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The Myth of the White Tribe

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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GLOSSARY

African National Congress (ANC): headed by Nelson Mandela it is the the single largest party in South Africa.

Afrikaner Broederbond: a secretive Afrikaner organisation whose membership includes many of the most influential Afrikaners in South Africa.

Afrikaner Volkswag: a right wing extremist group that broke away from the AB.

Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB): led by Eugene Terre' Blanche this is a neo-nazi group that is violently opposed to any compromise with the blacks in South Africa.

Azania: a term first coined by the ancient Greeks for the land mass south of Egypt. It was revived by th Pan-Africanist Congress in the 1960's as the black nationalist term for South Africa.

Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO): the heirs to the Black Consciousness Movement. A black purity group that opposes intervention by white liberals or any other white group in deciding the future for the blacks in South Africa.

Black Consciousness: founded by the charismatic figure Steven Biko it believed in raising black consciousness through education and positive black action without the help of white intervention.

CNA: the Central News Agency.

Conservative Party: led by Andries Treurnicht. The party was founded in 1982 after a right wing defection from the National Party in response to limited reforms by Botha.

COSATU: the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

FRELIMO: the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique.

Herstigte Nasionale Party: an early right wing Afrikaner party whose policies are based on traditional white values. Attracted increased support during National Party defections during the 1970's.

Inkatha: a Zulu dominated organisation led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Has fought to obtain an independent state for the Zulu people. Opposes any attempt to dominate negotiations by the ANC.

Labour Party: the main party in parliament for the coloured or mixed-race people. The leader of the party is Reverend Allan Hendrickse.

Natal Indian Congress: a Natal based organisation that rejected any participation in the new Tricameral Parliament established by Botha in 1984 with its House of Delegates for Indians (45 members) and House of Representatives for Coloureds (85 members).

National Party: the ruling white party which came to power in 1948 under the leadership of Dr. Malan and has remained in power ever since.

National Union of South African Students (NUSAS): dominated by whites the organisation failed to meet the needs of the black voice during the 1960's.

Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC): this group sees itself as 'africanist' in its approach to the struggle against white oppression and rejects the role played by white radicals. It was formed in 1959 by a goup that broke away from the ANC.

Progressive Federal Party (PFP): the liberal opposition party advocating a universal franchise within a federal system.

SABC: the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

South African Student Organisation (SASO): formed in Natal in December 1968 to represent black students. Steve Biko became president in July 1969. The white student body NUSAS had previously spoken for blacks.

United Democratic Front (UDF): formed on 20th August 1983. Exclusively aimed at bringing an end to apartheid and bringing about a democratic state. In the UDF's inaugural declaration they stated: 'we stand for a single, non-racial, unfragmented South Africa, free of bantustans and group areas....'.

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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The Myth of the White Tribe

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The site of this thesis is the relationship between Politics and writing in present day South Africa and the struggles and tensions between political history and events and the literary imagination in the context of the rise and fall of the doctrine and practice of Apartheid. Particular attention is given to prominent Afrikaner writers, notably Andre Brink and J. M. Coetzee, and to the ways in which their work reflects and perhaps helps to demystify the ideological and mythological contexts in which it has been created. Central to this enquiry is the claim that the literary imagination has the capacity to investigate shapes of consciousness and patterns of conviction in ways which may be vividly illuminating and that through its ability to engage the reader play a part in the raising of consciousness. This '*dialectical*' relationship between reader and public, is echoed in various ways throughout the thesis: in consideration of questions of text and context, in the interplay between the Black Consciousness movement and the challenge to white liberal self emancipation; in the attempt to bring together literary criticism and historical analysis to investigate mythology and the importance of language in the creation of mythology, and finally to explore and to specify and offer a prognosis for the psyche of present day Afrikanerdom in the light of the foregoing.

INTRODUCTION

In order to examine the present and changing climate in South Africa and make a rational critique of the unique phenomenon commonly termed *'Apartheid'* it is necessary to trace its history. For this reason the first part of this thesis will consist of an historical analysis from pre-colonial times up until the present and the attempts by De Klerks Nationalist party to reform both party-political and social structure. To reform itself is no easy matter; so effective has the policy of *'separateness'*(1) been that South Africa now finds itself in the absurd situation of being one country but with two worlds, two minds: as Allister Sparks points out in his work *'The Mind of South Africa'*: South Africa has become the kind of country *"H.G Wells might have invented, or that Jonathan Swift might have sent Gulliver to"*.(2)

In Southern Africa at present there is an abundance of literature that has until recently, possibly due to our isolation and complacency, gone practically unnoticed in Western Europe. Within private collections may be found a copy of Doris Lessing's *'The Grass is Singing'* or Alan Paton's *'Cry the Beloved Country'*, other than that choice seems to have been very limited. To take a personal example, in September 1989 I was surprised to find Dillon's in Southampton had a book display featuring the work of J.M Coetzee including his most recent publication *'Foe'*(3) and his Booker Prize winner *'The Life and Times of Michael K.'*(4) but despite the fame and attention there was still the sense that this writing had not, and still hasn't received the recognition it deserves. It seems however that times are changing; recognition in the West at last of the vitality, energy and stature of one of the world's greatest contemporary writers of fiction.

Two generations ago the pens of T.S Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Franz Kafka and a host of others secured the West's standing at the heart of world literature. Today European literature is justly seen as representing one of many collective viewpoints within the wider collective consciousness of the human condition. Increasingly our bookshelves are stocked with the works of Third World writers who are rapidly becoming household names: Rushdie, Marquez, Ngugi and Achebe as well as a number of former Eastern Block writers such as Milan Kundera. Their writing has often been produced either in exile or under appallingly repressive

conditions; regimes, which more often than not, have been the focus of the authors work and ironically have often stimulated the material the systems had intended to censor. An extreme example would be the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa'Thiongo whose novel *'Petals of Blood'*(5) was written on toilet paper while imprisoned. These regimes defend themselves by spreading fear through torture, banning, 'disappearing' people and censorship in order to maintain the post-colonial order - too frequently simply an extension of the old colonial system.

The result is a literature born out of anger and frustration amidst the turmoil created by a regime bent on foiling the individuals attempts to express themselves: the result may be a work of Art that is creative in design but destructive by intention. Interestingly enough it was an English writer of the 19th century, Anthony Trollope who was one of the first to point out not just the barbaric situation the blacks had to face in South Africa but also their ultimate destiny. In 1878 he wrote while travelling in the area that: *"South Africa is a country of black men - and not of white men. It has been so; it is so; and it will continue to be so".*(6)

A hundred years later Jan Morris in her travel book *'Destinations'* (Essays from Rolling Stone 1979) observed that *'the law can do almost anything to you in South Africa. It can lock you up indefinitely incommunicado without trial. It can place you instantly under house arrest, or ban you from public activities,or prevent you meeting other people, or publishing your books, or even being interviewed. It can prohibit any publication, expel you without explanation or appeal, confiscate your passport, imprison you for being a communist, or for sleeping with a blackman, or for spending a night in a white residential area, or failing to carry your pass book, or even I dare say for writing an article like this.'*(7)

And yet, to repeat, it is the case within late twentieth century literature that we look to writers working within such unpropitious circumstances to carry the vital line of literature forward. Early twentieth century modernism seems to have run its course in the metropolitan countries. Part of what is at stake here is the theory of the novel as such and the problem of the diffusion of the novel from a European context to a more

global perspective.

To understand' *modernism'*(8) it is first necessary to understand a concept of the individual human condition that precipitated the emergence of this movement and resulted in what is often a quite unique expression of consciousness. It is perhaps to the emergence of these new writers that the West must look in order to rediscover its direction. To the extent that literature has energy and a vital social role the world itself seems to conform to the contours of literary theory. We are, to some extent the products of what we read - we seem increasingly in the West to be in search of an Art which reinforces our individual social identity and pulls us up out of the mire of collective alienation.(9) It is the recognition of this historic collective consciousness that sets us apart and gives us our first step to freeing ourselves; it is the existence of this subliminal collective linking which gives rise to the repressed guilt which Western man often finds lurking just below the surface and which deviates his behaviour. Modernist literature and the human condition live in a symbiotic partnership - modernism is the realism of the absurd.(10)

In order to express my argument clearly I have chosen two white writers from South Africa each of which has contributed in some way to this struggle: Andre Brink and J.M.Coetzee. I have chosen two white Afrikaans writers not because I believe in any way that they are superior literary figures to their black counterparts but because they are representatives of the white minority and thus intrinsically linked to the doctrine of the *'myth of inherent white cultural superiority'*.(11)

Coetzee was born in Cape Town in 1940 and educated in South Africa and the United States as a computer scientist and linguist. He is Professor of General Literature at the University of Cape Town. Since the appearance of his first novel, '*Dusklands*' (1974; reprinted by New York: Penguin, 1985), his writing has received considerable critical attention. His allegories and fables attack colonialism and demythologise historical and contemporary myths of imperialism. '*In the Heart of the Country*' (1976; reprinted by New York: Penguin, 1982) has won the CNA and the Mofolo-Plomer Prizes; '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' (1980; New York: Penguin, 1982) was awarded

the CNA Prize, the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. '*Life and Times of Michael K.*' (1983; New York: Viking, 1984) won both the CNA Prize and the Booker Prize, Britain's prestigious literary award. He is winner of the Jerusalem Prize for 1987. He has also had published '*White Writing*' on the culture of letters in South Africa (Yale University Press, 1988) and '*A Land Apart*', which he edited with Andre Brink (Faber & Faber, 1986) and comprises of a collection of short stories and poems from South Africa. Bernard Levin has described him as '*an artist of weight and depth that put him in a category beyond ordinary comparison*'.

Brink was born in the small village of Vrede, Orange Free State in 1935 and is currently Professor of English at Cape Town University. He is a playwright, critic, translator and novelist. He previously lectured in modern literature and drama at Rhodes University where he was Associate Professor. He is married with four children, and lives in Grahamstown. His novel '*Looking on Darkness*' stirred up great controversy when first published in South Africa in 1973. He has won the CNA Award, the most prestigious South African literary prize, three times. The only author to receive it both for Afrikaans and English work. Both '*An Instant in the Wind*' and '*Rumours of Rain*' were shortlisted for the Booker Prize. In 1980 he received the Martin Luther King Prize, and in France the Prix Medicis Etranger. In 1982 he was made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur and in 1987 was named Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et de Lettres. His latest novel was titled '*On the Contrary*'. His work has been criticised for its sentimentality and sensationalism. He also has a tendancy to stress structure over narrative which can detract from original intentions. He is however a political activist and former dissident.

And withever whom they may claim to put their personal allegiance they remain white in a society whose social structure is determined by the colour of ones skin. It is their struggle to come to terms with this reality and their attempts to find a place within the struggle that concerns me. Both writers are brilliant at their crafts, endowed with a genius of perception that enables them to unravel the complexities associated with the *'white supremacy'* myth that has perpetuated our civilization since

Daniel Defoe first uplifted Crusoe as a symbol for white superiority. Though I recognise that it was not Defoe's intention to have his hero mythologised as a *'white supremacist'*.

An important theme of this thesis is that of 'myth'. I turn to Levi Strauss to reinforce this connection between writer and reality:

'Like dreams, myths are the articulation of unconscious cultural desires which are for some reason inconsistent with the conscious experience of the world. The myth presents an answer to the question "how are the unconscious wishes to be reconciled with conscious understanding?'(12)

The writer works within a framework that consists of the social structures that make up the environment within which he lives; his writing must unavoidably be a product of this environment. The celebrated Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa'Thiongo puts it succinctly:

'What the writer can do is to choose one or the other side in the battlefield: the side of the people or the side of those forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics?'(13)

For this reason the primary concern of most South African writers of any value would be with *'fighting Apartheid'* by demonstrating how monstrous the system is,with exposing how it dehumanises people. The greatest hurdle they have to overcome is the lack of communication.

By juxtaposing the history with an examination of the white psyche I will trace the events that have led to this crisis and prove that a dialectic is already under way.

When I write of lack of communication I do not merely mean the physical hurdle of language, I mean a more profound social disunity that has been elaborately

constructed by a racist government intent on cultural separation. I am not suggesting here that language is not a powerful tool. For example the S.A.B.C's policy of having a separate language radio station for each tribal area is not so much as the government claims to provide a service as to maintain the ancestral language barriers and prevent communication. In actual fact many of these *'separate languages'* are about as distinctive as that of the dialect of a Northerner in England with that of a Southerner. Using English as a common medium through which to communicate is a necessary solution to overcoming this hurdle and reaching a larger audience important when dealing with National issues.

The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe warns that any African writer, be they black or white, who shies away from social or political concerns runs the risk of becoming irrelevant:

'It is clear to me that an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant - like that absurd man in the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames.'(14)

Within the more specific South African context the writer finds a situation even more critical; the moral dilemma facing the individual to make a choice. Not to speak out would in itself be a crime against humanity. To quote William Blake: *'he who wills but does not act breeds pestilence'*.

The South African writer Nathaniel Nakasa observes the problem of communication in everyday social life:

'*What one finds here is worse than a decline - it is a paralysis of conversation. The colour bar which dominates the lives of all South Africans, haunts and plagues the dinner tables monotonously all over town.*'(15) To quote again from Jan Morris's travel book:

'The racial conflict dominates every conversation,as it dictates every political act and every economic decision. Every day its shadow grows more ominous,and every day its symptoms break into the newspapers - more deaths in the Cape Town black township- another student riot - a militant black paper is launched - a policeman is killed by a grenade - another batch of black protesters is charged under the Terrorism Act, or the Suppression of Communism Act, or the Internal Security Act, or they are detained incommunicado without charge, or placed under house arrest, or banned from public life indefinitely.'(16)

This is apparent not just between racial groups but within small family units - there are always the unasked questions, the unstated views, or the endlessly repeated formula. As this paralysis increases so the need for self-expression becomes greater and the honesty, certainty and explosive force of the writing more intense, more valuable. The writing possesses the Marxist quality which Sartre insisted upon; that it should, if literature is to be meaningful *'reverberate at every level of man and society'*.(17)

Western European writers have become preoccupied with intimate relationships, sensitive childhoods, fantasy or nostalgia. The South Africans cannot retreat - however much they may want to - into these luxuries; they are compelled to come out into the world and there is no difficulty in knowing what to write about. The poet Mongane Serote when asked what direction the liberation struggle would take in the 1980's replied: *"that is the direction of the South African poet"*. The writing in South Africa has then manifested itself from the human condition that has been brought about by Apartheid and its associated evils. It seems that European, at least Western European literature is held in something of a stasis, as its function in society has become obsolete or at least uncertain.

Some attention to the viewpoint of black writers points up the fact that emerging black consciousness has been itself an important aspect of the context in which radical whites find themselves.

As Njabulo Ndebele pointed out at the *'Culture In Another South Africa'* Conference in Amsterdam in December 1987:

'Discussion on prose is premised on the belief that an essential precondition to the establishment of a free and non-racial cultural community in South Africa is the adoption of a holistic approach towards South African society.'(18)

Roughly the history of prose reflects something of the following about the intellectual response of black South Africans to the drift of history around them:

1. The desire to learn,and to absorb new forms of experience and knowledge.
2. The desire to prove ability and successful acculteration.
3. The desire to define an authentic self.
4. The steady growth of self-confidence.
5. Concerted protest.
6. Defining the enemy (index of self-confidence).
7. Determined assertion.
8. Celebration.
9. Critical questioning and the quest for,and enhancement of,self-knowledge.
10. The quest for the future.

(Njabulo Ndebele CASA Dec.1987)(19)

It is also important to understand however that the writer, if he is to remain true to his art, should not be tempted to censor his own work in favour of personal political alignment. His work must be as true a reflection of reality within the writers imagined framework as possible.

Milan Kundera made the following observation in 1977:

'The novel is a game with invented characters. You see the world through their eyes, and thus you see it from various angles. The more differentiated the characters, the more the author and the reader have to step outside themselves and try to understand. Ideology wants to convince you that its truth is absolute. A novel shows

you everything is relative. Ideology is a school of intolerance. A novel teaches you tolerance and understanding.'(20)

I would therefore like to add to Njabulo Ndebele's list of ten possible directives:

11. It is the aim of the writer to teach both tolerance and understanding.

It is of course essential to recognise *'that novels only "work" because their discourse makes it possible for their readers to take up positions somehow analogous with that of a character or speaker.* (Ken Hirschkop - *'Bakhtin and Cultural Theory'*.(21)

With this in mind it is appropriate to look briefly at the present economic and social patterns prevalent in South African society at this point in time. This movement from a discussion of text to an analysis of context is a movement I make frequently in the thesis. To understand the narrative it is essential that one has an insight into the historical background and contemporary political situation, I recognise that my thesis poses a methodological problem concerning academic disciplines. In order to deal with the symbolic relationship between text and context it is necessary to approach the subject from a literary/philosophical angle as well as a political/historical one.

A high percentage of South African natives live well below the basic poverty and nutrition lines drawn by Western democracies. They exist in an environment where crime and human deprivation have distorted old tribal value systems and created an ethos of 'survival of the fittest' in many of the townships.

At the same time the requirements of industry and the advancing skills of African labour are gradually eating away at the previously exclusive white economy. Nadine Gordimer (22) comments on this in her short story *'City Lovers'* and also points out that acquirement of skills links in closely to an increasing shortage of semi-skilled whites:

'....he was aware that it was only recently that the retail consumer trade in this

(country) had been allowed to employ coloureds as shop assistants; even punching a cash register represented advancement. With the continuing shortage of semi-skilled whites a girl like this might be able to edge a little farther into the white-collar category.'(23)

Until very recently rather than encourage this growth the white establishment has refused it any political or economic outlets creating a growing pool of skilled and semi-skilled black workers increasingly disillusioned with their lot.

With this in mind the National Party's decision in the eighties to push ahead with Verwoerd's Homeland policy appears even more self-destructive.

Increasing paranoia, the result of international isolation and self-realisation at South Africa's obviously anachronistic ideology (but not with the foresight to recognise ways out) had led the Nationalist Party up until the arrival of De Klerk(24) to take more and more extreme measures; the trump card being the *'Homelands policy'* of Grand Apartheid: turning the Bantustans into native reserves with powers of self-government. The Ciskei Commission of 1980, paragraph 307, puts the case against the independent homelands very clearly:

'....blacks are not properly consulted about whether they want it; the loss of South African citizenship is unacceptable; the homelands are too small and fragmented; their inhabitants could suffer important economic disadvantages and there is no prospect of international recognition.'(25)

The ten years since the Commission's report have seen the policy put into operation despite the weighty arguments against it. The economies of the so called *'independent homelands'* are in a shambles, unemployment is steadily rising and as populations increase the already considerable pressure on the available land resources reaches crisis point.

However even if such a policy was to succeed it still would not cater for the one third

of the blacks who live in the urban areas or another third who live as labourers on European and Afrikaner farms.

The more enterprising and sophisticated of the three groups are those who live in the urban areas and they play an essential part in the running of the economy. Rather than being treated as an invaluable asset the group are treated as a migrant, transient element which can never be given equality nor security; that is as workers, husbands, fathers or citizens. One Liberal belief was that this situation would change through necessity as the pressure on the economy increases. Christopher Hill gives a brief summary of how the argument runs:

'....as the population of South Africa grows, the white percentage of the total will fall and it will be impossible for whites to continue to occupy all the responsible positions and provide most of the skilled labour which the economy requires. It will then become apparent that such such job reservation are incompatible with the rational operation of the economy and, having been exposed in their full absurdity, will fall away. The need for black labour at all levels in the economy will in turn lead to an improvement in black education; the rules governing the mobility of labour and the right to live in the white area will be scrapped and at that point South Africa will 'take off' on the road to self-sustaining growth.'(26)

The argument appears to contain a certain amount of logic. De Klerk during his first year in office made it a point to lift job reservations within all the main areas of the economy and also to lift laws preventing the movement of labour within the country. Unfortunately Apartheid with its myriad of laws and regulations is far harder to disassemble than it was to set up, especially when those organisations with the responsibility of doing the job are far from committed to taking apart a system they still believe to be functional.

The serious repercussions of not officially recognising this large urban group are only too evident. On 29th August 1989 'The Independent' ran an article written by David Beresford, part of which read:

'There is another dimension to the sense of urgency in South African politics, evidence of which is to be found in a smart new office block on a hillside outside Cape Town, which houses a team of professional crystal ball gazers. It is the Institute for Future Research, a Stellenbosch University think-tank which has spent the last 15 years researching long- term social and economic trends'.(27)

The Institute is funded by clients including major corporations and, intriguingly, the State Security Council - which heads the country's security apparatus and, at least during the P.W Botha era, has probably had more direct influence on government policy than either Parliament or the Cabinet.

The director of the Institute, Professor P.H Spies, is blunt about the state of the country - *'South Africa is clearly a disaster scenario,'*(28) he says.

The South African labour force, for example,is growing at 400,000 a year and the formal sector is meeting only half the demand for jobs. The current growth in housing needs is 161,000 units a year, on top a 1.6 million backlog last year.

The school population,which was 8.6 million two years ago, is expected to reach 12 million by the end of the next decade.

These trends, Professor Spies says, pose a threat to social stability amounting to *'almost a national hari-kiri'.*

The Nationalist government then, as long as it continued to insist on supporting apartheid forced itself into an inescapable position. Even if De Klerk is serious about reform, and Mandela himself believes him to be, then the problem still remains. With reference to the Education system the situation has been further exacerbated by the schools boycott which has denied a whole generation an education.

Quite clearly, in order to maintain what the Nationalists called the 'survival of the white race' and of 'civilisation' this race found itself forced to break some of the most

essential principles of justice and fundamental human rights upon which, and ironically, the claimed superiority of that civilisation rests. Since 1985 up until its final lifting in Natal in October 1990, the whole country had been seized in the grip of a State of Emergency imposed to help maintain brutal police control and censor all media coverage where and when it pleased. The movement of all Africans, their power to meet, to speak, to write, to work, even by the control of churches and of all Education - to think, are all closely controlled. The control is advanced upon all printed words and broadcasting.

The European liberal or Christian who ventured to protest - and recent events have made this rapidly expanding group more vociferous - ran often as not, into the psychological trauma of being ostracised from his own community. The novel '*A Dry White Season*' by Andre Brink, discussed later in this work, examines this predicament in greater depth.

There is an issue of method here. The methodology focuses on not just events but on the forces at work important to political scientists in conveying subjective aspects of higher pressure political situations. In this respect the following treatment, seen from the point of view of method is an approach which enriches the viewpoint of political scientists. An analysis of specific texts and narratives fills out and makes more vivid various kinds of accounts which historians and social scientists have brought to bear on the South African situation. This is not merely a matter of illustration but makes a stronger claim that the literary imagination may convey over lived realities which otherwise may not be reached.

The dialectic divides into three sections. The context is covered in the first three chapters which traces the history of South Africa from the arrival of Van Riebeek to the setting up of the Transitional Executive Council in 1993. The text is dealt with in Chapters 4 and 5 and examines the work of Andre Brink and J.M Coetzee, the two most prominent white Afrikaner writers in South Africa.

Chapters 6 and 7 undertake an analysis of the plight of the Afrikaner mentality from a

social psychological point of view, drawing upon and fusing the previous elements in the discussion.

Each of the three history chapters differs slightly in style. The first chapter is divided into sub-sections and is not intended to be a comprehensive study of early white settlement but through careful selection each sub-section aims to dispel some of the myths that have come to effect the present world view of the Afrikaner; especially with respect to the *taal* and early migrations. The layout of the the chapter is intended to appropriate easy reference, which the reader may find useful when reading later chapters. The chapter covers the period from the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in the 17th Century to the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970's.

The second chapter is intended to introduce the symbiosis of text and context by firstly giving examples of the writings of important Black Consciousness activists and showing how the rise of black intellectualism affected the writing of white Afrikaners who fought to change the system.

Chapter three presented the greatest problems due most obviously to the contemporary nature of its content, covering the period from the release of Mandela to the setting up of a Transitional Executive Council in 1993. This chapter is far more comprehensive empowering the reader to visualise the context within which Andre Brink and J.M Coetzee have been and are at work.

I remind the reader at the beginning of chapter four that the dialectic concerns the relationship between text and context. This is revealed in the friction that arose between white liberals and members of the Black Consciousness Movement who rejected white help in the struggle against oppression. The question, what role is the white liberal to have in the struggle, is central to Brink's work. What interests me in this chapter however is the myopia that effects the Afrikaner community and the processes involved that lead to the lifting of this myopia and the consequences of that uplifting. This analysis also examines the psychosis which manifests itself in the

white community.

Brink's writings can often be read as narratives of the South African experience over the past thirty years; discussing the problems involved in consciousness raising. '*A Dry White Season*' is a good example of one such narrative. '*States of Emergency*' exemplifies Brink's concern with the technical construction of narrative while '*Rumours of Rain*' concerns itself directly with the mass psychosis and the myopia of the white Afrikaner.

In chapter five I go on to discuss the work of J.M Coetzee. Coetzee, like Brink is an Afrikaner with a family tree that reaches back to early white settlement in South Africa. Like Brink, Coetzee feels himself very much a part of the struggle for a democratic future for South Africa. Both men are academics whose lives have been spent teaching and promoting African literature. Both see fiction as a weapon in the struggle to raise the consciousness of their own tribe. Unlike Brink however Coetzee is more interested in mindscapes specific to the human condition as a whole and his work reaches into the psyche of the individual and examines the conflict between the conscious and sub-conscious manifest in what he terms the 'other'.

The opening section of this chapter discusses this phenomenon through an analysis of two of his novels; '*Life and Times of Michael K*' and '*Foe*'. This particular theme is crucial to the dialectic as it confronts face on the possibility of a mass psychosis at work in the Afrikaner tribe. This is the sub-text of Coetzee's work and his novels can be read as a series of diagnoses of the psychological conditions of man and the historical inheritance which effects this condition. For this reason the chapter draws on a wide range of sources, including; Kafka, Nietzsche, Defoe, Golding, Arendt and others. It is fundamental to this thesis that the South African situation can be seen as a microcosm of a much broader crisis at work in Western civilisation.

Following '*Life and Times of Michael K*' and '*Foe*' comes a study of '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' which shows how the externalisation of the individuals fears can collapse in a traumatic realisation that the 'out there' of the 'other' is in fact manifest in the self.

'*Dusklands*' carries this further by grimly exemplifying how this dichotomy between conscious and sub-conscious can be used to create a mythology which can be used as a powerful weapon for controlling and directing social forces. '*In the Heart of the Country*' follows '*Dusklands*' and is equally dark, creating a physical landscape whose sub-text is a black violent mental landscape which throws its victims into a state of abandonment and despair. The landscape painted is that of the isolated Afrikaner homestead 'out there' in the wilderness. The '*Heart*' is the '*Heart*' in Conrad's '*Heart of Darkness*'.

I conclude with J.M Coetzee's most recent novel '*Age of Iron*'. An old white woman is dying of cancer, a cancer which symbolises a more profound decay eating at the heart of South African society. After the bleakness of the preceeding novels it ends a vision which is possibly redemptive.

Chapter six begins with a summary of the basic framework for the Afrikaner mythology and then proposes a possible model for the analysis of an individual psychosis and then for mass psychosis. The argument then focuses on language and draws together text and context so as to attempt an overview. I draw on examples from South African poets to give the analysis a fresh approach.

The conclusion examines to what extent the thesis has succeeded in reaching its objectives. That is whether the analysis of the white tribe of Africa through text and context can lead to a better understanding of their present condition. the conclusion also comments on the writings of J.M Coetzee and Andre Brink from the point of view of literary criticism and makes judgements about the effectiveness of their work in helping us understand better the white tribe of Africa.

I refer to the conclusion as chapter 7 as I do intend some new ground to be broken at this final stage, as a synthesis takes place and brings to the surface a number of issues. It is essential to understand that at the time of writing this thesis the ideological battle in South Africa was in full swing and the whole situation extremely fluid. It was almost impossible to hold down any single political development for

more than a few days before yet another surprising turn of events replaced it. It must be stressed that this thesis does not claim to make predictions for the future South Africa but stresses some such process of resolution at work and suggests the possible obstacles that lie in the path of reconciliation. It is a hypothesis that aims to confront these obstacles and begin a dialectic.

This thesis works towards a conclusion and throughout must be seen as an exploration through the dialectic that takes place which becomes fused in the final chapter. The thesis aims to show the collective condition of the Afrikaner to be in a state of crisis and I term this crisis '*mass psychosis*'. Chapters one, two and three cover the historical events that have contributed to the development of a mythology which , to use Nietzsche's phrase gives the Afrikaner a '*history for life*' and holds him in bondage. Chapters four and five show how literature can confront this history and the resultant mythology and begin to disassemble and demythologise the contemporary condition. Chapter six begins by discussing directly the mythology itself and its relationship to Apartheid. I deal at length with the pivotal role that language itself has and is playing in the cultural processes and especially how language relates to empowerment. The works of both Andre Brink and J. M. Coetzee are brought together in this chapter and fused around the common theme involving the crisis in the Afrikaner psyche. The final chapter examines the subconscious fears that need working through in the dialectic process. It holds up the literary imagination as a powerful vehicle for exploring mythology and demythologising history which in turn is replete with mythology. Mythology, history and the literary imagination are seen at work together in language itself and I use references to such writers as George Steiner, Friedrich Nietzsche and Bakhtin to enforce my argument.

The thesis concludes with a discussion on the importance of the literary imagination in the demythologising of the Afrikaner psyche. It also stresses the different possibilities that literature offers compared to the other human sciences and that the literary imagination has a very different but equally vital role to play in the development of human consciousness.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. When referring to '*separateness*' I refer to Dr. Malan's two main principles of the Nationalists stated in *Die Transvaler*, 19 September 1944. Namely:
   a) That there should be no racial equality in the white areas, and
   b) that the natives should develop along their own lines in their own areas.

2. Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (Heinemann:London 1990).

3. J.M. Coetzee, *Foe* (Penguin 1987).

4. J.M. Coetzee, *Life and Times of Michael K.* (King Penguin 1988).

5. Ngugi Wa' Thiongo, *Petals of Blood* (Heinemann 1983).

6. Anthony Trollope, *South Africa*, reprint of the 1878 edition (Cape Town, 1973),pp.361-2.

7. Jan Morris, *Destinations* (Essays from Rolling Stone 1979),p.122.

8. I refer to Margaret Drabble, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature.* (Chaucer Press 1985).

9. I use this term to refer to the manner in which the European gives up his individuality in preference to a general social order. As this order deviates from its original course - for example in the form of fascism - the individual loses recognition and then control.

10. Again I use this term in relation to 9. The study of the human condition in literature by definition becomes absurd as it is a study of the ridiculous, of man abandoned by his own creation.

11. My italics here. The phrase has been coined after reading the work of Fanon, Cleaver and Biko.
    Belief in the myth by blacks results in subservience. Black-Consciousness aimed at destroying the myth and freeing blacks. Black is beautiful not inferior.

12. Levi Strauss, *The Structural Study of Myth & Totemism* (Association of Social Anthropology of the Commonwealth.).

13. Preface to *Writers in Politics* (Heinemann:London 1981).

14. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*. p.78.

15. Nathaniel Nakasa, speaking at CASA (Culture in Another South Africa) Conference. (Zed Books 1989).

16. Jan Morris *Destinations*. p.107.

17. J.P. Sartre *The Purpose of Literature* , quoted by Raymond Williams in Marxism and Literature (Oxford University Press:London 1977) p.201.

18. Njabulo Ndebele, *Culture in Another South Africa* conference in Amsterdam. (Zed Books December 1987) p.20.

19. Njabulo Ndebele, CASA. (Zed Books December 1987) p.27.

20. Milan Kundera 1977.

21. Ken Hirschkop, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Manchester University Press 1989) p.13.

22. The Nobel Prize winner Nadine Gordimer is one of the most prominent white writers in South Africa. Her novels include: *The late Bourgeois World*, The Conservationist (Joint winner of the Booker Prize), *July's People*, *The Burger's Daughter* and more recently, *A sport of Nature*.

23. Nadine Gordimer, *City Lovers* :from the short story collection Six Feet in the Country. p.56. (Penguin)

24. Botha must take some credit here. He was the first to begin to dismantle Apartheid. Though even Vorster before him had his liberal phase in dismantling aspects of petit Apartheid such as segregated sport and separate bus queues. However once threatened by a back-lash from the right he about turned eventually leading to a leadership crisis and the take over by De Klerk.

25. Report by Ciskei Commission. 1980. Paragraph 307.

26. Christopher Hill, *Change in South Africa* (Rex Collings London 1983).p.25.

27. David Beresford. *The Independent*. 29th August 1989.

28. Professor Spies; as quoted in article note 29.

CHAPTER ONE

The Historical Background

Pre-1652 - 1971

AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY: PRE-1652 - 1971.

Introduction

The following chapter is intended to give a brief but concise history from early settlement to the birth of the Black Consciousness Movement. I keep the style straightforward and factual and there is intentionally no attempt at this stage to begin to assimilate text and context. When referring to *context* I mean the historical setting within which the text exists. The *text* refers to the fictional matter under examination. As the historical analysis gets closer to the present situation the paragraphs get longer and the relation between *text* and *context* become more close knit. Each paragraph contains a sub-heading in bold type for easy reference. For someone who knows little about the situation in South Africa it is essential that they are given a guide to the more important historical events that effect the contemporary text and context.

From the stone age to 1652. Before the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in the form of Jan Van Riebeek in 1652, the Cape was populated by two groups of stone age people. Both groups were small in number: the San (more commonly termed Bushmen) of whom there were approximately some 20, 000 and the Khoikhoi (commonly termed Hottentots)(1) of whom there were approximately some 100,000. Both groups were small in stature with yellowish-brown skin, very different from the Nguni(2) who were by this time encroaching from the north. The San moved in small family groups as hunter gatherers; they were a timid people who had little to do with the whites. The other group, the Khoikhoi, were cattle herders and were important to the early white colony for the supply of fresh meat.

The Cape Coloured. After Doman's rebellion in 1659 (3) the Khoikhoi were enslaved. However the Koikhoi did not supply the manpower that the white settlers required and consequently slaves were imported from West Africa; the Khoikhoi appear not to have made industrious labourers and were considered by their enslavers as being apathetic and untrustworthy. Slaves were also brought in from Asia, West Africa and Madagascar. What followed was a great deal of interbreeding and intermarriages. Mixed marriages were particularly prevalent between whites and

Bengalese women and later with women of mixed race. There was during this period a severe shortage of white women and so the idea of separating the races during this early settlement period would not have been a consideration. It is during this period that the Cape Coloureds emerged.

Birth of a language: It was also during this early period that the Afrikaans language was born.Van Riebeek's crew of 70 consisted mainly of Dutchmen with a small group of Germans. Their language was the seamens dialect of Amsterdam, larded with Portuguese and Malay words picked up from the eastern trade and the domestic servants. Over the next 200 years a Dutch patois known as the *Taal* (Dutch for language) developed and by the 20th century it had become a distinct language in itself.(4)

French Settlement: In 1688 some 200 french Hugenots escaping religious persecution arrived in the Cape. For further information read the opening chapters to Marq de Villiers, *White Tribe Dreaming* (See bibliography). There was no other significant settlement during the 150 years of Company rule. One of Andre Brink's novels *An Instant in the Wind* that I look at later in the thesis, deals with this period of early settlement. The characters histories would have been typical of this period.

'We were here before the black man': The origin of this statement also stems from this early period and is important as it lies imbeded deep within the Afrikaan mythology. In 1702 a group of 45 Afrikaners accompanied by their Khoikhoi servants rode north from the grain and fruit growing area of Stellenbosch 25 miles from Cape Town and engaged in the first recorded battle between the White man and the Xhosa (5). This has been put forward by the Afrikaners as proof that they settled the Cape before the arrival of the black tribes from the north. However there were reported sightings of the Nguni (Xhosa, Swazi and Zulu) as early as 1552 in the southern coastal area. Allister Sparks in his book *The Mind of South Africa* makes it quite clear how he feels about the Afrikaner argument:

'The premise is absurd. The archaeological evidence shows that the iron-working and cattle husbuadry in the northern Transvaale date back to at least 300-

800 A.D., while shipwrecked Portuguese sailors reported meeting the Nguni along the coast 150 years before Jan Van Reiebeeck arrived with his first party of Dutch settlers in 1652.'(6)

Consolidation: By the end of the eighteenth century the original crew of 70 had multiplied to 20,000 Afrikaners, employing 26,000 slaves and 13,000 Khoikhoi (their earlier number having been reduced by small pox). The Dutch were finding it increasingly difficult to hang on to their colonies and in 1815 sold the colony to the British for £6 million. The British ownership of the Cape was extremely unpopular with the Afrikaans; four laws that the British introduced will help explain why this was so:

a) 1807:Parliament outlawed the sale of slaves throughout the Empire and in 1833 the ownership of slaves was banned altogether.

b) 1820:Severe unemployment in Britain led the government to encourage settlement in the colonies. It paid for 4, 000 Britains to travel to the Cape where each family was allotted 100 acres of frontier land.

c) 1822:Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor, proclaimed that within 5 years English would be the only language used in the courts.

d) The British settlers found a lack of available labour. Slaves were no longer on sale and the Afrikaners had already monopolised the Koikhoi. This, plus the pressure from the missionaries led the issue in 1828 of a famous ordinance:

'As it has been the custom of this colony for Hottentots and other free persons of colour to be subject to certain hinderances as to their place of living, way of life and employment, and to certain forced services which do not apply to other subjects of his majesty, be it therefore made law that no Hottentot or other free person of colour shall be subject to any forced service which does not apply to others of his majesty's subjects, nor to any hindrance, interference, fine or punishment of any kind whatever under the pretence that such person has been guilty of vagrancy or

any other offence unless after trial in the due course of law.'(7)

It is very difficult for us to understand the devastating effect that this had on the Afrikaners. Since Greek times slaves had been part of the social community, an essential part to the mechanics of the state, now suddenly removed because a tidal wave of moral indignation felt by a minority of powerful states. A comparable moral climate could be found after the end on the Second World War when the ideas of *White Supremacy* propounded by the Nazis during the 1930's were seen in their ultimate fulfilment in the gas chambers of Aushwitz. The collective guilt felt by the first world countries resulted in the rapid disintegration of the old European Empires(8). In response to this change in world opinion South Africa isolated itself and set about creating a society that went against all the principles of the new era. In response to the measures taken by the British government the Afrikaners did the only thing they could do, they decided to move on mass. In 1837 6,000 set off on what became known as the Great Trek. By 1854 almost one quarter(10,000) of the colony had left the Empire.

Pass Laws: Apartheid is not simply a product of the twentieth century. Its origins lie in the early colonial times. In 1809 the British introduced the *Hottentot Code* which was designed to prevent the Khoikhoi from drifting off the farms when they wished. The code designated that all natives have a fixed *'place of abode'* and that if a Khoikhoi wished to move then he had to obtain a *'pass'* from the local official.

The Expropriation of African Land: As British and Afrikaner settlers took increasing amounts of native land the effect on the traditional communal mode of production was devastating. The 'hut' and 'poll' taxes intended to drive the blacks from the land and into the urban areas where their labour was required for the farms. The idea was that a tax would force families to find a way of earning money and so compel them to find employment on the farms.

The next 45 years saw the British driving the Afrikaners north as they refused to accept coming under the rule of the British Empire. As gold and diamonds were

discovered British interest in the northern territories increased. Eventually the Afrikaners found themselves boxed in with the British controlling Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to the north and north-west and the Cape to the south. In 1881 the first of the two *'Freedom Wars'* took place.Initially the Afrikaners made some notable victories including a humiliating defeat for the British during what became known as the Jameson raid. In 1899 war was officially declared.

The Afrikaners fought an effective guerilla war which forced the British to use extreme measures. Kitchener's '*scorched earth*' policy and his use of concentration camps(9) had appalling results; more than 20,000 women and children died from malnutrition and disease. The deaths were not intentional but due to the reasons being that the camps were simply not equipped to cope with such large numbers of people over such a long period of time. The British had expected the war to last no more than a few months but it was drawn out over two years at a cost of half a billion dollars and 22,000 lives.

In 1902 the **Peace of Vereeniging** ended the independence of the Republic and in 1905 Milner became President. The Boers had received great international sympathy during their bitter war with the British and in 1907 the Campbell-Bannerman liberal government decided to return the two Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to own-rule. Then in 1910, on the suggestion of the once Commander-in-Chief of the Boer forces Botha, the Free States were amalgamated forming the Union; Botha became the first Prime Minister and Jan Smuts (a young Boer hero) became his deputy.

Botha, an Afrikaner, was the man who managed to patch up many of the differences between the British and the Afrikaners and helped to create an atmosphere of trust; quite a feat after such a bitter war. As usual it was the black who paid the price. The only natives who were allowed to vote were in the Cape and no blacks were allowed to sit in the South African Parliament. Blacks were very disappointed, they had hoped for an extension to the limited franchise they had enjoyed in the Cape since 1854.

However not all the Afrikaners had forgiven the British and many were unhappy about the pro-British stance that their government had decided on taking. It was the historic stature of General Smuts and General Botha that frustrated white extremists by maintaining support for the Union Party. Even the coalition in 1931 was the result of clever political manoevering to placate poor whites after the political crisis created by the miners strike. The coalition was between the Union Party and the National Party, led by General Hertzog. Hertzog had laid down the first segregationalist policy on paper but by offering a coalition Smutts could prevent such a policy being implemented. The coalition also ensured strong government after seven years of weak and confused politics.

The Growth of Resistance: It was another Boer General, J. Hertzog, who established the National Party in the Orange Free State. It was Hertzog who, as minister for native affairs, produced the blueprint for nationwide state-enforced segregation. Hertzog had been dismissed from the Government for attacks he had made on the Government's pro-British sympathies. Ironically it was the liberal segregationists, made up of missionaries, anthropologists and so called African experts, during these first two decades who, reflecting the wider body of international feeling argued that it was *"essential to try and insulate African peasant societies from what was perceived as the generally pernicious consequences of Western capitalist industrialism"*.(10)

It was the segragationists between the wars who held the middle ground between the liberalism of the Cape (Cape Coloureds had successfully integrated into the local communities over many generations and still held the vote) and the 'repressionist' policies of the Boer Republics. Segregationists quickly lost ground after the 1936 territorial legislation on the land and the Cape African voters were removed from the common roll.

Hertzog's Nationalist Party found its support significantly increased during the 1922 miners strike. The government had been expelling expensive white labour in favour of cheap black labour after the gold price slump. The miners strike was a desperately

bloody affair which resulted in 200 dead; four were later hanged while two of the ringleaders committed suicide. Times were bad and as more and more poor, demoralised and alienated whites poured into the cities the situation became intolerable (11). The whites though poor had one thing the blacks did not have and that was the vote.

In 1924 the Nationalist party was in government and suddenly the Afrikaner pride was restored and a new era began. At the forefront of the revival was the Afrikaans language. As William Nicol, an Afrikaner clergyman noted '*....the most startling revelation of this change was their use of the Afrikaans language*'(12). But as Allister Sparks points out the language that the white Afrikaner minority claimed for its own was in fact a part of a far more colourful and complex tradition:

'How ironic that this wonderfully expressive and cosmopolitan new language, which the slaves invented out of their necessity for communication and then passed on from black nanny to white child while the sophistication of High Dutch wilted on the dry and distant veld, should have become the talisman of a narrow racist nationalism dedicated to the oppression of its real creators.'(13)

The priority was to improve the lot of the poor white; the disaffected miners and the small holders being the most volatile representatives.

Hertzog's rule was cut short by the economic crash of 1929-31. His new government lacked the experience and skill to ride the disaster and a coalition government was formed between Hertzog and Smut's. Extreme Nationalists rejected the 'fusion' and a secret organisation was set up by Henning Klopper called the *Broederbond* (14)(band of brothers). They had the bible translated into Afrikaans and recruited the Dutch Reformed church. Smut's called the organisation '*a dangerous, cunning, Fascist organisation*'. The Broederbond even had its own version of the Nazi, the *Ossewa-Bradwag*(15) (Ox-wagon Guard, O.B) and its own recruitment of *stormjaers(16)* (storm troopers). Dr. Malan and the only other M.P to follow him, J.G Strigdom set up the Purified **National Party** and called for a complete break with the British

Empire and to declare an independent Republic.

It was also Malan in 1950 who appointed Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd to be Minister of Native Affairs. From this point on Apartheid was to become a reality where the party`s theories were to reshape both the social and economic reality of South Africa. In 1955 Verwoerd made it quite clear how he felt about the place of the black man in South Africa with the introduction of the *'Bantu Education Act'*.(17)

'My departments policy is that Bantu education should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its root in the spirit and being of Bantu society....There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour....what is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live.'

The Homelands policy was a non-starter from the beginning. It was ridiculously under funded; the estimated £104 million that was asked for to fund the scheme never materialised. Secondly, it was clear that what the blacks wanted was to stay in the urban areas where their labour was in demand: it was economically naive to propose that you withdraw such a precious raw material as labour out of the market place just at the time when manufacturing industry was booming. Thirdly, many blacks had already been detribalised and had no homeland they could identify with in the first place.(18)

The Awakening of Black Resistance: It was mission schools that provided the first wave of resistance; most notable was the work of Lovedale (19) during the 1840's in the Eastern Cape who produced many political leaders and who believed in the toleration of different races within the community. However despite the brave attempts by some individuals to promote the black man in South Africa there was no real resistance until after the Second World War. Under the leadership of Sol Plaatje (first Secretary of the A.N.C and member of the Tswana tribe) the A.N.C had really

made little impact between the wars; in fact the situation for the blacks had rapidly deteriorated. By the late 1940's the black African was in a vicious stranglehold. The **1913 Land Act** had deprived him of his birth right and driven him into the urban areas. The **Colour Bar Act** in 1926 (the Mines and Works Act of 1926) effectively prevented him from entering skilled trades and the 1923 **Urban Areas Act** confined them to specific areas within the urban zone; politically termed native locations. In 1927 the **Native Administration Act** established the Governor General (representing the British Crown) 'Supreme Chief' over all african areas.

Despite the forces posed against them the A.N.C were inspired by the efforts of Gandhi(20) and in 1952 the movement launched its first effective defiance campaign. The Indian and Coloured groups joined them on a plan 'for the defiance of unjust laws'. A letter to Malan asked him to repeal the Pass Laws, the **Group Areas Act** 1950 and the **Bantu Authorities Act** 1951. As was to be expected the authorities took little notice of the peaceful demonstrations. The action included assembling on mass without passes, and using 'European only' entrances such as railway stations. It was however a new experience for the white minority which had in the past done as it pleased without opposition. They acted in a manner which was to become typical in its heavy handed control of the 'justice' system, they simply changed the law accordingly. The **Criminal Law Amendment Act** was passed which provided heavy penalties for those convicted of 'defiance offences'. The police opened fire on a peaceful May Day demonstration in 1950 and 18 people were killed. The authorities followed up with a new law which was rushed through the courts called somewhat erroneously the **Suppression of Communism Act** (later the **Internal Security Act**, 1976) which made illegal all organised demands for social change and enabled the state to take administrative action against its opponents by means of *'banning orders'*(21). In 1950 the **National Day of Protest** proved the first really effective measure taken by the A.N.C. The 26th June was subsequently adopted as **South Africa Freedom Day**.

The programme of action planned in 1949 breathed new life into resistance against Malan's authoritarian regime. Because of the way in which the authorities reacted to

the peaceful protest the action also attracted the condemnation of the world press; the struggle was really under way. The A.N.C claimed its paid up membership rose from 7,000 to 100,000. Suddenly it was a political force to be reckoned with. In December 1952 Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and 18 others were tried under the Suppression of Communism Act (22). Whether the accused were actually communists or not didn't matter, as the Act states an offence as:

'Any doctrine or scheme....which aims at bringing about any political, industrial, social or economic change within the Union....'

Mandela's arrest resulted in a banning order being served on him and as a result his famous address of September 1953 was read on his behalf. He had been elected A.N.C (Transvaal) President earlier that year.

'You can see that there is no easy walk to freedom, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires.'(23)

Mandela explained his 'M' plan devised to get round the **Riotous Assemblies Act** and **Banning**. The central argument was that meetings could be held anywhere. *'Make every home, every shack and every mud structure where our people live, a branch of the trade union movement and you must never surrender.'*(24) The idea was to build the movement at a grass roots level, with a carefully constructed intermediate level, making public meetings unnecessary. Mandela's speech contained an illuminating insight into the appalling conditions of the black majority:

'The cost of milk, meat and vegetables is beyond the pockets of the average family and many of our people cannot afford them. The people are too poor to feed their families and children. They cannot afford sufficient clothing, housing and medical care. They are denied the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, old age and where allowances are paid they are far too low for survival.'(25)

The judge sentenced them to nine months imprisonment but suspended the sentences for two years. It was because the government found this unacceptable that the *'Criminal Law Amendment Act'* was rushed through which introduced the idea of Banning. The revised act was termed in such a way as to prevent possible suspects from slipping through the net. One clause read:

'Any person who in any way whatsoever, encourages, incites, commands, aids, or procures any other person....or uses language calculated to cause any other person to commit an offence by way of protest against the law....shall be guilty of an offence.'

Three years maximum was to be the offence for offenders. Another Act enabled the authorities to legally intervene on passive resistance used during the Defiance campaign(26). **The Separate Amenities Act** made it clear that the segregation of public amenities was to be enforced by law.

In June 1955 the A.N.C fought back by holding a **'Congress of the People'**. The Congress was to be made up of four bodies speaking for the four bodies of the people of South Africa.

a) African National Congress - Black
b) South African Indian Congress - Indian
c) Congress of Democrats - European
d) South African Coloured People's Organisation - Coloured

* The Congress of Democrats was formed as a direct result of the Defiance Campaigns between 1950 and 1952.

The C.O.P. adopted the **Freedom Charter** which mapped out, admittedly in rather broad terms the aims and objectives of the movement.

'For the first time in the history of our country the democratic forces irrespective of race, ideological conviction, party affiliation, or religious belief have renounced and

discarded racialism in all its ramifications, clearly defined objectives and united in a common programme of action.'(27)

In 1958 Verwoerd became Prime Minister and stated that *'segregationist policies that had been maintained by unwritten codes of behaviour would in future be enforced by law'*(28). Verwoerd became known as the *'father of the apartheid system'*.

1958-66: The Bantustan. The aim was quite clear. The National Party set out to deprive blacks of South African citizenship and to move them, by force if necessary, into what were somewhat euphamistically (the word Bantustan derived from the British terms for Hindustan and Pakistan) termed *'homelands'*. The National Party argued that they were acting in the interests of the black but as Mandela said in 1959: *'Behind the "self-government" talk lies a grim programme of mass evictions, political persecution and police terror'*.(29)

As stated earlier the policy was doomed from the outset; ridiculously underfunded and representing only 13% of the land, many blacks soon came to see the Bantustans as holding areas for the state to tap for cheap labour when the economy required. However it was also obvious that if the economy were to go into recession then these areas would be the first and worst to suffer. By the mid-1960's the expected 'collapse' in the Bantustans had reached desperate proportions with starvation widespread. The already overcrowded situation resulted in terrible soil erosion which was taken to crisis point when the State moved an estimated 3.5 million more people into the areas between 1960 and 1983. The majority of whites continued to believe the Nationalist Party when it claimed that it was acting in the best interests of all the people. Many whites however must have realised that the policy was all too convenient for the future of the white minority and had simply chosen to turn a blind eye; a blind eye they would continue to turn through the awful atrocities of the late sixties and seventies until the repressed guilt had built up into an unbearable burden.

For those blacks who had to remain in the new Republic Verwoerd made it clear that *'like Italians working as miners outside Italy, they will have no political rights outside*

the homelands; their position will be that of honoured guests'.(30)

Nelson Mandela in a speech entitled '*Verwoerd's Tribalism*' (May 1959) on the governments Bantustan policy made it quite clear that although the National Party could fool its own voters it could not dupe the black majority or the outside world:

'The governments plans do not envisage the partitioning of this country into separate, self-governing states. They do not envisage equal rights, or any rights at all, for Africans outside the Reserves. Partition has never been approved of by Africans and never will be. For that matter it has never really been submitted to or approved of by the whites. The word "Bantustan" is therefore a complete misnomer, and merely tends to help the Nationalists perpetuate a fraud.'(31)

There was never any intention that the areas designated for 'independence' should become self-supporting. Workers were needed for the Nationalist farms and the gold mines. *'More than one third of the total number of Africans employed on the Witwatersrand gold mines come from the Transkei.'*(32)

Mandela's analysis of the situation proved accurate. The reserves were desperately overcrowded and underdeveloped. Unemployment resulted in terrible poverty and the people's dependency on wages to substitute for insufficient land to eke out a living forced them to find work as 'visitors' in the Republic.

To remove any doubt the Nationalists may have had Mandela stated: *'no serious or responsible leader, gathering, or organisation of the African people has ever accepted segregation, separation or the partition of this country in any shape or form.'*(33)

Sharpeville and the Winds of Change. From 1960 to 1966 Apartheid became consolidated and with it opposition more determined. In February 1960 McMillan infuriated Verwoerd with his 'winds of change' speech which repudiated National Party policy and spoke of the irresistible changes which were sweeping through

Africa and were bound to sweep through South Africa too. On 21st March 1960 an anti-pass day rally ended in tragedy. The Pan-African Congress had managed to collect some 5,000 people outside the police station. The police were not use to dealing with such opposition and a number of young constables panicked and opened fire. A total of 69 people were slaughtered, most of them shot in the back as they fled in terror. The International outcry that followed the massacre shook the economy and threw it temporarily into the wilderness. As so often before when trapped, rather than compromise, the National Party withdrew even further into its shell. Later the same year South Africa became a Republic and in 1961 she left the Commonwealth. Britain's response was to draw up '*The Republic of South Africa Temporary Provisions Act*', in May 1961. The act was a response to South Africa having left the Commonwealth and froze relations for one year. In 1963 there was a ban on the sale of arms for internal purposes. However as Geoff Berridge points out: *"all things considered it is clear that Britain's partial arms ban was no more than a public relations exercise*".(34)

The A.N.C and P.A.C responses to the events of 1960 were to set up military and sabotage units. Peaceful protest had failed. Mandela took leadership of *Umkonto We Sizwe* (the Spear of the Nation) while the more extreme Pan African Congress estabishoshed *Poqo* (Xhosa for 'pure').

With Vorster as Minister for Justice security laws were tightened and basic liberties ignored by the police; when Vorster became Prime Minister he set up B.O.S.S (35)(The Bureau for State Security) which typified the State's ruthlessness and complete disregard for civil liberty. By 1964 both military wings had been crushed and investors found renewed confidence in the economy. Even the English speaking businessmen began to hail Voerwoerd as a great Prime Minister, as a period of great prosperity and growth ensued. After Verwoerd's assassination in 1966 Vorster became Prime Minister; not for his ability to think deeply but because his colleagues thought him a tough man in the tradition of Verwoerd. They had good reason to think he would live up to their expectations. One may see this from his record on police power to hold suspects without charge:

1962 12 days

1963 90 days

1965 180 days

1966 Unlimited if authorised by a judge.

1976 Unlimited without authorization.

However what followed came as something of a shock as Vorster attempted to take South Africa back into the Western camp. He set about renegotiating sports ties with other countries (his predecessor had refused to allow South African teams to play foreign teams that included coloured players) and opening a 'peace offensive'with other African countries. At the forefront of this offensive was President Banda's visit in 1971. Oddly enough Vorster was soon regarded as the leader of the *Verglites* (the enlightened ones) as opposed to the *Verkramptes* (the narrow ones). Unfortunately it was never intended as anything more than window dressing and Vorster soon returned to the fold as the pressure from the right grew.

Increasingly by the 1970's writers and artists were coming to the fore and making themselves heard. The work was highly political and pulled no punches. It was written from the heart, from experience, from the street and spoke to an audience that on the one hand was rapidly gelling into an unstoppable political force and on the other was taking its first tentative steps towards '*enlightenment*'. The poetry of the Black Consciousness movement spoke a new and more frightening message to the whites. It refuted out right the white claim to the soil of Africa and preached revenge. It spoke of revolution - with Vorster's failure came a new harder blacker opposition.

When did the revolution begin?
It began the day the first white put his foot on the land.
It began when your forefathers were brought in chains to work the
fields.
They killed Shaka - it began.
They incarcerated Sobukwe, Mandela, Sisulu - it began.
Now it is on - the revolution

- because they killed my brother
- because they muted our leaders.(36)

South Africa had every opportunity to create a truly multi-cultural society from the early period of white settlement. The Cape Coloured could have come to symbolise the unification of the various ethnic groups but instead they increasingly came to symbolise the dangers of creating a cross-breed group that lacked any clear identity, being neither black on the one hand or white on the other. The birth of the Taal was a language born out of this racial mixing but instead it was claimed by the Afrikaner and came to symbolise oppression and racial hatred and fear.

The Afrikaners have certainly had an undeniably difficult passage through the last three hundred years. The early influx of white settlers fled religous persecution and arrived at the Cape hopeful that it would be the promised land. On their arrival however the majority quickly fell into terrible poverty ending up leading lives more barbaric than the Khoikhoi themselves. Life held few pleasures and they turned to their faith for the support they needed. Corruption on the part of the Dutch East India company frustrated many of their hopes but it was nothing compared to the arrival of the British. The narrow, supercilious, sanctimonious British Empire brought new restrictions and treated the poor Boer farmer as a second class citizen in his own land. As the Boers trekked north they were thrown headlong into the Zulu Chiefs Dingaan and Mzilikazi and eventually had to rely on British help to secure a settlement. When diamonds and gold were discovered the British moved north and when the Boers resisted the British defeated them on the battlefield.

Some would say it is hardly surprising that they developed a psychosis that made them myopic zealots, paranoid and aggressive to all but their own. Others argue that such a history should have given them the wisdom to understand the true horror of racial oppression.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. Now a term regarded as derogatory.

2. There are four main language groups in South Africa: the Nguni, the Sotho, the Tsonga, and the Venda. The Nguni account for 66% of the black population and comprise the Zulus, the Xhosas, the Swazi and the Ndebele.

3. The only serious attempt by the Khoikhoi to rise against the Cape Colony. Even this rising was not aimed at killing settlers, only forcing them to buy Khoikhoi cattle.

4. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 5.

5. One of the four main tribes making up the Nguni people.

6. Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (Heinemann:London.1990) p.8.

7. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid: A History* (Paladin1986) p.39.

8. The historical inheritance of this guilt as seen in the white Afrikaner and their attempts to justify their oppression of the blacks through apartheid led me to examine the work of George Steiner and later Wilhelm Reich. See Chapter 5.

9. The British have the dubious boast of being the inventors of the camp system. The Vrouemonument near Bloemfontein bears the dedication to *'the memory of the 26,370 women and children who died in the concentraion camps....as a result of the war 1899-1902'.*

10. Paul Rich, *The Roots of Apartheid.* Review by Native Affairs dept. in 1920's and 1930's.

11. One tragic irony of the plight of the urban black is the fact that in many ways the poor white Afrikaner met a similar fate at the hands of the British during the urban expansion between the World Wars.

12. Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa.* p.178.

13. ibid.p.79.

14. Afrikaner League of Brothers. Formed in 1918 with a secret membership; aimed at reviving Afrikaner unity after their defeat in the Boer war.

15. A right wing white Afrikaner group that supported Hitler during World War II.

16. The military wing of the O.B. They actively supported Hitler by attacking allied targets in South Africa during the War.

17. 1953. Provided separate education systems for African children.

18. This fact turned the policy into an organisational nightmare and quickly a complete farce. Many of the blacks in the urban areas had completely lost touch with their roots. For a more detailed insight read Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* (Penguin 1987). There are still many whites who argue that Apartheid is not morally wrong but simply unworkable.

19. Founded the most famous of the early mission schools in the eastern Cape in 1841.

20. Gandhi's lead in the civil disobedience of 1946, against the Asiatic Land Tenure an Indian Representation Bill had had a marked effect on white opinion and more significantly paved the way for future ANC peaceful protest during the 1950's; especially protests against the pass laws.

21. Such orders restricted victims to proscribed areas and forbade them from attending public meetings. Such an order could prevent them from being in a room with more than one person at any given time. For clarification watch the film '*Cry Freedom*' which deals with the relationship between the editor Donald Woods and Steven Biko.

22. Although the Act appeared to identify communism as its target the wording left interpretation by the authorities very open. It defined communism as '*Any doctrine or scheme....which aims at bringing about any political, industrial, social oreconomic change within the Union....by unlawful acts or omissions or by the threat of such acts or omissions....or under the guidance of any foreign or international institution*'.

23. Presidential address by Nelson Mandela to the ANC (Transvaal) Conference, 21 September 1953. Elected ANC (Transvaal) President earlier in the year, Mandela had been served with a banning order subsequently and the address was therefore read on his behalf. For the complete address see: Nelson Mandela. *The Struggle is my Life*' (IDAF Publications. April 1990) p.42.

24. ibid. p.40.

25. ibid. p.37.

26. Introduced in 1953 to tighten controls on anti-government organisations; in particular the communist party.

27. The '*Freedom Charter*' was drafted by a sub-committee of the National Action Council from contributions submitted by groups, individuals and meeting all over South Africa, approved by the ANC National Executive and adopted at the Congress of the people, Kliptown, Johannesburg, 25-26 June 1955. This section from '*Freedom in our Life time*' - article on the '*Freedom Charter*' by Mandela in '*Liberation*', June 1956.

28. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.181.

29. Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle is my Life.* p.4.

30. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.182.

31. Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle is my Life.* p.77.

32. ibid.61.

33. ibid.77.

34. Fiona Thomson, *British Economic Policy on South Africa during the Eighties* (LSU. 1989).

35. Now with less sweeping powers named the National Intelligence Service. It still however remains a powerful for for De Klerk's government to control.

36. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.210.

CHAPTER TWO

Breaking The Chains of Mental Slavery:

From Black Consciousness to the State of Emergency

Breaking the Chains of Mental Slavery.

In the second history section which relates to the period from the birth of The Black Consciousness Movement up until the final State of Emergency imposed in the late eighties, a number of references are made to poets and refer back to the poem which ended the first history section. These poets are an integral part of the Black Consciousness Movements history and political philosophy. It is important to remember that this was a movement and not a political party. It had no interests in achieving political power. The philosophy behind Biko's '*consciousness raising*' relates directly to the dispelling of cultural myths historically inherited by both black and white tribes. The act of writing, as I argued in the Introduction, is itself a political act. Andre Brink's novel '*States of Emergency*' deals directly with the moral dilemma facing the South African writer of the 1980's. It must always be remembered that Brink, as well as being singled out for special attention in this work as a novelist he is also a political activist and commentator. It must be that the writer has a responsibility to his reader to confront the issues of the time. Many of those writing in South Africa found themselves subject to banning orders, or like Breyten Breytenbach prison and torture. The '*breaking the chains of mental slavery*' refers directly to the process of demythologising South African culture.

The irony is that it was Verwoerd's policies which really acted as the precursor to black intellectual resistance among the youth. By segregating education and creating blacks only colleges the government was inadvertently establishing the breeding grounds for effective dessent. The lack of effective black opposition on any large scale was only partially due to the rigorous constraints of the Apartheid system, it was also the result of a deep rooted belief amongst the majority of the blacks that they really were in fact an inferior people(1). The authorities were now giving the oppressed the opportunity to create a black intelligentsia who would quickly set about dispelling the myth of white supremacy. Apartheid could only survive as long as the myth was held to be true. Once blacks began to believe that they really were capable of meeting the white man on his own terms then the system would collapse: as the mission schools before them had shown education and its subsequent enlightenment

is a dangerous weapon against injustice.

After Sharpeville the liberal elements, controlled by whites, such as the Liberal and Progressive Parties and the National Union of South African Students (N.U.S.A.S), were increasingly incompetent at airing black grievances. Previously, as Gail Gerhart has argued, *'it was whites in these organisations who, for the most part, took on the task of articulating African grievances and demands'*(2). The incompetence in N.U.S.A.S was a mixture of fear of state reprisals and conservative sympathies within the organisation. As Clive Nettleton states:

'The major problem facing N.U.S.A.S as a non-racial organisation existing in a society based on discrimination and racialism is that, while preaching the ideal of non-racialism, the members of the organisation are unable to live out their ideals: these remain ideals and, for the vast majority of students, unreal. The fact is that; while it is still possible for white and black students to hold joint congresses and seminars, and to meet occasionally at social events, they live in different worlds.' (3)

With the government having brutally suppressed their organisations during the early 60's the black youth needed an alternative voice and looked increasingly towards the *'tribal'* universities. From frustration and anger was born the South African Students Organisation (S.A.S.O) which developed into the **Black Consciousness Movement**. It is important to state here that B.C.M never intended to rival the A.N.C. As Brian Lapping points out, *'Black Consciousness was not an organisation but a set of ideas that helped create a mood'*.(4).

The leading writer and thinker of the movement was a medical student at Natal University's non-white medical school, Stephen Biko. The literature that arose from the movement was principally didactic in nature and overtly political; many of its contributors would never aspire to being seen as writers in the usual sense of the word. As James Mathew argued:

'I wrote. It was not prose. Critics hyena-howled. It was not poetry they exclaimed. I

never said it was. I was writing expressions of feelings. I would find it extremely difficult to write poems of love or praise of nature. Neither would I produce lines so finely polished or use metaphors and metre - art for arts sake. I would feel like a pimp using words as decoration for my whoring....I am not a poet, neither am I a 'writer' in the academic sense.'(5)

The poetry espoused the beauty of blackness, the evil nature of the state and the need for active struggle(6). The opening lines of Don Mattera's poem '*Blackness Blooms....*' shows how struggle from pain and suffering can lead to sweetness and the hope for a brighter future:

Come morning
Come glorious light
Return justice
Heal my broken sight.

And now black sunbeams fall on the slope
Bringing new light to fulfil my hope
Conscious of their sacred duty
Sweet,sweetly my blackness blooms
And becomes my beauty.
(7)

The objective is a rediscovery of cultural identity against a repressive, corrupt regime. As Stephen Biko asserts *'our culture must be defined in concrete terms....It is through the evolution of our genuine culture that our identity can be fully rediscovered'*.(8)

The movement was anti-Bantustan in the divisiveness of the system and encouraged unity among black people.

'Another significant aspect of Black Consciousness is the call for cohesive group

solidarity, i.e. black solidarity. Thus the quintessence of Black Consciousness is the realisation and acceptance of blacks in South Africa that, in order to play a positive role in the struggle of liberation and emancipation, they must effectively employ the concept of group power and thereby build a strong base, from which to counter the oppressor's policy of divide and rule.'(9)

The idea of Liberalism was rejected as shallow, paternalistic and patronising.

You just don't understand
There's no-one as liberal as me
Some of my best friends are
Kaffirs,Coolies and Coons
Forgive me, I mean other ethnic groups
How could it be otherwise?
I,m Jewish. I know discrimination
From the ghetto of Belsen
So,don't get me all wrong
'cause I know just how you feel
Come and see me sometime
My folks are out of town

(10)

I go on when discussing Brink to distinguish between different types of white liberal: from those who simply act to appease their conscience to those who surrender everything, even their lives.

In 1977 the movement was banned. The spirit of the movement lives on however in the form of the Azanian People's Organisation (A.Z.A.P.O). The Kennedy visit to South Africa in 1987 gave a good example of A.Z.A.P.O's anti-liberal sentiment inherited from the B.C.M. Michael Valpy reported:

'A.Z.A.P.O, the smaller and more militant of the two main anti-government black groups, labelled the Kennedy visit a hypocritical sham. It said that the senator had done nothing to eliminate the economic and social inequality of blacks in his own country and accused him of trying to further his own political ambitions on the backs of South African blacks.'(11)

The emphasis on the 'differentness' of blacks from whites must raise many problems for the future of a new South Africa. This difference is echoed by black American writers however. Toni Morrison has argued *'black people have a way of allowing things to go on the way they're going. We're not too terrified of death, not too terrified of being different, not too upset about divisions among things, people. Our interests have always been, it seems to me, on how unalike things are. Black people always see differences before they see similarities, which means they probably cannot lump people into groups as quickly as other kinds of people can.'*(12)

It is then a quite separate distinction from the racism of the white minority regime. It is more positive, it has its 'rationale' in a quite optimistic, positive attitude that exposes barriers, not creates them, in order to destroy them.

By mid-1976 the internal situation had reached crisis point. In June, the people of Soweto, economically the elite of black Africa, gave witness to the first outburst of violence which quickly spread across the whole of South Africa and which provided the stimulus to establish B.C.M as a major movement. In May of the same year the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, Desmond Tutu, had warned Vorster in a letter *'....A people made desperate by despair and injustice will use desperate means'*.(13)

At the centre of the trouble were the school strikes over the use of Afrikaans as the medium for teaching. Between August and November 1976 the children forced Johannesburg to a standstill on four occasions by calling general strikes, which they enforced by preventing workers from leaving the townships. During the following twelve months a total of 575 were killed and 2,389 reported injured. On 12th

September the government made a grave error. While being detained Stephen Biko died in custody. He was young, healthy and internationally respected. Donald Wood, editor of the newspaper wrote of him:

'In the three years that I grew to know him my conviction never wavered that this was the most important political leader in the entire country, and quite simply the greatest man it had ever been my privilege to know.'(14)

The events of 1976 had also born witness to a much more important change. As Rian Malan explained:

'South Africa's psychic landscape had been transformed. Blacks saw that they had shaken the white power structure to its very foundations, and they suddenly had hope. The tide of history had changed.' (15)

Something more sinister was happening also. With the old black subservience had come an acceptance that all things white were in themselves superior because they were the creation of whites. Even when blacks wanted to complain they did so through white liberal channels. But the thinking amongst the young was now different and as I stated earlier Apartheid relied on the fact that blacks recognised white superiority unquestioningly; when they stopped doing so Apartheid was finished. In 1976 they stopped doing so. In the fifties Alan Paton had warned the white community of the dangers of pushing the black people too far:

'By the time we turn to loving, they will have turned to hating.'(16)

Crisis and Reform Biko's charisma had captured the imagination of the West and when the State failed to keep quiet the brutality of his death and photographs of his tortured body were released in the world press. It created international uproar. Donald Wood's dramatic escape with Biko's life story added to the light already falling embarrassingly brightly on the South African government. Coinciding with the School boycotts and the police crackdown in the townships as it did the effect was

catastrophic for the South African economy. There was a heavy economic and financial backlash and the housing market collapsed. For three months Vorster said nothing. There came a number of rather half-hearted reforms. But Verwoerd's strict avocation of Apartheid and Malan's belief in eventual Afrikaner domination was proving to be a fallacy. By 1990 most educated Afrikaners realised that Apartheid was economically disastrous. The manufacturing industry had expanded so quickly white labour was insufficient, black labour was therefore needed. Afrikaners had still not taken over the economy as Malan had predicted. At the end of 1987 60% of all personal taxes and 75% of all corporate taxes were paid by English speakers. The civil service however was now 90% Afrikaner dominated; this Afrikaner domination of the South African bureaucratic machinery is one of De Klerk's greatest headaches when it comes to reform. As a matter of self-survival they have a somewhat conservative opinion when it comes to reform. The need for black labour and thus the need to get round the colour bar led to an increasing amount of bribery and corruption with the police and relevant authorities. Exacerbating the situation the Bantu Administration boards, which had since 1971 been taking their orders directly from Pretoria, were told that the flow of blacks into white towns should be slowed. The absurdity of this was stunning coming just at the time when the demand for black labour was on the increase. The result was that shanty towns grew even more rapidly as desperately needed housing plans were shelved. These shanty towns became hell-holes of violence, crime and poverty. The government found itself caught in the trap of its own policies. The governments own commissions set up in 1977 made it clear what action was needed:

1/ Riekert Commission - Concluded that the government should enable privileged blacks with skilled jobs and proper housing to be accepted as permanent residents in the towns.(17)

2/ Wiehahn Commission - This group studied industrial relations. The Commission was notable in the fact that it had one black member. Between 1970 and 1976 black wages rose by 51.3%,whites by 3.8%. The Commission advised that job reservations be abolished and black unions recognised.(18)

Some concessions were made. Blacks were allowed to buy houses in townships and some blacks were trained for skilled industrial work. In Soweto a new township called Selection Park was developed with elite houses. In 1975 the Military Disciplinary Code was amended to give blacks in the defence force the same status as whites of equal rank. Vorster also used the media,launching a massive propaganda machine between 1974 and 1978 costing some £30 million into information special projects.

Ironically Vorster's Presidency came to an end as a direct result of his special information projects. What became known as the *Information Scandal.* The misappropriation of defence funds was brought to light by the press and the resulting publicity, backed by strong Calvinist morality forced Vorster to resign. The Information Scandal also emphasised that although they were not yet the dominant force among the economic workings of the urban, industrial power force the Afrikaner was no longer just a rural creature. The Financial Mail pointed out, *'the Nats are no longer the party of the "volk".' They are better dressed, affluent members of the "volk"'*.(19)

Andre Brink's hero Martin Mynhardt (later analysed in more detail) in *'Rumours of Rain'* stereotypes the rich Afrikaner businessman; an insensitive, uncompromising bigot suddenly in control in a world which fails to understand him.

Vorster's successor Botha's only experience was that of politics. He joined Malan's Purified National Party in 1936 and in 1946 was promoted to information officer. Few people expected any new ideas from him, but like Vorster he was to be somewhat of a surprise. In 1978 he gave the following speech:

'We are moving in a changing world, we must adapt otherwise we shall die....The moment you start oppressing people....they fight back....we must acknowledge people's rights and....make ourselves free by giving to others in a spirit of justice what we demand for ourselves....A white monopoly of power is untenable in the Africa of today....A meaningful division of power is needed between all race groups....Apartheid is a recipe for permanent conflict.'(20)

It was Vorster as Minister of Justice and Police, helped by Nan Den Bergh as head of the security branch who had crushed black resistance in the early 60's. Together they had set up the infamous B.O.S.S, feared outside as well as inside Africa. Van Den Burgh had upset Botha in 1975 by opposing S.A.D.F intervention in Angola. Botha was quick to bring both B.O.S.S (renaming it the National Intelligence Service) and the Department of Military Intelligence closer to his personal control. Once Botha after 1978 began reforming Apartheid, whose implementation was creating a state of crisis, he set up a chain reaction. As Stephen Biko made clear shortly before his death, there was no going back now.

Changes may have come if the 1981 election hadn't signalled warning lights. 1979 saw the legalisation of the trade unions and in 1980 many facilities such as hotels, restaurants and libraries were desegregated. In 1981 education was made compulsory for black children and in 1982 a system of local government was introduced for the black community in their 'independent' homelands. With the manufacturing centre expanding rapidly the government found itself in a quandary. In fact it can be argued quite safely that Botha's popularity with big business was less for his rationalising of petit-Apartheid than for his economic policies. Two measures, one old and one new were utilised immediately. Alex Callinicos pointed out that the fact that the Riekert Report didn't advocate the abolition of influx controls but in fact could be interpreted to mean 'bantustans should continue to perform their function of a dumping ground for non-productive blacks'; productive blacks were in growing demand. Botha also (page 39) comprised the '*Colour Bar Act*'. Callinicos goes on:

'A major victory was won by the employers when an industrial council agreement involving the white unions in July 1978 opened all job categories to africans in the crucial iron, steel, engineering and metallurgical industries.'(21)

Botha's thinking was simple. He realised that the old Malan style Apartheid was unrealistic. He also realised that Business, a crucial National Party ally, needed labour to meet the growing demand. Botha was also acutely aware of growing township unrest, especially from the intellectual Black Consciousness Movement;

Stephen Biko's death in detention had aroused serious international criticism and sanctions were pressing. What Botha needed was a buffer between the small white minority and the black majority. In a similar manner to which the feudal aristocracy creamed off the more established and influential middle classes with privileges and bribes so Botha intended to create a black middle class.

The high point of Botha's plan culminated in the meeting of 250 businessmen at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg on 22nd November 1979. Botha intended to quell the extreme right while at the same time be promised capital from the English speaking business community.

Unfortunately, Botha's reforms came to an abrupt end after the election in 1981. Albert Hertzog's breakaway *'Verkramptes'* won nearly one third of the Afrikaner vote. On the other side the Progressive Federal Party (P.F.P), part successor to the United Party won 29 seats, hoped to back Botha against the right wing. Botha backed down although he did make efforts to make changes to the Constitution.

The election results were not the only warning however. A number of other factors brought about an end to Botha's attempts to rationalise Apartheid. The Prime Minister was finding it increasingly difficult to keep his own cabinet together and when Vorster came out of retirement to denounce him the situation reached crisis point. Victory for Z.A.N.U PF. in a now independent Zimbabwe increased growing paranoia. Treurnicht (leader of the Conservative Party) voiced this concern amongst the white electorate when he declared that *'any political planning that aimed at getting white and black nations to grow together politically or socially is unacceptable to whites'*.(22)

Another problem,one which now faces De Klerk, is dealing with the vast bureaucratic machine which was set up during Verwoerd's era and which had a vested interest in preventing the machine from being dismantled.

It is interesting that both Vorster and Botha realised early on in their terms of office

that Apartheid was untenable and that it was eating away at the economic and social fabric of the country. Both made tentative moves to deconstruct areas of petit-Apartheid but it was nothing more than tinkering and neither of them had the courage to tackle the foundations of apartheid laid down by their predecessor Verwoerd. Both felt the wrath of the right wing backlash and both tried to placate the opposition by following up with a period of brutal reactionarism. For Botha the result was to lose the support of both the right and the left and be forced out of office.

The New Constitution: Whites, Coloureds and Indians would each have a separate House; of Assembly, of Representatives and of Delegates. The number of members of each house was roughly proportional to the population: 4:2:1.

During 1983 the United Democratic Front was formed and Rev. Allan Boesak was asked to speak at their inaugural rally:

'We are here to say that the government's constitutional proposals are inadequate, that they do not express the will of the vast majority of South Africa's people....'(23)

Uprising and the State of Emergency:

'On 3rd September 1984, the newly elected deputy-mayor of Sharpeville was hacked to death on his own doorstep. The same day in Sharpeville two blacks were burned to death in their cars, four people were strangled behind a plundered garage, a man burned to death in a liquor store, many buildings and cars were set on fire. The official tally for Sharpeville, September 1984, was 26 dead. With comparable killings in Sebokeng, it marked a new phase in South Africa's history: the moment when blacks turned their anger against those fellow blacks regarded as collaborators with the white government.'(24)

The uniformed police were now almost half black. Many had joined the force during the brief period of reform, now finding themselves in the face of horrific violence. Police opened fire on a crowd in Langa killing 20. As in 1960 and 1976 the

Governments international reputation collapsed. But risings were becoming more frequent, and more widespread and longer lasting. Sharpeville had continued for a year and Soweto for two but the troubles that begun in 1984 were still boiling over well into 1987.

A.Z.A.P.O who rejected any compromise with whites or the capitalist system battled with U.D.F supporters. The black-on-black violence was to become increasingly widespread and during the 1980's a weapon that the State would use to prove that blacks were not capable of ruling themselves. In 1991 it was still being used and the violence even encouraged by right wing white elements to destroy de Klerk's reform policy as the AZAPO - UDF violence was replaced by Inkhata - A.N.C violence.

It was quite apparent that if changes were to be made then action had to be taken that was fast, incisive and sweeping giving the right wing no chance to organise. With the economic recession of the late eighties and the increasing disillusionment amongst the majority of whites with an anachronistic Apartheid De Klerk was not just the right man for the job but he was in the right place at the right time. The political storm which followed the callous murder of Steven Biko examplified the extent to which the myopia of the white South African had lifted. It also gave warning to the authorities that both black and white in South Africa were moving irrevocably together in the face of injustice. It must be said here that the Afrikaner is generally a very devout Christian and has believed sincerely that his government has acted in good faith and only in the interests of the *'volk'* and God. This is important as it highlights the moral crisis that the Afrikaner faces now.

NOTES

CHAPTER TWO

1. See opening section Chapter 4 on Black Consciousness Movement.

2. Gerhart, *Black Power.* p.257.

3. Clive Nettleton, *Racial Cleavage on the Student Left - Student Perspectives on South Africa* (ed. Hendrik Van Der Merwe and David Welsh) p.125.

4. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.210.

5. James Matthews statement: *Momentum.* (ed. M. J. Daymond, J. U. Jacobs and Margaret Lenta) pp.73-74.

6. This particular style remains popular and can be traced back to the early period of the '*Black Consciousness Movement*' and the teachings of Steven Biko.

7. Don Mattera *Azanian Love Song* p.18.

8. Steven Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Penguin 1988) p.70.

9. Nengwekhulu, *The Meaning of Black Consciousness.* p.198.

10. James Matthews, *Liberal Student Crap* (Cry Rage) P.33.

11. Michael Valpy, *Kennedy's visit widens the gap in already divided South Africa* (The Globe and Mail.No.25.Jan.1985) p.8.

12. Toni Morrison, *Black Women Writers at Work.* p.123.

13. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.211.

14. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.213.

15. Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart* (Vintage1991) p.78.

16. Alan Paton, *Cry the Beloved Country* (Penguin Modern Classics 1987. p.38.

17. Conducted by P.J.Riekert in 1977 and commissioned by Vorster the study examined influx controls.

18. Conducted by Professor Nic Wiehahn in 1977 and commissioned by Vorster the study examined industrial relations.

19. *Financial Mail,* 25th June 1979.

20. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.222.

21. Alex Callinicos, South Africa between Reform and Revolution (Bookmarks.1988) p.41.

22. Treunicht; quoted by John Carlin, *The Independent*, 14th February 1990.

23. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.226.

24. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid. A History.* p.228.

CHAPTER THREE

The Present Situation

1990 - 1993

Bringing the historical record up to date produced the greatest problems. The contemporary situation is extremely fluid. We are inundated with a flood of contradictory information. We are forced to rely on newspaper articles and television reports. There were some excellent contemporaneous books that can be seen as resource material, most notably Allistair Sparks' '*The Mind of South Africa*' and Rian Malan's '*My Traitor's Heart*'. It might also be said that this review of events involves questions of judgement, selection and emphasis. Such a sustained reading of the immediate situation is integral to the thesis but it is claimed that it is accurate from the viewpoint of independent historical research.

The current situation is creating another kind of Afrikaner writer; the apologist. There has been a long tradition of racist Afrikaner historians such as M. Theal and G. Cory but contemporary apologists claim to be of a liberal disposition. They continue to insist for example that the first white settlers arrived before the Nguni had travelled as far south as the Great Fish river despite the accepted evidence to the contrary. They argue that Apartheid was a mistake but under the circumstances of the time, at least understandable. They stress the intolerable hardships the Afrikaner has had to suffer in order to explain his paranoia. An example the reader may wish to consult is Marq de Villiers '*White Tribe Dreaming*' (see bibliography). No doubt that there will be a great deal more literature of this type over the coming few years in an attempt yet again to rewrite history rather than face the guilt of the past.

The Present Situation: From the release of Mandela to the abolition of Grand Apartheid.

Since Mandela's release on Sunday 11th February 1990 the deputy head of the A.N.C has followed a gruelling schedule that has led to rumours that at seventy years his health is ailing. The President of the organisation, Oliver Tambo recovering from a stroke had attempted to step down in favour of his deputy. In February he sent the organisations London representative to Lusaka but the N.E.C re-elected him. It was clear from the moment he was released that he did not want to be seen as dictating the policy of the organisation but as he reiterated again and again during the year was

only acting as spokesperson for that organisation. What was quite clear was that negotiations if they were to be successful - and the National Party view Mandela as a moderate compared to some of the younger members in the organisation (President De Klerk referred to him as a 'man of integrity') - had to proceed rapidly because:

a) The age and uncertain health of Mandela. Mandela is respected by all sides and may be the one person who can hold the various factions together. Mandela referred to De Klerk as a 'man of sincerity' while addressing 100,000 people at a rally in Bisho, Ciskei but warned:

'*Increased repression can only increase the crisis facing the Apartheid government. We must put an end to Apartheid. It is fast playing our country into chaos and waste.*'(1)

b) The rapidly deteriorating situation inside the country. A frightening escalation in violence between factions belonging to the A.N.C and those pledging their support to Inkatha as well as the emergence of the so called 'hidden hand' supposedly directed by white extremists; this 'hidden hand' is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter when I look at right wing extremism.

c) Mounting unrest among the white minority and increasing pressure from the Conservative Party could threaten De Klerk's parliamentary mandate and result in a right wing backlash.

Mandela's initial problem was to persuade the international community to maintain sanctions. After Mandela's release in February 1990 Mrs. Thatcher lifted a 'voluntary' ban on new investment and tourism. Nadine Gordimer, writing for 'The Independent on Sunday', 4th February stated:

'*Mrs. Thatcher is wrong when, in self-congratulation and hubris, she attributes change to her opposition to sanctions. Exactly the reverse is true....in the outside world, we have to thank those who brought South Africa to some sense of reality*

through economic and political pressure....'(2)

Gordimer also explained clearly the dramatic impact that De Klerk's speech at the beginning of February had on both black and white in South Africa:

'*It was with amazement, a singing in the ears, that we in the small room heard the leader of the South African government announce that the A.N.C, the P.A.C - even the South African Communist Party! - were henceforth unbanned. Restrictions on the United Democratic Front, on the Congress of South African Trade Unions!*'(3)

All the same there was at this time no mention of the '**Group Areas Act**' or the '**Population Registration Act**' or the question of land ownership, enforced by various Land Acts. It was quite clear to all organised opposition in South Africa that the dismantling of Grand Apartheid was the real goal and that Thatcher's opposition to the continuation of sanctions was premature and somewhat naive.

For whites like Nadine Gordimer the changes came unexpectedly quickly and the sudden easing of pressure on white liberal thinking allowed many to find new voice, especially through the English speaking newspapers. As to what line whites should take in the struggle I would like to refer back to a letter Bishop Tutu wrote to '*Frontline*':

'*What I consider to be the place of the white man in this - popularly called the liberation struggle. I am firmly non-racial and so welcome the participation of all, both black and white, in the struggle for the new South Africa which must come whatever the cost. But I want....to state that at this stage the leadership of the struggle must be firmly in black hands. They must determine what will be the priorities and the strategy of the struggle.*'

'*Whites unfortunately have the habit of taking over and usurping the leadership and taking the crucial decisions - largely, I suppose, because of the head start they had in education and experience....of this kind. The point is that however much they want to*

identify with blacks it is an existential fact....that they have not really been victims of this baneful oppression and exploitation....it is a divide that can't be crossed and that that must give blacks a primacy in determining the course and goal of the struggle. Whites must be willing to follow.'(4)

There are echoes here of Stephen Biko during the split with the student union which was so dominated by whites. As Wally Serote pointed out, whites must learn to listen and blacks must learn to speak. The international community however wanted to reward De Klerk for the steps he had already taken - they had to wait. A document forwarded to De Klerk on 12th December 1989 made it clear that negotiations would be possible only on the following conditions:

a) All political prisoners be released.
b) All political organisations be unbanned.
c) Troops be removed from the townships.
d) An end to the State of Emergency.
e) A repeal of all legislation designed to prevent political activity, such as the Internal Security Act.
f) An end to all executions and political trials.

In an interview with B.B.C 1 on the 17th March 1990 Mandela reiterated that the government must first '*normalise the political situation in the country*' and that a solution must be found within 5 years.

All these points were documented at the Harare Conference at the end of 1989. Points c, d, and e became increasingly difficult for De Klerk to deal with as township unrest escalated during the year and it was probably these points that the so called 'Hidden Hand' were to consider when trying to foil the National Party's attempts at reform; encourage violence in the townships and so prevent the government from withdrawing troops from the townships thus preventing negotiations.

On top of De Klerk's problems the A.N.C had a few of their own. The most serious were as follows:

a) Conflict in Natal between the pro-A.N.C, U.D.F and Inkatha. The violence giving the National government reasons for maintaining the State of Emergency in that area. A conference of Inkatha, the A.N.C and the U.D.F was planned for the 2nd April to try to put an end to the mounting violence in the townships. But Mandela was criticised for not consulting local opinion by Natal A.N.C activists and on 30th March the meeting was cancelled. It was not until March 30th the following year that the organisations finally met.

b) The internment of many of its leaders and exile of the remaining Executive had meant that not all A.N.C strands had been kept within the fold; especially in the townships where the youth (the Young Lions of the Youth Movement particularly) seemed more interested in slogans, songs and action rather than long winded rhetoric. When Mandela praised the youth at an address in Durban on 25th February 1990 by saying 'the youth have been the shock troops of our struggle' he may have been ironically closer to the truth than he at first realised. Life in the townships; the squalor, the unemployment, the broken homes draws the young together like stray dogs:

'The doctor saw before her a teenage boy indistinguishable from a thousand other waifs, strays and urchins who constituted the rich undergrowth of the township. Some were in school, many were not. A few were determined to succeed. Most were tough, sharp, excitable, living on scraps, on white bread and coke, on what they could beg or steal. Those children who went to school were at least manageable for a time. But after school and at night they roamed the township, drifting through the dusty streets like leaves blown by the wind, like spies, or stray dogs or beggars - laughing, stealing, yelling, longing to be big. Big like the bigger boys who dressed in tight black or white trousers with shiny jackets and who hung out of the windows of taxis and whistled at girls. Those same bigger boys formed gangs and fought each other.'(5)

c) Retaining popular following while at the same time negotiating with the government. The Executive could not be seen to be doing too much compromising. The ultimate goal must be 'universal suffrage on a common voters role' and minor

political victories over petit-Apartheid could not satisfy many supporters for very long; Grand Apartheid had to go. This explains the bitter war of words between Buthelezi and Mandela. Accusations against Pretoria for allegedly siding with Inkatha in an attempt to destroy the important A.N.C powerbase in Natal and Zululand is an interesting example. By September of 1990 the accusations had become more savage with A.N.C youth leaders in the townships claiming that the police were siding with Inkatha supporters in the hostels against local township residents, most of whom were A.N.C sympathises. The accusation that Inkatha and Pretoria were working together brought the following reaction from Chief Buthelezi:

'*Sadly the facts do not tally with the interpretation which Mr. Mandela places upon them, and he should seriously question those who give him the kind of background information which leads him to make this kind of serious error of judgement.*'(6)

At the heart of the bitter conflict lay the accusation of 'sell-out' directed at Buthelezi for his acceptance of limited government in his homeland of Kwa-Zulu. Those,like Andre Brink, who supported this viewpoint were open to heavy condemnation from Inkatha:

'*Only a self-opinionated writer like Andre Brink would turn into a divisive propaganda what would otherwise be an optimistic prelude to the release of Mr.Mandela....As a South African writer, Andre Brink should be aware of the fact that Kwa-Zulu, the traditional and political leadership of the Zulu nation, existed long before the Battle of Blood River between the Afrikaners and the Zulus in 1838.*

The succession of leadership from the Zulu Monarch,from his Prime Minister (in the present case Mangosuthu Buthelezi) and from the Amakhosi, has always been a matter for the Zulus as a nation and not the "tiny minority of the Zulu people" as Andre Brink arrogantly alleges.

Naturally there are Zulu people who will differ with the political views of Dr. Buthelezi and by doing so they are not at all renouncing their allegiance to their

nation of more than seven million Zulus and to which Dr.Mangosuthu Buthelezi is Prime Minister.'(7)

Whoever is to blame and whatever the causes, the results were brutal and tragically divisive. Inkatha, intended or not, are certainly doing the polices job for them as far as undermining black solidarity in some vital areas is concerned. Inkatha's 'christmas offensive' cost 11 lives. John Carlin, writing for 'The Independent', 19-12-89, from the tribal homeland of Kwa-Zulu wrote:

'At a higher level the conflict turns on a power struggle between those who seek to preserve the bond of Zulu tribalism through Inkatha, and those who aspire towards a modern, nationalist political system - the U.D.F. The Zulu chiefs and 'warlords' who help Mr. Buthelezi enforce his power stand to lose a lot in terms of wealth and privilege should the 20th century catch up with them.'(8)

Amongst the warring factions in Kwa-Zulu one woman in particular, a white middle aged woman, had first hand experience of the trouble. Creina Alcock has farmed for 14 years on the Kwa-Zulu border trying to reverse the tragic effects of the homeland policy. Rian Malan in his work *'My Traitor's Heart'* (Vintage Press, 1991. p.346) outlines the problem:

'In 1969, the apartheid government bowed to mounting pressure and outlawed labor farming, leaving hundreds of thousands of black labor tenants stranded inside 'white' South Africa, making a complete mess of the Grand Apartheid master plan. Pretoria decided that most of them had to go back to where they 'belonged, 'back to the tribal homelands.'

Quoting from an article in 'The Sunday Times',1-7-90:

'....in a recent newsletter to friends and supporters [Alcock] wrote: "I am sick of the smell of human blood and I sick of the smell of death and I am sick of writing around the edge of human experience, when there's been a subsidence inside my head from

living too close to violence.'"(9)

Andrew Hogg in his article went on to quote one acquaintance of Alcock's:

'She has gone further than anyone in attempting to alleviate the suffering in this country. While the rest of us always have a nice home to go back to, she lives in a rural community and suffers their hardships with them.'(10)

Going back to the call for 'universal suffrage on a common voter's role' as being the ultimate political goal we are also reminded that Mandela had to somehow reassure the white minority if he wanted his plans to succeed. He realised that this ultimate political goal represented the whites greatest fears. During the first press conference after his release he made the following statement:

'The A.N.C is very much concerned to address the question of the concern of whites over the demand of one-person-one-vote. They insist on structural guarantees - that is the whites - to ensure that realisation of this demand does not result in the domination of whites by blacks. We understand those feelings and the A.N.C is concerned to address that problem and to find a solution which will suit both the blacks and the whites of this country.' (11)

On the 17th March on B.B.C television he went on:

' *We have no blacks we have no whites we have just South Africans.*'

d) 'Real politik'. Walking the fine line between quelling white fears of 'revolutionary turmoil' while not alienating black workers and youth. Despite examples like the one above this became increasingly difficult as the year progressed; especially unpopular was the suspension of the armed struggle which the Youth movement claimed was putting them at the mercy of Inkatha supporters (A.N.C casualties had certainly been far higher than those incurred by Inkatha). On 14th March Joe Modise, - the commander of the A.N.C's military wing - warned that he thought the organisation

was being rushed into negotiations with the government.

e) Dealing with the right-wing back-lash. On 16th March it was announced that 'talks about talks' would begin on 11th April. The government by then was preparing what it claimed was a 'constitutional model'. Then the worst thing possible happened. At Sebokeng on 26th March the police opened fire on black demonstrators. They claimed that the crowd was chanting 'kill the Boers'. The result was 11 dead and 450 wounded. It also called uproar in the black community and as a result the talks were abandoned. Talks eventually began on 2nd May.

Between August 1st and September 16th over 760 deaths in the townships led Mandela to accuse De Klerk of not 'getting his own house in order' while De Klerk retaliated by accusing Mandela of not being able to constrain A.N.C activists in the townships.

The so called 'Peace Accord' on 29th January 1991 after a meeting between the ANC and Inkatha did at least signal well for the new year but the slaughter in the townships carried on leading in the end to the break down in negotiations for a new Constitution in June 1992. It had in recent years been the intention of extremist factions to disrupt negotiations by creating political rifts between the A.N.C and the National Party. Exactly what the right wing wanted. As early as March 1991 both the ANC and Inkatha admitted that black leaders in the townships were also to blame. A joint statement in March 1991 recognised that the violence in the townships was an 'indictment of black leadership in the country'. But the distrust that built up to the breakdown in negotiations and the General Strike called by the ANC in August 1992 was a consequence of the ANC's scepticism and distrust of the police leading to worrying statements from Mandela. Quote: *'in a situation where the government failed to apprehend these criminals, we have no option but to form defence committees'.*(12)

It is important here to reflect briefly on the historical origins of Apartheid so we can better understand the sometimes baffling behaviour of the Afrikaner community.

The Afrikaners see Apartheid as protecting them from being overrun by the black masses that surround them. They see themselves as Africans, though ironically the oppressive system that they have established 'separates' them from the rest of Africa. Most are quick to remind foreigners of a time in the not too distant past when they were 'poor whites' struggling in a country they regarded as their own. Victory in the 1948 election engineered by the Afrikaner secret society the 'Broederbond' gave them the power to change things forever. Verwoerd, the 'father of Apartheid' created the system intended to protect white supremacy for all time. The Boers have had a history of struggle against oppression. In 1881 the first 'Freedom war' saw the Boers temporarily regain independence for the Transvaal and in 1899 the second 'Freedom war' resulted in defeat and more than 20,000 Afrikaners dying in British concentration camps. During both colonial wars there were attempts by the Boers to shake off British colonial power. Significantly both rebellions were put down by Afrikaner governments. A Conservative party organised rally on 26th May 1990 saw 70,000 demonstrate against De Klerk's intended reforms but the A.W.B were not there in any great number and there was none of the rumoured 'call to arms'.

Dr.Andries Treurnicht almost echoed the A.N.C when he said, 'if you put a proud nation in chains, uprising against the law becomes its right'. The right are certainly backed themselves into a corner as any whites only vote was bound to favour the more moderate pro-De Klerk line, even if the right wing did manage an Afrikaans majority. Treurnicht repeated at the rally on the 26th that constitutional measures would be used not arms - but that line seems a dead end.

Back in November 1988 Barend Strydom, a former policeman, went on a lunatic rampage murdering seven blacks in Pretoria. He claimed to be the leader of an extremist right wing group calling themselves the 'white wolves'. On 4th July 1990 a bomb attack on the radical Afrikaans newspaper 'Vrye Weekblad' ('True Weekly') was followed by a telephone call from someone demanding the release of Strydom, claiming the existence of the 'White Wolves' and also demanding an early general election. Mr. Du Preez the editor had recently moved address and the telephone number was enlisted, suggesting the bombers had contacts within the Post Office or

Security Forces. Du Preez said: *'These guys mean business. They're organising.'*(13)

The murder of Sam Mabe a prominent black journalist in Jabulani, a suburb of Soweto, was unlikely to be the work of white extremists as they do not usually enter the townships. The murder did however ominously recall the message from the bomber of the 'Vrye Weekblad' that this was 'only the beginning'. The A.W.B denied responsibility calling it the work of 'cowardly terrorists' though they did certainly have reason enough to attack the office. David Beresford reminded us:

'Vrye Weekblad recently won publicity for disclosures about an alleged plot by members of the neo-nazi Afrikaner 'Weerstandsbeweging' (A.W.B) to assassinate President F.W de Klerk and the A.N.C deputy president, Nelson Mandela, after his present world tour.' (14)

On 7th July 1990 a bomb went off in a Johannesburg bus terminus injuring 27 people. For the first time it was totally indiscriminate; this was the eighth bomb blast since the 23rd June though previous targets had been inanimate like offices of the National and Liberal Democratic Parties and on the 4th July 'Vrye Weekblad'. Also on the 6th July the 'Daily Mail' which is politically to the left received two telephone bomb threats.

By late August there were rumours of a 'hidden hand' at work, directing for example the brutal and totally indiscriminate murders on the trains that were taking place during the second half of that year. The possibility that renegade members of the S.A.D.F's recently disbanded 'dirty tricks' Civil Co-operation Bureau were at work intent on destroying negotiations and thus reform could have been constued as a tactical manoeuvre. It would certainly have explained the indiscriminate nature of the attacks. In one incident on a comuter train at the end of the second week of September 26 people were hacked to death and 100 injured in an horrific massacre. It was the calls by the A.N.C to put an end to the township violence which led him to send the troops in. Although Mandela claimed that De Klerk's *'Operation Iron Fist'* was not a solution to the problem it was popular in the townships and did at least

temporarily put an end to the troubles in some areas. The army were more popular in the townships than the police who were often accused of siding with Inkatha.

Chris Hani (Chief of Staff of '*Umkhonto we Sizwe*' the military wing of the A.N.C before his murder by white extremists in April 1993.) said somewhat euphemistically that he was 'worried' about police failures to arrest right wing extremists. Unofficially they suspected involvement within the security forces. One notable example was Piet Rudolf suspected of being involved in the theft of large quantities of arms from a Pretoria air base in May 1990. Rudolf became a symbol to the right wing - especially the A.W.B - of the white struggle against those who were betraying them. When he went on hunger strike it seemed possible that the right wing may have a martyr to help their cause. However, the hunger strike came to an end and Rudolf denounced the right wing. There now existed paranoia about the extent to which organisations like the A.W.B had been infiltrated by the security forces and what information they had extracted from captured activists like Rudolf and others.

By trying to undermine the ANC the government hoped to destroy the party's election hopes. By July 1991 allegations of SADF involvement in township violence and claims that the government had been secretly funding Inkatha was evidence that the policy was in serious danger of backfiring. The result was that an increasingly nervous white electorate began to criticise De Klerk's credibility. In order to regain their confidence in the face of rumours of a government backed 'dirty tricks' campaign De Klerk needed to show the electorate that he was in charge and not the puppet of the rumoured 'hidden hand' written of in the English press in South Africa. As for the black majority, claims were being made that the president was not ' the last great liberal' but a double dealer like Botha - one of the old school of South African politicians. For a while it appeared that De Klerk was trapped; if he took no action he would be confirming the worst fears of the pro-reform lobby but if he was to take action then it would be an admittance of Security Force involvement at the very highest level. Action would confirm allegations, so far uncorroborated, of a 'third force' or 'hidden hand' at work in the black townships. Dr. Stals a respected technocrat, shocked analysts at a conference organised by the Institute for Democratic

Alternatives for South Africa in Italy in April 1991. Dr. Stals warned that if the three factors he blamed for the low economic growth rate - political uncertainty, social and industrial unrest and economic sanctions - were not solved then South Africa would be ungovernable by 1995.

To make matters worse 'The City Press' newspaper acquired a receipt for the purchase of guns, dated March 1988 putting further weight behind allegations of Security Force involvement in township violence. The involvement of a senior Pietermaritzburg security policeman seemed to confirm collusion between the Security Forces and Inkatha was taking place at the very highest level. On 18th July Adraan Vlok was finally forced to concede that transactions had indeed taken place. The ensuing scandal that the press termed 'Inkatha-Gate' I believe gave De Klerk the opportunity to put his own house in order. On 29th July De Klerk made it clear that he was still in charge of the Party and thus policy and not the hard-liners on the right. General Malan, Defence minister under P.W Botha was replaced by the moderate Roelf Meyer - a man popular with the ANC, and Adraan Vlok, Minister of Law and Order (and so head of the South African Police) by Hernus Kriel, untainted by previous involvement with the Security Forces and tough enough to face up to the right wing elements standing in the way of reform.

Not surprisingly 'Inkatha-Gate' led to the defection of Security Branch officers afraid of the repercussions of the inevitable investigations. Ironically one, Captain Coetzee, survived in exile under the protection of the ANC, the very people he was trained to kill. Interestingly, Coetzee's evidence argued that the 'third force' was a loose alliance between the dirty tricks departments of the military and the police, involving equipment and personnel from South Africa's Front-Line wars, notably Rhodesia, Mozambique and Namibia. The strategy based on that used by the Security Forces against SWAPO, is one of undermining the enemy and boosting political opponents in order to prevent that enemy from gaining the political initiative in any election. Coetzee also insisted that the level of transactions between the Security Forces and Inkatha - single payments of up to R150'000 - would have required authorization from the Minister himself. The Johannesburg 'Weekly Mail' claimed Inkatha and

UWUSA (United Workers Union of South Africa) had received more than $600,000. The Johannesburg based Independent Board of Inquiry into Informal Repression released a study at the beginning of August alleging 29 separate cases of "collusion between Inkatha and the South African police", in which at least 290 people were killed.

Somewhat ominously Coetzee dismissed the naivety of replacing Vlok with Kriel. He suggested that Kriel will himself become totally dependent on the 'rotten clique' which runs what Coetzee termed South Africa's 'security culture'. It is important here that it is made clear how this frightening situation had come about. The Afrikaner had put their complete trust in the Government to rule the country and to protect their interests. South Africa's 'Security Culture' was a result of several factors. Firstly, the almost self-willed myopia which entrusts power in the hands of the few who act behind closed doors so as not to upset the conscience of the ordinary God fearing Afrikaner. Secondly, the collective fear of, *'swart gevaar'* (black peril) which results in a violent reaction. And thirdly, the resultant secrecy - more a product of bad conscience than anything else - which enables corruption to thrive unchecked.

In January 1992 further investigations by the 'Weekly Mail' revealed further damming evidence against the Security Forces. It published claims that they personally trained black gangs to carry out 'terrorist' acts. One particular gang, called the Black Cats, operating in the Eastern Transvaal township of Wesselton, were sent to a secret camp in northern Natal run by the South African military, for training in the use of arms. The camp was set up by South African military intelligence in collaboration with Chief Buthelezi's Kwa-Zulu administration.

That the National Party still hoped to win a future election there was no doubt. In November 1990 at a by-election campaign rally in the Johannesburg suburb of Randburg, De Klerk told followers "*we plan to be part of the majority winning the first election*". In July 1991 Pik Botha the foreign minister said in an interview with Time magazine: "*we hope to attract black support on the basis of our principles. Perhaps at first there will be a psychological barrier to cross*". The massive support

for the General Strike a year later seemed to suggest that either the foreign minister was living on another planet or he and his party seriously miscalculated the effects of the 'dirty tricks' campaign waged since Mandela's release.

Evidence that the National Party were quickly losing the initiative came with the draft for a non-racial constitution presented in September 1991. The ANC rejected it because it would leave the option for a minority group to consistently veto attempts to introduce new legislation. Under De Klerk's proposal the Presidency would have been scrapped in favour of an executive made up of between 3 and 5 members. Below the executive there would have been two other houses with the power to block legislation. The first house would be elected by universal franchise on proportional representation - this house would, consequently, have a large black majority. The second house was designed to protect minority interests and the house would have the right to veto. Each party would be allowed a limited number of seats. Each party receiving more than 10% of the vote would receive the same number of seats. Even if the ANC were to receive over half the votes it would still not command a majority in the house. In addition the system would be weighted in favour of the white electorate permitting only property owners to vote for a specified number of seats in local government, while everyone could vote for other seats. Few blacks - even though legally able to by mid-91 - would have the economic possibility of moving out of the townships to qualify for the vote. Alliances would be forced upon parties wishing to win through new legislation.

In response to the attempt to make power sharing obligatory the ANC said: *"coalition governments are formed voluntarily. Yet the South African government wants to make coalition government a constitutional principle, together with measures to paralyse any attempts by the party with the most votes to use its strengths for social reconstruction."*(15)

As the National party and the ANC drifted further apart - both De Klerk and Mandela walking on very thin ice to keep the support of the more extreme factions within their parties - the formation of a Patriotic Front alliance by over 70 organisations,

including rather ominously the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress in late October signalled the growing impatience of the black majority. A two day strike in early November brought the country to a virtual standstill and should have forewarned the National Party of the support a General Strike would have the following year.

South African Constitutional negotiations eventually began in December 1991, initially termed a Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). Almost immediately the issue of who was to blame for the violence in the townships threatened to halt negotiations. De Klerk demanded the disbandonment of Umkhonto We Sizwe while Mandela accused the National Party of duplicity; of playing a "double game".

Despite promising wavering conservatives that the possibility of a white homeland could be discussed at Codesa De Klerk's popularity continued to fall during the first few months of 1992. Treunicht's Conservative Party were claiming they had 50% backing from the white electorate. More ominous were the rumblings of discontent in the army. The 'end conscription campaign' confidently predicted in a letter to Roelf Meyer, the new defence minister, in January that they expected at least 50% of those called up for service to ignore or defy the call up. Most seriously for the National Party was that it indicated that it was not simply the white English speaking liberals but previously loyal Afrikaners who were among the 'refuseniks'.

Colonel Jan Breytenbach accused the defence minister of destroying 'the honour, pride and esprit de corps" of the defence forces. With the A.W.B preparing for civil war and rumours of a military coup De Klerk faced his greatest test. Psychologists talked of a mass 'psychosis' as some whites went on the rampage killing blacks indiscriminately; in Ladysmith for example a white man killed 9 and injured 19. To add to De Klerk's increasing problems a by-election result in February in Potchefstroom - where De Klerk went to University and where he met his wife - saw the Nationalist M.P ousted in favour of the Conservative candidate. However, it is possible with hindsight to view such blows as ultimately working in De Klerk's favour. After all Inkatha-Gate provided him with the opportunity to replace Malan

and Vlok. Zach de Beer leader of the liberal white Democratic party made the point: 'the better the Conservative party looks, the more urgent it is to get on with reforms'. De Klerk was very much aware that the majority of whites realised that reform had to continue and that a return to Verwoerdian days that the AWB called for was neither practical nor desirable.

It was then a calculated gamble to call a whites only Referendum on 17 March not simply the act of a desperate man. For most whites a protest vote in a by-election in Ptotchefstroom was explainable but a Conservative party government was an altogether more frightening prospect. As Allister Spark's commented in the Observer, 23-2-92:

'By putting his own leadership on the line, saying he will resign and call an election if he loses, De Klerk shifts the focus from uncertainties about where he is leading the country to a Doomsday scenario of where Dr. Treunicht would lead the country if he became President.'(16)

The white electorate were asked to respond with either a 'yes' or a 'no' to the following carefully worded question:

'Do you support continuation of the reform process which the State President began on February 1990, and which is aimed at a new constitution through negotiation?'

Possibly De Klerk had at the back of his mind the memory of the 1948 election. Smuts and the United party attacked the Nationalists, then under Malan, for having Nazi links and warned the electorate that a vote for the opposition could lead to economic disaster. The National party now launched these same accusations against the Conservative party. Smuts was also accused of selling out to the blacks and Smuts like de Klerk warned his supporters against "complacency" when it came to the election. Smuts, against all reckoning, lost. Nelson Mandela's warning that if there was a Conservative victory then "civil war is unavoidable" probably shook any complacency out of National party supporters as did increasing incidents of right

wing activity. In one act of right wing violence a church was burnt down and eight children died. The *Wit Wolwe* (White Wolves) claimed responsibility.

The outcome of the vote was even better than the National party could have hoped for. 68.6% voted 'yes' in an 85.08% turnout of the white electorate. Analysts worked out that 62% of Afrikaners participating voted 'yes', and 79% of English speakers. only one of the 15 regions - Pietersburg - voted 'no' and then only by 49,820 votes to 37,612.

From June 1992 to September 1994: New Constitution or Civil War.

On the 23rd June Constitutional Talks were broken off by the A.N.C and eight allied political organisations. At the heart of the dispute lay the argument over the size of the majority required to adopt the new constitution and what Mandela claimed was the 'failure' or the government to bring an end to the black-on-black violence. The violence itself was forcing Mandela to become more extreme in his dealings with the National government in order to placate an increasingly vociferous youth organisation. In an increasingly anarchic show of their discontent with the ANC leadership the youth became increasingly alienated from the moderate centre of the party. The leaders of the youth league were also aware of the influence they could have over the leadership battle at executive level. By supporting Thabo Mbeki, the ANC's speaker on foreign affairs against Cyril Ramaphosa, the Secretary General and presumed successor, the youth league ensured that they remained a thorn in the side of the ANC leadership. However the leadership must also have been aware that it could be argued that they created the problem in the first place. As I argue in my analysis of J.M. Coetzee's novel '*Age of Iron*' there is a whole generation of uneducated and unemployable young blacks in the black townships who have known nothing but the struggle. It was they that supported the schools boycotts during the late 70's and 80's. Unfortunately the success of the action resulted in a more long term sacrifice for those who participated. Any future policies concerning a new South Africa will have to confront this complex problem. Secondly, the effectiveness of the Black Consciousness Movement to raise the consciousness of the young blacks

through the teaching of Steve Biko had not been adequately supported by an educational training programme to re-socialise the activists once the struggle was over. Ironically the struggle has created a 'separated' group who see no place for the white in a new South Africa. Many of the gangs in the townships had become so powerful they had all but taken over many locations creating a climate of fear. Most alarmingly still was the rejection of authority - whether black or white.

It is essential that Mandela then must be seen to be aggressive in his dealings with the National Party. The youth organisation labelled Ramaphosa a 'sell-out' - certainly an unfair label but also a warning to the elderly men in the ANC Executive. The National Government stubbornly held out for a 75% majority believing that it could muster 25% blocking vote. Under pressure the ANC agreed to 70% but when the National Party continued to push for an even greater majority they reverted in disgust back to their original demand of only two thirds. The decision to call a week of action was taken after the Boipatong massacre finally exacerbated ANC patience. It was rumoured that police in armoured vehicles assisted the Inkatha attackers on 17th June during which 41 died. Mandela was having increasing problems controlling the more extreme factions within the organisation, especially amongst the youth. Responding on television to accusations that 'bully-boys' had been forcing people to take part in the week of action Mandela explained the ANC violence as follows:

'The reasons why the youth have got completely out of hand is that they are being attacked and there is no vissable sign that we a are defending them.'

It was realised also by the Executive that a week of action would put further pressure on an economy in crisis. Nothing threatens democracy more that economic instability. The government had made several concessions before the week of action commenced. As follows:

1) Disbanding three of the more controversial security service units. All three security units were made up of 'foreign' nationals. Two battalions of Angolan and Namibian troops as well as the Koevoet police unit were reintegrated into the security

forces. Much suspicion had been levelled at these units over the controversial 'hidden hand' discussed earlier in this chapter. However, one of the major problems involved the Kwazulu police force. The ANC repeatedly accused them of being pro-Inkatha and being responsible for the murder of ANC activists and sympathises. The phrase 'private army' was used when talking about the relationship between the police and Inkatha. On the 6th August in Cape Town Bishop Tutu said:

'*We urgently need a professional police force which is apolitical and neutral and which acts as a peace-keeping force and law enforcement agency.*'

Investigations into the Boipatong massacre of 17th June which the ANC expected would show police involvement in the slaughter were foiled when Sgt O'Reilly told Justice Richard Goldstone that she had accidentally erased 13 hours' worth of tape recordings. The recordings were of police radio transmissions before, during and after the massacre.

2) Reforming the migrant worker hostels. This would actually eventually lead to the phasing out of all migrant hostels. The Goldshone commission set up to investigate political violence would look at policy on the future of the hostels. This 'hostels' had become the centre of much attention during the period 1990 to 1993. Migrant workers living in the hostels were of predominantly Zulu extraction and the majority of them were Inkatha supporters. Located in the midst of traditionally ANC areas the hostels had become 'fortresses' from where Inkatha could strike at the very heart of the A.N.C and then argue that their hands were clean and it merely exemplified the ANC's failure to control its own people. The claim that liaison between sectors of the security forces and Inkatha becomes the more credible if the following are considered.

Firstly, with and election to be called sometime before September 1994 the ANC looked almost certain to win a landslide victory. One of the greatest reasons for this popularity was that the majority of blacks saw the ANC as being the only party that could successfully negotiate a new constitution and run the country after the end of

white minority rule. If the ANC Executive could be shown to have lost control of more extreme elements within the party then many voters may switch allegiances. There could only be two viable options, either Inkatha or the National party. The latter was running a vigorous campaign at the time to draw blacks into the party and be seen as the party for all South Africans. It seriously believed it could win an election despite association with the oppression of Apartheid. Secondly, Inkatha had problems of their own. Politically very traditional in organisation, maintaining much of its historic tribal traditions - in fact positively promoting them - Inkatha's leadership would be threatened by a more democratic approach to political power broking. It may also be considered that the Zulus are a proud race and would find playing a secondary role in a unified, integrated South Africa humiliating.

3) Greater controls over the carrying of weapons by all groups (but especially aimed at the Zulu traditional weapons). When De Klerk and Mandela met at the end of September 1992 the government did agree to the banning of all weapons in public places. Mallaby argues in his book *'After Apartheid'* that there is a link between De Klerk's complacency in 1992 and his attitude towards Inkatha:

'...De Klerk should have reined in Inkatha's thugs by policing the mainly Zulu workers hostels more thoroughly. He should also have enforced the ban on 'traditional' Zulu weapons, rather than turning a blind eye...'(17)

Although I agree with the need for such enforcement I'm not at all convinced that De Klerk did not have ulterior motives for allowing Inkatha to continue terrorising ANC supporters. Certainly De Klerk wished for a peaceful transition but he also still hoped for power sharing under the new constitution. A weakened ANC would be easier to negotiate with than a strong one. Inkatha-Gate back in July 1991 had revealed how the security forces had financed Inkatha rallies to the total of R,250,000, with a separate sum or R.1.5 million going to the pro-Inkatha United Workers Union of South Africa.

4) United Nations monitoring of the week of action. A ten-strong team led by

Hisham Omayad, the U.N's Director of Political Affairs in New York. Still the week commencing Monday 3rd August 1992 the week of action began. Considering the support for the campaign the week of action went very peacefully. The Monday and Tuesday General strike had approximately the following regional support:

95% - Johannesburg area.

75% - Durban area.

50% - Cape area

On day three possibly one of the most encouraging events took place. A crowd of 70,000 poured into Pretoria to hear Mandela speak about the week of action. Pretoria is the heart of Afrikanerdom and yet the whole rally passed off almost without incident. Any pessimists who were thinking that moderate voices in the ANC were being drowned out by the extremists would have been both greatly surprised and relieved. The voice of moderation had also found another powerful voice from an unlikely corner. As I mentioned previously Chris Hani was former chief-of-staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe and had served for a time in Rhodesia. He was a man whose courage could not be disputed and so when Hani called for peace it carried tremendous weight. His death at the hands of a white gunman on 10th April 1993 was not just a terrible blow to the ANC but also to the voice of moderation. During the week Mandela spelled out ANC demands before negotiations would recommence:measures to curb political violence, clear moves towards an interim government and an elected constituent assembly.

It had been De Klerk's intention to get negotiations started again in Pretoria in September. The following events brought to the surface just how complex and sensitive the political situation had become. The ANC had planned a peaceful march on Bisho, the capitol of Ciskei. Ciskei being one of nine self-governing homelands that sympathised with Buthelezi's stand against Pretoria and the ANC to try and maintain their independence. Right wing elements within the Security Forces saw with these unstable puppet dictatorships the possibility for destabilising the ANC or at least undermining their efforts to win a future election. Five years before South African troops had intervened on a large scale to put down a coup attempt in

Mmbatho, the Bophuthatswana capitol. This time the 50,000 strong crowd were met by the armed forces of the Ciskei, 43 people died and nearly 200 were injured. The marchers were demanding the removal of Brigadier Gqozo who had seized power two years previously; (informed critics claim with the help of the South African Security Forces.) However it was not just Gqozo against which they marched but the whole homelands policy, a relic of Grand Apartheid. Again the political analyst could give the benefit of the doubt to De Klerk. The march was certainly provocative and Gqozo had made it quite clear that he would not allow his authority to be challenged in any way. However it also became evident that elements within the Security Forces had encouraged Gqozo to feel that his life was threatened. With Gqozo at his most vunerable he became an easy target for Security Force manipulation. At the same time the ANC has good reason to believe that the march could go ahead in relative safety - messages received suggested very strongly that Gqozo would not intervene. When Gqozo's troops did open fire the SADF were conveniently miles away. The lack of SADF surveillance for such a large gathering was unprecedented. The backlash was certainly severe but the SADF maintained that it was the ANC who were to blame for provoking Gqozo. The aftermath actually resulted in bringing the two sides back around the conference table as internal and international pressures to restore peace increased. De Klerk never had any intention of allowing the ten homelands to remain 'independent' in any case. By the beginning of April 1993 secret talks were underway to reincorporate the homelands back into South Africa, the final edifice of Grand Apartheid levelled. With Gqozo now friendless in South Africa Ciskei would be unlikely to resist.

It was now September 1992 and the ANC and the government had not been involved in any proper negotiations since July. What followed became termed as the 'talk about talks', a tentative step by step move towards a summit. Initial moves were made between ANC general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa, and the Constitutional Development Minister, Roelf Meyer. Throughout this period violence continued to escalate between groups supporting the ANC and groups supporting Inkatha. The worst of the trouble continued to be in the Natal highlands and along the Transkei border. Here the ANC had made serious inroads into Inkatha loyalties among the

Zulu. It was here that the fighting was most bitter, where neighbour attacked neighbour.

When the two leaders did meet again only small steps were made - banning the carrying of weapons at rallies, release of all remaining political prisoners - but none on the fundamental questions concerning the size of vote needed to carry a new constitution through parliament were resolved. De Klerk continued to pontificate 'power sharing' while on the other side the ANC called for 'majority rule'. As 1992 neared an end De Klerk, hounded by critics from the right who accused him of being a 'sell out', became increasingly obstructive. In an interview with The Times, 15-11-92 De Klerk spelt out what he claimed were his 'fundamental requirements'. He said they would include the installation of a government of national unity whoever won a multi-racial election; the introduction of a bill of rights to protect minorities and individuals; and provision for strong regional government. The ANC would also have to transform itself into a political party, declare the armed struggle over (it is merely suspended so far) and abandon its armed wing. Even more threateningly De Klerk suggested that he would use new legislation to keep him in office beyond March 1995 despite existing legislation requiring a whites only general election well before that date.

Although alarming to hear much of this should be taken as political rhetoric as well as manoeuvering. Rhetoric is unavoidable due to the complexities of the present climate. Both men were under tremendous pressure from more extreme factions within their respective organisations and had to be seen to be being determined to get the best deal for their side. It may also have been true to say that De Klerk may well have allowed himself to become a little complacent. His policies over the preceding two years had been warmly received both inside and outside South Africa and he may have temporarily overestimated the strength of his own position. As for the ANC, a number of key members had already expressed concern about how fast the changes were coming about. The speed at which change was coming about was another factor to be considered. There was always the worry that the pace of change itself may get out of control and events run away with those responsible for negotiating a peaceful

transition. Chris Hani pointed out in July:

'There was a gap in perceptions between the leadership and the people on the ground. We began to feel we had moved too fast ahead of the people. If we had not called a stop to (negotiations), the net result would have been growing disaffection and even alienation (from the ANC).' (18)

They were in agreement over a number of key issues already. Firstly and most importantly was the fact that whatever they decided they realised that they had to work together or South Africa had little future. The week of action had the double edged character that it highlighted the frailty of the economy. Both the ANC and the National party did not have far to look if they wanted examples of post-independence economic collapse. In helping to destroy the economies of front line states - Mozambique and Namibia especially - South Africans more than anyone else should realise just how frail economic structures are. Devolution of power from central government to the provinces, proportional representation, separation of powers and a bill of rights were all issues upon which they had agreed. By the middle of February the results of secret talks were suddenly released and several days later one of the main stumbling blocks, namely Buthelezi's intransigence, was overcome when the Zulu chief announced that he would join in the planned all-party negotiations.

By the end of February 1993 it was possible to map ut a possible scenario leading to transition.

1: March/April - Multi-party Negotiations Planning Conference.

2: April/May - Multi-party Conference. After Codesa was aborted in July the previous year Inkatha insisted that negotiations start from scratch while the ANC believe they should continue from where they left off. The final aim will be to decide on a process leading to non-racial elections and the adoption of a final constitution.

3: June/August - Parliament passes legislation for the creation of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC). What was still an issue was exactly how powerful this TEC would be

4: September/December - New non-racial constitution passed by present parliament providing for non-racial elections and the creation of a constituent assembly.

5: January/April 1994 - constituent assembly elected as a 'constitution-making body' and parliament. There is agreement that the 'body' will be 400-strong within a single chamber comprising 200 members elected on regional lists and 200 on a national list.

6: 1994/1999 - coalition government of national unity made up of parties winning more than a minimum number of seats in the elections. Threshold undecided; 5%, 10% or 15% of seats. It is here that the greatest controversy exists with the government demanding that all decision making is done through consensus while the ANC wants an executive president who can make decisions on 'specified matters' without the interference of the multi-party cabinet.

7: 2000 - Majority rule.

The constant procrastination on the part of the National party could be seen cynically. Bishop Tutu expressed it wittily: 'In this county we have so many people who want to change so long as things remain the same'. In actual fact it is the intergration of the Afrikaner into the market place which has undermined his bullish fight for cultural independence. The modern business person requires economic stability to protect his investments. Apartheid was an economic non-starter going against all the logic of economic good sense. Peaceful transition over to any system which maintains the protection of their assets and thus their economic privileges is the priority. There is even an acceptance amongst most urban whites that they will have to foot much of the cost of transition and the rebuilding of a new South Africa. The average white

has a great deal to lose and as the 150.000 emigrant Rhodesians found out at the beginning of the previous decade, they can't expect to lead a similar lifestyle anywhere else. The baby white is born in a well equipped, ultra-modern hospital, sent to a private school with sprawling playing fields and well stocked laboratories. University will probably follow and then a job is almost guaranteed. Thereafter; a good wage, a big house, with the statutory swimming pool, in a leafy white suburb.

The historical events are of course subject to selection, emphasis and interpretation and the resultant subjectivity within the cultural environment leads to the creation of mythology. Historical events act as points of reference for subsequent generations as these points of reference become sedimented into ideologies and work as an axis for the demythologising work of present day creative writers. We now go on to analyse the work of Andre Brink and J. M. Coetzee paying close attention to what we have learnt from the three history chapters.

NOTES

CHAPTER THREE

1. Address to rally. Cape Town, 11th February 1990.
2. Nadine Gordimer, *The Independent*, Sunday 4th February 1990.
3. ibid. Sunday 4th February 1990.
4. Bishop Tutu, *Frontline* . (Johannesburg. Vol.2, No.5, April 1982).
5. Christopher Hope, *Black Swan* . (Frank Delaney:Hutchinson 1987) p.5.
6. Chief Buthelezi, *The Daily Mail*, Saturday 17th February 1990.
7. B.M.Skosana, Permanent Representative, Inkatha, London. *The Independent,* 4th February 1990.
8. John Carlin, *The Independent*, 19th December 1989.
9. Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart.* (Vintage Press 1991) p.346.
10. Andrew Hogg, *The Sunday Times*, 1st July 1990.
11. Nelson Mandela, *The Independent,* 13th February 1990.
12. Nelson Mandela, *The Independent*, 7th August 1992.
13. Du Preez, *The Guardian*, 5th July 1990.
14. David Beresford, *The Guardian,* 5th July 1990.
15. ANC spokesperson, *The Guardian*, 5th July 1991
16. Allister Sparks, *The Observer*, 23rd February 1992.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Work of Andre Brink

Andre Brink was born in a small village in South Africa in 1935. Since 1961 he has been lecturing in modern literature and drama at Rhodes University where he is now Associate Professor.

He is the author of *'Looking on Darkness'*, a novel which stirred up intense controversy when first published in South Africa in 1973, An *'Instant in the Wind'*, *'Rumours of Rain'* and *'A Dry White Season'*. He was awarded the most important South African literary prize, the C.N.A. prize, twice- the only author to receive it both for Afrikaans and English work. In 1980 he received the Martin Luther King Memorial prize and was twice the runner up for the Booker prize. Andre Brink is married and has four children and lives in Grahamstown.

Andre Brink's novel, originally in Afrikaans titled *'Kennis Van Die'* (Looking on Darkness) was banned in 1974 and was the very first Afrikaans novel to meet this fate. The English translation was also banned. The 1960's saw a sudden eruption of talent, called the Sestigers (sixtiers), young Afrikaans writers like Andre Brink, Jan Rabie, Etienne Leroux and Breyten Breytenbach. With them came the censor. As Brink writes in his essay *'The Failure of Censorship'*(From Index on Censorship in 1980).

' the fact that we dared to question traditional religious, moral and aesthetic values of Afrekanerdom implied the rejection of accepted authority.....however their (the authorities) attempts to discredit us in the eyes of potential readers backfired because of the surge of enthusiasm with which especially the younger generation accepted these works. (even if, in the party-political field, many of these readers still supported the government.)'(1)

Censorship itself may be either a total ban or a 'temporary' embargo (up to six months - in the hope that demand for the book will decline.) However the 'official' censor creates a climate of fear which, as Brink describes;

'One's regular publisher turns down a book for fear of a possible ban; a printer

refuses to print a novel for fear of being implicated in case it is banned; booksellers decline to buy stocks of 'dubious' titles. (And in the long run, the censor hopes, the writer himself, especially if he is young and vulnerable and eager to see himself in print, may start doing the censor's dirty work for him.)'(2)

However Brink feels the censor in South Africa has failed and gives the following reasons.

1) Censorship aims to inhibit written opposition to the system. This has only been partially effective against white writers. There has been a flood of black writing since the 1960's distributed in a number of ways before the ban became effective.

Brink claims his books sell far better after a ban is put into effect.

The need to write both in your own language and be translated in English, originally as a matter of literary survival, opens the work to a wider audience and lends itself to publication abroad. Awareness abroad has grown to a large extent simply because of censorship and the publicity it gives.

2)The isolation of writers from one another through fear and intimidation. In fact the opposite has happened. The Soweto-based PEN centre is proof of the increasingly strong ties between writers of different races.

3) Censorship attempts to alienate reader and writer from each other. Failure to do this is proved by an increase in demand for books.

Brink writes: *'When Kennis van die Land was banned the public rallied by collecting thousands of pounds (most of it contributed in sums of two or three pounds by anonymous donors, 'ordinary' readers) in order to fight the ban in the courts.'*

4) Censorship attempts to reduce writers to impotence. The variety of writers organisations prove the failure of this aim. eg.the money raised to fight the ban on

Kennis van die Land was used to launch a small private publishing enterprise called *'Taurus'*. Two thousand copies of *'A Dry White Season'* were printed at Taurus before the authorities could implement a ban thus foiling the authorities again.

5) *'Censorship is based on the concern to impare an ideology at the expense of the free circulation of ideas.'* This has worked to a large degree and the writers aim is to awaken the consciousness in a manner that will pressure change and stimulate positive responses against Apartheid.

6) 'Censorship aims at maintaining the unity of the 'system'.' In fact censorship creates division amongst groups within the system who disagree on the morality and the aesthetics of banning works.(3)

Before discussing the work of Andre Brink it is necessary to place the text within its context. Brink's work, as with Nadine Gordimer's, is concerned with the contemporary historical political situation and his black characters are not the passive victims rescued by generous kindly whites that had previously dominated white narratives. This change was very much in response to what was happening 'out there' in the real world. The late sixties and seventies saw the rise of a black intellectualism which rejected the intervention of white liberals and created a black aesthetic which challenged the white monopoly. For a more detailed reference refer to the beginning of chapter two. It became evident that if Afrikaner writers were not to be out flanked then their narratives must adjust accordingly.

The Afrikaner who rejected apartheid and fought for black liberation from the white oligarchy was still a member of the privileged minority. There was therefore a change in attack. As black writers struggled to raise the consciousness of other blacks, Afrikaner writers struggled to raise the consciousness of the Afrikaner minority. All whites were guilty, all implicated in the atrocities carried out in their name. As Milan Kundera asks:

'Is a fool on the throne relieved of all responsibility merely because he is a fool?'

Stephen Biko was the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement now called 'The Azanian People's Organization' and led by Pandelani Nefolovhodwe which aims to raise black consciousness by encouraging black development programmes and discouraging interference from white liberals. The organisation is especially opposed to the arrogant assumption by some white activists that they should, because of their colour, take leadership in the freedom struggle. Biko established an independent black student union for precisely this reason - not only was the official student union not 'listening' to black demands it was all too willing to reach compromises on basic demands. The slogan 'black is beautiful' was as much a part of their philosophy as that of Malcolm X. and the American Black Consciousness Movement. The film '*Cry Freedom*' popularised the events immediately before and after the tragic death in police custody of Stephen Biko. Its central character is not in fact Biko but a newspaper editor Donald Woods. It is his conversations with Biko and his conversion to the black struggle that is the central theme.(4)

Stephen Biko made it quite clear that the white liberal was not wanted in the black struggle, that despite their often good intentions their actions often had the opposite of the desired affect; of creating a smoke screen of reform enough to ease international demands for reform but in fact changing little in reality. In his essay '*Black Souls in White Skins?*' Biko wrote scathingly of the white liberal:

'*They vacillate between the two worlds ,verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully, while skilfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive pool of white privileges.*'(5)

In fact Biko advised liberals 'to leave blacks to take care of their own business' and to concentrate their efforts on fighting the 'white racism' within their own ranks. In Breyten Breytenbach's frightening autobiographiical narrative '*The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist*' the narrator speaks directly to his investigator and we the reader become the omniscient observer:

'*But what does one do if you are white, if in fact you are part of the privileged*

minority in power? When you come in revolt against such a system, how do you oppose it effectively? One of the effects - and perhaps it was intended to be so - of Apartheid has been that it has splintered the opposition to the system. The gulf between black and white or between between whites and all the others is so enormous that in fact we are strangers to one another. The only common ground we share is Apartheid. But; we interpret that ground differently. We are conditioned, each in his own way, by the privileges and the iniquities of the system. To pretend differently would be taking and mistaking ones desires for reality.'(6)

I would like briefly to examine the credibility of the white liberal and the quite real terror of the no-mans land that he may have found himself in. For many whites are, often almost unintentionally drawn into the world of ruthless sadistic barbarity that is the State's security network; a world almost surreal in nature such that they must feel themselves suddenly thrown into Dante's '*Inferno*'.(7)

In South Africa the label 'White Liberal' has come to take on rather negative connotations. An individual whose conscience has been moved to the extent that he feels compelled to act in accordance to the injustice he has witnessed. He makes then a sacrifice but, many blacks argue, only a superficial and temporary one (they can always return to the white world when they have had enough) and the liberal often manages to retain his white privileges and continue being 'liberal' while assuming an air of superiority over those he claims to be helping. There are questions as to his sincerity and his motives; he has in one way set himself up as another 'baas', as a paternal shield protecting the helpless black from the ruthless sysem that he is not responsible for the existence of. The white liberal now has a clear conscience, he has done his part. There is no more he can do.

His sacrifice may well be small indeed. The authorities aware of the liberal suburbs of Johannesburg seem content to allow them to hold their meetings, to arrange peaceful demonstrations, to raise money for black charities and to campaign for the release of political prisoners. Such are containable. The police know who, where and when; the why they also claim to understand: this is an expected reaction from this

group of middle class, white English speakers; self-righteous, misinformed, naive and totally ineffectual. If they get a little too big for their boots then a severe warning is usually enough to bring them back into line. They have too much to lose to simply throw it away for nothing. You would have to be mad!

Are Brink's fictional liberals like this? Ben du Toit, Brink's fictional hero in '*A Dry White Season*' is not English he is Afrikaans. He starts his adventure happily married with two children. He is well employed as a history teacher (with the symbolic value attached to the role) of a white Afrikaans boys school. He has no intention of rebelling - in fact he sees apartheid as a necessary evil. He is proud to be an Afrikaner. He is not a white liberal he is a stalwart of white Afrikanerdom.

Ben du Toit is an aging and respected teacher who has never before questioned the authorities which maintain Apartheid in South Africa. Gorden Ngubene is a cleaner at the school where Ben teaches and Ben has been helping Gordon pay for his son's education - a philanthropic gesture not uncommon amongst the liberal white minority and despised by black activists as merely a way to appease their guilty conscience. The year is 1976 and the message from B.C.M to boycott the teaching of Afrikaans in black schools is causing increased unrest in the townships. The usual methods for suppressing unrest used by the police in the townships are quickly proving themselves to be terribly inadequate. Internal Security attempts to prevent the press from exposing horrific police brutality prove futile. Jonathan, Gordon's son, goes missing and the police inform the parents that he was shot during the riots; but no body is forthcoming. Gordon approaches du Toit to inform him that a detainee claims to have seen his son while being held by the police at John Vorster square and ask him if he can help. Du Toit makes tentative enquiries but learns nothing more. Gordon leaves his job at the school in order to concentrate on finding his son. Soon afterwards Gordon also goes missing and is later reported to have committed suicide in his cell.

The remainder of the plot traces Ben's attempts to discover the truth and his growing awareness, as he moves from myopia to full consciousness, of the evil system that has

for so long maintained his comfortable existence: the system he has had an unquestioning loyalty to and which he has helped to sustain. Once he questions the system he immediately becomes an 'outsider'. This echoes Johannes Kerkorrel, a young song writer and critic in South Africa who pointed out recently:

'*once you stand up and you dare to criticise then you are out there in no-mans land, they reject you completely*'.(8)

There is in South Africa an unquestioning loyalty to the system, a dogmatic Calvanistic faith that God speaks through the system and that the government speaks for God and cannot be wrong. The Reverend of the Dutch Reformed Church who is a personal friend of Ben du Toit gives his own slanted interpretation of the Bible: '*remember what Samuel said to Saul: To obey is better than sacrifice*'(9). Ben is echoing Stephen Biko when he replies to the Reverent Hester, '*I find it too easy, Dominee, to shrug off our own responsibilities by referring them to God*'. The Reverend though is incapable of thinking that the State, that is seen as God's representative on earth, could possibly be wrong.

Stephen Biko attacks the church in South Africa, in fact Christianity itself,on four points. He points out that in South Africa the emphasis seems to be on the 'turn the other cheek' religion while at the same time addressing what is quite obviously a destitute people.

1. It makes Christianity too much of a people.
2. It is stunted with bureaucracy and instititionalisation.
3. It manifests in its structures a tacit acceptance of the system, ie. '*white equals value*'.
4. It is limited by too much specialisation.

'*The other women, my white contemporaries in town, supporters of amongst other things the doctrine of Christ their homes like the stems of plants - filled with sap. They do not waver, they are not irresolute. We are fighting a holy war on our*

borders. The prognosis is good. Order will remain with us, it will be with us and our fenced off properties, forever and after, amen.'(10)

It is my belief that many whites have known for a long time that methods used by the security forces to control black unrest are morally reprehensible. The shocking revalations concerning the torture of Stephen Biko that were printed on the front pages of international newspapers, after they were smuggled out of the country (interestingly enough Brink chooses just such a dramatic ending to his novel when papers are smuggled out of the country implicating Security Force members in the murders of detainees) disturbed many whites who had been pretending that such things never happened and who saw themselves as God fearing and just people. These people were forced to fall back on a second line of defence and talked of a 'conspiracy to overthrow the government and plunge South Africa into anarchy'. Because of the 'conspiracy theory' such actions were necessary; it added however to the growing paranoia in the country and the increasing sense of being internationally isolated. It was also now increasingly difficult to pretend that atrocities did not take place in South African police stations. Still they tried to push such thoughts to the backs of their minds and an uneasy silence fell over dinner tables all over white South Africa.

Ironically it may go some way to explain the acceptance white South Africans have had for the covert way in which the police force has been operating since the 1950's. The white minority would prefer police brutality, although necessary, to be carried out behind closed doors - they would prefer not to know. As a result differences between fiction and reality, rumour and truth and justice and the law become blurred. In the film version of '*A Dry White Season*' Ben du Toit's lawyer played by Marlon Brando tells Donald Sutherland (playing du Toit) that '*justice and the law in South Africa are not friends. In fact they are not even on speaking terms*'.(11)

What we are led to believe then in Brink's novels is that the majority of whites simply do not comprehend apartheid as being intrinsically evil. They believe the establishment by Verwoerd during the 1950's of this system to be necessary and in

fact mutually beneficial to all races. The daughter of Brink's fictional hero du Toit speaks for many when she complains of protesting blacks that they should be grateful for all the white man has done for them. Is the 'law' therefore not meant, or even intended to be based on what we in the West may regard as justice. In South Africa 'justice', as du Toit's lawyer points out ironically 'and the law are not on speaking terms'. There are overtones reminiscent of Kafka here;' *the duality of the law. What bars the way to the law of the truth of things is the law of the necessity of things*'(12). Law, then, is systematically ambiguous; there is the law of necessity, life in the world, and ethical ontological law which is life and truth. In fact one could go further and say that world order is based on necessity not on truth. In South Africa there is a line over which you must not step; Gordon, du Toit's gardener, in his attempts to seek the truth does just this and is immediately condemned.

The black Priest who is comforting Gordon Ngubene's widow does not understand how Ben du Toit fails to understand the white mans innocence:

'*They don't know. Even when they shoot our children they don't know what they're doing. They think it doesn't matter. We must help them. That is the only way. They need our help. Not hate, but love....*' (13)

Sometimes the reaction a critic receives is just too confounding to make any sense at all unless we accept that so many whites seem to live in an unreal world created to protect themselves from the very horrors they themselves have let loose.

To engage in a struggle against evil does in itself present other real dangers that the individual himself may well be changed by his experience.

'*He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you.*'(14)

It would be helpful here to refer back Breyton Breytenbach, a white Afrikaner poet and a personal friend of Andre Brink. Breytenbach spent seven years in South

African prisons for his writing and for his beliefs. During a literary ceremony in the eighties he let loose a stream of carefully worded abuse at the five hundred or so Afrikaners present. The word 'Afrikaner' had become synonymous with *'spiritual backwardness, ethical decay, cruelty, dehumanisation, armed baboon bandits, and the stigma of brutal violence.'* What Breytenbach expected the reaction to be I am not altogether sure, what he received was a standing ovation. It seems that the audience failed to differentiate between the real world and that of fiction.(15)

If then, the majority of whites do have a conscience, that they do recognise that blacks may not be being treated 'justly' but that the necessity of the law 'justifies' the brutality of its enactment. What then occurs to result in the conflict between individual whites and the State? In Brink's depiction Ben du Toit does not become involved with the disappearance of Gordon Ngubene out of a sense of social obligation, or at least to begin with, to help Gordon, who has worked for him as a gardener for many years, find his son. Once however Ben begins his investigations he finds himself enmeshed in a web of deceit, hypocracy and violence. Melanie, the young journalist who supports his attempts to find the truth, became involved in much the same way. Their inability to comprehend the relationship between the fictional and the real may lend the audience to dismiss Breytenbach's attack as an attack on some fictional characters and to dismiss any notion of a personal reference to themselves.

'It wasn't the poverty as such: one knows about poverty,one reads the newspapers,one isn't blind, one even has a 'social conscience'. But Dorothy was someone I thought I knew....As if for the first time I discovered that other lives existed....' (16)

Even though as individuals the whites do not feel responsible for the evils of the system, many see them as unavoidable, they still feel, often subconsciously, guilty for actions perpetrated on others by the system. This guilt may reveal itself in many forms while concealing the true nature of the cause. In Freudian terms the suppression of this guilt builds up tension that may be released through aggression. Kundera in his novel *'The Unbearable Lightness of Being'* voices the Party members

defence:

'"My conscience is clear! I didn't know! I was a believer!" Isn't his "I didn't know! I was a believer!"at the very heart of his irreparable guilt?' (17)

Rian Malan argues:

'They're all [the whites] waiting for the night of the long knives. You never know when, but you know it's coming.' (18)

The government in Pretoria is well aware that the greater the interdependency of black and white, the more complex the social mix the greater the pressure for social reform will be. The photograph of Gordon Ngubene's wife being comforted by Ben that appears on the front page of the newspaper results in a stream of angry telephone calls; with tragic irony Ben's headmaster retorts, *'what about the immorality laws of the country?'* (19). The immorality rests with people like Coetzee who have positions of responsibility but refuse to take advantage of their position to bring about changes to what is an immoral system.

The white South African finds it very difficult to look far into the future and when he does he conjures up images of communist insurrection and the Second Coming, of Armagedon. Not surprisingly this creates great anxiety. This is not a new South African phenomenon. James Bryce,once the British ambassador to the United States wrote in 1897 in the conclusion to his *'Impressions of South Africa'*(20) that anyone in South Africa who looks sixty or eighty years forward suffers grave anxieties. The belief in western civilisation is that all problems have rational answers, confronted then with a problem and seemingly no solution the South African has good reason to worry. The recent failure of the Homeland policy initiated by Botha's government never had a chance of solving the crucial problem the urban black presented, like those in Soweto; bulldozing townships, removing buildings, like Crossroads and District Six could not solve the human problem.

I turn to Crapanzano's excellent study of white Afrikaner life and thinking, '*Waiting*', to give us an insight into what many Afrikaners really thought about Government policy.

Hennie Van Der Merwe, an Anglican priest of Afrikaner descent from Wyndal in South Africa recognises the problem:

'....*well, you see, in many ways, they [the urban black] are completely detribalised. They can't really go back to their homelands. They have nothing in common with their people.*'(21)

The seventies had been a traumatic period for the white community but especially for the Afrikaners. Andre Brink's '*Dry White Season*' may be seen as an account of the 1970's. The sixties had been a period of economic boom for the privileged minority. Spirits were high, faith in apartheid and the National Party protected them from any niggling sense of guilt. But the violence of the seventies shook the foundations of South African society. The economy was suddenly struggling, corruption within the National Party undermined their faith in polotics and more frightening, the blacks were breaking free; no longer passive and accepting but violent and rapidly gaining foreign support. Things would never be the same again. We now return to the work of Andre Brink.

Moving from the turmoil of the mid-seventies '*States of Emergency*' deals with the more recent crisis of the mid-eighties. The novel opens with the narrator contemplating the writing of a love story; a decision which creates a certain amount of heart searching considering the chaos which is tearing the country apart. The hero's conscience tells him that to write a love story would be a superfluous exercise in escapism and that to be true to his art he should be reflecting on the crisis that confronts his country. An extract from the Cape Times precedes the first chapter and reads:

'*The year which ends at midnight tonight has been so full of violence and sadness that*

many will feel that the sooner it is forgotten the better. Yet 1985 was a watershed year and before its manifold horrors are thrust out of mind it would be as well to reflect on the significance of what has happened.' (22)

The year 1985 was a year of black unrest,of mass boycotts and strikes; it is the year in which the government declared a State of Emergency which still held areas of the country in its vice like grip as late as 1990 (one of Mandela's requirements before talks could commence between the A.N.C and the National party was the lifting of sanctions in Natal).

In '*States of Emergency*' the narrator's moral dilemma - pertaining to the writing of his love story - becomes resolved after receiving an autobiographical novella posted to him by a suicide victim's brother. The author of the journal is a young woman Jane Fergusson whose account documents the relationship she has with an A.N.C activist Chris de Villiers. The novella is titled '*A ,Sense of Occasion*'. As the narrator reads through the tragic testimony of Jane and Chris he writes his own story; the two plots become inextricably entwined, the narrator using extracts, with slight alterations, to help his own story.

'*States of Emergency*' is a novel within a novel. Options for the introduction and to the conclusion are offered and the reader is taken through the explanations of possible names for both hero and heroine - we are witness, even participants in the engineering of structure. But such 'structuralising' is inadequate in a world in turmoil, where reality does not conform to organised patterns where reality is the exploration of the absurd. (Reality in South Africa is a totally different animal from that in the West). The narrator, Professor Phillip Malan makes just this point:

'*To keep things apart, distinct, separate (man and woman; life and death; beginning and end; the inside and the outside of the text; life and story) to define them in terms of their exclusivity rather than in terms of what they have in common, must end in schizophrenia, in the collapse of the mind which tries to keep the distinctions going. In this lies the future of Apartheid, and the future, as I see it, of structuralism.*' (23)

Interestingly, it may be noted according to Virginia Woolf's interpretation of structuralism, this literary approach to the novel constrains the writer not by his own free will, to '*provide*' a plot, to '*provide comedy, tragedy, love interest and an air of probability, embalming the whole too impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour*'. (24)

Life is not like that. The narrative, if it is to depict the real world, should jump around from place to character, character to place, reflecting life as it really is, not as symmetrically ordered. Brink in his narrative, '*States of Emergency*' is discussing the very nature of narrative and its organisation in much the same way as Virginia Woolf had done previously. These are not single observations but are a self-conscious attempt by the author to decide on how to approach the narrative itself.

It is not packed into tidy compartments but is more often a confused, chaotic '*myriad of impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel, is it not the task of the novelist to convey this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit....*' (25)

Brink's technique is reminiscent of that of Fowles in '*The French Lieutenant's Woman*' in that it presents the reader with several possible conclusions to the novel with a resultant deflection of emphasis from storyline to content. This is the technique whereby the author is drawing attention to the fact that the storyline is only fiction not truth, that it is of little importance in comparison to the content. It is merely the means by which the author demonstrates his views and feelings.

Real life and fiction hold similar illusions in the way interaction takes place. Phillip in '*States of Emergency*' reflects philosophically on Lacan:

'*It is the world of words which creates the world of things. She is fabricating an existence wholly strange to him, a world that has no right or reason to exist.*' (26).

By rebelling against the conformities of structuralist techniques the author is at the same time rebelling against the constraints of a state which attempts to separate, to compartmentalise through apartheid.

Traditional structuralist techniques are becoming less and less effective in conveying the reality of mans existence. The world is in turmoil.

The writers task is to attempt to form '*an Island of meaning upon a sea of negativity*'. (27)

Brink chooses Professor Phillip Malan, M.A,University of Stellenbosch and Melissa Lotman, doctoral student and tutor in his department. There is immediately a parallel with Jane Ferguson and Chris de Villiers in that both their lives are devastated not only by their relationship but by events going on around them. Both women are attracted by older men but:

'*....it cannot be simply a matter of her youth. Here, too, a hint of the unusual must be evoked, to make of it the kind of experience in which, suddenly and violently, one is confronted with "the other" which illuminates both the freedom and the boundaries of the self. Here end the 'I'; here begins the "you"'*. (28)

Their relationship takes some time to really become involved. The event which finally throws them into each others arms is potentially violent, the planting of a bomb in a restaurant.

The symbolism reinforces the authors objective, to prove the impossibility of 'separateness' or 'isolation' in society; either enforced or out of choice. The world forces itself upon you: the symbol of the 'Island' reminds us of our introduction that the critics task, and there is hardly a more comical one, to coagulate an island of meaning upon a sea of negativity.

Both Jane and Chris, and Melissa and Phillip attempt to create safe islands of

existence for themselves and both come to understand that this is impossible. Both relationships are doomed 'out there' in the world and need, for their survival, the 'separateness' that the 'island' offers.

'Perhaps the concept of the island, like the concept of the novel as a rounded whole, the perfect circle, the magical ring, is not just a manifestation of the urge to escape, to deny the world, to seek refuge from what you cannot handle, but the result of the need for self-preservation and survival. In which case the supreme irony is that on the island we recreate the conditions of the world we try to escape. Robinson Crusoe. Lord of the Flies.'(29)

Like an *'Instant in the Wind'*, discussed later in this chapter, time is short and inevitably both will be drawn back into the 'real' world. When Melissa asks Phillip, *'do you believe in islands then?'* he replies *'I believe in the two of us here, tonight'*.(30)

Both couples are constantly aware of a sense of being watched. As with Julia and Winston-Smith in Orwell's *'1984'*, we feel that it is just a matter of time before they are discovered. Julia and Winston engage in secret rendezvous' with the knowledge that that their love affair, like the love affair in *'Instant in the Wind'* could only be a brief moment of pleasure before the 'real' world - in *'1984'* quite literally - comes crashing in through the windows and doors. In *'States of Emergency'* the reader is constantly reminded of the world 'out there': Brink does this by interlacing the love affair with journalistically styled paragraphs on the events taking place in the townships. Which, as their ferocity mounts, increasingly threaten the little island of existence the two lovers have created for themselves. Phillip has also befriended Milton Thaya whose activities in and around Fingo village occasionally require Phillip's reluctant assistance - borrowing a car or money.

Chris de Villiers is eventually arrested by the Special Branch at a peaceful demonstration. It is at just such a demonstration that Phillip joins Melissa - the writer allows Phillip to come out of it unscathed, but the police violence that Phillip sees on

and around the University campus will change Phillip's attitude for life. For de Villiers fate casts a heavier blow:

'According to a police spokesman he hanged himself on strips torn from his blanket.'(31)

Such suicides can only be received with bitter irony in the face of knowledge about police brutalities on those detained. Van Wyk, a prominent Afrikaner poet wrote a damming satirical poem dealing with just this issue:

IN DETENTION

He fell from the ninth floor
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing
He fell from the ninth floor
He hanged himself while washing
He slipped from the ninth floor
He hung from the ninth floor
He slipped from the ninth floor while washing
He fell from a piece of soap while washing
He hung from the ninth floor
He washed from the ninth floor while slipping
He hung from a piece of soap while washing

Chris van Wyk (32)

Andre Brink's most outstanding, certainly his most controversial novel to be banned is *'Looking in on Darkness'*. The titles origins are Shakespearian, "*Looking on Darkness that the blind do see,*" and like any of Shakespeare's great lines the

interpretations are both profound and manifold. The most obvious metaphor is theatrical. The audience is ignorant of the wrongs which are taking place around them, they are about to be taken through an awareness raising experience as performed before their eyes are the unmasked evils which before now have been carried out surreptitiously. We remember Hamlet's young players, the play within a play, reenacting King Hamlet's murder:

'The play's the thing that'll catch the conscience of the King!'(33)

The performance is not played out to innocent onlookers, and this is crucial, for innocent onlookers would not respond to the scene which is reenacted. Only those who recognise the dastardly act and share in the collective guilt can possibly respond to what takes place. It is precisely this catching of the conscience that Brink's hero Joseph Malan sets out to achieve. Ben du Toit in '*A Dry White Season*' was initially 'blind'. He was unaware of the atrocities which were taking place around him until they affected his life directly. The theatre is not an alternative to escape then. It is a means of bringing an end to Apartheid by making people face up to the inescapable truth that it is evil. A young Joseph Malan was greatly influenced by a young black radical Dulpert who points this out to the young, naive coloured student.

'Suppose the theatre helps a few people to forget about the world for a while, so that they have more hope to face it when they go out: don't you think that's important?' 'Forget?' [Dulpert] stood up. You must force them to remember, not pamper them by allowing them to forget. They must never be allowed to forget. It's from remembering that revolutions are born.' (34)

The novel begins with Joseph Malan, a coloured actor, awaiting execution for the murder of a white girl. Before his death he retells the story of his life; the role Joseph has played on the stage of life. The story is of an uncompromising man of courage who refuses to give in to oppression as one by one his friends either disappear or are frightened into silence by the police. There accompanies the unravelling of the plot an inexorable belief that the outcome is unavoidably predictable.

'There was an air of satisfaction about it all, not unlike the atmosphere in a theatre where Shakespeare is performed: the play was familiar, each phrase could be anticipated, each new moment expected on hence the 'tranquillity' Anouilh speaks of, the calm resignation to the fate fulfilling itself.' (35)

This inevitability, reenacted again and again on the stage is a frightening testament to the 'dark' side man's nature. The end result is the ultimate darkness for those who do not believe in an afterlife of salvation, death:

' the theatre really was something like the Black Death, a plague raging in darkness, a delirium, a terrible and contagious thing born from a dark and ancient urge, nurtured by a black sun, as inescapable as freedom.' (36)

For the author the novel becomes more of an exploration than an exposition: an exploration of the true nature of this darkness.

If the stage is a reflection of the world, that '*all the world's a stage*' then we its actors, can be portrayed realistically. The subjectivity of such an interpretation of what reality is or may be makes this statement dubious and highly debatable.

The darkness encroaches, soaks into our senses, drives out the light and encases us within its shell - it comes from within and from without; it can protect us from the hunter or can drive us mad. It suggests something unseen,unpredictable and untamed; locked within it we sometimes imagine we hear voices. The voices may be those of the hunter or they may be our own. The pessimism seems to deny all hope. We recall Hamm in Becket's '*Waiting for Godot*':

'*You cried for night....It falls. Now cry in darkness.*'(37)

The darkness that follows sunset, the darkness in our souls, the darkness we discover locked in a prison cell unsure of the future and what it holds. Breytenbach's poem, '*In the Middle of the Night*' echoes this haunting reminder:

'while alive we all bear the great divide and shadow inside us the knowledge'(38)

Darkness itself can only offer temporary escape for the hunted. Joseph Malan's illicit relationship with a white girl fly in the face of South Africa's morality laws. As Malan sits in his prison cell he sees a symbolic parallel between the lonely darkness of his cell and his relationship with Jessica:

'And now the night is my constant guardian, a great fish which has swallowed me. I find a form of comfort in it which the day lacks, an innocence like that I knew with Jessica for the night used to be our domain, it was the landscape of our love. To us the night meant safety and protection against the dangerous world with the innumerable eyes.' (39)

The tragic irony of solitude may be that not until man is truly alone severed from society from his formal identity, isolated in the wilderness that he is able to discover the truth about himself. However, by this time despite his enlightenment he is often unable to return to that society or former existence which he had left, or was alienated from. (Plato's cave discusses such enlightenment arguing that if the enlightened one was to return to society then the people would kill him unable to comprehend the words he spoke. Nietzsche too talks of leaving the company of ordinary men in *'Beyond Good and Evil'*.)

The theme is one familiar to Brink's novels: *'An Instant in the Wind'*, *'A Dry White Season'* and *'States of Emergency'*, that of the alienated couple attempting a rendezvous within the maelstrom of South African society. The need for this temporary isolation, for temporary is the most they can hope for, is vital to their sanity:

'Now we're together, and alone in our togetherness.'(40)

The reader is always conscious that the relationship is doomed from the beginning, just as Joseph Malan's downfall is inevitable. Limited to this relationship alone the

novel would be powerful, though the hero something of a superhuman in his single-mindedness and courage - a cynic may be inclined to interpret the actions of the hero more cynically as those of a fool. Brink however creates a character with a carefully annotated history rounding his character to persuade the reader of the plausibility of his hero's nature and the action he takes as the story unravels. Joseph is not limited to just his ill-fated relationship with Jessica but performs with admirable prowess on numerous females.

Isolation however, as stated earlier, is impossible for any extended length of time:

'*And I so desperately wanted to keep her face from the world outside, untouched by my history, virginally mine. One learns so slowly and so stumblingly.*'(41)

and

'*In our violence we tried to exorcise our fears by breaking through to a new tenderness: in that it became a struggle, not against each other, but with one another, together in our loneliness against the unintelligible wilderness around us.*' (42).

Dark and light interplay with each other, are full of contradictions and controversy - have no semblance of the reality within which they happen. In a world where evil moves by day, the night gives temporary succour to the good, a symbolic paradox. The religious symbolism highlights the horror of the hero's predicament and places the authorities firmly on the side of the devil: the darkness visible emanates from the fires of hell.

'*If I say let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night, even the darkness is not dark to thee, the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with thee.*'(43).

Joseph is given a contact in Johannesburg. '*Harry Tsabalala on The Star*'. Joseph and, unknown to him A.N.C activist and future acting colleague Jerry, dodge the curfew

on blacks by sleeping in the offices of the newspaper and anywhere else they can hide out. (It should be noted that this situation applied directly to what was actually the reality for many blacks who were indeed legally bound to leave 'white areas' after a certain time in the day.) One of the characters they meet is a Zulu night watchman named Dhombe who tells Joseph's future using the ancient skill of using the '*dolos-bones*'. Dhombe tells Joseph what he sees:

" He's a man of darkness. But he's afraid of the dark." A grunt. 'He doesn't know the dark yet. I can see him come a long way, a very long way, from the other side of the morning star." He glanced up and in the glow of the coals I could see his eyes burning on mine. I see people stamping their feet on you."

" Why are they stamping?"

" They ask you stones, you give them bread." ' (44)

Dhombe's cryptic message has deeply religious overtones. Just as the Jews awaited a firesome general to lead them against the Romans and are given the pacifist Jesus so blacks are given another man of words, Joseph the actor. The '*other side of the morning star*' refers to Joseph's recent return to London.

Joseph had spent ten years in London learning his trade and now returns to establish a drama group which will translate traditional play's through the eyes of contemporary politics:

" ' That's exactly why I left London, 'I said. ' I have just as little time for a theatre that's a mere sickness of the bourgeoisie. But that's why I've come back. I don't want to have anything to do with the establishment. I want to get in touch with people.' " (45)

One by one Joseph's friends either disappear or are reported dead. Harry Tsabalala is eventually arrested by the police:

'Two days later [he] was reported dead. "Of natural causes in his cell," said the

paper." '(46)

and Dulpert his old college friend from the Cape, *'hanged himself in his cell in Durban'*. (47)

Rushed to the edge Joseph and Jessica decide they cannot go on. It appears, though it is not clearly stated, that Joseph helped Jessica take her own life before handing himself in. The story of the 'little' man who refuses to be broken and whose unbreakable resolution turns him from an ordinary man into 'hero' told by J.M Coetzee in *'The Life and Times of Michael K'* is retold again in *'Looking on Darkness'*. Joseph turns to his interrogators:

' *You've made a mistake gentlemen, I'm not Joseph Malan. My name is Joseph K.*' (48)

Brink's books present their hero as 'everyman', the ordinary soul caught in the chaos of every day life. Against him the paradox of total isolation and alienation, and the enigma of social acceptance in a society known by that individual to be an inhuman one. The inevitably doomed progress of the hero can be mapped out with predictable accuracy: a comfortable life destroyed by a devastating experience which throws their life into chaos; the result is to be cast into the wilderness by both friends and the authorities. A somewhat ironic analogy which may help to explain the superhuman courage the heroes obtain once 'out there' can be made with Milton's *'Paradise Lost'*:

' *Once hope is lost Satan retorts. "Farewell hope and with hope farewell fear."* '(49)

Knowing he's up against overwhelming odds, but armed with his newly found courage and the profound belief that he is aware of some truth to which most whites are blind he battles onwards. One minute exposing himself to great danger in an often foolhardy manner, the next hiding away in the darkness to recuperate for the next assault. This 'truth' appears to be the discovery that reality and the individuals perception and awareness of that reality are contradictory forces, juxtaposed in a

ridiculous paradox that throws them into an irreversible spiral down to inevitable destruction. Once in possession of this 'truth' the individual is either incapable of escape or as I have already mentioned chooses, like Joseph, not to escape. The world they enter into is a 'dark' one. For du Toit totally different from the comfortable middle class background he was use to. The hero, and here Joseph is an exception, is often a 'liberal' who thought he accepted and understood the controversial make up of Apartheid and was willing to do his bit to make the lives of the blacks a little more bearable; to donate money for a new hospital in the township, give up a Saturday afternoon for a charity event, treat his servants better than average and so on. What is clear is that nothing can prepare them for the horror which awaits them once they set out on their journey into the unknown, blind in the 'darkness'.

Sight and blindness take on the same kind of symbolically obsessional role that we find in Shakespeare's '*King Lear*' where blindness brings about an inner sight. Gloucester on the stormy heath sees more in his blindness than he could unscathed. As Nietzsche argues, *'to have left the company of ordinary men'*, is to sever all hope of return. So is Brink giving us a depressing insight into the hopelessness of mans human condition? I don't think so. The knowledge that the hero gains from his exploration of the 'darkness' brings to him terrific strength and a profound understanding of what is right and what is wrong. The hero is now sure of the path he is to travel and does so without questioning the danger.

Night is discovered. Night offers us the mysteries of the unexplored, the unconscious mind; the unconscious protector of man's past: pre-history - to a time when man had knowledge of the 'form' of things and was at one with nature. The darkness also suggests fertility, fercundity, and authenticity - an internal light lit by physical blindness which brings with it a special strength which others fear and often condemn as madness. We are again reminded of Plato's cave in '*The Republic*'. Having gained enlightenment the enlightened one can no longer return to society. The fool is often the one who speaks the greatest sense - that he is thought of as a fool gives him his shield. Like Hamlet in Shakespeare's play of the same name, feigned madness can be a useful tool. Hamlet's *'antic disposition'*(50) allows him to speak words that would

have been punishable from the mouth of a sane man.

Ultimately, it may be argued,this unveiling exposes hell's 'darkness visible', a more terrible reality, beyond ordinary mans perception. As Eliot remarks in his poem *'Burnt Norton', 'humankind cannot bear very much reality'*(51). The white man claims his law is the just one and their protective overseer is their god who knows all and is the truth. Light itself is truth and this light emanates from the white mans god. Cast from heaven are those who dare to question the legitimacy of the white mans gods total authority. The question may be asked and *'Paradise Lost'* - as with the horrors of Dante's inferno - can be argued to support such a claim; what if this god is unjust, what if he is a cruel despot. There then may be an argument in sympathy with those condemned in the inferno. South Africa's system is clearly morally wrong yet seems able to justify its continuation through Biblical interpretation. If this is so then perhaps the true nature of the evil lies much deeper, in the very foundations of Western civilisation.

The Afrikaners see themselves as the chosen people. They see the black people as those cast into the wilderness as testament to the guilt of man. Blackness itself then is seen as a symbol of this guilt. With this in mind then the Afrikaner does not view the black as a 'human' in the normal sense of the word; he is a non-person and removed from the considerations of state. For this reason the Communist Party could talk in terms of equality for whites without having to consider the plight of the black majority.

Cast into the wilderness the blackman becomes master of his own domain. To quote Leroi Jones:

> 'The day will not save them
> and we own
> the night.' (52)

The 'other' world of darkness then offers an alternative perception of reality, that

although it is not the dominant culture it does lay claim tom a believable explanation for the 'human condition'. The world of 'light' controlled by the white race has planted itself on the black culture, it is profoundly unauthentic and does not understand, nor try to, the ancient natural world upon which it feeds. Coetzee's '*The Life and Times of Michael K.*' exemplifies this superbly when the author describes the imperialist settlements as temporary surface features that fail to make any contact with the world 'out there'. I will be going on to discuss the work of J.M. Coetzee in considerable detail in the next chapter of this thesis. The white world then in its inauthenticity is contrived - a safe, comfortable world which has been laid upon the old world and lives off it like a parasite. Its existence can only be temporary. This unauthentic world fears its opposite, the dark, mysterious 'other' world, and refers to it in enigmatic language as 'out there' and 'beyond'. A language that would be clearly understood by readers of Coetzee.

The heroes who oppose this domination by the more aggressive white culture are not doomed by any tragic flaw in their character but by the very nature of their defiance. The recognition of the 'truth' alienates him from ordinary men and his 'knowledge' prevents his return. After barbaric treatment at the hands of his torturers the sadists give up, they are themselves incapable of understanding what has motivated him and he is as equally incapable of transmitting his enlightenment. Both barbarise each other:

"'*Take him back to the police, 'they say,' tell them to go ahead with the murder charge. He won't get away.*'

All I'm afraid of, shivering, sobbing, feverish, delirious in my cell, is that they may still find a means for me to get away. For that, I know, I won't be able to endure.' " (53)

Living in isolation, either in the world of 'light' or in the world of 'darkness' can only be a short lived affair. To survive one must be able to live within both. I go on now to discuss another work by Andre Brink, '*Rumours of rain*'. Bernard in '*Rumours of*

Rain' includes this in his final testimony before he begins his life imprisonment for terrorist activities. Speaking of apartheid he says:

'*But in the end your system must crumble. For in order to cling to power permanently one would require what you lack: right on your side and justice in your system.*' (54)

Like Joseph, Bernard returns from safety abroad even though he knows what fate ultimately awaits him. Like Joseph he has no fear. With confidence he speaks:

'*My Lord, even if you should decide to impose the death penalty on me I shall not offer any plea in mitigation. What I have done I did in the full awareness of my responsibilities, for the sake of a freedom greater than that of one individual. I put myself in your hands. I have no fear either of the future or of death. And now nothing can impair my ultimate freedom.*' (55)

Below the thin veneer of sophistication and cultural superiority broods a dark sinister evil which has absorbed all the misanthropy from both 'worlds' to create a frightening and barbaric machine of death. The machine that was unleashed on the children of Soweto, that bulldozed Sophiatown and District Six and that 'disappears' and tortures at will.

The pathetic irony is that the majority of those living in the comfortable 'white' world seem unaware of what happens around them. Bernard talks of the '*myopia of the white South African*'. (56)

Most are morally weak. They fear the 'other' world which they do not understand. Even though they are aware that atrocities are committed by others on their behalf they manage to disassociate themselves from them. Some actually realise that there must be change but procrastinate because they do not know what form this change should come. Others fear that they will lose their comfortable privileged life - others, still sicker, believe they have a God given right to suppress the black. All repress their sense of guilt. Deep down even the most hard-hearted has an inkling of what

Nadine Gordimer has called the 'unwritten charter'.

'The unwritten charter that exists inside you and me just as surely as the mechanism that keeps us balanced on our two feet. The unwritten charter that makes us know, out of the deepest source of collective knowledge and experience, that I have no right that you should not have.' (57)

Andre Brink's novel *'An Instant in the Wind'* opens with a quotation from Eldridge Cleaver:

'We live in a disorientated, deranged social structure, and we have transcended its barriers in our own ways and have stepped psychologically outside its madness and repressions. It is lonely out here. We recognise each other. And having recognised each other, is it any wonder that our minds equivocate, hesitate, vacillate and tremble?' (58)

As Brink made quite clear in *'A Dry White Season'* stepping outside the madness and repression of South African society and the racial laws which govern it is a lonely and a dangerous business. It can however be an exhilarating and self-fulfilling experience - there is a sense of release, of freedom once the shackles are removed, almost a sense of flying. The wild wind that blows the heart is not conscious of any laws which govern which way it should blow. To return to *'Instant in the wind'*, as Alexis Laarson comments somewhat poetically in his journal:

'The whole interior is like a sea of wind on which we toss and drift unsteadily.' (59)

Erik Alexis Laarson is a scientist who works for a man in Sweden who it is claimed *'is working on a system for naming all the plants in the world'*. (60)

Laarson is to embark on a journey into the interior to collect samples to send back to Sweden. He is a dry, unemotional man whose only interest in nature is scientific. When his young wife Elisabeth responds emotionally to the scenic view Laarson

answers in a purely cerebral fashion:

' *"You see?" she said ecstatic. " To me this is the most beautiful view of the whole Cape."*

"Phoenicopterus ruber," he remarked pensively. "They belong to the same group as the cranes, the grallae." ' (61)

This inability to respond emotively to beauty is portrayed as a weakness and linked to the human condition of the white settlers. George Eliot saw similar traits in the character of certain learned men in Victorian society. Indeed Laarson is strikingly reminiscent of Casaubon in Eliots '*Middlemarch*'. Both believe that they are engaged in a quest to unlock the secrets of the universe through their research. Both fail to understand the disparity between their objectives (ambitions), their ability, and a recognition that what they are doing is projecting and externalising their mental energies in an attempt at self deception. Recognition of their own hollowness, the wasteland of their own interior eventually destroys both of them. The juxtaposition of internal and external penetration are central to the decoding of symbol in this novel.

Both Casaubon and Laarson are idealised by young women who appear to visualise the men as emblems of the wider world and all its mysteries and excitements. Both are willing to play servile roles in helping those they idolise to achieve their goals and both become frustrated in their hopes and eventually turn to younger, more passionate blood for fulfilment. Laarson then is emotionally sterile. Despite his undoubted intellectual strength he is not capable of even the most basic of human emotions. It is only when Elisabeth finally rejects him that he tragically realises he has lost his one chance to become 'whole'. Her rejection is what finally leads to his wandering off into the bush and his death. On reflection Elisabeth remembers how the paradox between her image of him and his true self finally became revealed when a lion which attacked him was killed by a servant Booi:

'The man who possessed part of the world, who knew the names of all things, the crown of creation: there he was climbing up a ridiculous little tree to escape from a

dead lion.' (62)

His death itself can be interpreted symbolically. Alexis follows a little bird off into the bush carelessly forgetting to monitor his coarse. The freedom the bird has cannot be possessed by Alexis, he must have been a sad, pathetic creature during the final hours before his death. Interestingly a parallel can be drawn to Elisabeth and Adam later in the book as they too reach a crisis during their journey back to the Cape. Adam follows a Honey bird in a last desperate attempt to find sustenance. Instead of leading him into the wilderness and to death the bird leads Adam to a bee hive and enough honey to restore both of them to health.

Elisabeth never married Laarson out of a passionate love for him but because he represented something she could not get in the Cape and because he offered her a means of escape from the constraints of middle class bourgeois society in the Cape where women are nothing more than domestic slaves or pretty dolls to be admired but not to be listened to.

The trek into the interior is a disillusioning experience for Elisabeth who gradually comes to realise that she has made a terrible mistake in marrying Laarson. The trip turns into a nightmare when the Hottentots run off with most of the cattle and Van Zyl, Laarson's partner, having been rejected by Elisabeth, shoots himself rather than face the consequences of his attempted seduction.

When Adam, a runaway slave, discovers Elisabeth she is with the wagons, hungry and suffering from heat exhaustion. She is awaiting the return of her husband who has been gone a week, after following a rare bird in order to include it in his collection.

The books structure revolves around a central theme weaving within which are three sub-plots. The central theme is the symbolic journey which Adam and Elisabeth make from the other side of the Karoo range to the Cape, a journey they make almost entirely on foot. Weaving in and out of this central theme are the three sub-plots:

Elisabeth's life in the Cape up to the moment she meets Laarson; Adam's life before he runs away from his '*baas*' in the Cape; thirdly, the trek Laarson and his new bride make into the interior.

Adam's first reaction to Elisabeth is one of scorn; she represents a potential burden of responsibility which he is not willing to take on. He mocks Laarson's map which she clings on to as a possible route to her salvation:

'*My land I've seen with my eyes and heard with my ears and grasped with my hands. I eat it and drink it. I knot it isn't something there - it's here.*' (63)

There is a definite parallel with J.M.Coetzee's novel '*In the Heart of the Country*' here, in that much of the plot involves Elisabeth and Adam's attempts to find a common 'language' with which to communicate, to break down walls which have been conditioned into their psyche and, if possible, to penetrate each others silences.

'*Adam looks back, looks at her. He wants to speak to her. There is so much to say, to ask. To touch her, to penetrate her silence, to break into her. But all he can say, when at last he dares to speak is, "tell me about the Cape again" .*' (64)

Stripped of all the normal forms of identification such as dress, family, language, social life and so on, Elisabeth finds herself being able to examine herself under the constraining shell she has been forced to live and by which others have judged her: she looks into the mirror and can no longer recognise herself, seeing the 'other' emerging; a strange metamorphosis which discards the withered past-reality in an almost religious rebirth. There are times when the language does resound almost humorously with an existential hollowness that makes it at times difficult to take seriously.

'*What am I doing here? Who is this I who looks like this? She peers at the reflection....*' (65)

It could almost be Ophelia as she slips from madness into the river. In fact what happens is a ritual cleansing, a delving inside the body. Her masturbation is an intimate attempt to penetrate her physical being to rediscover the inner-self. The pause that follows orgasm gives the opportunity for more existential philosophising:

' *Where does it reside, that elusive I? Above me, unquestioning, unanswerable, the sky, the white clouds slowly drifting, and the sun; around me stones and red earth, grass and tangled brushwood.*' (66)

Both Adam and Elisabeth are striving to discover this other '*I*'. To understand that their existence is not dependent upon the drudgery and disillusion of the Cape. The interior does not have to be mapped out for it to exist, nor the plants and animals named for them to be a part of the landscape. One may be surrounded by beauty and feel it strongly, passionately, a recognition of a common bond between man and the land that D.H Lawrence wrote about so powerfully in '*Sons and Lovers*' and '*The Rainbow*'. Or there may be a detachment, an alienation from the land that casts the individual adrift, dispassionate and doomed, in Laarson's case to an intellectual sterility made more evident by the vibrance of the world he claims to 'know'. History itself cannot be understood and interpreted and mapped out, by a group or even a whole civilisation:

'....*don't you think history can happen here too, without you? - with every week old Hottentot bundled into a porcupine hole, with every nameless wanderer crossing this river?*' (67)

Adam carries the marks of Elisabeth's culture on his back, the scars of the cat o' nine tales delivered when he refused to beat his own mother with a sjambok. As the Magistrate in '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' (J.M.Coetzee) is as much to blame for the scars on the young girls feet so Elisabeth is to blame for the scars on Adam's back. Both represent a common root; with their own history which creates a collective guilt which helps to separate, to divide even when their own consciousness attempts a union.

Until the recent abolition of the morality laws it was illegal in South Africa for individuals of different colour groups to have a sexual relationship. The white oppressors understood that if such contact was allowed then the result would lead to the formation of a knew 'coloured ' group which would threaten the existence of white supremacy in the country. Even with the abolition of the morality laws this gradual eroding of the white minority by a mixed colour group is still one of the most deep seated fears of the white oligarchy. The belief that survival for the Afrikaner is intrinsically linked to the maintenance of separation and avoidance of inter-breeding is still a major stumbling block in the formation of a truly integrated society in South Africa. It is precisely this union between Elisabeth and Adam which causes the walls to come thundering down:

' Passively allowing him to part her legs, she suddenly felt him contract against her. For a while he lay very still.
'Take me,'she whispered.
' You're not here, 'he said. Not accusingly; neutrally, calmly. ' I want to be here with you,' she said. ' I am here.' ' You're looking for the hunters in the wood.' ' How did you know? Why do you ask? It isn't true.' ' The Cape is calling you.' ' No.' She shook her head violently against his shoulder. ' Don't be afraid,'he said, holding her. ' Stay with me.' ' I am with you.' ' He felt his heart shrinking, not clearly knowing why. The small cosy cave suddenly felt so exposed to the night wind; so penetrable yesterday and tomorrow.' (68)

The penetration and opening up for Elisabeth is an almost religious experience, an at oneness with her surroundings.

' I know now that it is possible for me to be happy. I have explored serenity, something inside me has opened wonderfully, I have travelled farther into myself and nothing can ever be quite the same again.' (69)

Their coming together and understanding of each other through a '*penetration*' of bodies is immediately juxtaposed by the symbolic journey they are engaged upon:

' *It is a strange sensation: not of travelling through the mountains but of penetrating right into them. As they go on, the walls of the kloof grow more perpendicular; below, it deepens into a ravine carved out of prehistoric floods....*' (70)

It is a journey into both the past and the future, into what the society of the Cape has made them - a society, a small gathering of humans poised precariously on the edge of a continent with a history stretching back and forward, dwarfing them into insignificance. It is a journey of '*faith*' (71), penetrating into the future, discarding all the false trappings that made them forget themselves, an '*Instant in the Wind*'. It can only be temporary, but even for that one moment we are led to believe it is worth everything.

' *And so it was I entered the broken world. To trace the visionary company of love, its voice. An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled). But not not for long to hold each desperate choice.*'(72)

That which they had, that which they learned can never be taken away from them. Although they know that once they return to the Cape they will again not be man and woman but black and white they know the truth and know too that this truth can not be communicated to those who meet their return. As Aob, his African name, reminds Elisabeth:

' *You forced me to look at you, to acknowledge you. I feared you and desired you; I feared myself. Always this incalculable thing in myself, this secret unexplored interior.*'(73)

They have had the kind of freedom which few people experience, a freedom worth being sacrificed for. When Brink writes in the closing few lines of the novel:

' *Come, he would think, breathless in the wind. The land that happens inside us no one can take from us again, not even ourselves. But God what a long journey ahead for you and me. Not a question of imagination, but of faith,*'(74)

he writes for all those who understand what it was Aob and Elisabeth discovered. He writes for Ben du Toit, he dedicates his novel to his friend and fellow writer Breyten Breytenbach.

'*Rumours of Rain*' as with Brink's other books for which he has chosen a contemporary setting is played out on the colourful backcloth of South African politics: the two dominant influences being the controversial conflict in Angola and the unnerving stirrings of black unrest in the townships during the mid-seventies.

Martin Mynhardt, a wealthy Afrikaans business man has after the recent death of his father sold the family farm. He has done this against his mother's will and despite the fact that he had promised his father that he would do no such thing.

'*After all there were only two of us. And his thought were already wandering.*' (75)

The narrative is a reflective account by Mynhardt of the eventful weekend he made his journey to the farm in order to persuade his mother to leave the family homestead. The use of first person narrative creates an interesting conflict between reader narrator; here we have a wealthy 'modern' Afrikaner with all the racist convictions of his forefathers speaking directly to us the reader with the expectancy of a sympathetic ear. Looking over Mynhardt's shoulder we are torn between our position as confidant and our own beliefs. This is proposed on the understanding that the majority of Brink's readership would come from the more liberal minded members of society and that a more reactionary audience would simply reject the narrative as invalid. Unknown to her Martin has already received a good offer for the farm. With him travels his son Louis. The two have become estranged since Louis' experience in the army in Angola. While at the farm one of the labourers murders his wife. The murder itself acts as the nucleus around which the rest of the plot is spun. Wound round the central symbolic journey are several connected threads.

Firstly there is Bernard Franken's trial. Bernard has been a close friend of Martin's for over twenty years and the trial acts as the catalyst which brings Martin's whole world

tumbling down.

' *In the Bretoria Supreme Court Bernard Johannes Franken has been found guilty on twnty-three charges under the Terrorism Act and the Suppression of Communism Act, and had been sentenced to life imprisonment.*' (76)

The novel contains numerous sections written in italics which are direct quotations from Bernard's final statement in court; a narrative device which cleverly controls our reading of the the central characters point of view.

Secondly, the reflections by his son on his experiences in Angola. It is this experience which has altered Louis' perception of the South African 'situation' and which has led to the estrangement with his father.

Thirdly, there is Mynhardt's exploitive female relationships with his wife Elise and his mistress Beatrice. The women act as mirrors upon which Martin may observe his true nature if he wishes.

Many of Brink's symbols reoccur throughout his work. The drought which has scorched the land barren is chosen as a suitable symbol for the sterility, for the stasis, which South Africa seems to have found itself. As one would imagine in a hot dry climate, rain symbolises rebirth, change, life and the renewable of the old. Other novels by Brink use this comparative between man and his natural environment to comment on his condition; for example '*Instant in the Wind*' and '*A Dry White Season*' discussed earlier. The 'rumours' are of change. Driving back from the farm the skies open up and the rain comes down in a thick blanket covering the land. We are in the last few lines of the novel given some kind of prophetic parallel with old Noah and his Ark when it rained for forty days and forty nights.

' *Ceaselessly, irresistibly, it came down from the dark skies. In a blunted stupor I resigned myself to the thought that it would never stop again. I didn't care any more. Let it go on, I thought, let it increase and grow worse and worse, a flood to soak the*

earth and uproot trees and split rocks; causing the red earth to run down the hills, streaming, streaming, endlessly, red water as if the earth itself was crying, as if the earth was crying blood. Nkosi Sikeli Afrika....'(77)

The war in Angola is a possible enactment of the effect of civil war and foreign intervention. The horrific sights that Louis witnesses leave with him an abhorrence of violence. It is the ordinary peasants in the middle who really suffer while the two opposing sides play their war games and engage in political intrigue around them. All the time we are acutely aware of the wider implications of the Angolan struggle on the unstable relationships at home in South Africa, especially between father and son.

' *Then something happens quite by chance - an accident, a death, a touch of fortune, a war in Angola - and suddenly you discover that you know nothing of one another at all; there is no secret bond, no instinctive alliance.*' (78)

Again the road over which the character must travel is one of self-discovery; the original position being one of self-delusion or myopia, followed by crisis that leads to embarkation. The journey itself will change the character forever and there is no chance of return once initiation has taken place.

The farm is being sold back to the government who are integrating a number of the white farms in the area into a nearby Bantustan. The symbolism again binds the transaction:

' *"So the old eastern frontier is becoming a frontier again, isn't it?" he asked. I couldn't make out whether he was joking.*

' *We're creating more and more frontiers all the time.*' (79)

Mynhardt has become dry and hard like the land. He is callous and unfeeling in his treatment of those around him, unsympathetic towards those who contradict his own stereo-typed values and attitude. Arrogant in his manner and cruel and aggressive in

his self-protectionist desire to survive.

Mynhardt suffers from myopia both physically and in the wider sense of the word. Bernard in his long statement from the dock talks of the '*myopia of the white South African.*' (80)

During the weekend on the farm the brutal murder takes place. Mandisi, a black labourer murders his wife. When the police arrive to collect the murderer, Martin is the one who guides them to the village.

'*But I kept stumbling in the dark, and twice my myopia made us lose the path up the bare slope.*' (81)

The symbolic importance of Mynhardt's myopia is strengthened by the fact that he is misleading others and that those others represent authority. So 'justice' itself becomes the unwitting victim of the same myopia. The extension of this myopia beyond the physical debilitation of one individual; Mynhard's stubborn refusal to recognise the inevitability of change and his complete lack of sensitivity towards others is an ill omen for all Afrikaners. As they drive to and from the farm the radio keeps them in touch with the torrid events happening around them. Louis blurts out in reply to a comment made by his father that the riots have been successfully quelled:

'*But for how long, Dad? When will the next ones break out? And where? Doesn't that scare you? You and your white generation, Jesus, Dad: you organised everything so neatly, made a law for everything. But surely you know it's only a temporary arrangement. One murder like last nights threatens the whole edifice. You can't understand it. You feel scared. And the more scared one gets the more power you need to keep it nicely covered up. Until one gets addicted to it.*' (82)

Interestingly enough his father had been moved by the murder. As Louis argues his father does not understand the full implications of the murder but sees it in terms of the 'primitive', 'other' world encroaching on the civilised white enclave. The white

farm and the black village represent a micro-world of the larger South African scene. The validity of sociological interpretations are therefore seen as symbolic. White murders are justified no matter how horrific through various psychological and pathological explanations in order to ameliorate a self-repudiating 'civilisation' in which they materialise. Murders committed by blacks however come under no such introspection; they are simply the product of the barbaric spirit not present in the white world. This interpretation is obviously hypocritical and totally unacceptable when seen in the wider context of the macro-world. It is precisely this fallacy which Brink unmasks.

' *What intrigued me that night (what intrigues me now) was the mere fact of what had occurred; something so wild within a few hundred yards of the house. As if an entire, primitive, invisible world had reached up, through that simple barbaric act, to momentarily reveal itself. It was more than a discovery of 'their' world, 'their' way of life. It was something darker and more profound: something belonging to the very guts of the farm itself, as secret and as dangerous as the subterranean water courses beneath the house, of which we'd never been aware before.*' (83)

This is very reminiscent of J.M.Coetzee's world. The temporary existence of the white world as a thin, almost insignificant laquer over the old Africa; the 'other' world which has not revealed her dark secrets and cannot be conquered. The whites are 'almost' aware of this, it lies just below the conscious. Because the white civilisation too in its wider 'world' sense is only a temporary blip in the immensity of the history of the universe.

Louis recognises the fear in his father and from that moment his son is lost to him. Louis accuses:

' *And you've got everything to lose, so you're scared. Is that it? So you'd rather cling to what you've got, no matter how bloody sordid it is.*' (84)

For Mynhardt life is a violent struggle where only the fittest survive.

Oh, I would have loved to have believed in freedom and hope and faith and charity. But above all I wanted to survive. And in order to survive I had to stay on the winning side.....in me was the hunger to succeed, the instinct to kill. Dad had never had it. (Neither had Bernard). (85)

What both his father and Brenard did have was compassion for their fellow men. Both were sensitive to the pain and suffering that can be inflicted on individuals or whole cultures by the ruthlessness of others. Mynhardt believes he has chosen the winning side yet by the end of his weekend he has lost everyone who really mattered to him and finds himself standing alone.

Behind Mynhardt's hard exterior lies a vulnerability which belies such a confident nature, which wipes away the myth of white cultural superiority. With Bernard he's exposed to the timeless truths of Mozart's mathematical notation; Mynhardt receives a brief glimpse at this 'other' world.

' *Returning to beyond faith and hope and charity, to the truths of sun and stone, in a land where rain was no more than a rumour or an intimation of mortality.*' (86)

The obession of the Africaner is his identity. As an Afrikanner farmer tells Martin: '*We are engaged in a battle with all the forces of Evil. And what is at stake is the very soul of Afrikaneredom. What do you think will happen in this land if the Afrikaner renounces his identity?*' (87)

To lose identity one would lose everything. The ultimate fear is that the Afrikaner be lost in the vastness of old Africa.

' *There had been nations in history before, he told me, who'd disappeared from the face of the earth without leaving any trace at all. The Avares, for example. And it might happen again.*' (88)

Louis points out that Robben Island, before it was used to detain Black prisoners was

used to hold lunatics. Those who have received 'enlighenment' as we discussed in *'Looking on Darkness'* have passed in Platonic terms beyond the normal reach of men. As with those who left Plato's cave they have gained knowledge but cannot re-enter the cave nor can they communicate what they have seen to those outside. Those 'ordinary' men fear those who have left the confines of the cave and think them mad. They make seemingly irrational statements which mean little to ordinary men and the unknown brings with it fear revulsion and rejection. They must be cast out. If necessary killed. For Bernard there is no such fear for Joseph in *'Looking on Darkness'* .

'I have no fear either of the future or of death. And now nothing can impair my ultimate freedom.' (89)

To Mynhardt the fact that Bernard returned, even though he knew he would be arrested, *' is quite beyond (him). It makes no sense at all. It's madness.'* (90)

Martin's analysis of his son's traumatic experience in Angola seems to suggest a similar conclusion. He notices Louis' preference for music with a *'barbaric rhythm'* while *'Before Angola he had proved quite susceptible to decent music.'* (91)

Others around Martin are also seen in similar terms. All isolated, apart, separate and in tune to rhythms of another more profound, alternative nature.

' Once again I saw Bernard and Elise as I'd seen them from the door, in their unbearable isolation, surrounded by music.' (92)

What should have become increasingly obvious to Martin was that it was he who was becoming increasingly alienated from those close to him. A black business collegue of Martin's is introduced to Beatrice by Bernard. It annoys, infact infuriates him when Bea informs Mynhardt that his business collegue Charlie feels 'paternal' towards him. The audacity of a black man placing himself in such a position of superiority is quite unacceptable. Mynhardt decides to have him sacked; claiming it is because of the

dangerous effect he is having on Beatrice.

We know that until that fateful weekend on the old homestead Martin had managed to keep the 'other' world suppressed as if it didn't exist. I have argued earlier in my work however that the suppression is never complete. There is always a bitter taste left in the mouth. The 'guilt' is not always understood for what it is and becomes manifest in various conflicting ways. This collective guilt cannot but be aknowledged by the end of his narrative. ' *Even as a child,*' he admits '*on the farm, I was heir to an entire history of violence, revolt and blood.*'(93)

It is religion that Martin sees as the root cause. Christ who died so that we might be spared. A collective cultural guilt under which all men are born to labour.

'*It is part of our social foundation, part of our Christian tradition, that we are guilty by definition. Our dimension is that of guilt. The opposite ie. innocence, is an un-condition, an absence, a negative, a denial.*'(94)

Superiority for Mynhard is obtained through subjugation, by violent overthow, by the rape of an old friend of Bernard's who comes to him to discuss Bernard's predicament. He reasures himself somewhat dubiously;

'*How could I be held responsible? I'd merely wanted to comfort her.*'(95)

He also rapes Beatrice in a violent gesture meant to emotionally protect himself. Both rapes he explains away with a simple rationale that leaves one cold. Everything is either calculated, logical or if not then emotionally irrational. Nothing in the end matters but self-preservation. All else is expendible.

But self-destruction is foreign to my nature. What matters is to survive, survive. To survive even the Apocalypse.'(96)

Within the relationships of his private life Mymhardt practices a kind of Apartheid.

As Bea points out; '*And for how long do you think your kind of apartheid is going to work?*'(97)

In the end for Mynhardt everything can be weighed up in materialistic terms;

'*if one cannot reach one's goal with a woman within a reasonable time, the relationship becomes uneconomical, the investment too large for the eventual return.*'(98)

It appears that what Mynhardt is effectively afraid of is intimacy.

'*The moment a woman tells you she loves you it's time to move out.*'(99)

Money can buy off responsibility and his mistakes can cover his weaknesses. Brute strength can temporarily cover his most serious weakness: ' *I don't think you really know what 'love' means,*' Bea tells him.(100)

He is afraid of having someone emotionally rely on him. ' *Ever since Louis has been born I've found the noise of babies intolerable*'(101)

When Elise cries at the funeral of his father Mynhardt is disgusted.

'*Quite indecent, I thought, such a public display of grief.*'(102)

Any physical contact which is not one of total domination, preferably by force Mynhardt rejects. Intimacy on any level is abhorrent to him.

'*I can't stand kissing and cuddling, or holding hands, or touching in any other way.*'(103)

He feels that itimacy threatens his individuality and his ability to make objective decisions. However the act of consciously alienating himself from meaningful

human contact ultimately dehumanises him. It is his rejected friend Charlie who comes closest to the heart of the matter.

'Deep down you hace a very simple philosophy, Martin: "What I can't buy or screw, I either tear down or fuck up."'(104)

Because we the reader are usually a part of the central characters personal reflections we often find ourselves being trapped by his simplistic conclusions about the chaotic complexity of the world around him. The reasonable tone of the narrator, as I mentioned earlier, conflicts with his bigoted miopic vision. Mynhardts world is a simple one which obeys simple, logical, economic, materialist laws. Of his relationship with his relationship with Beatrice he says:-

'Supply and demand are in perfect balance. Consequently treachery or betrayal is inconeivable and the very possibility of disappointment excluded.'(105)

He goes on to admit however, into the unavoidable truth that she was obviously implicated in Bernard's treason, that;

'I still do not understand her.'(106)

Indeed this is sadly true of all his intimate relationships as he lacks the breadth and depth of vision that would enable him to see below the colour of an indvidual's skin.

When confronted by seemingly illogical, emotive arguments that do not conform to his rational he defends himself by exclaiming:

'.....And much more emotional nonsense to the same effect.'(107)

It is with Bernard, that we are led to believe, lies the philosophical foundation of truth that the new South Africa needs to harken to. Bernard it seems understands Martin Mynhardt very well for we see him in another of Bernards statments from the dock;

' In order to survive in South Africa, I realise today more than ever before, it is necessary to shut one's eyes and one's conscience: one has to learn not to feel or to think, else it will become unbearable. In other words, the paradox obtains that one should really learn not to live, order to go on living.' (108)

NOTES

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Andre Brink, *The Failure of Censorship* (Heinemann: London 1981).

2. ibid.

3. ibid.

4. It is unfortunately ironic that even here we still have a white man as the main subject of the film. Even in death it seems a white Liberal is given the final say over Biko.

5. Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Penguin. 1988) p.36.

6. Breyten Breytenbach, *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist.* (Faber & Faber 1985).

7. Dante, *Inferno.*

8. Johannes Kerkorrel, interviewed on '*Signals: Singing in the Changes*'; ITV Wednesday, February 8th 1989.

9. Andre Brink, *A Dry White Season* (Flamingo.1988).p.144.

10. Ingrid Scholtz, *A Little Cloud out of the Sea, Like a Man's Hand: From the Experiences of an Afrikaner Housewife in the Bosom of a Nuclear Family.* (From South Africa anthology)

11. A *Dry White Season*, directed by Euzhan Palcy. Produced by Paula Weinstein. 1989 Metro Goldwyn Mayer Pictures inc.

12. Martin Greenberg, *Terror of Art: Kafka and Modern Literature.* (London, Deutsch 1971).

13. Andre Brink, *A Dry White Season.* p.174.

14. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Maxims and Interludes: no.146. Edinburgh & London, Foulis 1911).

15. Such an absurdity is quite understandable if we relate it to the overall dialectic. The repression of their own guilty part in the history clears their conscience and allows them to look elsewhere for someone to blame. Their reaction was undoubtedly sincere. Breytenbach's speech was delivered in the State Opera House, Pretoria, on receiving the Rapport Literary Award, June 12, 1986.

16. Andre Brink, *A Dry White Season.* p.130.

17. Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (Faber and Faber. 1987) p.177.

18. Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart.* p.186.

19. Andre Brink, *A Dry White Season.* p.139.

20. James Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa.* (3rd.ed.London:Macmillan.1897).

21. Vincent Crapanzano, *Waiting: The Whites of South Africa* (Granada 1985).

22. Andre Brink, *States of Emergency* (Flamingo 1989),opening page.

23. ibid.145.

24. Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader.* Modern Fiction. (Penguin 1938)

25. ibid.

26. Andre Brink, *States of Emergency.* p.192.

27. ibid p.196.

28. ibid p.23.

29. ibid p.204.

30. ibid p.33.

31. ibid p.193.

32. Chris van Wyk, *In Detention* (A Land Apart. ed.Brink & Coetzee. Faber and Faber 1986) p.50.

33. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* : Act 11, Scene ii, l.579/80.

34. Andre Brink, *Looking on Darkness* (Flamingo 1988) p.137.

35. ibid p.17.

36. ibid p.239.

37. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot.* p.271.

38. Breyten Breytenbach, *In the Middle of the Night* (From '*The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist*'. Faber & Faber 1985) p.375.

39. Andre Brink, *Looking on Darkness.* p.33.

40. ibid p.286.

41. ibid p.312

42. ibid p.345.

43. ibid p.281.

44. ibid p.230.

45. ibid p.208.

46. ibid p.241.

47. ibid p.250.

48. ibid p.316.

49. Milton, *Paradise Lost. Book 1.*

50. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act1, scene ii, li.173.

51. T.S Eliot, *Burnt Norton.*

52. Leroi Jones. Andre Brink, *Looking on Darkness*: opening quotations.

53. Andre Brink, *Looking on Darkness.* p.271.

54. Andre Brink, *Rumours of Rain* (Flamingo 1987) p.136.

55. ibid p.112.

56. ibid p.133.

57. Nadine Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture* (Penguin 1989) p.91.

58. Andre Brink, *An Instant in the Wind* (Flamingo 1983) opening page.

59. ibid p.14.

60. ibid p.40.

61. ibid p.39.

62. ibid p.161.

63. ibid p.33.

64. ibid p.46.

65. ibid p.49.

66. ibid p.51.

67. ibid p.84.

68. ibid p.132.

69. ibid p.158.

70. ibid p.147.

71. ibid p.160.

72. opening quotation by Hart Crane: From Andre Brink: '*An Instant in the Wind*'

73. ibid p.249.

74. ibid p.250.

75. Andre Brink, *Rumours of Rain*. p.274.

76. ibid p.111.

77. ibid p.446.

78. ibid p.67.

79. ibid p.267.

80. ibid p.133.

81. ibid p.278.

82. ibid p.307.

83. ibid p.284.

84. ibid p.307.

85. ibid p.265.

86. ibid p.161.

87. ibid p.144.

88. ibid p.258.

89. ibid p.112.

90. ibid p.115.

91. ibid p.118.

92. ibid p.126.

93. ibid p.370.

94. ibid p.370.

95. ibid p.171.

96. ibid p.374.

97. ibid p.395.

98. ibid p.424.

99. ibid p.122.

100. ibid p.417.

101. ibid p.176.

102. ibid p.260.

103. ibid p.111.

104. ibid p.429.

105. ibid p.15.

106. ibid p.15.

107. ibid p.115.

108. ibid p.116.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Work Of J.M. Coetzee

There is a question over the relationship between the recognition of ideology and the acceptance of an historical philosophical inheritance. Modern South Africa had attempted to persuade both its own people and international opinion that Apartheid is a justifiable ideological system. Since De Klerk came to power a learning process has been underway and to a large degree it is readily accepted by the majority of white South Africans that the policy of Apartheid is unworkable.

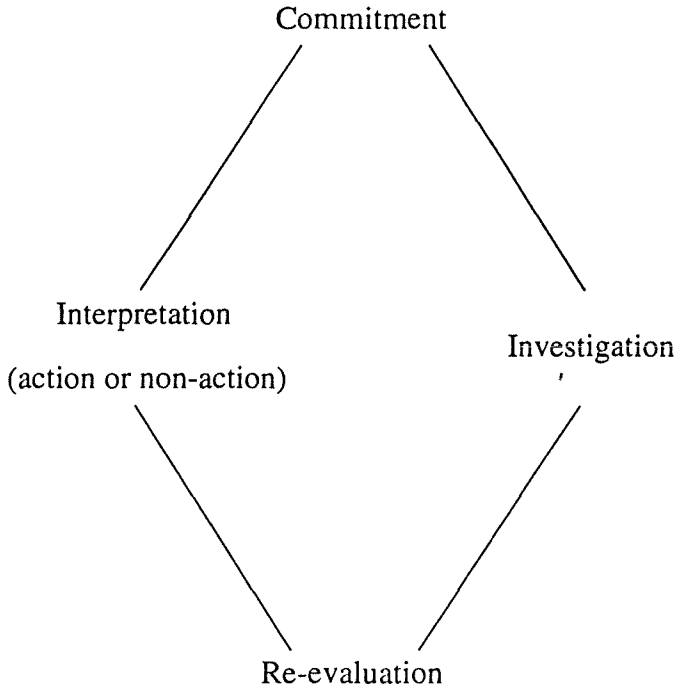
In order to maintain what is a totally irrational, racist internal policy extreme controls must be implemented; this can be done if government can convince people that a state of emergency is necessary to protect their own interests. Extreme situations often justify extreme measures. Up until 1990 Cuban troops numbering some 250,000 operating from Angola in order to secure Independence for Namibia [communist troops sustain the paranoia] offered an acceptable motive. All whites in South Africa must do their National Service(1); war has historically had the effect of drawing a nation together. However, as Brink illustrated effectively in '*Waiting for the Rain*' many young white males in South Africa have been shocked by their experience in the townships and the frontline states and returned home with anti-government sentiments.

Up until the demise of Botha we can argue that the majority of white South Africans believed that Apartheid was necessary despite its faults. We can also then argue that the injustice that they at first acknowledge is then repressed and that this repression leads to feelings of guilt; since the source of this guilt being repressed knowledge means that the individual does not recognise the true cause of their anxiety. This then leads to frustration that can lead then to violence.

This interpretation and evaluation of any given situation depends upon the degree of awareness of the individual assessing it. The relevance of this interpretation grows or decreases in relation to the awareness of those around him. Less knowledge might result in a reduction of conscious contradiction and thus despite a lower degree of understanding, a greater commitment. That man can stand 'just so much reality' may well be true. It is also evident that there is a need for reality to be a process of self-

discovery rather than something forced on one. Such force tends to lead to a stubborn rejection by the individual of what us being pushed upon them. The sheer weight as well as degree of information readily available through mass media has meant that contemporary man has been confronted with far more than he can cope with.

Schematically, we might represent the process of acceptance or rejection of information graphically.



It must be stressed that this process is on-going and is a porcess that is constantly altering the individuals world view.

White South Africans are aware, as many Germans were aware in 1944, that atrocities occur as a result of brutalities committed by the security forces. (Prime Minister De Klerk's failure to remove certain ministers from his cabinet who reminded blacks of the Botha regime was until recently viewed by many as being a sign that under the surface little had changed during 1990. The revelation that money was being paid to anti-A.N.C organisations, including Inkatha, by the Security Forces suggested that De Klerk was not in control of the right wing elements in the army and the police force. The subsequent scandal that led to the demotion of Magnus Malan,

Minister of Defence and Adriaan Vlok, the Minister of Law and Order, in July 1991 however indicates that he will when given the opportunity deal with these elements and that all he requires is the excuse to act.) No system. no matter how thorough can be so efficient so as to stop the slow seeping out of information to the general public from behind closed doors; even with segregation and a State controlled press the snippets of information that slowly accumulate add up and can eventually be pieced together by the ordinary people. The question is whether the underlying feeling that 'something is not quite right' may generate a psychological complex manifesting itself for example in the paradoxical use of violence against those to whom they subconsciously feel guilty. The perversity of such violence permeates the work of J.M.Coetzee.

'But those whom we have abused we customarily grow to hate and wish never to lay eyes on again.' (2)

It is to the work of J.M. Coetzee that I now turn. All novels are dealt with individually with the exception of the comparative study of *'The Life and Times of Michael K'* and *'Foe'*. I decided to make a comparative analysis of these two texts as the discussion that opens this study of J.M. Coetzee involves questions concerning 'communication' and Friday and Michael K make interesting points of reference. It is also important to note that at times I move across several texts within the space of a few lines as the texts themselves are being used as vehicles in the broader dialectic which concerns the entire fictional repertoire of J.M. Coetzee; that of language and suppression.

How long can this suppression coexist with the normal state of health of the individual before the individual has to stand forward and say enough. And even then where can the ordinary man on the street start?

Coetzee's novel *'Foe'*, published in 1986, deals with a story which has become firmly embedded into our culture, into a mythology through which the modern condition has characteristically been interpreted. By representing The Crusoe myth with an altered

narrative Coetzee re-evaluates the belief in Western ideology of white cultural superiority.

In 1720 the writer Daniel Foe is approached by a woman, Susan Barton who is hoping to claim fame and fortune by selling him the story of her experiences while she was marooned on a desert island after a mutiny on the ship she was sailing on. On the Island she meets Cruso and his man-servant, Friday. Cruso's bouts of illness become increasing frequent until he is close to death with fever. Then as if by miracle a British ship stops and picks them up, but unfortunately Cruso dies on the way home.

Coetzee, as he does with Michael K(3), alters our sense of perception. His narrative weaves hauntingly in and out of our consciousness, increasing our awareness of our world by illuminating darkness inside us. We hang on to what we believe as true in the 'myth' of Daniel Defoe's '*Robinson Crusoe*'. The white man 'civilises' the cannibal and symbolises white supremacy at the height of the slave trade. Neither is it coincidence that Susan Barton worries over Friday's possible cannibalistic past. In Daniel Defoe's '*Robinson Crusoe*' it is explicitly so. In Coetzee's novel he quite intentionally makes it more implicit, it is a suspicion. Of such suspicion Fanon writes;

' *In the first chapter of the history that the others have compiled for me , the foundation of cannibalism has been made eminently plain in order that I may not lose sight of it. My chromosomes were supposed to have a few thicker or thinner genes representing cannibalism.*' (4)

In Coetzee's narrative the 'teacher' had little to offer the black man and failed to produce a crop from the land. We are quickly aware that the whole experience is only temporary and has made little impression on either blackman or the land. I recall Michael K's journey across white South Africa. The towns that seem to hover above the land yet not be a part of it, the blacks ' *in the Mountains*'. Relating such imagery back to its historical context we are reminded of the Afrikaner's struggle to possess

the land and live free from interference, be it black or white. Coetzee writes here of an historical legacy which still stands out, in the form of a '*volkstaat*', for many Afrikaners.

The subtleties of language are reminiscent of Conrad, the journey has the frightening inevitability of '*Heart of Darkness*'- it drives us on at great speed. Coetzee may be called a post-European structuralist.

The '*Journal of Commonwealth Literature*' makes the following observations concerning literary style:

'*The dialectic of self and other, indigine and exile, language and place, slave and free, which is the matrix of post- European languages....Appropriation of these texts as 'post-modern', or of their insights in to the importance of text and word as a means of control into European hegemony.*' (5)

The problem of communication is central to an understanding of Coetzee. Michael K. the inarticulate victim who does not possess the means to make himself understood, Friday whose tongue has been cut out, who has had his means of making his deeper feelings felt cruelly removed. We are conscious of the helplessness that comes with the inability to communicate. We are also hurtled down the interstices which form the silences in the narrative: as with Conrad it is as much what is not said as what is. Susan Barton asks:

'*And then there is the mystery of your submission, why, during all those years with Cruso, did you submit to his rule when you might easily have slain him, or blinded him and made him into your slave in turn? Is there something in the condition of slavehood that invades the heart and makes a slave a slave for life, as the whiff of ink clings forever to a school-master?*' (6)

Cruso need only teach Friday what he needs to know in order to carry out the most routine functions required of him. Domination can be maintained through control of

learning; in much the same way that Bantu education was designed to give to blacks only that which was needed to accomplish the menial tasks that were asked of them. This control ensures that the subservient partner in the transaction can not take control as his expectations are limited by the information that is made available to him. Once this balance has been upset, for example by teaching the slave to read in a situation that does not necessitate this skill then the expectations of the slave are heightened and future transactions are threatened.

Cruso understands quite clearly the power that language creates. That articulation in the language of supremacy raised the individual above the level of his less articulate neighbour. Again I quote Fanon:

'Nothing is more astonishing than to hear a black man express himself properly, for then in truth he is putting on the white world.' Paul Valery knew this, for he called language 'the god gone astray in the flesh.'(7)

The fact that Coetzee chooses to characterise both Michael K. and Friday as 'childlike' in their awareness of what is going on is important. Franz Fanon wrote in his novel '*Black Skin, White Masks*'; '*A white addressing a Negro behaves exactly like an adult with a child and starts smirking, whispering, patronizing and cozening.*' (8)

It is not only Fanon who observes this relationship between black and white but it has been a part of the history of South African racial interaction for hundreds of years. The following is typical of 19th century thought amongst the white settler.

W.J.Knox Little, a parish parson and a close friend of Cecil Rhodes, wrote on this matter in 1899 in his book '*Sketches and Studies in South Africa*':

'There is no need for harshness, much less cruelty; and I do not believe that these are shown to the natives by the English - of course, speaking broadly. There is need that they should be governed. They are in the position of children - but children who may, if not educated properly, do incalculable mischief. Mr.Rhodes, who has the kindest

feeling for the natives, constantly speaks of them as "those poor children." As they have generations of savagery behind them, they can only slowly be educated to better things. Like unruly children, they require discipline, but they must be treated with justice and kindness. It takes time to teach people to work who have inherited habits of laziness varied by the enthusiasms of hunting and war. They have to be taught to work, and to be shown that work must be done.'

(W.J.Knox Little - '*Sketches and Studies in South Africa*'. Isbister and Company Ltd. Second Edition. July 1899.) (9)

Susan Barton does not understand why Friday does not turn on the slave master. Fanon uses a lighted approach to make a serious observation:

'*One day St. Peter saw three men arrive at the gate of heaven: a white man, a mulatto, and a negro. "What do you want most?" he asked the white man. "Money." "And you?" he asked the mulatto. "Fame".,St.Peter turned then to the negro, who said with a wide smile."I'm just carrying these gentlemen's bags."* '(10)

Fanon calls this surrender, 'negative-aggression'. Obsession with the past and with its frustrations, its gaps, its defeats, paralyses his enthusiasm for living. Unfortunately Michael K. does not fit this description as Michael K. bears no grudge, is not conscious of any disillusionment. Michael K.'s introversion is even more severe. His separation is almost, if not total. Michael K. is an '*abandonment neurotic*'.(11) He is all child in his complete surrender to the world at large. It is the child in him that opens him up as victim and paradoxically the child in him that prevents him from rationalising his predicament and understanding his condition. Michael K. is like a child and we recall what Nietzsche said was mans greatest tragedy, that he was once a child. (12)

Susan in '*Foe*' threatens the symbolic stability of the mens relationship by bringing the outside world onto the Island. Susan finds Cruso almost impotent and quite incapable of offering her any comfort at all. The Island is trapped in a stasis, a sterility that Cruso refuses to recognise. Cruso's domination of Friday is based on a

false precept; that he represents some kind of Enlightenment that Friday has the good fortune to be a part of. Both white and black are trapped by the ideology of the Enlightenment in South Africa. Friday can not speak, his voice of instinct has been torn, with his tongue from his mouth.

'*For as long as he is dumb we can tell ourselves his desires are dark to us, and continue to use him as we wish.*' (13)

Language then enforces repression, it is an instrument of power, it defines for us our limitations, marks out boundaries beyond which we cannot comprehend. (The white liberal speaks for the inarticulate black incapable of voicing for himself.) Cruso makes no attempt to 'penetrate' Friday, his domination of Friday is a futile, temporary gesture. Both live in a world separate from each other, 'alone' on their Islands. Susan cannot understand this and tries in vain to find some way of 'penetrating' his hard exterior shell. Note again the direct historical link. The school boycotts in 1976 over the teaching of Afrikaans in schools was a response to the Black Consciousness Movement's teachings. Clear associations were made between oppression and the language of the oppressor. Refer to 'Breaking the Chains of Mental Slavery', chapter 2.

Friday is 'barbarian' because he does not possess the 'word'; though in Friday's case it is a false presumption as Friday fails to communicate because he is physically incapable of doing so and not because he does not desire it.

'*The word, the human voice is both miracle and outrage, sacrament and blasphemy. It is a short severance from the world of the animal, mans begetter and sometime neighbour, the animal who, if we rightly grasp the myths of centaur, satyr and sphinx has been inwoven with the very substance of man and whose instinctive immediacies and shapes of physical being have receded only partially from our own form.*' (14)

Susan Barton arrogantly assumes she is his saviour and cannot understand that Friday should have '*a disdain for intercourse with (her)*'. (15)

Silence itself carries with it its own language, its own unspoken messages; subtleties of communication that Susan fails to recognise. Susan attempts music as a possible bridge between the two of them:

'As long as I have music in common with Friday, perhaps he and I will need no language.'(16)

But Friday remains indifferent to her attempts to encourage him to play along with her and continues in his own way. The black characters need say nothing as the whites speak for them. Coetzee however uses an African setting for his novels not simply to discuss a black predicament but to hold a discourse on the human condition in general. Friday's lack of response to Susan frustrates her attempts to 'teach' him and consequently her attempts to dominate him. By refusing to acknowledge her presence he makes domination impossible.

Silence can be therefore a very real and effective form of resistance. French writer, Vercors, (17) advocated silence as a way of resisting the occupying forces in France during the Second World War through his novel '*Le Silence de la Mer*' (The Silence of the Sea). The novel was not overtly anti-German, Had it been it's publication would have been prohibited. But the message was clear. In Vercors The innkeeper and his niece refuse to acknowledge in any way the presence of the German officer who is billeted on them even though he is sympathetic to their situation. In refusing to acknowledge the occupying force their power is 'deadened'. Both Michael K. and Friday have an intuitive understanding of this. Susan Barton like Vercors' German officer is sympathetic and yearns to 'make contact'. Friday will not be duped into her world, a world which would destroy his very soul. Here there is a clear parallel with the Nazi regime as Vercors saw it, whose aim was to destroy the soul of France.

There are boundaries to language across which communication must sometimes pass in order that expression become manifest. Language itself is 'limited' and often, as Foe shows Barton, open to interpretation; Friday's world is not the world of language.

The novel has a visionary ending. Susan comes across the body of Friday. She assumes he is dead but when he stirs and his teeth part she presses her ear to his mouth in a desperate attempt to hear him, to 'penetrate' his silence.

'At first there is nothing. Then, if I can ignore the beating of my own heart, I begin to hear the faintest faraway roar: as she said, the roar of waves in a seashell; and over that, as if once or twice a violin string were touched, the whine of the wind and the cry of a bird.' (18)

She realises that what she can hear are the 'sounds of the Island'. It is the wind that blows across the Karoo in Brink's *'An Instant in the Wind'* that Susan hears. Both sounds relate to the wilderness, the unknown, the 'out there' that cannot be mastered.

The Island is both physical entity and metaphor. *'Sometimes I wake up not knowing where I am. The world is full of Islands, said Cruso once. His world rings truer every day.'* (19)

Michael K's strength lies in his ability to exist outside the normal flow of life. He is essentially animal, there is no anger, no joy in his life. This is his strength, it makes him invulnerable to the torments that are rained upon him. This gives Michael K. a super-human power, a quality which the doctor recognises and which he interprets in religious terms. There is terrible irony here. An interesting reflection may be Peter Sellers in *'Being There'*. The reclusive butler whose words are given symbolic meaning he neither intended nor understands is in the final scene depicted walking across the water of the pond, out of the sight of everyone else.

To broaden the literary dimension I turn also to Herman Melville's novella *'Billy Budd'*. Billy, Melville informs us is *'little more than a sort of upright barbarian, much such perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company'*(20)

Billy is incapable of doing evil but has innocence makes him vulnerable to the

jealousies of others. When accused of planning a mutiny on board ship Billy is struck by a life-long speech impediment and despite every attempt cannot utter a word in his defence. The effort creates a build up of frustrated energy in Billy's body and he involuntarily lashes out, killing his accusor and witnessed by the Captain himself. The Captain when asked how such a thing could have happened replies:

'Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!'(21)

Billy was incapable of understanding the twisted workings of the minds of those around him. He was an innocent among sinners. This also gave him greater than human strength. Billy's language was uncorrupted in its honesty and frankness.

The language of the white man is European. It is the language of Imperialism. In his essays in '*White Writing*' Coetzee has asked:

Is there a language in which people of European identity, or if not European identity then of a highly problematical South African-colonial identity, can speak to Africa and be spoken to by Africa.' (22)

Language itself helps maintain supremacy - it controls, it distances.

Language and consciousness go hand in hand. As Magda speaks in Coetzee's '*In the Heart of the Country*':

'It is the slave's consciousness that constitutes the master's certainty of his own truth. But the slaves consciousness is a dependent consciousness. So the master is not sure of the truth of his autonomy. His truth lies in the inessential consciousness and its inessential acts.' (23)

Behind it all there is another kind of alienation. The relationship between man and the land; there is a sterility. A feeling that the white man is not of the African soil, that he does not belong. The long list of place names in Michael K's journey from Cape

Town without associated geographical and topographical references has the effect of distancing the white communities from the natural surroundings. In '*Foe*', Cruso admits that for him it is only a temporary and preparatory domination, it is the future that is to bond man and nature; Cruso appears to symbolise human sterility; both his relationship to Susan and to the land. Cruso spends most of his time clearing land for planting, but Cruso has no seed to plant a crop.

' *"The planting is not for us," said he. "We have nothing to plant - that is our misfortune." And he looked at me with such sorry dignity, I could have bit my tongue. "The planting is for those who come after us and have the foresight to bring seed."* ' (24)

We must also ask ourselves whether Cruso really has anything credible to teach Friday. The white man naturally assumes a position of superiority, his oppression is made possible from a position of physical, unassailable strength. The domination can only be accepted dumbly by the oppressed. The arrogant assumption of superiority of the white man, honestly believed by the oppressor at the time of the Renaissance European, is today a position of bitter irony. James Baldwin has made the point:

'*White people cannot, in the generality, be taken as models of how to live. Rather, the white man is himself is in some need of new standards, which will release him from his confusion and place him once again in fruitful communion with the depths of his own being.*' (25)

Michael K. in the middle of a civil war, as the order struggles to maintain power, plants and grows food. Michael K. is part of the life force, the life force that the doctor desperately seeks to hold onto in others and indirectly in himself.

Although it has a female narrator, Friday is not the only one who cannot 'tell' his story. Susan herself goes to Foe because she lacks the power of the written word to put the story into words. But much of the truth must be invented as we can never read into Friday's silences anything definite; not even how he lost his tongue. Much of the

second part of the novel concerns communication between Susan and Foe and the function of the narrative, the role of the author. As with Michael K. much of the narrative is marked by the characters position outside the symbolic order, his silence marks the space which the text cannot fill. Michael K's stubborn silences give the hero a kind of immortality such as to turn the emaciated skeleton into someone worth worshipping for the doctor. It is Susan Barton's belief that the spoken word has supremacy over the written word. This leads her to become obsessed with the idea of teaching him some kind of oral articulation. The visionary ending reinforces the manifestation of the absurd:

'*It is for us to descend into the mouth (since we speak in figures). It is for us to open Friday's mouth and hear what it holds: silence, perhaps, or a roar, like the roar of a sea-shell to the ear.*' (26)

Friday is the receiver of the new Enlightenment-Realism which is suggested enigmatically in Friday's design on the slate:

'*But when I came closer I saw the leaves were eyes, open eyes, each set upon a human foot: row upon row of eyes upon feet: walking eyes.*' (27)

Daniel Defoe wrote at a time which saw itself as a period of emerging Enlightenment. South Africa claims herself a bastion of enlightenment-realism. The contradictions are poignant. Foe, as also Defoe is a poor example of Enlightenment man, having to hide from his creditors and the bailiffs. He changes Susan Barton's narrative to suit his own purposes (and thus tampers with reality to create the myth) and claims to have found Susan Barton's daughter, her original reason for setting out on her journey in the first place.

Like William Golding, Coetzee is primarily concerned with the idea of the 'myth' (28). Coetzee's first novel '*Dusklands*' divides into two novellas; '*The Vietnam Project*' and '*The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee*'. The two novellas dispel two myths; that of the link between science and the 'bettering' of human existence and the second

that of the heroic explorer bringing light where before there was only darkness. We are witness to the death of the spirit in a terrifying blend of the absurd and the horrific. The first of the novellas deals with a specialist in psychological warfare whose job for the department of propaganda involves effective strategies in the '*mythography section*'. Although the project is directed towards the war in Vietnam the implications are obvious. The second of the two novellas details the exploits of a megalomaniac Boer who engages on a brutal revenge against a Hottentot tribe who have humiliated him. Coetzee unmasks where the myth has covered revealing the brutality lying under the thin veneer that we term 'civilised'. It is again to Nietzsche and '*Beyond Good and Evil*' (29) that I turn. It is the warning that if we stare too long into the pit at darkness we soon find darkness peering into us. Breyten Breytenbach who spent years imprisoned for his political beliefs and who was tortured while in custody clarifies the frightening relationship torturer and victim find themselves in:

'*The two of you, violator and victim (collaborator! violin!), are linked, forever perhaps, by the obscenity of what has been revealed to you, by the sad knowledge of what people are capable of.*' (30)

And the truth of the horror can not be contained. As Allister Sparks in '*The Mind of South Africa*' points out:

'*The higher authorities know, of course. The doctors know because you cannot have systematic, ongoing torture in any country without the medical profession knowing. The lawyers know, big business knows, the public knows, but there is no concerted action to stop it. Like ripples in a disturbed pond, the waves of culpability radiate outward, corrupting the whole society.*'(31)

Coetzee's novels are Islands, in existential terms like peoples lives. Long established beliefs that help create the foundation of our cultural belief system, thus making us doubt ourselves and question our principles. The Robinson Cruso story Coetzee says '*perhaps, after all, the only story there really is.*' (32) Coetzee is a master of language with the incredible ability to distance himself from the concerns of his fellow writers while dealing implicitly with the same issues not didatically but with the 'one world'

whole culture approach of the master craftsman. He has been called elitist. That he does not represent the concerns of 'black consciousness' and is not accessible to the majority. However, Coetzee's post-modernist style can be given holistic interpretations that manifest themselves in often quite implicit ways in the narrative.

'The craft in reading Coetzee's fiction is all in being attuned to its silences, in being alert to the spaces in the texts, its effacements, its absences. Only part of the truth, such a reading asserts, resides in what the text says; for the rest its truth lies in what is not said, in what is outside the perceptions of the narrating selves, and unrepresentable in writing that retains its affiliation to a European or a highly problematic South African-Colonial identity.' Teresa Davey (33)

The following may be read into the silences of both Friday and Michael K. but more importantly to the greater silence between white man and black that still only a few in South Africa have tried to fill.

Silence is an alternative, *'when the words in the city are full of savagery and lies, nothing speaks louder than the unwritten poem.'*(34) There is also the possibility of silence from cacophony. *'We also speak far too much far too easily making common what was private, arresting into the cliche of false certitude that which was provision, personal, and therefore alive on the shadow side of speech, we live in a culture which is, increasingly, a wind tunnel of gossip; that reaches from theology and politics to an unprecedented nosing private concerns (the psychoanalytic process is the high rhetoric of gossip). The world will end with neither a bangs nor a whimper but with a headline, a slogan, a pulp novel larger than the cedars of Lebanon. In how much of what is now pouring forth do words become word - and where is the silence needed if we are to hear that metamorphosis?'* (35)

It is interesting that the instrument of torture in Franz Kafka's *'Penal Colony'* is the printing press. For Kafka a great inhumanity lay in wait for European man and parts of language itself would serve it; for Kafka torture itself was his struggle with language, to find meaning within a language wrecked by cliche and distorted by

vagueness and vulgarity.

This degeneration of language in all its horror contributes a great deal to the decline in European culture as the written word loses its potency.

'The silence, which at every point surrounds the naked discourse, seems by nature of Wittgenstein's force of insight, less a wall than a window. With Wittgenstein, as with certain poets, we look out at language not into darkness but into light..... the writer today tends to use far fewer and simpler words, both because mass culture has watered down the concept of literacy and because the sum of realities of which words can give a necessary and sufficient account has sharply diminished.' George Steiner (36)

The 1983 Booker Prize winner *'The Life and Times of Michael K.'* is a perfect example of Coetzee's powerful style. The novel is beautifully written, capturing the reader and leading him through the tragic journey of the non-entity. Michael K. is stylistically reminiscent of Golding at his best. The simple naivety of the hero who refuses to become enslaved, who battles to maintain his dignity against overwhelming odds not as a revolutionary amidst the ravages of civil war but as an ordinary human being who expects only the most basic rights of man. The Lok of William Golding's *'The Inheritors'*(37) whose fate it was as a Neanderthal to witness the savage dawn of the Homosapien and the extermination of the last of his own kind may seem a tenuous comparison at first. But this is another myth turned on its head. The superiority of the Homosapiens lies in their violent, aggressive nature, the Neanderthal is not a carnivore but a passive, gentle vegetarian. It is the tragic naivety and their helplessness that wins our sympathy. Michael K. is also not what his persecutors think him; he too creates fear in those who hunt him. Not because of his physical threat but because in them they can see the reflection of their own 'darkness' - the *'other'* (38) - but cannot fathom what it is they are seeing. Lok's death is symbolic, it marks the new dawn; the birth of new man and of the new order.

There is no bitterness as an acquaintance of K. explains why the farmers should look

after them at all:

'*....do you think they do it because they love us? Not a hope. They prefer it that we live because we look too terrible when we get sick and die. If we just grew thin and turned into paper and then into ash and floated away, they wouldn't give a stuff for us. They just don't want to get upset. They want to go to sleep feeling good.*' (39)

Dare we believe this. Does it echo something within ourselves? Something we choose to suppress.

The title echoes Kafka. '*The Trial's*' Joseph K. and Coetzee's Michael K. are both tiny, insignificant creatures in a world large and incomprehensible to them. There is no dawn, no new enlightenment.

'*Civilisation is trapped in a stasis, cut off from its instinctual roots by the logic of its choice of reasons as its guiding light.*' (40)

This is the message of '*Foe*', this is the truth which Coetzee uncovers.

'*In South Africa both black and white are trapped by the ideology of the Enlightenment; Friday's voice of instinct has been torn, with his tongue, from his mouth.*' (41)

Michael K's voice too has been stolen, but neither of the men surrender to their oppressor. In both there lies an unspoken power which must inevitably reveal itself.

Vincent Crapanzano's anthropological novel '*Waiting*' (42) confirmed for me something I had always suspected. Emerging from the subconscious of the white human condition in South Africa there lies a latent belief that their position is only temporary. That inevitably change must come. In what form this change will take is unclear. There has been, and amazingly there still exists, a belief in a Soviet backed plot involving members of the African National Congress. Changes in Soviet

international relations that resulted in the unbanning of the South African Communist Party in early 1991 are rapidly taking away the credence in such a belief. Still, hardly a day goes by without the police sweeping down on a black township in search of the elusive revolutionaries; the black forces of insurrection that threaten to return 'civilised' South Africa to anarchy, to some kind of communist barbarity. It is with this uncertainty, this paranoia that I turn to Coetzee's novel '*Waiting for the Barbarians*'.

A sleepy somewhat idyllic frontier settlement on the very fringes of the Empire feels itself happily estranged from the impending war between the government forces and the Barbarians. The central character and the readers eyes and ears is the local Magistrate, grown fat and lethargic during his twenty or so years amongst the sleepy community. The Magistrate sees himself as a 'just man' and quotes us examples of how, after explaining to the criminals the reason for their sentences they have accepted them with humility.

The law thus interpreted through the eyes of a just man is seen to be fair and accepted without question by those who transgress. Then a terrible horror descends on the community in the form of Colonel Joll and his team of interrogators. They arrive at the frontier with the aim of capturing and interrogating Barbarian prisoners in order to discover plans for what they believe is an imminent Barbarian offensive. It is not so much Joll's belief that '*the end justifies the means*' as the role in which the Magistrate sees himself playing which becomes the central flux of the novel.

The Magistrate is shocked into sympathy for Joll's victims. He sees the victims as suffering at the hands of a brutish animal. This brute risks, ironically, sending the whole community into a frenzied turmoil by his inhuman actions against 'innocent' natives. Interestingly enough the whole community fully supports Joll who they see as protecting their own interests and completely reject the magistrate when he is accused of treason, regarding him as an insane old man. This itself seems quite plausible in the South African context. Those who reject all the privileges that a member of the white minority awards one and who turns on their own 'kind' in order

to fight for savage 'kaffirs' must surly be insane. Stalin it might be said used similar tactics when dealing with members of the intelligentsia who opposed his methods. Ben du Toit, earlier discussed was regarded by close friends in just such a way. The question was always why? Why? Such behaviour was illogical, irrational, made no sense. The individual must be mad.

The Magistrate commits his act of treason while Joll is away. His actions are regarded as rather a pathetic gesture to assert his own 'value system' on the events and at most can only be seen as symbolic. One of the prisoners is a young Barbarian girl whose ankles the interrogators have broken and whose eyes the interrogators have temporarily damaged. The allusions here are significant; the broken feet and blinded eyes accounting for the loss of freedom and understanding suffered by the victims of the oppressors. The loss of sight is more complex. There is on the one hand the wisdom of internal reflection but on the other, and more poignantly, there is the attempt by the oppressor to hide from the gaze of the victim and thus attempt to conquer self-doubt and guilt. The symbolism is profoundly problematic. What the oppressor fears is not itself contained within the frail and disturbingly vulnerable girl as a physical force; the threat is a double edged sword - it is doubt both in the justification and legitimacy of the actions taken by the oppressor (a threat which must then be artificially 'created' through myth and historical interpretation) to control the 'other' that is 'out there' and an increasing suspicion which, for the sake of sanity must remain hidden from the consciousness; that the 'out there' is with the oppressors themselves. I will use two examples to clarify this argument. First is the Christian one. That Christ died for us on the cross and that we must bear the burden of that guilt and remember it in order to ensure that we do not sin. But man is born sinful and so must live in torment in the hope that he may one day be forgiven. If we reject God we are damned; God is all seeing and we cannot act without his knowledge. We cannot escape his gaze, we cannot blind God so that he cannot see. The young girl in her purity and in her innocence is all powerful for she has not sinned and her gaze is a constant reminder of their guilt.

The second example is a literary one. In Joseph Conrad's novel '*Heart of Darkness*'

Marlow goes on a journey through 'darkest' Africa in search of Kurtz who has not been heard of for a considerable time by the company he works for. The revelation at the end of the novel is not that Western civilisation is proven to have advanced from these primitive times but that Civilisation itself is a mask. Just below the surface is the brutish barbarian, the dark pre-Christian lurking in the sub-conscious and restrained only by the forces of control manifest in a well ordered and just society. Kurtz utters the haunting reminder of his discovery to Marlow with the words:'*The horror. The horror*'(43). What has taken place is a process of self-discovery. Civilisation can be compared to the shell of an egg where the paradox is that the embryo of this egg, deep within man's conscious is dark and savage, untamed and self-destructive, not at all pure and innocent. The world is made of a multitude of eggs all of varying colours and sizes, each size and colour being a different culture. Each shell is a thin veneer, delicately held together by the fine threads of social principles, responsibilities, moral and ethical values. The shell divides the conscious from the unconscious - the violence of war can break the shell and man becomes aware of the dark and violent centre which makes up his being.

The territory beyond the community is described rather enigmatically as 'out there', something almost intangible. As with '*The Life and Times of Michael K.*' the white community is clearly represented as being superimposed upon an alien landscape. Through the eyes of the colonialist the land is barren, the great fresh water lake the community succours from grows a little more salty each year. Their time is limited. The young girl's role is quite implicit. She is a product of 'out there', beyond the settlement. She is an earth mother figure; a fertile and sensual being living close to the natural forces which emanate from the wilderness. It is a pagan bond which links the forces of nature to man. The lake salting up is therefore reinforced symbolically in this context. The language too is devisive and double edged. The Magistrate fails to 'penetrate' her in much the same way as the soldiers fail to 'penetrate' and 'thrust' their way into the 'interior' of the land. His failure to conquer her reflects his impotence but has wider implications for the conquering army.

Such a phenomenon has been commented on by Stillman and Pfaff:

'An Indochinese in 1909 remarked "caught in a machine which saps our energy, we are reduced to impotency" .' (44)

Rape itself is a violent act but impotence makes it a worthless conquest. He does not need to rape the girl, she is quite willing to let him take her and does not understand why he does not do so. He spends long hours in a ritualistic massaging of oil into her skin, of caressing the surface but goes no further and has no desire to. He feels that there is no way into her body, no way of 'knowing' her and he has a vision of her face as 'all surface'. *'Blank, like a fist beneath a black wig, the face grows out of the throat and out of the blank body beneath it, without aperture, without entry.'* (45) We are told quite clearly what sort of experience sexual intercourse with a woman is:

'....to enfold her and enter her, to pierce her surface and stir the quiet of her interior into an ecstatic storm, then to retreat, to subside, to wait for desire to reconstitute itself. But with this woman it's as if there is no interior, only a surface across which I hunt back and forth, seeking entry.' (46)

The metaphor works on a second level. The forces that travel in hopeless pursuit of the barbarians travel into more than the heart of the wilderness, they travel into the heart of man, another bleaker landscape - barren and depraved, lacking all justice and decency. A human condition more 'barbaric' in the hearts of the imperialists than in the hearts of those whom the Empire terms 'barbarians'.

An interesting question must now be asked. Are the settlers trying to find in the Barbarians confirmation of their own humanity, in order to hide their own barbarism? Are they seeing in the eyes of the Barbarians the reflection of their own guilt, of what is essentially their own barbarity? It would not be the first time that Coetzee has been compared to Conrad or Golding. There are strong undercurrents in the language that create for the reader an understanding of the 'other' at work in the text. The relationship between the subtleties of the spoken and of the implied induce an awareness of this before mentioned intangible element; a haunting 'otherness'. When Colonel Joll sets off for a final sortie into the interior to crush the barbarians once and

for all he is making more than one journey. He is unconsciously making a journey within himself to the heart of darkness. Earlier in the narrative Colonel Joll made it quite clear how far he had travelled already.

The Magistrate, like Ben du Toit the hero of Andre Brink's novel '*Dry White Season*', had questioned the methods by which the State maintained its grip over the natives. By doing this he had automatically branded himself an enemy of the State. The central idea in question is made clear by Joll himself:

'*Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt.*' (47)

The only way then that truth, with regards to human existence is valid, is through pain. The continual restatement of this truth is necessary and an accepted instrument with which this restatement can unmask the truth is through torture. The idea is an old one. The human world is subject to a multitude of interpretations and illusions which mask the truth. Pain however, when inescapable, is pure in feeling and cannot be misinterpreted. Pain goes below the illusion and unmasks the truth. Torture was very much a part of Fascist philosophy. Torturers were highly respected and seen as doing a vital job. But there is more to it than simply that. Pain can alter your concept of reality, it can change truth itself; it is with this knowledge that the torturer can leave behind moral doubt. If morality is a disposition attributed to the nature of ideology then the morality itself is open to change and the torturer is master in his own domain. In George Orwell's novel '*1984*' this idea was propounded most succinctly. Reality itself is an illusion, truth a matter of interpretation.

The hero of '*1984*', the innocuous Winston Smith, faces torture after attempting to rebel. The pain itself is enough to completely rearrange the way in which he perceives the world. As he says:

'*Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain. In the face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes, he thought over and over as he writhed on the floor, clutching uselessly at his disabled left arm.*' (48)

The answer to the question, '*how many fingers am I holding up*?' (49) is simple. I am holding up as many fingers as I tell you I am holding up. The knowledge that there exists Room 101, that contains that which you fear most - in Smith's case rats - is enough to convince you of anything. Pain in these cases then is argued to be a higher reality. The torturer renders his victim incapable of escaping through illusion. The torturer too is quite sincere in his belief that what he does is justified.

What Orwell does not confront however is the effect that experience will have on the torturer himself. O'Brien, Winston's torturer is not affected by his inhuman treatment of Smith. He talks rationally of restoring Smith's sanity so that he can eventually return to 'normal' society - this is reminiscent of the malevolent hero in Anthony Burgess' novel '*Clockwork Orange*'. In this case reintegration does not succeed despite a complex method of brain washing where the anti-hero has his eye-lids pinned open and he is forced to witness scenes of appalling violence to the music he loves - and yet if we accept that both are products of the same culture it is unconvincing. Breytanbach's belief, discussed earlier, that both become dehumanised by the experience seems more plausible.

An interesting contrast to the subjectivity of what is effective torture can be found in Franz Kafka. For Kafka writing was a profound scandal. George Steiner forcefully asserts: '*The live nakedness of his style takes no syllable for granted. The hopelessness of the writers task which is to find language as yet unsullied, worn to cliche, made empty by unmeditated waste. The instrument of torture in Kafka's 'Penal Colony' is a printing press. In short, Kafka heard the name Buchenwald in the word Beechwood. He understood, as if the bush had burnt for him again, that a great inhumanity was lying in wait for European man, and that parts of language would serve it and would be made base in the process.*' (50)

This point may be explored through a specific example:

On 11th November 1988 Max du Preez, a South African journalist, released an article titled '*The Grammar af Racism*' in the liberal Afrikaans paper Vrye Weekblad (Free

Weekly) in which he pointed out:*'It is generally accepted that a language reflects the soul of its people. Judged by the official 'Dictionary of the Afrikaans Language',which is printed by the government printer, Afrikaans has a heavily racist substructure. In Part Five of the dictionary, which covers J to K, there are twelve pages about the word 'kaffir' . No less than three hundred and three words starting with 'kaffir' are dealt with. And the golden thread running through all these words is that 'kaffir' is equal to inferior, useless or lazy.'* (51)

The following are examples of definitions from the Afrikaans dictionary published in 1968 but still the valid dictionary of the Afrikaans language: (52)

kaffir: uncivilized, uneducated, ill-mannered, rough person. A fictional person used to frighten children. A sub-servient person - one of low standing.

kaffir like:like an uncivilized, ill-bred kaffir.

Kaffir brother: an abusive nickname given to a white who demonstrates a preference for kaffirs or particularly favours them; a negrophile.

kaffirgoat: a goat of inferior quality, as those often found in possession of kaffirs.

kaffirdog: inferior, impurely bred dog, as found with kaffirs.

kaffirmanners: bad uncivilized manners.

kaffirplace: bad, miserable, unpleasant place.

kaffircourtship/lovemaking - lovemaking in the kaffir way. in which the lover hurts/ bullies the girlfriend in a playful manner, for example by pinching her or beating her with a light cane, etc.

kaffirwork: work regarded as being beneath the dignity of whites.

kaffirbad/useless: intensification of bad/useless,very bad/useless, as bad/useless as one can find.

kaffirslow: particularly, irritatingly slow.

kaffirdom: all the kaffirs together, the whole Bantu race. Very dumb or stupid.

The horror of two world wars contributed greatly to the decline in European culture and hence in the decline in the written word. To return again to Steiner:

'*the silence, which at every point surrounds the naked discourse, seems, by nature of Wittgenstein's force of insight, less a wall than a window. With Wittgenstein, as with certain poets, we look out of language not into darkness but light....the writer today tends to use far fewer and simpler words, both because mass culture has watered down the concept of literacy and because the sum of realities of which words can give a necessary and sufficient account has sharply diminished.*' (53)

The complex interaction between culture and language is necessarily constrained and contorted by historical experience and the level of angst that may become manifest. Language which is inherited then is not simply the product of the limitations of past experience but also the yard-stick by which cultural progression can be measured. This being the case it is hardly surprising that both Brink and Coetzee choose to write both in English and Afrikaans. What is also apparent is that one can not choose to opt out, one is implicated by association every time one opens ones mouth and allows language to be uttered. To go back to Coetzee's novel, the magistrate realised that '*the distance between myself and her torturers....is negligible.*' (54)

Recognition of this complicity is a terrifying experience and one that under normal conditions is suppressed. We inevitably return to the phenomenon of '*mass psychosis*' that I raised when discussing De Klerk's difficulties at the beginning of 1992. The horror is the seeming ordinaryness of those engaged in act of brutality; who act on behalf, if you like, of others. Hannah Arendt observed of Adolf Eichmann that:

'The trouble with (him) was precisely that there were so many like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic but were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of out moral standards of judgement, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied....that this new type of criminal, who is indeed 'hostis generis humani', commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong.' (55)

The Magistrate, after suffering at the hands of the torturers and subjected to quite brutal pain and humiliation finally gets the opportunity to ask the question, from Joll,s lackey Mandel, that he has been constantly asking himself:

'Do you find it easy to take food afterwards? I have imagined that one would want to wash one's hands.' (56)

The allusion to washing ones hands of guilt is an old literary one. We remember the physical manifestation of Lady Macbeth's guilty conscience in the blood stains that no amount of washing can remove from her hands. The wounds on the body of Christ are a constant reminder to mankind of their collective guilt. In much the same way Lady Macbeth made a physical transference of the murdered King's pain and suffering onto herself, finally driving her mad.

The Magistrate is historically and culturally implicated, bound to the same principles and code of conduct; there is a collective consciousness rooted in a sense, in a belief in justice and where injustice results in a manifestation of guilt which reveals itself in an often obscure and implicit manner; *'the distance between myself and her torturers....is negligible'*. The Magistrate is potent with the girl at night because the physical reflection of his guilt in her wounds is obscured. Although the Magistrate realises this connection he also understands the greater implications that are implanted in a wider historical context. So the illusion the darkness offers:

'It has not escaped me that in bed in the dark the marks her torturers have left upon

her, the twisted feet, the half-blind eyes, are easily forgotten.'(57)

Such a recognition has profound meaning in the fact their relationship enlightens a terrible truth:

'*Is it her she I want or the traces of a history her body bears.*' (58)

The Magistrate's arrogant belief that he is '*the one just man*' quickly fades. She for him symbolises the barbarism that before then had been reflected in the eyes of the barbarians. His need for her is not as a woman but as an historical model emblematic of the barbarity of the human condition.

What then was Mandel's reply to the Magistrate's question? Cornered and unable to avoid some kind of reply the torturer seems to falter, unsure of how to respond. There seems to be a contradiction here. I am sure that Joll would not have had trouble in finding a suitable response. Mandel however behaves like a cornered rat:

'*You fucking old lunatic! Get out! Go and die somewhere.*' (59)

There is 'guilt' in Mandel's reply, Mandel realises he is an unjust man, a hollow man, unable to explain the validity of his actions. '*Human kind cannot bear very much reality.*' (T.S Eliot - Collected Poems.) (60)

In many ways Coetzee's work can be read as an examination of myth and a demystification of illusions. Eldridge Cleaver has made just such a point by way of historical generalisation in his polemical work '*Soul on Ice*'. But Coetzee brings it vividly to life by way of the literary imagination, drawing the reader into the narrative itself. Cleaver argues:

'*What has happened is that the white race has lost its heroes. Worse, its heroes have been revealed as villains and its greatest heroes as the arch-villains. The new generations of whites appalled by the sanguine and despicable record carved over*

the face of the globe by their race in the last five hundred years are rejecting the panoply of white heroes whose heroism consisted in erecting the inglorious edifice of colonialism and imperialism; heroes whose careers rested on a system of foreign and domestic exploitation rooted in the myth of white supremacy, and the manifest destiny of the white race.' (61)

For the Magistrate the myth of 'white civilisation' rested on a sincere belief in justice. This was the yard-stick by which he gauged all actions and interpreted all acts of deviancy. The Magistrate reaches a rather pessimistic conclusion:

'*Justice: once that word is uttered, where will it all end? Easier to shout No! Easier to be beaten and be made a martyr. Easier to lay my head on a block than to defend the cause of justice for the barbarians for where can that argument lead but laying down our arms and opening the gates of the town to the people whose land we have raped.*' (62)

Coetzee's world then is one of illusion, of myth, of the 'other' in the human psyche. That the barbarians exist, that it is believed that they are 'out there' is essential to the maintenance of the myth of the Empire's superiority. It harks back to the words of the modern Alexandrine poet Cavafy:

'*night is here but the barbarians have not come. Some people arrived from the frontiers, and they said that there are no longer any barbarians....what shall become of us without barbarians? These people were a kind of solution.*' (63)

Coetzee's work then explores mans inner fears using topographical and geographical features as a mindscape. A mindscape upon which man enacts ritual and ceremony in a preservation of myth.

Colonel Joll's final return is at night in a desperate flight from the forces 'out there'. The army has been defeated but by whom it seems unclear. One of the survivors with Joll explains:

'We froze in the mountains! We starved in the desert! Why did no one tell us it would be like that? We were not beaten - they led us out into the desert and then they vanished.' (64)

During the brief conversation the Magistrate has with the soldier Colonel Joll cowers back in his carriage. He turns briefly in the Magistrate's direction:

'I stare at his pale, high temples. Memories of his mother's soft breast, of the tug in his hand of the first kite he ever flew, as well as of those intimate cruelties for which I abhor him, shelter in that beehive.' (65)

Milan Kundera has remarked on how historical association can work in a rather odd yet frightening way. The sentimentality gives a disturbing insight into the creation of myth:

'Leafing through a book on Hitler, I was touched by some of his portraits: they reminded me of my childhood. I grew up during the war; several members of my family perished in Hitler's concentration camps; but what were their deaths compared with the memories of a lost period in my life, a period that would never return.' (66)

Something inside the Colonel has snapped. The Colonel has lost touch with his own reality. His perception of his surroundings has altered and he finds himself reborn into himself, his old self discarded. The Colonel has recognised his own emptiness, his total alienation from the world he thought himself master of. Like Kurtz in Conrad's *'Heart of Darkness'*, the Colonel is *'hollow to the core....reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity and cruel without courage'*. They 'could get (themselves) to believe anything - anything.' Arendt sees the danger to the self for these *'hollow men'*:

'Expelled from a world with accepted social values, that had been thrown back upon themselves and still had nothing to fall back upon except here and there, a streak of

talent which made them as dangerous as Kurtz if they were ever to return to their homelands. For the only talent that could possibly burgeon in their hollow souls was the gift of fascination which make a "splendid leader of an extreme party The more gifted were walking incarnations of resentment like the German Carl Peters (possibly the model for Kurtz), who openly admitted that he was "fed up with being counted among the pariahs" and wanted to belong to a master race.' (67)

The paradox has an ironic twist. Those setting out to enlighten the barbarians may inadvertently enlighten themselves to their own 'hollowness'.

'*The world of native savages was a perfect setting for men who had escaped the reality of civilisation. Under a merciless sun, surrounded by an entirely hostile nature, they were confronted with human being who, living without the future and the past of an accomplishment, were as incomprehensible as the inmates of a madhouse. "The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us - who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wandering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be, before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone leaving hardly a sign - and no memories. The earth seemed unearthly,....and the men....no, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it - this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrill you was just the thought of their humanity - like yours - the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar." '* (68)

J.M Coetzee's novel '*Dusklands*' divides into two parts: '*The Vietnam Project*' and '*The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee*'. As mentioned when dealing with '*Foe*' the first part of the novel is the story told by a specialist in psychological warfare who has had a nervous breakdown after his involvement in the macabre project drives him to assault his own son.

The department that Dawn works for is that of mythography; the importance of myth is made clear:

'A myth is true - that is to say, operationally true - insofar as it has predictive force. The more deeply rooted and universal a myth, the more difficult it is to combat. The myths of a tribe are the fictions it coins to maintain its powers. The answer to a myth of force is not necessarily counterforce, counterforce reinforces the myth. The science of mythography teaches us that a subtler counter is to subvert and revise the myth. The highest propaganda is the propagation of a new mythography.' (69)

The central character who is responsible for the research into the Vietnam Project has become so removed from the 'outward reality' of the world others live in, so obsessed with his work that he loses touch with the real world. His wife, who has been with him all his adult life recognises his mental deterioration but he simply interprets this as a failure on her part to understand men. The allusion towards the woman figure echoes *'Waiting for the Barbarians'*, that of interiors awaiting claim. He complains that his wife Marilyn saw *'every entry into her'* as an *'invasion and possession'*. (70)

In truth, as the protagonists mental health deteriorates the invasion becomes more poignant, the threat more real, he more alien. We look through his eyes:

'She has found honest belief impossible ever since she decided that my moral balance was being tipped by my work on Vietnam. My human sympathies have been coarsened, she thinks.'(71)

Later on the metaphor becomes even more explicit, closer to its true objective:

'We forced ourselves deeper than we had ever gone before into their women; but when we came back we were still alone, and the women like stones.'(72)

The psychologist's contact with his work appears to have the same sort of moral disintergrating effect that pornography can have on an individual's sensibility. The

violent rape of Vietnam and her people is reflected in the aggressive pornographic nature of the photographs the psychologist carries around with him in his brief case. One shows an American army sergeant copulating with what is probably a Vietnamese child; '*arching backward with his hands on his buttocks, he lifts the woman on his erect penis*'. (73)

The photographs have a stimulating effect on the psychologist who interprets this response as confirmation that he is 'a man'. His work has desensitised him, he has been entrapped within the world of 'the other'.

He turns down the offer of a familiarisation trip to Vietnam because such a trip he considers superfluous to his designs.

'*The truth of my Vietnam formulations already begins to shimmer, as you can see, through the neat ranks of script, when these are transposed into print their authority will be binding.*'(74)

The second photograph is of two smiling American soldiers holding three severed heads between them. The psychologist, Eugene Dawn suggest:

'*One's heartstrings may be tugged by photographs of weeping women come to claim the bodies of their slain; a handcart bearing a coffin or even a man-size plastic bag may have its elemental dignity; but can one say the same as a mother with her son's head in a sack, carrying it off like a small purchase from the supermarket? I giggle.*' (75)

And so each photograph proposes another perversion, another regression in the human spirit. The human Vietnam, unrecorded by the lense of the camera the psychologist sees as an '*irredeemable Vietnam in the world which only embarrasses and alienates me.*' (76)

Eugene Dawn blames the failure of propaganda to 'penetrate' the hearts of

Vietnamese towards the Americans on the *'voice of the doubting self'*. This 'other self', the unconscious, Dawn rejects, claiming:

'there are no secrets....everything is on the surface and visible in mere behaviour.' (77)

Eugene Dawn prefers to approach the problem of propaganda in a more Freudian manner, choosing not the dichotomy of 'self' and 'other' but the father figure as representing this 'other'. This subservience reflects the subservience Dawn has to the father figure Jacobus Coetzee.

'The blow that wins the war against the tyrant father is not a death thrust but a humiliating blow that renders him sterile (impotence and sterility are mythologically indistinguishable). His kingdom no longer fertilised becomes a wasteland.' (78)

In real terms then what Dawn proposes is the alteration of the myth of the overthrow and murder of the primal father by the band of rebellious brothers in collusion with their mother the earth, by a new myth in which the earth itself is destroyed and can no longer nurture and protect its sons. Dawn's new myth rejects the *'mother earth'*, he rejects his wife and he has clearly repressed knowledge and meaning of his mother: *'my mother (whom I have not hitherto mentioned) is spreading her wings for the night,'* attributing the qualities of darkness, *'blood and anarchy'* to her also.(79) Control he states quite clearly can be effected as follows:

'that if we wish to take over the direction of a society we must either guide it from within its cultural framework or else, eradicate its culture and impose new structures.'(80)

J.M Coetzee recognises in South Africa some similar processes at work. The journalist John Carlin reports:

'There is no doubt that since the national emergency was imposed in June 1986 it has

proved effective in holding back, if not calming, the insurrectionary floodwaters. The detention without trial, and later release, of tens of thousands in the last three years; the banning, in the past year, of 32 anti-apartheid organisations, the restriction orders, banning political activity, on hundreds of black political leaders; the prohibition of open political gatherings; the arbitrary power of arrest and freedom from prosecution granted to the police in "unrest situations"; the restrictions on the media: all have transformed the political scene since the 1984 to 1986 period of township unrest.' (81)

In Coetzee's novel Dawn argues '*there is only one rule in Vietnam: fragment, individualise. Our mistake was to allow the Vietnamese to conceive themselves as an entire people huddled under the bombs of a foreign oppressor.*'(82)

I now turn to Coetzee's work '*In the Heart of the Country*' which revolves around the diary account of the central character, the daughter of an Afrikaner farmer, Anna. The novel effectively depicts the isolation and existential abandonment of a young woman who is unloved and for whom life offers no purpose.

'*In the Heart of the Country*' is written in diary form with 266 separate entries. The central character Anna, is the daughter of a farmer, lonely and slowly being driven towards insanity by the tedious monotony and isolation of the interior.

'*I am one who stays in her room reading or writing or fighting migraines.* (83)

There is only her father and he has little time or interest in a daughter who has failed to find a suitable companion and who will undoubtedly grow into a dowdy old spinster. '*The colonies*' we are told '*are full of girls like that.*' (84) Both the unpenetrated interior of the Karoo and the unpenetrated virgins are barren.

The diary entries commence with the arrival of her new step-mother. She barely recall her real mother. The style of the diary itself tell us of her need to express herself and the frustration of having no one to approach. Communication, or lack of it

is central to the understanding of the novel. The language itself is stale and lifeless, its pedantic overtones suggest a banality of existence that is reflected in its content. The dryness of the language reflects the girls lack of emotional and spiritual energy. She has become a hollow shell, withered through neglect, never having experienced love or beauty in her life. Entry 18 reads:

'I live neither alone nor in society but as it were among children. I am spoken to not in words, which come to me quaint and veiled, but in signs, in confirmations of face and hands, in postures of shoulders and feet, in nuances of tune and tone, in gaps and absences whose grammar has never been recorded. Reading the brown folk I grope, as they grope reading me: for they too hear my words only dully, listening for those overtones of the voice, whose subtleties of the eyebrows that tell them my true meaning: "Beware, do not cross me,""what I say does not come from me." Across valleys of space and time we strain ourselves to catch the pale smoke of each others signals....' (85)

This detachment as it was with Susan Barton in '*Foe*' (we remember Susan Barton listening to Friday playing the flute unable to communicate and receive recognition through both the medium of voice and music) and the Magistrate in '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' is far more than an etymological one. It concerns itself with a vacuous gulf, a recognition of the 'other' - and her lack of fulfilment as an individual and more importantly as a woman. She describes herself as '*a black widow in mourning for the uses I was never put to*'. (86)

The condition is one of despair, of existential abandonment. She feels that she has something alive within her but it is locked inside her body.

'The wound in my chest slides open. If I am an emblem then I am an emblem. I am incomplete. I am a being with a hole inside me. I signify something. I do not know what. I am dumb. I stare out through a sheet of glass into a darkness that is complete....' (87)

Her father's new wife usurps the only position of power she has held, the autonomy of the household - she also symbolises the 'other' in the daughter; she is all body without mind. Her *'full dark lips'* are constantly referred to, as are the descriptions of her bedroom antics with her father.

Shortly after her father's remarriage Hendrick, a servant on the farm, marries Armoede and brings her to live on the farm. Hendrick asks if she may be employed in the farmhouse. Although they live closely together there is still a distancing between them.

'But most nights the wind whips the frail sounds away, and we might as well be on separate planets, we on ours, they on theirs.'(88)

Relationships and the relative distance between individuals comes down to an understanding of language - of how it can be shaped, how it can enclose, disclose, how it can accept or reject individuals into a social group. In a country like South Africa language is an important tool of power.

Gradually the daughter becomes paranoid, thinking Klein-Anna (the new wife) and her father are developing a 'private language' that they use to block her out. They corrupt language and by doing so distort her own ability to communicate with others, especially the *'brown folk'*. This stunting of the language therefore does not only affect those who are implicated in this conspiracy but prevents others from moving on as they sail in the same cultural boat. This argument must therefore also raise a certain amount of sympathy for those who attempt to tear themselves away and establish their own separate dialogue. The Afrikaner is well aware of the relationship between language and identity, between language and power.

Such a shape of consciousness is well reflected by Andre Zaaiman, a young rebel Afrikaner interviewed by Graham Leach:

' *The Afrikaner is going through an existential crisis. He is beginning to reject*

apartheid but has no reference point. We must give a context to the Africanness of the Afrikaner. He has to decide whether he wants to be a european or an African. If he chooses for Europe, his language, so important to the Afrikaner, will disappear.' (89)

But the Afrikaner has used his language as a tool with which to subjugate others. The language has its roots in a rich multi-cultural background that dated back to the arrival of the first settlers and their relationship with indigenous and black slave groups in the Cape. Millions of blacks speak the language. The only way to breath new life into the language is to push out the goal posts to include all South Africans, to take Afrikaans out of the personal ownership of the Afrikaner and give it back to all South Africans as would of happened if natural development had been allowed to go on.

The isolation of the farmers daughter takes on new and frightening symbolic importance when viewed in this way. Her isolation, her separateness, becomes a sickness and she recognises the symptoms.

'*I toss about in the dark whipping myself into distraction. Too much misery, too much solitude makes of one an animal. I am losing all human perspective.*' (90)

She feels, in fact wills her 'other' to come out and take over:

'....*tonight I am going to relax, give up, explore the pleasures of drowning, the feel of my body sliding out of me and another body sliding in, limbs inside my limbs, mouth inside my mouth.*' (91)

The open wound in her chest that revealed her hollowness, that slid open now allows entry of the 'other' to slide in and fill the gap.

The image in diary entry 100 is identical to the final section of *'Foe'*. Drowning is a rebirth, a discovery of the true self, the 'other' awaiting discovery.

Descent into madness becomes a kind of drowning, a drowning in oneself. The drowning is interpreted as a kind of madness. Madness itself is a kind of death - the loss of reality unleashing you from the need to conform to exterior patterns of behaviour.

William Golding's novel '*Pincher Martin*' introduces us to this mysterious world which exists immediately after loss of consciousness and before death, the brain still functioning despite the loss of physical activity. The sensation Golding compares it to is that of drowning. The central character imagines that he has managed to swim to safety after a shipwreck. We, the reader also believe this as we are forced to interpret reality through the eyes of the central character. We only become aware of the truth at the end of the novel when we discover that in fact he died at the very beginning and that the rest of the story has been wishful thinking on the part of the main character.

So, as the daughter drowns in her own world and the dichotomy between reality and imagination become more and more confused so our perception of what is truth and what is fiction becomes blurred. We only have her diary accounts to go on and these repeatedly contradict each other. She imagines her step-mother and her father plotting to kill her, though there appears no reasonable grounds for thinking such a thing. Long before her father sleeps with Hendrich's wife her imagination leads her to fantasise about murdering the pair of them.

'*He lies head and arms over the edge of the bed, black with his heavy blood.*'(92)

It is quite apparent that she blames her father's subjugation of her for her inner disquiet. Ominously she meditates:

'*What did he learn from Hansel and Gretal about fathers who lead their daughters into dark forests? What did Noah teach him about fornication?*' (93)

Eventually the daughter murders her father and then implicates Henrich and Anna. When she gets them to help her with the burial, it is a long and complex affair due to

an undersized grave and the onset of rigormortis. Unfortunately the daughter cannot run the farm on her own, she loses the respect of the servants who quickly lose patience with her when she fails to pay them.

The front cover of the 1991 Penguin edition of Coetzee's latest novel '*Age of Iron*' gives us a number of clues as to the narrative which is to follow. Iron symbolises a cold, uncompromising world; it is hard, imprisoning and durable. The Age, although the creation of men, is not controlled by men - like Frankenstein it takes on a life of its own. However sincere, if misguided the founders are no longer the masters of their creation. The echo of the first Iron Age, externalised on the streets of the block township reverberates in the sub-conscious of the New Age. The time mechanism also depicted on the front cover reinforces this idea - civilisation is not reached though natural evolutionary movement forwards but is cyclic. The echo resounds to the relentless ticking of the clock. Man's creation, a kind of mechanical Frankenstein, is born from the male ego: one is no longer in contact with the 'machine'. The machine runs in, a Kafkaesque horror within which the individual becomes increasingly alienated from his creation. We enter here the true nature of the absurd and the paradox of the divided self; a tragi-comedy where the individual, like blinded Gloucester, wanders the moor and the storm rages.

'*The age of iron. After which comes the age of bronze. How long, how long before the softer ages return in their cycle, the age of clay, the age of earth?*' (94)

The narrative voice with its reflective, often nostalgic tone is interpreted by the reader as the product of a bygone age. A time when the marionettes obeyed the puppet master. The age of iron is a time of fusion, of terrible pain as two worlds inevitably collide. The years of repressed angst become manifest in the physical form of Vercueil a symbolic visitation of Curren - a white liberal who until the arrival of Varcueil had always considered herself in harmony with the environment. She was not conscious of the brooding guilt lying just below the surface, until the meeting with Vercueil, the 'angel of death'. This guilt had always been placated by acts of charity, tokens of her liberal conscience. The world 'out there' had not been

threatening as she had always managed to convince herself that its existence was, although tragic in its suffering, not the result of her actions directly of indirectly. 'Out there' becomes a hideous distortion, a phantasmagoria from the depths of the while psyche. This is the 'swart gevaar' (black peril) of Afrikaner mythology. As in some Gothic nightmare the dark side takes physical shape and steps out of the victims mind and into the real world. Elizabeth Curren discovers her true identity trapped within the mass psychosis that bonds the white South African community.

Vercueil is clearly representative of the lost children of Africa, discarded by their white masters - left to die in the townships and overcrowded rural reserves - they are uncountable, the 'swart gevaar' of the white nightmare. Brutalised by their environment they become desensitised to the daily horrors they experience.

An interesting and crucial link can be made here between text and context. The 'lost' children that are features of the fictional landscape of '*Age of Iron*' are the children of the South African townships today. Mallaby puts the situation in context:

' "Long live the spirit of no compromise" became the slogan of the period. To the young activists, oppression and martyrdom became badges of heroism, strikes and boycotts the highest callings in life. "*When I am eighteen,*" said a fourteen-year-old to a 'New York Times' reporter in 1985, "*I will go to become a cadre in Lusaka. Then instead if stones I will have a bazooka.*" ' (After Apartheid - Mallaby p.13)

Relating back to chapter 3 we are reminded that the S.U.D.'s (Special Defence Unit) were originally called into being by Chris Hani in 1990, in response to violent attacks by Inkatha supporters and later supported byMandela himself. See chapter 3, note 12.

By the time Mandela was released from prison possibly more than half Sowetos children were roaming wild on the streets with no parental care, Few had any schooling due to the boycotts. They terrorised adults who did not give their full support to the cause and informed on parents or even personally disciplined them is they thought them sympathetic towards the state. Removed from any contact,

protected from contamination by the Security Forces the whites continue to believe in a servile, childish black, simple and easily subdued. Elizabeth recounts a deeply symbolic story of a time when her daughter kept rabbits:

'Rabbits,' I said 'They used to belong to my domestic's son. I let him keep them here as pets. Then there was some commotion or other in his life. He forgot about them and they starved to death. I was in hospital and didn't know about it. I was terribly upset when I came back and found out what agony had been going on unheeded at the bottom of the garden. Creatures that can't talk, that can't even cry.' (95)

The metaphor couldn't be clearer. When Elizabeth visits the black township or Guguletu she sees for the first time the true horrors of Apartheid and the inhuman suffering that until recently has been carefully hidden from the majority of whites.

Elizabeth discovers that she has cancer the day Vercueil arrives. The cancer is the physical manifestation of the repressed guilt in the white psyche, Vercueil the unwanted child; physical proof of the white tyranny. So how does the cancer go to work? Firstly it arrives unseen. It asserts itself before the victim can put up any defence. It is infact a product of the bodies own immune system; it is a kind of suicide. A wrongly interpreted signal picked up by the body's defence system sparks off a self-destructive over-reaction. The host remains outwardly healthy while the cancer continues to grow in strength.

And so the contamination and resultant self-destruction of the body is the unconscious action of the body itself. In a young healthy body if the growth is detected early enough then the growth can be cut out but in a body which is old and frail such an operation would simply destroy the body. And so the corrupted body awaits death helpless and in increasing pain.

Although there is the physical death of the body at least the spirit is not confined and can be set free by the death. For Elizabeth the only person there to aid her at the end is Vercueil, a man who *'cannot swim, does not yet know how the fly'* (96). But it is

precisely this naivety that offers hope:

'Vercueil and his dog, sleeping so calmly beside these torrents of grief. Fulfilling their charge, waiting for the soul to emerge. The soul, neophyte, wet, blind, ignorant.' (97)

The absence of any obvious meeting place for South Africa's disparate groups, broken by apartheid and now drifting towards imminent collision has the effect to taking language back to its primitive form; a series of ritualistic iconic gestures. Such a coming about can be easily explained. Language itself has become the possession of the oppressor. Used to mediate all communication in its own terms. Symbol of oppression it cannot be trusted; language itself has become a lie. Messages are transmitted through posture, eye contact, mannerism and so on.

'A word, undeniable, from a language before language. First look and then the spitting.' (98)

Existence for Vercueil and Elizabeth becomes an enforced symbiosis *'since life in (South Africa) is so much like life aboard a sinking ship.'* (99). Pain itself - both are relearning the meaning of that word - becomes a necessary part of their fusion. There is much that must be exorcised before any intimacy can take place between them, In temporal terms they live within the 'dead zone', a non-place within which they can observe but upon which they cannot act.

'Two souls, his and mine, twinned together, ravished. Like insects mating tail to tail, facing away from each other, still except for a pulsing of the thorax that might be mistaken for mere breathing. Stillness and ecstacy.' (100)

Obsession with entymology becomes a necessary ordeal in search of the truth in a mediated world of lies.

'..... the reign of the locust family is the truth of South Africa, and the truth is what

makes me sick? Legitimacy they no longer trouble to claim. Reason they have shrugged off. What absorbs them us power and the stupor of power.' (101)

We have then three separate points here. First, the animal bareness brought out through a near state of civil war which has turned human beings into nothing more than animals intent only on their own survival. Second, the soul separate from the body and the mind meets in a state of ecstasy with other souls in the 'dead zone'. For the soul it is an escape and mirrors the conclusion of the novel as Elizabeth's soul leaves her rotten body. Thirdly there is the state controlled media manipulated by politicians hungry for power; an insect survival: intent on corrupting, polluting and controlling all that is good and using it for themselves.

The real issue becomes confused when the body and the soul become bonded in a terrible struggle, W.B Yeats' '*terrible beauty is born*' (102). Mr, Thabane explains:

'*When you are body and soul in the struggle as these young people are, When you are prepared to lay down you lives for each other without question, then a bond grows up that is stronger than any bond you will know again. That is comradeship.*' (103)

Elizabeth believes however that, '*comradeship is a mystique of death, of killing and dying*'.(104)

We read the above with the knowledge that Elizabeth's daughter has deserted both her and her country.

Coetzee's novels are not confined to the analysis of a particular South African condition, as it were removed from the wider context of European tradition. The problem confronting the white European, whether in Africa or in Europe with regards to his history and the expansive mythology built around that history is identical. The Afrikaner has the option, if he wishes to take it of becoming a white African and so the opportunity of rediscovering his identity. The European has no such option.

Going back into ones self in order to discover who one is is the main theme behind the novels of both Brink and Coetzee. For du Toit, who discovers everything he has believed in to be a lie, for Elisabeth in '*An Instant in the Wind*', or for the Magistrate who discovers the paradox of the 'out there' within the 'self' in '*Waiting for the Barbarians*'. The novels explore the no-mans land through which Michael K. unwittingly and indestructibly stumbles. That ground between oppressor and oppressed, torturer and tortured, fertility and sterility, fulfilment and emptiness. It is the collective fear of a nation on the brink of a new beginning or annihilation. It is the process of unmasking the 'other' between male and female, between black and white, native and settler, conscious and unconscious.

Conrad's '*Heart of Darkness*' you will recall, takes us on a journey into the heart of 'darkest' Africa, what becomes a metaphor for the human subconscious. The indigenous people are depicted as '*evil incarnate*', pre-christian barbaric savages and unenlightened. Being 'civilised' is purely dependent on existing within a so called 'civilisation' as Conrad shows through his character Kurtz. Once removed from this 'civilised' environment the individual quickly reverts to his primitive state. The analogy that Conrad makes is that the state of being civilised is but a thin veneer that encases the individual and protects him within a complex infrastructure that constitutes society. The barbarian within man lies just beneath the surface, repressed through social conditioning. Removed from 'civilisation' Kurtz constructs his own reality. Only when confronted with his past does he realise what he has become. The barbarian is not an external physical entity but a manifestation of his repressed subconscious. To the Afrikaner the fear of '*swart gevaar*' lies deep within their subconscious. It is not so much the 'evil' of the black man that they fear as the surfacing realisation of their own guilt - that they have committed unforgivable sins against innocent victims and that one day they must be punished for it. The terrible truth that du Toit faces in '*A Dry White Season*'. Coetzee in his novel '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' re-enacts the ritual with the Colonel riding out into the desert in search of the 'enemy' but finding nothing but his own terrible fear.

Coetzee's novels then are explorations of Western mans alienation from the land and

the breakdown in communication that has resulted as he has trekked further and further from his intended path. That is, deep within the Afrikaner is a sincere belief that he is just and is doing the Lord's work. That he may have strayed from the path has until recently been unthinkable such has been the faith in their own 'mission'. An examination of British values would reveal a similar arrogance. As the distance travelled from the intended path, which is also reflected in an ideological historical context in the West - the Afrikaner is merely the product of a civilisation already entering crisis - language has increasingly lost meaning, becoming a puppet to power mongers and hypocrites.

The yearning for wholeness that modernity has denied the individual; the splitting, breaking up effect of modern life and the collapse of the nuclear and extended family: the loss of personal identity in a material civilisation whose value system is rapidly losing substance is a plight that is essentially Western.

The journey through the novels of J.M. Coetzee is a tortuous and painful one but preferable to torture itself. The writing is explicit and graphically maps out the mindscape of the modern Afrikaner. It makes no attempt at compromise and one can easily be driven to an overwhelming sense of despair if not for the subtle suggestions of hope for a better future which are part of Coetzee's narrative. I have not come across another writer of fiction who has moved me so deeply and forced me to stop and think at length not just about the condition of the Afrikaner psyche but the human condition of western man. The work of J.M. Coetzee effects the European reader in a quite unnerving way. Not only does his work place the African situation onto a more universal map it deals with a particular human condition that the reader himself recognises and as reader becomes implicated.

Coetzee leads us naturally into the next chapter which examines the mythology of the white Afrikaner and the forces presently at work to cure the potentially catastrophic effects of their historically inherited myopia.

NOTES

CHAPTER FIVE

1. This has helped to undermine the faith that young whites have in the system. Their experiences in the townships can do a great deal to lift their own inherited myopia.

2. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe* (Penguin 1988) p.10.

3. J.M.Coetzee, *Life and Times of Michael K.* (King Penguin 1988).

4. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Pluto Press 1990) p.120.

5. Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the rehabilitation of Post Colonial History, Journal of Commonwealth literature vol.xxiii no.1 1988, p.71.

6. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe.* p.85.

7. Frantz Fanon, *Charmes* (Paris, Gallimard 1952).

8. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks.* p.31.

9. W.J.Knox, *Sketches and Studies in South Africa* (Ibister & Co. Ltd. Second Edition. July 1899).

10. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks.* p.49.

11. ibid p.80.

12. Nietzsche's remark.

13. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe.* p.148.

14. ibid p.57.

15. ibid p.98.

16. ibid p.97.

17. Vercors, *Le Silence de la Mer.* English - *Put out the Light.* (London, Macmillan 1944).

18. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe.* p.154.

19. ibid p.71.

20. Herman Melville, *Billy Budd.*

21. ibid.

22. J.M.Coetzee, *White Writing.* (Yale University Press 1988) pp.7/8.

23. J.M.Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country.* (Penguin1987) p.130.

24. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe.* ibid p.33.

25. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*: Quoted from Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (Panther Modern Society 1970) p.69.

26. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe.* p.142.

27. ibid p.97.

28. A commonly-held belief that is untrue or without foundation. The 'truth' comes in the fabrication of history. So the Afrikaner inherits a history which is built upon myth and so deludes the Afrikaner as to his inheritance.

29. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil.* (Edinburgh & London, Foulis 1911).

30. Breyten Breytenbach, *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist.* (Johannesburg 1984) pp.311/312.

31. Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (Heinemann:London 1990) p.222.

32. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe*: quoted from dust cover.

33. Teresa Dovey, *The Novels of J.M.Coetzee: La Canian Allegories.*

34. George Steiner, *Language and Silence.* (Pelican 1969) p.76.

35. ibid p.75.

36. ibid p.45.

37. William Golding, *The Inheritors.* (Faber 1981).

38. This is essential to the understanding of the dialectic. The '*other*' can be interpreted as that which the individual represses and which haunts the subconscious. For further discussion see Chapter 5.

39. J.M.Coetzee, *Life and Times of Michael K.* p.121.

40. Franz Kafka, *The Trial..* Translated by Wills and Edwin Muir. (London 1950).

Page 184 is missing from the original volume.

63. Edmund Stillman & William Pfaff, *The Politics of Hysteria.*

64. J.M.Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians.* p.147.

65. ibid p.146.

66. Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Likeness of Being.* (Faber & Faber 1985). p.4.

67. Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism.* (World Publishing Co. 7th print 1962) p.190.

68. ibid p.190.

69. J.M.Coetzee, *Dusklands.* (Penguin 1987) p.24.

70. ibid p.8.

71. ibid p.9.

72. ibid p.18.

73. ibid p.13.

74. ibid p.14.

75. ibid p.15.

76. ibid p.16.

77. ibid p.10

78. ibid p.26.
79. ibid p.20.

80. ibid p.21.

81. John Carlin, *The Independent.* (10th June 1989)

82. J.M.Coetzee, *Dusklands.* p.24.

83. J.M.Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country.* (Penguin 1987). p.1.

84. ibid p.1.

85. ibid p.7.

86. ibid p.40.

87. ibid p.9.

88. ibid p.28.

89. Graham Leach, *The Afrikaners: Their Last Trek.* (Mandarin 1990) p.302.

90. J.M.Coetzee, *Dusklands*. p.53.

91. ibid p.53.

92. ibid p.51.

93. ibid p.46.

94. J.M.Coetzee, *Age of Iron* (Penguin 1991) p.46.

95. ibid p.18.

96. ibid p.181.

97. ibid p.170.

98. ibid p.7.

99. ibid p.20.

100. ibid p.27.

101. ibid p.25.

102. W.B.Yeats, *Easter 1916.*

103. ibid p.136.

104. ibid p.137.

CHAPTER SIX

An End To The Great White Myth

First of all let us try to summarise the basic framework for the Afrikaner mythology, a framework upon which Apartheid was hung.

The first was an attempt to legitmise their bigotry before God. That the white man was made in the image of God. Malan had previously stated that: '*Afrikanerdom is not the work of man but the creation of God.*'(1) In a summit of four churches in February 1993 the Dutch Reformed Church - still divided by colour - again failed to come to an agreement for unification. To a large extent the problem is historic; the link between the predominantly white Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK)(2) and the Broederbond(3) (the secret society mainly responsible for the setting up of Apartheid) is a strong one with four members of the church's ruling moderature beloging to the society. Not surprisingly the NGK investigation into the Broederbond gave the society a clean bill of health. The NGK refused to Apologise for apartheid and argued that the men who had constructed and carried out such policies were men of integrity and had simply engaged in a social experiment that had gone wrong. The place of the black in this white purist philosophy was also quite simply determined. Blacks were not to be regarded as human beings in the normal order of things. They had been placed on this earth as a living reminder of mans sin. There was no place in heaven for these creatures. Convenient, it also perversely justified the exclusion of blacks from the vote and their use as nothing more than slaves in the white myth.

Secondly, the myth states that whites were divinely chosen to rule South Africa. Such authority thus legitimises the elitist ideology that Malan and his associates constructed. It was also possible to explain away international condemnation of Apartheid as that made from ignorance and without the divine guidance given the Afrikaner. Until the 1950's the majority of the Afrikaners were simple country folk, staunchley protestant and isolated from each other in their sprawling homesteads on the veld. They found themselves surrounded by 'primitive' black people whom they did not understand but who outnumbered them many times over. To be told that they were superior through divine order helped dispel fears of *swart gevaar*.

Thirdly, that the maintenance of political control - sustained since 1945 - was a

necessity if their religion and their culture was to be protected. Anthropologists even tried to argue that the homelands were ancient tribal kingdoms and that most blacks wanted their return.

Fourthly, history was written to fit the mythology that was being created. The mythologising of the *voortrekkeers* and the bloody war that was waged against both the Zulus and the British.

Fifthly, the Afrikaans language. As I have made clear throughout this work, language is a crucial yardstick with which to measure the relative positions of the two opposing ideologies. George Steiner in his paper '*The Language Animal*' argues:

'*Our language is our window on life. It determines for its speaker the dimensions, perspective, and horizon of a part of the total landscape of the world.*' (4)

The clarity of ones vision is dependent on the condition of one language and this condition is an inherited one. We may find our inheritance already tarnished and its potency weakened or lost.

In truth the *taal* was a rich amalgam born from the dialogue of generations of Dutch, German, Malay and other settlers, mixed with the languages of the indigenous people and black slaves from West Africa. It could not have originated further from the narrow ownership of one group that it became. In fact it symbolised the coming together of peoples not their separation. Now the language is corrupted with all the trappings of oppression. Its vocabulary is polluted with the vulgarisms of racism, bigotry and violence. It has become a language that enslaves free expression not releases it. Control over individuals can be enforced in various ways both implicit and explict but at its most effective it works at a subconscious level. In presenting the individual with a vocabulary which has been selected by a minority who have determined beliefs the reciever has little choice but to continue the received dialogue. The dialogue itself is conditioned by the individuals lexical selection. No matter what the individuals feelings are he or she can only react verbally within the restraints of

his or her known vocabulary. The loss of language is not a state that the individual has a natural awareness of for the paradox is seen in the lack of ability for the individuals to see that they are constrained by their ability to voice their feelings through their conscious reflection of the world that surrounds them. One can only speak within the confines of the words that one is given; all else becomes distorted and results in frustration. If we accept that the individual cannot break from the constraints of language without some form of spiritual enlightenment then we must accept that the white South African faces a trauma that can only result in a rejection of the total belief system upon which one has based ones whole existence. Enlightenment, in the way that I attempt to explore it, manifests itself in the surfacing of the repressed unconscious to a conscious awareness to the reality to which the individual has unknowingly become attatched. To come back to George Steiner:

'The forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious. These patterns are the unperceived intricate systematizations of his own language - shown readily enough by a candid comparison and contrast with other languages, especially those of a different linguistic family. His thinking itself is in a language - in English, in Sanskrit, in Chinese. And every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyses nature, notices or neglects types of relationship and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness.' (5)

We have then in the historic formation of Afrikaans a language which is born of a hybrid conglomeration of cultural roots, which has been deformed by the attempts of one root power to take control and strangle the other investors - a phenomena that can only be described as mass cultural suicide. The observations of Coetzee give us a clue as to the potentially hysterical and catastrophic result of the present crisis. The acknowledgement of *'the other'* within the self as being an intrinsic part of the surfacing unconscious can aid the process of enlightenment. The character of du Toit in *'A Dry White Season'* undergoes a terrible enlightenment and faces the sacrifice that others close to him must go through with an unbelievable naivety while Thomas

in '*An Act of Terror*' admits:

'*I can take whatever comes my way. It's something I've sorted out with myself years ago. But what one isn't prepared for is the price you pay when others are sacrificed. The ones you love.*' (6)

If the individual inherits a vocabulary which limits the freedom of individual expression then the expression of that individul will become limited. For the Afrikaners the inherited vocabulary allowed little room for individual expression. The only place for original thought was within the frustrated conscious and being unexpressed verbally the thought itself became a perversion and repressed into the cluttered subonscious. The cerebral process of verbalising a repressed emotion will be frustrated by the absence of a recognisable root cause. Rationalising the resultant action on a cause and effect basis becomes impossible. The resultant model when simplified would look like this: *Cause + repression + anxiety + guilt + frustration + scape-goat + reaction + violence.* The frustration itself resulted in angst which became then misinterpreted by the conscious and expressed through unrecognisable actions. In real terms the individual would react in violent ways that would be undireced towards logical targets. These targets when compared to the understood angst would represent figures repressed within the subconscious. Violent attacks on blacks by white youths are explained thus. One individual will is subjugated by the power of the subconscious. This is not to say that the conscious itself does not play a part or that the two states are totally separated. The individual will indeed seek to justiy their actions by giving what the individual recognises as rational explanations for the actions taken. The actions themselves can become common within groups and recognisable as traits. Such group activity will then justify the action itself and construct an identity through that action for the individual committing that action. The revised model may run as follows. *Repressed anxiety* within the *subconscious* surfaces in the *conscious* creating a recognisable *mood change* in the individual *psyche*. The absence of any rational cause leads to frustration and the individual is forced to seek out a scape-goat upon which to unburden his mounting angst. The illogical transition from the subconscious to the conscious prevents the individuals

attempts to justify his actions which results in guilt. This guilt works between the subconscious and the conscious with no logical outcome and is eventually manifest in the form of anger towards the scape-goat and even violence. The anxiety itself will continue to surface until the original cause has been exorcised through a dialectic between the various groups. Only then will the myth be dispelled and a new beginning be possible.

If we attempt to use this model in the context of South Africa and then focus on *swart gevaar* we come up with an interesting interpretation of the white mythology. The fear of *swart gevaar* (being over-run by black hoardes) is deeply embedded in the Afrikaans psyche. Its origins go back to the first settlers. The individual alienated from the security of his own cultural homeland finds himself alone in the vastness of the South African veld. His personal sense of abandonment has a powerful effect on his psyche. Rather than creating 'little England' as many British settlers managed in other parts of the world the Afrikaner actually reverted to a state of near barbarity. The section on Coetzee's novel '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' examines this situation thoroughly. The Structure of consciousness drawn out in Coetzee's novel (discussed in chapter five) is chronicled in the earlier history chapters. Around the early settlers were growing numbers of blacks, who during the early settler period were pushing southwards.The isolation of the individual settler and his own sense of vulnerability, heightened by his abandonment on the veld led to what I would term a psychosis. Against this was set the repressed despair of their attempts to realise their 'Garden of Eden' in South Africa. Life for the early settlers was extremely harsh and the afrikaner farmer lived a sparse life with little in the way of comfort or contact with the outside world. The availability of slave labour at least ensured survival but the price of such exploitation was a heavy one to pay. The brutality with which many blacks were treated by their owners must have bitten deep into the conscience of many a white farmer. As the world outside changed the white farmer remained isolated and intellectually backward. But even in their primitive isolation they would have become increasingly aware of the changing nature of the world outside. Increasingly effective would have been the missionaries who were vocal in their attacks on slavery and the exploitation of the black peoples. The Afrikaner are a

devoutly religious people and there must have been an increasing amount of guilt arising from their treatment of their black neighbours. The whites sense of abandonment contradicted another part of the myth - that they were chosen by God. Their treatment of the blacks led to tenuous reinterpretation of the Bible and more doubt was repressed. As a result the collective conscious became burdened by an accumulation of repressed guilt. Incest, alcoholism and violence became symptoms of a deeper affliction. The resultant mental state I have termed that of *mass-psychosis.*

Their language should have given them the opportunity to express their feelings and unburden themselves but they could not allow the feelings to surface without having to accept that their dreams were illusory. Language had to be silenced or it would speak the unspeakable. Any chance of establishing a dialectic became frustrated. The only truth within the dialectic became that within the mind of the writer of fiction. This individual became an explorer and ventured into an interior that was not only that which he or she wished to expose to the world but also one which flashed between conscious and subconscious because the reality that was being revealed was a part of the writers own history. The very thing that makes the Afrikaner writer strive to find the truth about his people is that that gives the writer potency. The struggle that the Afrikaner writer has is the struggle over the written word and the manner in which the language has been corrupted through faith in a false mythology. The knowledge that there exists a link between their own potency as writers and the ideological corruption of the language they rely on to transmit their ideas adds to the urgency of their work. George Steiner acknowledges the problem similarly:

'*Whether it is the decline in the life-force of the language itself that helps bring on the cheapening and dissolution of moral and political values, or whether it is a decline in the vitality of the body politic that undermines the language, one thing is clear. The instrument available to the modern writer is threatened by restriction from without and decay from within. In the world of what R.P.Blackmur calls 'the new illiteracy', the man to whom the highest literacy is of the essence, the writer, finds himself in a precarious situation.*'(7)

We have then the heart of the matter. If the myth itself can be exposed and if this can be done before the language itself has been corrupted beyond hope then the Afrikaner writer has an essential part to play in the crisis that Western Civilisation now finds itself in. In the silence of Michael K. lies not just the despair of abandonment but the recognition by the oppressor of the existence of an understandable cause. Where there is understanding there is hope. If we believe that the point of no return has passed and so *'farewell fear'* then there can be no future. The work of J.M Coetzee and Andre Brink gives the Afrikaner the opportunity to reassess their position but more importantly to do so in an open forum. The dialectic itself will convince others of their sincerity and create positive collaboration in attempts to find a solution to a uniquely complex problem. The importance of the struggle is expressed lucidly by Steiner:

'Languages are living organisms. Infinitely complex, but organisms nevertheless. They have in them a certain life force, and certain powers of absorption and growth. But they can decay and they can die.'(8)

It is of course quite logical to assume that the process can be reversed and that a language can be revitalised and given a new lease of life. The language of Afrikaans was born in a time of racial integration and the result of a coming together of disperate groups retreating from bigotry and xenophobic intolerance. The very nature of its birth gives those who utter its words a hope for the future. A language born from such a rich amalgam, with such a rich cultural history must also be resiliant to the short term usurpation by one group.

The present crisis that the white Afrikaner faces forces him to look inward and to examine his own consciece. It will take great courage and will not be easy but if the Afrikaner hopes to survive in Africa then there is no alternative; they cannot expect to continue at the expense of other ethnic groups. Nor can they truly believe that their own destiny is not intricately bound up with the asian, black and coloured communities. The belief in *'separation'* is founded on a false premise, that the Afrikaner can exist in total alienation from the other indigenous peoples of the

continent and indeed the rest of the world.

The fear of the 'other' discussed in detail in the chapter on J.M.Coetzee is a self inflicted paranoia that has been projected onto the black man as *'swart gevaar'*. The chapter on Brink discusses the problems of facing up to this fear and freeing the self from the terrible burden of guilt that has been passed from generation to generation. In order for the fear to be exorcised the repressed feelings of the whole community must be verbalised. Fear of speaking the unspeakable holds them back. The real enemy is within not without.

This fear of the 'other' world also helps to explain another strange anomaly apparent in the behaviour of many white South Africans, and that is the inability to look very far into the future. This inability to comprehend the future may fit well into the Calvanistic interpretation of things. That life on earth is a preparation for the next world and so the long term future alongside the present is somewhat diminished in importance. Crapanzano noted:

'There was often in responses to even the most secularised an implicit if not explicit assumption that they (or South Africa) were somehow 'chosen' whether by God or by the forces of history. In the most Calvanist versions South Africa was seen as God's testing ground for a new social order.' (9)

The level of white consciousness is difficult to assess. There is, certainly the belief that it is devisive to let the outside world think that they are not right. That the outside world does not understand the complexity of the situation. That talk of change will lead to changes; don't talk about the problems, talk about solutions. Hennie Van Der Merwe explains to Crapanzano:

'People don't like to rock the boat. I found that in Rhodesia as well. I say that if the boat can't stand a bit of rocking, it isn't safe on the open sea. I firmly believe that you have to know how much the boat can be rocked before you can come up with a solution to its problems.' (10)

The metaphor is effective. The boat is being rocked, but only so change can be implemented more effectively. Margaret Thatcher, who was very much involved in the pre-independence talks in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and who has been very much against sanctions doesn't believe in rocking the boat:

'*You will never get the sort of conditions you want for millions of black people in Southern Africa unless you get it on an expanding far more flourishing, thriving economy. They are helping to bring it all about and this would be the peaceful way of breaking down apartheid.*'(11)

They referred to Botha's government and the changes to the disastrous 'homelands policy'. The Botha government at the time was, if anything, swinging to the right. The Union has certainly gone forever and what seems De Klerk's best option is a Federation based loosely on the American system.

The role of the South African Broadcasting Company makes an interesting guide to the changing emphasis of government under De Klerk. The installation of television in South Africa is a surprisingly recent phenomenon, being established in 1976. It has been centrally controlled and used as a vehicle for government propaganda. Interestingly enough De Klerk used television in his 1990/91 campaign against white extremist groups like the A.W.B. The company has always prided itself in the fact that it offers separate television for the different language groups in South Africa. The channels are kept separate, so you can't pick up Radio Zulu in the Transvaal or Swana in Natal. It may well offer different language speakers their own stations but at the same time it helps to prevent the emergence of a unified nationalism in South Africa. When one begins to analyse the real differences between these so called different languages one finds that the truth is that the differences are often very small. During the final years of the Botha government news about civil unrest was lessened and news about so called reformist strategies heightened. At the same time behind the scenes assurances were made to the right wing. Unfortunately the effect of internal disruption on market forces could not be hidden so easily and Botha came under increasing pressure from the business sector - a growing proportion of which was

controlled by successful Afrikaners - to make 'real' changes. One of the ironies of the recent success by the Afrikaner in the business sector is that this group of highly influential people with its reliance on a stable market to secure its future has become less dogmatic and more pragmatic in its approach to issues of reform. The days when the Afrikaner - though this has always been more myth than truth - stood side by side against the world whatever the cost has gone. South Africa is as much controlled by international market forces as any other country in the world.

Internal instability combined with international sanctions during the late eighties pushed South Africa to the brink of economic disaster. But it wasn't just the blacks who were suffering. Most blacks still maintained a subsistence living and those who lived in the townships could get by on basic staples, the real sufferers from sanctions were middle class whites who were hit by shortages in consumer goods. The same effect happened in Rhodesia in the late eighties as world recession combined to aggravate the situation. The media in Rhodesia had mythologised the situation portraying the white minority as hardy survivors who relied on nobody. Stories were ran about such and such a person who rebuilt his tractor engine with parts made from tin-cans and so on. It was an attempt to bluff the outside world and it failed.

The South African government could not rely on all sectors of the press; the release of photographs taken by a newspaper journalist of Stephen Biko's mutilated body in 1977 created international uproar but more worrying was the Information Scandal. In 1978 due largely to investigative reporting by the 'Rand Daily Mail' (then edited by Alastair Sparks) and the 'Sunday Express' Vorster was forced out of office and the man until then thought to be his successor also forced to resign. It was Cornelius Mulder who gave his name to the scandal: the Muldergate scandal. Although it was chiefly the english speaking press who were responsible it was a valuable weapon against censorship and still is.

The language of state controlled media has been plagued with euphemisms: '*relocating people*', '*pacifying resistance*' and the like. The Afrikaans language has suffered due to the repressive nature of the system even more.

'More and more the Afrikaans language of Apartheid became eroded by newspeak, by the necessary distortions imposed by the adherence to an ideology that has to shape the world to its own image. In simplistic terms the language of Apartheid, colonised by the imperialistic activities of politicians, has now become the language of the lie.... because of the power it wields....the establishments voice is the one that resounds in the world. And so Afrikaans has become identified more and more in the mind of the world with Apartheid ideology.' (12)

The contradictions are all too apparent. A poem by Christopher Van Wyk plays cleverly on euphemism.

IT IS SLEEPY IN THE 'COLOURED' TOWNSHIPS

It is sleepy in the 'coloured' townships.
The dust clogs in the rheum of every eye
The August winds blow into all the days
Children play in a gust of streets
Or huddle in tired dens like a multi-humped camel.

It is sleepy in the 'coloured' townships.
Wet washing semaphore, then don't
and the dirt is spiteful to the whiteness
A Volkswagon engine lies embalmed in grease and grime
(the mechanic has washed his hands and left)
but the cat waits patient as rust.

It is sleepy in the 'coloured' townships.
Heads bob around the stove of the sun
The sleepiness is a crust harder than
a tortoise's shell.

It is sleepy in the 'coloured' townships.
A drunk lies lulled by meths
Children scratch soars - sleep
bitten by the tsetse flies of Soweto
of June 16
(Noordgesig lies on the fringes of Soweto).

It is sleepy in the 'coloured' townships.
A pensioner in Coronation
lies dead for a week
before the stench of her corpse
attracts attention through key-holes
and windows.

(13)

We feel secure, safe with the adjective '*sleepy*'. It conjures up sensations of tranquillity and warmth. As the poem moves on the irony becomes apparent, the contrasts building one upon the other with mounting force. The eyes are sleepy, tired from the dust which gets into them; the dust that signals to us the barren land. The camel is a creature of the desert, alien to South Africa, but at home here where the wind throws the soil down the streets.

The second stanza suggests timelessness (a static image) while at the same time decay (an image of change). The third stanza captures the enigmatic nature of this sleepiness. It has a hard shell, like the land; like the tortoise slow, for there is no hurry, nothing to rush for. Van Wyk tells us of the sleeping drunk '*lulled by meths*' and the children who sleep due to the tsetse fly, of '*sleeping sickness*'.

The climax comes as the poet reveals that it is not just sleep but death. The dead sleep long. The isolation and loneliness, the alienation of those who live in the township permeates the poem. Even the dead attract attention '*through keyholes and windows*'.

Interestingly the poet writes that '*the dirt is spiteful to the whiteness*'. There is stagnation here, a wasting away without purpose. The whites would not live here, the '*spiteful*' dirt negates this. As if those in the township have been put here, out of sight, to waste away. The repetition of the first line is suggestive of the alien idea; this is the reality of being 'coloured'. Is this the white mans impression of these people that are not white, that they are unclean and stain the goodness that is white?

The problem of language is very much at the centre of the South African experience. It controls, directs, interprets and censors information available to the people. It is language which has been largely responsible for mythologising the white man in Southern Africa and it is the control of the pronouncement and publication of language which controls the messages being sent and the process of decoding by the receiver. Language as an important power tool is something profoundly understood by the oligarchy in South Africa.

Jane Kramer writing at the time anonymously in '*The New York Review of Books*' argued:

'*White or Black or Coloured, English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking or speaking any one of a dozen native languages, one starts, even in the best of faith, in bad faith. The languages of South Africa have been consonant with race and caste, owner and worker, citizen and servant, for so long that language itself - the language one speaks and writes - is a weapon there, quite apart from those details of identity and ideology with which it happens to coincide. Words smother, sacrifices to Apartheid, in the closed expectations they arouse. They can sanction perverse exaggerations, such profound contempt, that anyone who wants to write in South Africa is left with the home truth that language has lost its metaphoric flexibility and assumed, instead, a kind of brute synecdochic power. By now to write in South Africa is by definition political.*' (14)

Van Wyk's poem offers the reader quite definite interpretations; we are given little more than a clever play on words at the beginning of each stanza, reinforcing a quite

explicit message. The poem 'South African Dialogue' expresses the extent to which language has become a tool of oppression with superb clarity.

SOUTH AFRICAN DIALOGUE

Morning Baas,
Baas,
Baas Kleinbaas says,
I must come and tell
Baas that,
Baas Ben's Baasboy says,
Baas Ben want to see
Baas Kleinbaas if
Baas don't use
Baas Kleinbaas,
Baas.

Tell
Baas Kleinbaas that,
Baas says,
Baas Kleinbaas must tell
Baas Ben's Baasboy that,
Baas Ben's Baasboy must tell
Baas Ben that,
Baas says,
If Baas Ben want to see
Baas Kleinbaas,
Baas Ben must come and see
Baas Kleinbaas here.

Thank you
Baas.

I'll tell
Baas Kleinbaas that,
Baas Ben says,
Baas Kleinbaas must tell
Baas Ben's Baasboy that,
Baas Ben's Baasboy must tell
Baas Ben that,
Baas says,
If Baas Ben want to see
Baas Kleinbaas,
Baas Ben must come and see
Baas Kleinbaas here,
Baas.
Goodbye Baas.

Baas Kleinbaas,
Baas Says,
I must come and tell
Baas Kleinbaas that,
Baas Kleinbaas must tell
Baas Ben's Baasboy that,
Baas Ben's Baasboy must tell
Baas Ben that,
Baas says,
If Baas Ben want to see
Baas Kleinbaas,
Baas Ben must come and see
Baas Kleinbaas here,
Baas Kleinbaas.

Baasboy,
Tell Baas Ben that,

Baas Kleinbaas says,

Baas says,

If Baas Ben want to see me

(Kleinbaas)

Baas Ben must come and

See me (Kleinbaas) here.

Thank you

Baas Kleinbaas,

I'll tell

Baas Ben that,

Baas Kleinbaas says,

Baas says,

If Baas Ben want to see

Baas Kleinbaas,

Baas Ben must come and see

Baas Kleinbaas here,

Baas Kleinbaas.

Goodbye

Baas Kleinbaas.

Baas Ben,

Baas Kleinbaas says,

I must come and tell

Baas Ben that,

Baas says,

If Baas Ben want to see

Baas Kleinbaas,

Baas Ben must come and see

Baas Kleinbaas there,

Baas Ben.

Baas Ben,

Baas Be-ne...

Baas Ben

Goodbye

Baas Ben.

Motshile Wa Nthodi (15)

(From 'A land Apart'. ed.A.Brink and J.M.Coetzee.)

Ingrid Scholtz concludes:

'On home ground nothing is left of art anyway. The house is burning, and art fondles itself in the bathroom. Or am I mistaken?' (16)

Art itself becomes victim to the limited colours available to the canvas. Scholtz, locked into her own suffocating world writes sets of words on cards, expression here limited to vocabulary, itself segregated.

'I start writing facts to memorise on my cards. These facts I must learn off by heart. I learn the facts of the rubbish in the streets of the townships. I learn the facts of the absence of sidewalks and gutters in the townships. I learn the facts of the size of the houses in the townships. I learn the facts of the evacuated plots with old car wrecks, the absence of parks, playgrounds, lawns and trees in the townships. I memorise how the word blows through the streets, how it blows the bits of paper. I memorise the whole landscape, how it looks when the world blows, when it rains, when the sun shines.

And what does it help me?' (17)

If the desire to bring about change is sincere, is there anything Ingrid Schultz's character can do?

'The revolutionary consciousness has to be mobilised from inside, it cannot be enforced from the outside. In the car between point A and point B, my husband mentions some of the facts. He mourns the fact that in his white lifetime he will probably never have the chance of living for some time in a black area like Soweto or Crossroads. Our child delicately picks the moss off the walls. He plays on the pavement with a little stick. We eat with our friends. Braised stuffed shoulder of lamb, herbed carrots and rice. Crepes aux mandarines for dessert, coffee. These facts speak forcibly enough for themselves.' (18)

Nadine Gordimer, one of South Africa's most prominent writers deals precisely with this problem. What role can the white liberal hope to play in modern South Africa.

Poetry however absurd can also demonstrate how the writer can break free from its inherited limitations and create profound imagery that breaths new life into a dying language.

DUST

The bundle in the gutter had its skull
cracked open by a kierie.
The blunt end of a sharpened bicycle
spoke grew a solitary
silver war-plume from the nape of his neck.
I turned him gently. He'd thinned to a wreck.

It was my friend Mketwa. He was dead.
Young Mac the Knife, I'd called him,
without much originality. Red
oozed where they'd overhauled him.
An illegal five-inch switchblade, his 'best'
possession, was stuck sideways in his chest.

He had been tough; moved gracefully, with ease.
We'd bricked, built walls, carted sand;
pitting strength against cement-bags, we'd seize
and humpf, steadied by a hand.
I paid the regulation wage plus fifty
per cent, his room, his board. He wasn't thrifty.

We were extending the old house I'd bought.
Those baked-lung middays we'd swill
the dust with cans of ice-cold beer. I thought
he must be unkillable,
except by white men. Each night the beerhall
took him: stoned wide, he would not stall or fall.

I don't think he learnt anything tangible
from me. From him, I learnt much:
his mother, cattle, kraal; the terrible
cheat that repaired his watch; such
and such pleased a woman; passes; bus queues;
whereabouts to buy stolen nails and screws.

His wife in Kwa Mashu, a concubine
in Chesterville, a mistress
in town: all pregnant. He'd bought turpentine
but they wouldn't drink it. This
was the trouble with women. Letters came
we couldn't read. He found another dame.

He left - more money, walls half-done, him tight -
to join Ital-Constructions.
Perhaps it had been white men: I am white.
Now, I phoned the ambulance

and sat with him. It came for Mac the Knife;
bore his corpse away; not out of my life.

Douglas Livingstone. (19)

Douglas Livingstone is one of South Africa's most respected poets, having been awarded both the C.N.A prize for his selected poems in 1985 and the Olive Schreiner prize for his play 'A Rhino for the Boardroom' in 1977. Born in Malaya in 1932 he qualified as a bacteriologist in 1958 in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), and worked in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). In 1964 he moved to Durban, where he has been in charge of marine bacteriological research for a South African water-research institute.

Livingstone's poem 'Dust' reveals familiar characteristics to much South African poetry in that the language, on a surface level is simple, personal and approaches its subject with a striking honesty. There is a dry, sardonic irony, even bitter humour which pervades the poem. The subject in this case deals with the relationship between a white employer and a powerful, somewhat violent black employee. The white man finds the body in the gutter: '*thinned to a wreck*', this once powerful man broken; a violent man living in a violent world, murdered we presume by his own knife. The title 'Dust' suggests both a biblical reference to the temporary nature of the flesh and a 'dust' that evokes images of death and decay. The poet appears to have chosen a powerful, violent, hard living man as his subject in order to suggest quite ominously, in a somewhat implicit manner, that no matter how powerful the man, nobody is unkillable when white men are present. The frightening understatement in the line,

' *Perhaps it had been white men: I am white.*'

explores the terrifying implications of association prevalent in all acts of violence perpetrated by white against black. The system that turned Mac the Knife into a wreck and eventually killed him is not the openly aggressive world Mac the Knife grew up in. This other world is a more sinister one - it possesses an inhuman quality

that while always attracting suspicion is constantly too much on the periphery to be implicated. The writer himself then, being white, is implicated. Such acts of barbarity carried out by whites on blacks implicates all whites who can not extricate themselves from a responsibility that is collective. Such acts are after all carried out in the name of a system to which all whites are inherently a part and one which protects those whites privileges and dominance as a minority in a resultantly violent world.

NOTES

CHAPTER SIX

1. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid: A History* . (Paladin 1986) p.103.

2. There are four main Afrikaans reformed churches, each representing different racial groupings: a) Nederduitse Gereformeerde (NGK) which is predominantly white, 2) the (coloured) NG Mission Church, 3) the (black) NG Church in Africa and 4) the (Asian) Reformed Church in Africa.

3. Secret white organisation. Has, historically had influence over government policy.

4. GeorgeSteiner, *Extraterritorial.* (Penguin 1972) p.88.

5. ibid p.87.

6. Andre Brink, *An Act of Terror.* (Secker & Warburg 1991) p.333.

7. George Steiner, *Language and Silence.* (Faber & Faber 1967) p.46.

8. ibid p.117.

9. Vincent Crapanzano, *Waiting.* (Granada 1985) p.329.

10. ibid p.33.

11. Margret Thatcher, Channel 4 News. 1987.

12. Andre Brink, *From South Africa.* (ed.D.Bunn & J.Taylor).

13. Christopher Van Wyk, *It is Sleepy in the Coloured Townships.* (chosen from the selection *'A Land Apart'* ed.Andre Brink & J.M.Coetzee) p.49.

14. Jane Kramer, *The New York Review of Books..*

15. Motshile Wa Nthodi, *South African Dialogue.* ibid *A Land Apart* . p.35.

16. Ingrid Scholtz, *A Little Cloud of the Sea, Like a Man's Hand: From the Experiences of an Afrikaner Housewife in the Bosom of a Nuclear Family.*

18. ibid p.422.

19. Robin Malan, *Ourselves in South Africa* (Macmillan 1988) p.108:Douglas Livingstone, *Dust.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

The argument of this thesis has had a dialectical structure and has attempted an interplay between an account and analysis of historical and political forces and their expression and reflection within the realm of fiction. Or what has sometimes been more crudely described as an interplay between objective events and their subjective refraction through art. This dialectic, an interplay between text and context, has brought to the fore and sought to examine, among other things, the following propositions:

That the present situation in South Africa as regards the White Afrikaner reveals evidence of a psychological disposition which is revealed in its full intensity as characteristic and highly concentrated in this group and that this *collective condition* shows this group to be in a state of crisis. This condition is the result of the sudden disappearance of a faith in a system which has justified actions taken against other peoples incorporated within the same system through historical inevitability. The loss of faith has caused this ideological system to become redundant, but no alternative ideology has arisen to fill the intellectual vacuum. As far back as 1912 when Hertzog carried the banner of right wing Afrikaner extremism the ideology was based on separation not integration. I quote from the biography on General Smuts by his son:

'In December, 1912, on Louis Esselen's farm at de Wildt, (Hertzog) made his most notorious speech. "South Africa must be governed by pure Afrikanders...." he said. "The main object is to keep Dutch and British separated....I have always said I do not know what conciliation is....".'(1)

The *collective conscious* which flows through a history of white supremacy has responded to subconscious pressures deep within the psyche. This process must be seen as inevitable due to the fact that the Afrikaner has been isolated from his European roots resulting in a sense of separateness and with the loss of faith, finally abandonment. Isolation has occured due to a number of factors. Firstly, the Afrikaner historically, has had to fight against oppression through what has been a violent, turbulent history. Secondly, this fight has been enacted in a place of geographical loneliness far from the rest of the world, causing a detachment from 'civilisation' that

has enabled the development of a mythology centred around the sense of a divine mission. It is essential to an understanding of the South African phenomenon that one recognises the importance of isolation as a factor in creating this unique and specific sitution. The idea of a divine mission is a response to *subconscious fears* and these subconscious fears have become externalised in a complex mythology. When one is threatened the other is activated and the mythology creates its own frankenstein-like embodiment. Politics and religion have become one and the same, and can therefore continue without rational explication as faith itself is not subject to rational interpretation. The crisis comes when the myth becomes exposed, metaphorically speaking the door is thrown open and the outside world comes crashing in. One could consider Wilde's *'The Portrait of Dorian Gray'* (2); Apartheid seemed able to suspend time briefly. Now time moves on apace to catch up with the present.

The result of this conjuncture, had been a strange improvisation, the perverse ideological birth of *Apartheid.* Apartheid has attempted to justify the mythology and has failed. The failure of Apartheid ideologically is the root cause of the present crisis. *Swart Gevaar* is a complex metaphor for what has happened to the Afrikaner psyche. The fear of being over-run by an alien barbarian is a terror rooted and endemic within Western civilisation - it is not unique in this respect. For this reason the study of the human condition of the white Afrikaner is both relevant and essential to western civilisation's understanding of itself. I term the condition that is manifest at this moment in time to be one of *mass-psychosis.*

If we accept that such a general condition exists then the purpose of the dialectical exploration is to characterise (and perhaps counter-act) this present crisis very vividly. There is also evidence that the Afrikaner is becoming aware of the fragility of his own historical, religious and political vulnerability and wishes to find alternative avenues for future discourse.It is logical that if one is to make certain assumptions based on historical evidence that one justifies such assumptions. For this reason I have given in this thesis a detailed account of the historical background to the present situation and have given particular emphasis to the events following the release of Nelson Mandela up to the close of 1993.

The main weight of the 'subjective' aspect of the argument is carried by two white male Afrikaner writers. For a justification of this decision I turn to George Steiner:

'Literature deals essentially and continually with the image of man, with the shape and motive of human conduct. We cannot act now, be it as critics or merely as rational beings, as if nothing of vital relevance has happened to our sense of the human possibility, as if the extermination by hunger or violence of some 70 million men, women and children in Europe and Russia between 1914 and 1945 had not altered, profoundly, the quality of our awareness. We cannot pretend that Belsen is irrelevant to the responsible life of the imagination. What man has inflicted on man, in very recent time, has affected the writer's primary material - the sum and potential of human behaviour - and it presses on the brain with a new darkness.'(3)

For the dialectic to work it is moved outside the immediate political sphere into that of the literary imagination and here the exploration of the mystique of mythology can be met head on. The process cannot be one of simply passing judgement but must show all those involved as victims and subject to the inalienable force of historical inheritance. It is the repression of guilt and of its attendent angst which concerns this thesis.

It is presently evident that the Afrikaner has to make a choice. Either he must align himself to Western civilisation or join forces with the native peoples of Africa and face up to the responsibilities that such a commitment would entail. Oswald Spengler in his work *'Decline of the West'* (4) presents us with a thesis that examines the shift of cultural centres in Western civilisation. He sees each cultural configuration like any organism as having a youth, a strong maturity and finally a disintergrating old age. Such a dilemma may seem to have an heroic dimension. And perhaps it is not too fanciful to describe such a dilemma in quasi-heroic terms. Spengler perceives two great destiny ideas: the Apollonian of the classical world and the Faustian of the modern world. The latter holds conflict as the essence of existence. Faustian man needs conflict in his personal life or only the most superficial values of existence can be attained. The individual is constantly confronted with obstacles which must be

surmounted through making choices. For the Afrikaner the recognition that the foundations upon which he has built his faith are unstable is potentially catastrophic. The ultimate catastrophe comes at the inevitable culmination of his past choices and experiences. The theory suffers from being over simplistic but the overall idea remains powerful. Belsen, for the West, examplifies the cultural decay but is only part of a complex splintering of Western civilisation. The degeneration of language, frequently referred to in this thesis, reflects the distancing of the individual from his cultural environment. Africa from a certain viewpoint, offers new possibilities if it can free itself from the debilitating influence of post-colonialism.

The argument here is not intended to stray too far into the discourse of clinical psychiatry. It might be mentioned here however that Wilhelm Reich's famous work '*The Mass Psychology of Fascism*' reinforces my argument that the condition I have termed '*mass psychosis*' is a condition complicated by deeply embedded, individually repressed and socially suppressed anxiety.

Reich argues:

'*....it is political psychology - and not social economy - that is in a position to investigate the structure of man's character in a given epoch, to investigate how he thinks and acts, how the contradictions of his existence work themselves out, how he tries to cope with this existence, etc. To be sure, it examines individual men and women only. If, however, it specialises in the investigation of typical psychic processes common to one category, class, professional group, etc., and excludes individual differences, then it becomes a mass psychology.*'(5)

Quite clearly one must realise that the period between 1914 and 1945 has had a profound effect on the moral fibre of Western civilisation. On top of this the tyranny of Western imperialism has had a destructive influence on those cultures that have taken the brunt of the oppression. Here the Afrikaner should understand the negative effects of such aggression having been victims of British imperialism themselves. This is in a way a terrible privilege which could lead to an empathetic bonding between the Afrikaner and the black man he has oppressed. Likewise however the

underlying guilt is the more profound as it is partly a product of the true knowledge of oppression both as victim and victimiser.

'Anxiety inevitably arises when a person is faced (as he always is) with the possibility of being in the sense of becoming, of fulfilling potentialities. When these potentialities are denied, the consequent condition is that of guilt, and this inherent human condition is to be distinguished from the guilt feelings which the psycho-analyst so often seems to suggest should be eliminated.(6)

The failure of Apartheid is already forcing many Afrikaners to face up to the consequences of past policy. Historically this anxiety has been transferred onto 'the other' manifest in the 'barbarian'. (See chapter four for a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon.)

What now seems to have happened is that the primitive myth of the barbarian has become 'internalised' and is no longer projected onto other peoples. The reason for this is that the third world man now dresses like us, lives in our communities and is seen to be educated. The barbarian, to quote Benge, has '*come out of the mythical jungle into our homes on the television screen*'. ibid (7) Perhaps, as some have said, what is now needed is a new mythology, a need to re-invent myths in order to answer the inner calls from the dark as Western civilisation continues to decay.

In the same way that an individual who is abused as a child may more likely grow up to abuse others than the individual who escapes abuse, so a whole tribe that has been victim to abuse may grow to abuse other tribes. On a mass scale the Afrikaner who suffered at the hands of the British now exploits the black tribes. The central myth is comprised in two parts: firstly that the white man is genetically superior to the black man and secondly the the black man should not be recognised as human. At best the black man would be seen as a naughty child. The bible has been used to support the latter. Under Apartheid for example the franchise was regarded as a treasure which should belong only to those who are able to use it responsibly before God. The African does not fulfill these requirements. In the mid-fifties the Cape Coloureds for

some reason suddenly became irresponsible, for they were disenfranchised! Calvinism is a determinist creed which goes hand in hand with ideas of racial superiority and of natural separation. Within European Calvinism there has always been a tendancy towards the authoritarian or the revolutionary. Afrikaans churches have always been politically powerful and authoritarianism is an insidious doctrine, especially in a multi-racial society. South African society is immensely complex and simplistic Calvinistic solutions based on obscene racist dogma can only lead to social division and violence. To force the point I repeat the words of the former President Malan:

'*We Afrikaans are not the work of man but the creation of God. It is to us that milions of semi-barbarous blacks look for guidance, justice and the Christian way of life and we have no intention of repealing apartheid law.*'(8)

With the townships in flames and bodies littering the sidewalks, with economic chaos and a possible mass white exodus on the cards Malan could not have got it more wrong. However the development of freedom requires that the individual be completely free of all illusions for only then can the irrationalism be rooted out from the masses. I repeat emphatically that the present human condition of Western man, be he isolated on the Southern tip of Africa or embedded in the heart of Western Europe, is the result of not just simply isolated outbreaks of political extremism but the product of thousands of years of human oppression. To return to Reich:

' *As a result of thousands of years of social and educational distortion, masses of people have become biologically rigid and incapable of freedom. They are not capable of establishing peaceful coexistence.*' (9)

It has been argued that for South Africa civil war would be an efficient method of cleansing away the impurities of the past and leaving the way clear to build a new '*Azania*' (10). It cannot be stressed too strongly that such a belief is pure myth. The myth argues that only once victory has been achieved can peace be concluded; that in the heat of war the old institutions are torn down and man is remolded in the fire -

that the seeds of peace will germinate in the devastations of war. However, after war comes the rebuilding. The social fabric has to be replaced before the new idealism can be achieved. Unfortunately by that time the old rigidity has returned and a new tyranny has replaced it. The cycle merely repeats itself and the old myths perpetuate it.

As far as the historical is concerned we hold a double edged sword. If the individual is to constantly look back at the past he would be incapable of stepping forward into the future. In the struggle to build a future the past holds the present in chains. Nietzsche in his essay *'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life'* writes:

'....there is a degree of insomnia, of rumination, of historical sense which injures every living thing and finally destroys it, be it man, a people or a culture.'
Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life' (11)

The need to forget then is imperative for health, cheerfulness, clear conscience and faith in the future - this Nietzsche terms the unhistorical. The historical however is important *'only so far as man, by thinking, reflecting, comparing, dividing and joining....'*. (12) Interestingly enough this theory has close association with the predicament of the man whose wishes fly in the face of his own conscience. Proverbally caught between a rock and a hard place. As Goethe claims:

'The man of action is always without conscience; no one has a conscience except the observer."(13)

Thomas Landman in Brink's novel *'An Act of Terror'* is in continual conflict with his own conscience which tortures him mercilessly. He finds he must keep justifying his actions:

'To throw a bomb - how many times had he repeated it? - demands more than that. It demands reflection, calm, dedication, faith.....There he was now, still unwavering. Lean weary, sufferimore. It brought a new sense of resolution to Thomas.' (14)

Shakespeare as always has an interesting example to offer. I believe that although we accept that the bloodbath created by Hamlet's dithering is unacceptable and that his alter ego Laertes would have ended the play at the end of Act One, Laertes, one feels, would have made a hopeless politician. Laertes problem, let's face it, was rather more cut and dry than Hamlet's: a murdered father and an insane sister with the culprit caught red-handed. Seldom are we presented with such clear distinctions between good and evil. The paradox of course lies with the intentions. Hamlet was trying to revenge the murder of his father wasn't he? Below the surface a malignant cancer had long since set in and as the play progressed so our hero became increasingly awae of his own complicity in the anarchy that threatened the state.

Landman like the Colonel in Coetzee's novel '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' has become barbarised by the violent path he has chosen to follow. We are presented with the Catch 22 scenario; the violated who protect themselves with violence become the violators.

Again we have Neitzsche's warning in '*Beyond Good and Evil*'. The individual who stares into the pit at evil finds evil staring back at him.

'*He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you.*' (15)

Or like Breytenbach's torturer, both torturer and tortured are barbarised at the same time. We find the same process at work in Coetzee's '*Waiting for the Barbarians*'. The darkness broods within. It festers masked within the subconscious, fed by guilt inherited through historical processes not at first glance recognisable. Chief Buthelezi and Treunicht's unholy alliance (by which I mean the coming together of the extreme white right wing and Inkather) which also incorporates extremist groups like the AWB came about due to the fact that they feel they have not been consulted in the setting up of the TEC and arrangements for the forthcoming general election. This is an alliance which strives to take South Africa back into the past and not forward into the future . It seeks to separate the races, purify the racial coming together that has

occured due to the treachery of the National Party and put white superiority back on the agenda.

However, the alliance produces more hot air than active opposition. Although some farmers do talk of struggling for an Afrikaner homeland the majority are more concerned with protecting their own farms and families from attack. In an article by Chris McGreal in '*The Guardian*', 6-11-93, a National party official, Mr. Schalkwyk said:

'*When the rightwing all sit around with their big stomachs and big beards, they look very tough. But they can't run up to the next block because they drink too much and smoke too much.*'

Admittedly somewhat stereotypical but one thing is for sure the white right wing are confused. They cannot agree when to begin to fight, who they will fight or what they are fighting for.

The right wing alliance also inadvertently drives the ANC and National Party together. Both sides feel that it is better to negotiate with the devil you know than throw yourself down the proverbial pit. Infact historically the Alliance is not so difficult to comprehend. White supremesists forming a pact with black supremisists. Both groups will see their positions compromised in a new South Africa. Both sides are proud of their past, aggressively determined to preserve their traditions and avoid assimilation with groups they regard as inferior. Both sides seek a separate existence for the future. Both sides have nowhere else to go, a question of '*hiervandaan*', of being *from this place.*

Coetzee's novels are explorations of Western mans alienation from the land and the breakdown in communication between individuals: language itself has lost meaning. The yearning for wholeness that modernity has denied the individual; the splitting, breaking up effect of modern life, the collapse of nucleated and extended families is witness to this phenomenon. Society forces upon the individual an unacceptable

impersonalisation in terms of his own condition and dehumanises him by forcing a wedge between his natural instincts and the pressures of society. By depersonalising the individual and creating a distance between the conscience and social expectations society is manufacturing the social negative of Coetzee's Michael K. on a mass scale. The football terraces become packed with them. When they are forced off the terraces they scatter amongst suburbia. They don't consist of the unemployed and the socially inept but of the educated and the financially able. As the individual becomes increasingly devalued in the name of economic logic so society becomes increasingly unstable. The loss of individual self-value will ultimately lead to a rejection of social values and through this to violence. Oppression becomes a matter of interpretation as the individual becomes trodden by the animal he created. The loss of personal identity in a material environment whose value system is rapidly losing substance is a scenario that is essentially Western. But as Third World countries forsake their own cultural patterns in favour of a Western lifestyle so others are drawn in. Many of the themes offered by the South African writer are in fact in direct confrontation with Western neuroses: isolation, alienation, loss of identity, breakdown in communication. The collapse of the white oligarchy and the resultant revelation of the imperialist objective in South Africa should stimulate extra momentum in the rest of the world for change . The old myths have been revealed for what they truly are. The oppressed are aware of the hypocricy but the oppressors, who still retain immense power are still struggling to reconfirm spoiled beliefs. Especially as their own economicsurvival depends on the continued exploitation of poorer nations. Du Toit's awakening in Brink's novel *'A Dry White Season'* is embryonic of the awakening of the afrikaner consciousness.

South Africa has the chance to construct a unique social environment because of her polymorphic make up. The Conference for a Culture in Another South Africa was held in December 1987 in Amsterdam. The conference hosted 300 South African artists, a mix of exiles from all over the world and 'insiders' working and living in South Africa. The conference exemplified the position that South Africa's oppressed have taken. The oppressed are appealing to a wider audience other than that of the tiny white oligarchy which they have long regarded as barbarous and pre-modern.

Up until September 1993 the present system had been the result of the President's Council report which resulted in a new constitutional bill that went through Parliament in 1982-83. The new Parliament is tricameral with the chambers constucted on a racial basis: a House of Assembly for whites, a House of Representatives for Coloureds and a House of Delegates for Indians. Blacks are not represented. Any government in South Africa irrespective of who sits in judgement, Malan, Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha or De Klerk will represent an unacceptable symbol of oppression until that person relinguishes power and gives everyone, irrespective of colour, the vote.

In 1948 The first Nationalist President, David Malan, in the face of international criticism made a statement which would warm the hearts of the right wing alliance:

'We believe the Afrikaner will again under the guidance of God arise from the debris and ashes of his defeats, shake them off and finally become powerful and victorious....' his heart is 'kept burning by God'. (16)

In reality apartheid means separatenes, a giving up of responsibility as the ludicrous underfunding of Verwoerd's Homelands Policy exemplifies. It has not been an attempt to protect the poor native more an attempt to pretend that he doesn't exist unless his labour requires it. And then he attempts to relieve his conscience, which is troubled by the maltreatment of blacks, with a hypocritical Calvinistic interpretation of the Bible.

Of a population of 30 million there are between 4 and 5 million whites. Of those only 3 million are eligible for the vote. Of those only half used their vote at the last all white election. Of those the National Party held power with a vote of approximately 900,000. The myth of the child like black and the paternal white died a long time ago since the like of Steven Biko and Nelson Mandela started becoming qualified as doctors and lawyers. When the student can teach the teacher if only the teacher would relinquish his cane and listen then we enter the realm of the absurd; and so we find modern South Africa. Unfortunately the West has been raised on images of

'gollywogs' (17) and the idle 'coon' (17). We still believe in a God given superiority ourselves because we have to. A civilisation in decay clings desperately to its past and to its mythology. The West gives up South Africa, as it did Rhodesia and Namibia and its other African colonies with great reluctance. But when it does so it does so with a moral high-handedness that attempts a final paternalistic gesture of generosity. The inheritor of the present crisis is America which sees in the African its own history of terrible oppression. For the U.S.A South Africa has a cathartic role to play. What it has failed to achieve within its own borders it externalises and exorcises without. Since Kennedy's tour of South Africa the States have taken on a moralistic stance which fails to reflect its own impotence. South Africa can not look to the States for any guidance. If it is to look at all then it must look to Britain, a country that owes it much and which has populated its territories over the last hundred years.

The novels of Coetzee and Brink are embryonic of Western patriarchy. Coetzee's novels deal with the condition of Western man it is only differentiated by its setting. The reality makes writers like Brink and Coetzee as relevant to us in Britain as they are to South Africans. The collapse of Western civilisation can be played out in South African terms as the arena is a perfect example of a pluralist social structure made up of loosely fitting unequally empowered languages. The controlling medium is Afrikaans.

'The Afrikaans cultural struggle which 1948 translated into political power had been patiently waged over decades through a range of initiatives whose unifying theme was the national language.' (18)

Control of language then is essential, arguably the ultimate instrument of control. As in Orwell's *'1984'* (19) if the State can change the individuals perception of reality through the individuals expression of that reality then the State has total control.

'This other white tribe - the 'English' - had not only inherited an automatic dominance from the structure of the Empire: it also had a special pedagogic and linguistic relationship with the African majority which was founded and expressed in the

schools and missions and journalism. In its drive to win hegemony and scale the heights of capital, afrikanerdom sought to break this long established dialogue by legitimising among the majority a displaced mirror-image of its own monoglot ethnicity in a clutch of anachronistic tribalisms based territorially in the 'homelands'. (20)

The writer then, the crafter of language, must play an essential role. Censorship and the need to reach a wider audience drive the Afrikaner or Bantu writer to be translated into English. The text itself may reveal itself on the surface to only a small ethnic group - the metamorphosis that occurs through translation is interesting. To explain this further I turn briefly to Ken Hirschkop's reference to 'outsideness.':

'By establishing a typology of author-hero relations, Bakhtin hopes to define a specific balance between the author (reflection) and the hero (the living consciousness), which would make it possible for the sense of value to emerge. What is thereby established as a general principle is the idea that the relations between a reflective consciousness and a consciousness ensnared in the activity of everyday life is " a relation of intense outsideness". It is only through reflection on an alien language that the right mix of distance and empathy can be achieved.' (21)

The paradox is stunning. Forced by censorship to live and to write covertly the writer has inadvertently found a market for his work amongst an international audience as much disillusioned by their own sense of alienation and abandonment as they are in fact recognising their own self in the image of their estanged bretheren. Each day the failure to recognise the dialectical quandry apparent in this struggle becomes more and more absurd. The absurd in the human condition of Western man helps explain the humour which is manifest in even the most horrific story the South African writer has to tell us. We laugh at ourselves. We recognise ourselves and rather than face insanity we laugh. The human condition becomes, we become absurd. A recent tragic example of this can be found in the personalities of those who arranged the murder of the late Chris Hani. They became nick-named the Basil and Sybil Fawlty of South Africa; Clive and Gaye Derby-Lewis. The murder itself was incompetently carried

out, amateurish and as a result solved within a few hours. A source in South Africa described it as '*a farce from beginning to end....*' The Sunday Times titled their article on 3 October 1993: '*Lunatics taking over the asylum*'. (22)

So what exactly is the situation at present. We are approaching the end of October 1993 and in just under six months the first 'all people' elections will take place. Great excitement is building up and with it a real sense of the possibility of a new peaceful and prosperous future for South Africa. Of course it is in the best interests of all sides that the economy does not collapse for the resultant inheritance would be ungovernable anarchy. September was a month typified with statements that begun 'Within weeks.....' and included the lifting of all remaining sanctions by the United Nations - leaving the gates open for foreign investment - the International Monetary Fund poised to offer a $850 (£559m) loan to boost the country's reconstruction and part of that loan being directed straight into education and housing projects. Suddenly, on the surface at any rate, anything seemed possible. The unusual spate of optimism could not be better examplified than by General Viljoen, the right wing army chief who has spent the previous few months threatening civil war unless the whites be given their own homeland 'separate', of course, from the blacks. Viljoen claimed that secret talks about a *volkstaat* (Afrikaner people's state) with the ANC had gone very well: '*I am hopeful a negotiated settlement can be found*'. (23) On Good Morning America' De Klerk told the American people:

'*Businessmen can look afresh at us. We expect wonderful economic growth once we've overcome our political difficulties.*' (24)

Interestingly it was Pik Botha, the foreign minister and therefore we presume someone who knows about these things, who was the voice of reason amongst the excitement. When saying '*the sanctions will only be lifted if the fighting stops*'. (25)

Between May and the close of September approximately 1,000 people have died in the conflict. Over the previous three years the figure is more like 10,000. A new method of killing has been coined '*drive-by killings*'. On 21 September for example

gunmen fired indiscriminately on black pedestrians from two vehicles over a four mile stretch of road just outside Katlehong killing 19 and wounding 16. Such massacres tend to take place shortly before or after a breakthrough in negotiations. On September 8 gunmen opened fire from two vehicles on commuters waiting at a taxi rank killing 19 and injuring 22. The killings followed a breakthrough in negotiations with agreement at the multi-party negotiating forum on the establishment of a Transitional Executive Council, aimed at giving blacks a say in government before the elections on 26 April next year.

As with the massacre in Ciskei when Brigadier Gqozo's troops opened fire on ANC demonstrators last year the resultant backlash drove the Nationalist and ANC camps closer together and actually speeded up the pace of negotiations. Ironic when the original intention by extremist groups is to frustrate those very negotiations. This I think is an encouraging sign in a country ravaged by violence.

As I discussed earlier in the thesis one of the most desperate problems South Africa must face up to is the 'lost generation'. Those children who supported the struggle during the previous two decades when the slogan was '*Liberation now, education later*'. It is no coincidence that the ANC now prioritise funding for education and housing; many of the youth on the streets are homeless. It is not so much these unemployable youth that present the problem as those figures in politics that use them to further their own political goals. These include such figures as Harry Gwala, the Natal ANC/SACP leader, Winnie Mandela and the ANC Youth League leader, Peter Mokaba who is infamous for his own slogan '*Kill the Boer, kill the farmer*'. Ironically, Chris Hani one of the figures that the whites feared most and who was murdered by white extremists had used his influence to moderate the extremist voices in the ANC and the SACP. It would be easy to be somewhat negative about all these developments especially if you believe that ANC leaders are using their influence to feather their own nests. It is conceivable that South Africa is poised on the brink of a mass white exodus. Especially vulnerable are the 750,000 British passport holders who retain the option of returning to Britain. Dual nationality is not a luxury they can hope to retain for very much longer. An article by R.W Johnson in 'The London

Review of Books' in July 1993 argues just this. However with the election just around the corner and a substantial section of the electorate still fickle it is not really surprising that there is a great deal of party in-fighting and that party officials seek to strengthen their own positions. Creating links with the business class seems a logical step in achieving this or that a nervous white community is considering the possibility of emigration.

At the back of their minds however will be the memory of the Rhodesian experience when over 100,000 whites fled black majority rule in 1979 and 1980 after Lancaster House. As they fled what they believed to be an imminent massacre of whites by blacks they left almost all their possessions behind them only to find that as exiles they were unwelcome; not least in South Africa. When they soon realised that Mugabe's government had no intention of reprisals against whites, infact allowing whites to retain their property and for a general amnesty for all, many tried to return. Having deserted the country in its time of crisis it was not surprising when they found their way back into a new Zimbabwe barred.

South Africans remember this experience very well. They nick-named the hapless Rhodesians *'when-wees'*, after their irritating habit of harping on about how wonderful Rhodesia waswhen they ran it and what a mess everything is in now. Of course one of the reasons the ZANU PF ruling party faced such terrible problems during the early eighties was the emigration of just those *'when wees'*! Of course the majority of the South African whites are African through and through and carry no other passport but that of South Africa. This is of course crucial. They are Africans unlike the white Rhodesians who had first settled in the nineteenth century. They are accepted as Africans by the blacks. Both sides know they are in the same boat together sink or swim. Both the ANC and the National Party are fully aware that if they allow themselves to be influenced by extremist groups agitating on both sides of the political spectrum then the result would probably be a blood bath. There would be little left to inherit. One of the greatest obstacles to an economic revival in South Africa is that 85% of the country's income tax revenue comes from just 20% of the economically active population. A sizeable proportion of these earning between

£5 000 and £20 000 a year. Not surprisingly this group are increasingly worried that they will have to pay for South Africa's economic future.

When one considers that many of the British settlers who arrived during the 1970's and 1980's settled in South Africa because they could live in comparative luxury compared with back home. They quickly settled into their big houses in white suburbia with the swimming pool and the various servants. They made no attempt to learn the native language their servants spoke and knew nothing about what was happening in the townships. Infact they made a point about not knowing. They relieved whatever bad conscience they had by donating to the local church fund or school building project. This is the group, who have scrounged off the state for two decades or more who are most vociferous when it comes to improving the lot of the blacks. One should not get too upset if this group decide to return to Britain. However most are likely to have heard rumours of the Rhodesian experience. Even a substantial reduction in their standard of living will still leave them better off than if they were to return home.

Signs of a possible exodus are certainly there however. Whites are selling off assets, mortgaging property etc in order to create as much liquid currency or 'portables' as possible in case the elections go badly. This has been termed '*downscaling*'. Some analysts estimate also that the illicit smuggling of wealth from South Africa since the early 1970's to be as high as £20 billion. Mandella's world tour in October 1993 emphasises the seriousness of the situation. Civil war and economic strife go hand in hand. Equally, a revived economy will ensure a new future for South Africa. Incredibly the dismantling of sanctions is taking far longer than was expected. Some 30 states in the USA still retain some sort of economic sanction against South Africa. But it is the violence that puts off most potential investors.

The writer continues to play an essential role as we move into the transition period. As I argued in the introduction to this paper, '*communication is the greatest hurdle*' in fighting Apartheid. The opposing sides have forgotten how to speak to each other and when they do it is done with mistrust and self-doubt. Apartheid will continue to live

in the minds of South Africans for generations to come. Sartre claimed that '*literature should reverberate at every level of man and society*' (27) and so it does in South Africa. It cannot hope to claim neutrality, because it demands basic freedoms to survive and systems of oppression like apartheid deny this freedom. I also added to Njabulo Ndebele's list of observations on prose in my introduction, that '*it is the aim of the writer to teach both tolerance and understanding*' (28). Any system that sets out to to deny this must become the enemy. Ngugi Wa'Thiongo is quite right when he says '*every writer is a writer of politics*' (29). We cannot, as the narrator in Brink's novel '*States of Emergency*' contemplates, choose to opt out; to write a love story removed from the barbarities of the present. The writer seeks to subvert his conscious and his work is doomed to mundanity. The white Afrikaner struggles to verbalise across not just the great divide between black and white, but more challengingly across the silent dinner tables in Crapanzano's backwater town in his excellent study '*Waiting*'. When Dawn in Coetzee's novel '*Dusklands*' argues that there is only one rule in Vietnam, to '*fragment, individualise*' (30) he speaks too of South Africa and the effect of apatheid. In Chapter 3 I quoted Breytenbach who stated the problem quite succinctly:

'*The gulf between black and white or between whites and all the others, is so enormous that in fact we are strangers to one another.*' (31)

Strangers in a common land. Trollope's assertion that '*South Africa is a country of black men - not of white men*' is no longer true. This is not a Vietnam scenario this is a situation which could lead to civil war. Until now it has been the white liberal in the white camp who has taken the brunt of the criticism where the white world meets the black world. Brink's liberals go through real suffering; alienation and abandonment and even death. It is their dilemma that reflects the reality for the individual who suddenly finds all he believed in previously has been a lie. These liberals are not content to relieve their conscience with small financial donations to black groups. These elements use such actions to maintain their myopia and have little interest in changing the basic social structures. These whites - and many come from the recent British settlers - still regard the black as child like and in need of protection from the

paternal white. Biko quite rightly rejects these whites. Ben du Toit however moves from a state of myopia to full consciousness, for such individuals there can be no compromise.

The need to distinguish between these groups of 'liberals' has led to an interesting obsession in the work of Andre Brink. The need to authenticate his fictional characters with historical background. Of the 834 words that make up the 1991 Secker & Warburg hardback edition of *'Act of Terror'* some 200 pages detail the history of the Landman family and there is also a 7 page glossary for Afrikaans vocabulary. His most recent novel *'On the Contrary'* (32) displays a tendancy to over-word his characters at the expese of the narrative. Where before one of Brink's strengths was in his ability to blend history and fiction into compelling narrative he now chooses to separate the two. The result can often be disappointingly tedious. Brink's success in placing his fictional characters within a very real historical framework enabled the writer to explode myths and to explore the real nature of the beast. It authenticated his work to a degree of political tenacity that made him a real weapon against apartheid. One hopes that as Apartheid, the catalyst for almost all his work begins to vanish that it does not mean that Brink the writer of novels will vanish also.

The work of J.M Coetzee seems likely to fare better against the test of time. Coetzee, as I pointed out in Chapter 3 can be read as an examination of myth and a demystification of illusions. Where Brink was concerned with outward actions and moral dilemmas Coetzee is concerned with the topographical features of the human mindscape. His novels are true explorations into the unknown. It is upon this forever undulating mindscape that man enacts both ritual and ceremony in a preservation of myth and it is through the delicate surface of this scape that the subconscious is constantly breaking through. We as observers give witness to what our guide, the often ecstatic narrator shows us. But most importantly what we see is not the raging of some diastan fude but the writhing of our own inner selves. The cancer which tears apart Curran's body in *'Age of Iron'* is the physical manifestation of the repressed guilt in the white psyche. It is a guilt born out of a long world historical tradition. It

encapsulates the actions of all white supremacists who have slaughtered and subjugated in our name. The attempt by the magistate in '*Waiting for the Barbarians*' to avoid the gaze of the young girl, who has been subjected to terrible cruelty by men acting for the same regime as the magistrate is a vain one. It illustrates the hypocracy of the oppressor and the shallowness of one form of liberalism; there are few liberal activists in the work of Coetzee.

But it is not simply an avoidance due to guilt. The feelings reflect a greater animosity which arises from oppression. To quote from '*Foe*':

'*But those we have abused we customarily grow to hate and wish never to lay eyes on again.*' (33)

To separate the groups avoids contact and the problems of gaze. Censorship prevents the walls being breached and contact being made. As I explained when discussing Brink censorship can actually help promote contact and rebound on the censor. When I exploded the myths relating to the effectiveness of censorship, see chapter four, it also dawned on me some months later that censorship itself in South Africa had become another piece in the jig-saw of self-deception. The problem comes when we examine the reasons behind the various forms of censorship that have been operating in South Africa. Much of the censorship operates in order to maintain the white myopia that has in the past guaranteed the short term success of apartheid. Coetzee's novels are themselves islands in existential terms like peoples lives.

It is common to both Brink and Coetzee that the inauthentic world - usually characterised by its omnipotence - fears its opposite, the dark mysterious 'other' world. The world of light and the world of darkness usually symbolising good and evil respectively become inverted. The innocent who have previously walked freely in the light can no longer do so and are driven into the shadows by the forces of evil. So boundaries between good and evil, right and wrong, the means and the ends become blurred. All nature throws the world into chaos So in '*Instant in the Wind*':

'The whole interior is like a sea of wind on which we toss and drift unsteadily.' (34)

Where before the heroic explorer was revered for his bravery and leadership he becomes despised or even mocked. He can only touch the surface of the land he claims to conquer and can never come to terms with it; it is always his enemy, hiding the foe in the mountains or the deserts or wherever. Only pain itself seems capable of unmasking myth but then only too often to replace it by creating yet another illusion. The author becomes more concerned with exploration than exposition. Dhombe tells Joseph in *'Looking on Darkness'* that *'he doesn't know darkness yet'* (35) but the exploration itself gives the explorer a more profound understanding of what is right and wrong and the strength to refuse to turn a blind eye.

One of Brink's most damning characterisations in his novel *'Rumours of Rain'* is Martin Mynhardt. The symbolic importance of Mynhardt's myopia is that he is misleading others and that those others represent authority. This irony adds to the absurdity of the whole situation, the blind leading the blind to their ultimate destruction. Mynhardt, importantly, lacks all sensitivity and cannot understand the feelings of others. He is full of his own self-importance and fails to comprehend his own world as it falls apart around him. An example of only one white fictional character but symbolic of the effect that apartheid has had on the privaleged white. As James Baldwin, quoted earlier on in the thesis, claims:

'White people cannot, in the generality, be taken as models of how to live. Rather, the white man is himself in some need of new standards, which will release him from his confusion and place him once again in fruitful communion with the depths of his own being.' (36)

We are in the West increasingly desperate to discover art forms which help combat increasing social alienation by promoting individual identity. As the crisis worsens the conscious recognition of this problem as a collective one also increases. The first step to freedom, as seen in the struggles of Brink and Coetzee's central characters, is to recognise the the historical bondage which has contributed the myopia. I have

Pages 232 & 233 are missing from the original volume.

NOTES

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. J.C. Smuts, *Jan Christian Smuts* (Cassell & Co. Ltd. !952) p.126.

2. Oscar Wilde, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray.*

3. George Steiner, *Language and Silence* (Faber and Faber. 1967) p.22.

4. Oswald Spengler, *Decline of the West: 1922-1929.*

5. Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 1970) p.16.

6. Ronald Benge, *Communication and Identity* (Clive Bingley. !972) p.202.

7. ibid p.99.

8. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid: A History.* (Paladin. 1987) p.103.

9. ibid p.319.

10. *Azania* - The name given to South Africa by AZAPO. The name is derived from the ancient Greeks' term for the mysterious land south of Egypt.

11. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* (Hackett Pub. 1981) p.10.

12. ibid p.11.

13. Goethe, *Spruche in Prosa*, quoted in Gedanken aus *Goethe's Werken* (ed. Herman Levi. 4th ed.) p.80.

14. Andre Brink, *An Act of Terror.* p.297.

15. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil.*

16. Brian Lapping, *Apartheid: A History* (Paladin.1987) p.104.

17. See *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*: 1972.

18. Ken Hirschkop, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory.* (Manchester University Press. 1989).

19. George Orwell, *1984.*

20. Ken Hirschkop, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*. p.64.

21. ibid p.10.

22. The Sunday Times, 3 October 1993.

23. The Times, 26 September 1993.

24. ibid.

25. ibid.

26. Notes on Introduction.

27. ibid.

28. ibid.

29. ibid.

30. J.M.Coetzee, *Dusklands* p.24.

31. ibid. Notes on Chapter 3.

32. Andre Brink, *On the Contrary* (Secker. 1993)

33. J.M.Coetzee, *Foe*. p.10.

34. Andre Brink, *Instant in the Wind*

35. Andre Brink, *Looking on Darkness* p.230

36. James Baldwin, *Soul on Ice*. p.69.

37. Andre Brink, *States of Emergency*. p.192.

38. Nadine Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture* (Penguin 1989) p.91.

EPILOGUE

In August 1994 I spent three weeks touring South Africa. I travelled from Gabarone to Johannesburg to Durban via Swaziland. I then drove down the wild coast to Cape Town before returning to Botswana, where I was working, by crossing the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. My intention was to talk to as many people as possible to try to gauge the overall psychological effect the transition to a multi-racial government of National Unity had had on the people, but more especially the Afrikaner.

What I surmised would be the major problems confronting the New South Africa were basically as follows. Expectations would be running high and the millions of poor blacks would be impatiently awaiting homes, land and jobs. 'Affirmative action' in the work place would be putting a strain on industrial relations and with over a hundred top trade union leaders having left for work in politics, education or the private sector the workforce would be on the brink of anarchy. Not only did I expect tension here - despite Jay Naidoo former leader of Cosatu being in charge of the Development and Reconstruction Programme - but I also expected trouble between the ANC and central government. Cyril Ramaphosa heading the ANC made it clear that he saw himself as the moral watch-dog of the government. As one by one once radical ANC activists became seduced by power and the privileges it brought I envisaged increasing division between those invested with real power and those at grass roots level.

There were also other problems. 'Federalism through the back door' had already presented itself as a real possibility. But this meant conflict between national policy as dictated by central government and regional implementation of the R.D.P. One example of this was the difference in opinion of Tokyo Seywale, Premier of the P.W.V. and Joe Slovo the Minister for Housing, over the construction of housing for the millions of blacks living in squalor.

Finally there was Nelson Mandela's insistence to go ahead with his 'Truth Commission'. The idea was not, he claimed, to bring offenders to justice - after all a general amnesty had been decided on - but to air the grievances of those who had

suffered under Apartheid and thus relieve tension.

Everything hung on two crucial factors: speed of implementation and available resources to finance the massive reconstruction and development that was demanded by the masses. At the same time it was essential that the whites were not frightened into emigrating en masse depriving South Africa of valuable human resources. With Derek Keys the Finance Minister and the man who wrote the 1994 budget - a work of genius in its clever appeasement of so many conflicting demands - tendering his resignation as from October 1994, one half on the equation seemed in jeopardy.

Living in Botswana, close to the border with the Northern Transvaal, I had already picked up the changing moods that occurred as the elections drew near, came and then passed. From deep anxiety and dread, to hushed frightened silence, to euphoria and finally tremendous relief as the whites realised it had all happened - Apartheid had gone, a government of national unity was installed and they were still alive. Young Afrikaners working in construction in the north east of Botswana went from an hysterical feeling of impending doom to one of puzzlement and even confusion - where were the reprisals, where was the blood bath; the blacks and Communists had taken over so it must come: 'swart gevaar' was realised at last?

As I made clear in my thesis, Apartheid had become a tremendous psychological burden to the Afrikaner. Post-election South Africa was a time of great relief, even disbelief, an unburdening, but also there still remained an unease. As I travelled around I became increasingly aware that this was only the beginning. Indeed Mandela and De Klerk had pulled off a 'miracle' politically, but there was another 'miracle' to be realised, an economic one. The ideological battle had been put on hold in a rational collective agreement that R.D.P. was of paramount importance but the problems I highlighted at the beginning of this epilogue were already beginning to arouse unrest by August - only four months after the elections.

Sitting in the Garden Pavilion of the Carlton Centre, Johannesburg, I watched the young come and go. Johannesburg is the great melting pot of South Africa,

cosmopolitan and generally liberal in outlook. I became increasingly aware that although blacks, coloureds and whites shared the same facility they didn't sit together, there was still no communication. It was almost as if they simply didn't register each other's presence. When I first arrived in Johannesburg on my motorbike I hit afternoon rush hour and in all the confusion got quite lost. I did the very British thing and asked a policeman for directions to somewhere I could have a drink and unwind until the chaos had subsided. He directed me to a pub in Yeoville with the advice that 'you should talk to your own kind there, they'll speak your language'.

Relief that Apartheid had finally been burried was certainly evident but I spoke to many whites who clearly hadn't changed their views. Apartheid, although economically unviable, had done tremendous damage. State control of the media had indoctrinated the whites to such an extent that most simply cannot believe that political control by blacks can bring anything but economic decline and social decay. I never got the impression that they were preparing for a fight, there was more an air of resignation. As if to say to the world, 'now you'll see if we were not right'.

I met a group of young Afrikaners in Durban who were preparing to leave for Canada at Christmas. They had not completely given up on South Africa - they had bought open-ended return tickets valid for one year, just in case.

I finish this epilogue on a more positive note. Welcome Msomi - writer, composer, playwright and choreographer - was interviewed by Richard McNeill in The Sunday Times, 28th August and put forward an exciting proposal that may be part of the answer to the complexity of the communication breakdown problem in South Africa. The idea would be to put together a road show, a combination of film and live events to promote South African culture. To quote Msomi:

'It would reflect our different cultures, our music, our singers, our people, the very essence of the land, and yes, it would promote trade, industry and tourism too; that's the bottom line.'

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