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PAULINE SMITH : BETWEEN WORLDS

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

ESTABLISHING A REPUTATION

The publication in 1925 of Pauline Smith's first book, a collection of eight short stories called The Little Karoo, caused a stir in the literary world. She had initially attracted attention in the pages of John Middleton Murry's The Adelphi (London) with her story "The Pain" (August 1923), about which, Arnold Bennett was to write later, "review letters ... were received from the uttermost parts of the earth" (Arnold Bennett: The Evening Standard Years 141). Other stories appeared in The Adelphi in quick succession: "The Schoolmaster" in October that year, and in April and July 1924 "The Miller" and "Ludovitje". Bennett's patronage - he wrote an enthusiastic introduction to her collection that attested to his admiration for "her strange, austere, tender, and ruthless talent" (Little Karoo 11) - as well as the fact that she was able to publish through what Francis Brett Young called "one of the small 'selective' presses whose imprint may safely be displayed in public by the most highbrow of readers" (The New York Herald-Tribune, 3 April 1927, BC 236 C2.45),¹ were not the only reasons for acclaim: reviewer after reviewer noted the technical skill and emotional power of Smith's work. Jonathan Cape had arranged for simultaneous publication in New York by George H. Doran, and itself reprinted the book

three times that year. A new edition, with two stories added, came out in 1930.

The publication of The Beadle in 1926, also by Cape, with Doran's publication the following year, drew even more, and still largely favourable, attention. A notice in The Inverness Courier reported that "No novel of the autumn, so far as one has read the reviews in some good dailies and weeklies, has had a better press than The Beadle (30 November 1926, BC 236 C2.26). It was reported as one of the best sellers at Brentano's in New York (The New York Herald-Tribune, 17 April 1927, BC 236 C2.47), and even received the distinction of being banned in Boston. Smith was put in the same company not only as Rudyard Kipling and Ford Madox Ford - "three writers of genius" (Vogue [London], November 1926, BC 236 C2.21) - but also as George Eliot, Barrington Gates discovering in Smith's treatment of Andrina a dimension of sympathy and passion lacking in Eliot's presentation of Hetty Sorel in Adam Bede. "A comparison of these books", Gates stresses, "is an act of criticism. It brings home the nature and limitation of George Eliot's power" (The Nation and the Athenaeum [London], 12 March 1927, BC 236 C2.40). The Beadle was also favourably compared with Tess of the d'Urbervilles and The Scarlet Letter: the "finest novel of simple life since Thomas Hardy produced Tess", said one reviewer (The Lancashire Daily Post [Manchester], 3 February 1927, BC 236 C2.38), and "a finer version of the theme of Hardy's Tess", said

another (The Nation and the Athenaeum, 8 January 1927, BC 236 C2.33). A reviewer for The New York Times wrote:

The author of The Beadle has begun where the biographer of Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale left off. What of little, wayward, beautiful Pearl, with her heritage of beauty and passion? Hawthorne, intent upon a study of adult romance flowering out of the dark, rocky soil of Puritanism, left the question unanswered. Either he was not interested, or it was a problem with which he did not feel himself able to cope. Indeed, it is possible that it was a problem beyond his age; that before the twentieth century revelation of the feminine the question could not be answered. (20 March 1927, BC 236 C2.44)

Smith's reputation held through the twenties and thirties. In 1933 her A.B. "... a minor marginal note", a tribute to Bennett who had died in 1931, was called "perfect" in The Listener (London), "what we should expect from the author of that exquisite novel" (15 February 1933, BC 236 C3.18); and in 1935, when her collection of short stories, Flatkops Children, was published, also by Cape, reviewers recalled her earlier works. Gerald Gould wrote in The Observer (London): "I do not reckon that children's books as a rule come within my province; but the name of 'Pauline Smith' on the cover of Flatkops Children made me pause" (18 September 1935, BC 236 C4.7).

Neither A.B. nor Flatkops Children sold well in Britain (see letters to Frank Swinnerton, 26 December 1934, BC 236 D9.24; 14 October 1935, BC 236 D9.28), but Smith continued to be remembered as a writer. In 1941 H.E. Bates included discussion of The Little Karoo

in his survey The Modern Short Story, saying that it formed part of the "backbone" of the English short story (205). The British Broadcasting Corporation, which had broadcast her play "The Last Voyage" several times in 1929, aired The Little Karoo stories as well as extracts from The Beadle in 1947. In 1949 William Plomer wrote in an introduction to a new edition of The Little Karoo that "readers ... continue to look forward hopefully to seeing her name on the title page of a new book" (18). But Smith was to publish nothing more. Her literary remains comprised two short stories, some sketches and short story fragments, journals and diaries of her return visits to South Africa (she had left just before she turned thirteen), and an incomplete manuscript which is the only evidence of the novel that, according to letters that passed between Bennett and Cape on her behalf, she had once hoped to publish in 1928 or 1929.²

The reasons for her small output have been matter for speculation: critics have cited the ill-health that plagued her throughout her life, and the death of Bennett, whose encouragement was so necessary to a young woman both diffident and, after the loss of her father, melancholic. She had started writing early, and had contributed sketches and verses to The Aberdeen Free Press from about the age of twenty, and by twenty-eight was contributing to The Evening Gazette (Aberdeen), always under pseudonym. "The Sisters" was accepted by

The New Statesman (London) when she was thirty-three, but she was into her forties by the time she had her next story published, and forty-five the year The Beadle came out, though reviewers sometimes referred to hers as a youthful voice (see The Nottingham Journal, 24 September 1926, BC 236 C2.1; and Daily Times [Victoria, B.C.], 16 April 1927, BC 236 C2.46). She died in 1959, seventy-six years old, bequeathing to the University of Cape Town her literary remains.

South African reviewers, responding positively to Smith's fiction, had already laid claims to her as their own, and liked to note Bennett's "quaintly laboured explanations, intended to enlighten readers in Europe upon matters South African" (The Cape Times [Cape Town], 21 March 1935, BC 236 C1.24). A.D. Donovan, editor of The Cape (Cape Town), made a similar comment, as well as remarking with relief that here was someone different from "those lady novelists who write about South Africa from their London flats [and] spell 'veld' with a 't'" (The Cape, 4 December 1926, BC 236 C1.40). Donovan's grateful recognition of Smith's South African sympathies was repeated in the Afrikaans press, Die Burger in Cape Town running a review that recommended The Beadle to "all Afrikaans women" (11 January 1927; tr. in Driver, Pauline Smith 92), and, twenty years later, by Herman Charles Bosman, who wrote: "It comes almost as a shock to find a S.A. English writer of the period circa 1925 whose attitude toward South Africa was other than that

of an aloof superiority" ("Aspects of South African Literature" 39).

On at least one occasion Smith was invited to submit work to the local press: it was at Donovan's request that she had sent The Cape her "Three Travellers: From a South African Diary" in 1926. Other work appeared in South African newspapers: in Cape Town "The Cart" and "The Horse Thieves" in The Cape Argus (19 December 1925; 8 January 1927) and "Mrs Obbinson's Story" in The Cape Times Annual (1931); in Durban "Notes from a South African Diary: Neighbours, A Farm Governess, A Vergadering" in Voorslag (December 1926). Some of her work was reprinted in local journals: "The Sisters" and "The Miller" in The Outspan (Cape Town) September and November 1927, for instance. Despite Smith's complaint that "book-sellers here are not enthusiastic about books at all.... I suppose it is because South Africans in general are not readers" (letter to Swinnerton, 4 July 1935, BC 236 D9.25), it appears that she was widely read.

There were two essays specifically on Smith in the English press of the forties and fifties: one by Dora Taylor in 1942 and the other by Joseph Sachs in 1950. However, in 1952 a reviewer of the first critical book on South African fiction, J.P.L. Snyman's The South African Novel in English, found it appropriate to note the book's "timely reminder to the South African reader

of the sensitive talents of Pauline Smith, whose novels [sic] ... put her among the best novelists writing in English to-day, and cry out to be reprinted" (Cape Times, 20 May 1952, BC 236 C5.30). Balkema in Cape Town published The Beadle in 1956, which was its first South African publication. The Little Karoo first appeared in South Africa only in 1982.

In the 1960s Smith began to receive some critical acclaim from the South African academics starting to take local literature seriously.³ The first book-length critical work on her appeared in the Twayne World Author Series in 1969 (Haresnape, Pauline Smith). Interest in her has increased recently, with the general growth of attention to South African literature, and her fiction is read at school and university levels. Editions of both her "South African Journal, 1913-14" (BC 236 B29; referred to here as her 1913-14 Journal or, simply, as her Journal) and her "Diary, 1905" (BC 236 B27; referred to here as her 1905 Diary) are forthcoming from Balkema, with some of her out-of-print and unpublished material; "The Cart" and "The Horse Thieves", two hitherto uncollected short stories, have been reprinted for the first time; Balkema has recently reprinted her three works of fiction, two of them with new introductions;⁴ a casebook has been published (Driver, Pauline Smith) and three biographies are in preparation.⁵

The bulk of work produced on Smith has been

introductory: critics have tended to present her as a relatively unknown literary figure and generally provide a basic reading of her fiction. Recently, however, Smith's texts have begun to generate debate, largely relating to her sociological import and her political responsibility; this is, of course, part of a wider debate current in South African literary criticism.⁶ Critics are using Smith (as they use other writers) to present, defend and attack ideological positions, a situation quite in accord with the gradual scrutinizing and redefining of political stances that is currently occurring here. South African literature, because it is the literature of a country in the process of a social revolution, is in use, constantly being assessed and reassessed as product of and contributor to the socio-political environment. It is the intention of this study to enter and extend such a debate, drawing into the discussion an aspect of Smith that has been altogether undeveloped: her identity as a woman writing in a colonial context. And in this regard, the critical approach used to assess Smith's work will be a feminist approach, an approach which was formulated initially in reaction to male-dominated criticism, and which, to put it simply for the moment, focuses on the term woman, whether author, character or reader, within a more general discussion of gender relations.

READING FOR GENDER

Tillie Olsen, American poet and essayist, recently talked of how much she was looking forward to the works of criticism "which, though including women writers only, will be titled ... Critical Studies in Recent American Literature. Or conversely, when only men writers are being discussed, The Male Imagination or Literary Men" (188). Her wryness is a reaction to the embarrassment involved in continually having to assert that qualifier "woman", and an indication of her irritation that this assertion has been continually necessary. Because literary history and criticism has generally been male-dominated,⁷ feminist literary history and criticism have needed to counter the balance with "separatist" critical studies of women's writing as well as anthologies and bibliographies of women writers. In South Africa too there is an historical necessity to assert the term "woman". Work of this kind has already begun: there has been a bibliography of black women writers of Southern Africa (Amelia House), an anthology of contemporary women's writing called LIP (lip from women, women's lips ...), edited by Sue Brown et al, and now in production is a collection of critical essays on Southern African women writers writing in English, edited by Cherry Clayton. In the social sciences, too, since the path-breaking books produced by Jacklyn Cock and Cheryl Walker, there have been essays (for example,

Jill Baikoff, and Belinda Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and Women's Studies") and anthologies (for example, Suzanne Gordon; Beata Lipman; Jane Barrett et al) on Southern African women, focussing largely on black women, however, rather than white or colonial women.

South African literary criticism, as practised in schools and universities, and published in the local media, has hardly begun to take account of the determining influences of gender in the writing and reading processes. That it generally ignores the post-modernist dislocation of the writer's authority, speaks as if a single authoritative reading of a text were possible, takes little account of current debate regarding reader response, and (with the exception of Marxist critics) prefers to discover "unity" in a text rather than textual disjunctions, and a harmonious resolution of irony and ambiguity rather than ambivalence and contradiction, suggests how alien to the South African context must be any criticism which bases itself upon such revisionist readings, as does feminist literary criticism.

The extent to which South African literary criticism has been male-dominated is all the more striking in the context of a literature that has included a number of women novelists, if not poets and dramatists, although less surprising when one recalls that the academic world and the world of literary reviewing has included more men than women. The

tradition is, to use the term deployed by Mary Ellman, "phallic" (27-54), though it might have seemed politer to use the term "patriarchal" - used by Gertrude Stein to describe a certain type of poetry (qtd. in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar 187) - or "masculinist", Virginia Woolf's term for Milton - "the first of the masculinists" (*A Writer's Diary* 5; 10 September 1918) - or Jacques Derrida's now common term "phallogocentric", or even simply "male": "What I mean by 'male critical theory' is a concept of creativity, literary history, or literary interpretation based entirely on male experience and put forward as universal" (Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" 183).

The term "phallic criticism" has been employed by feminist critics particularly in order to characterize the reception of texts written by women, a reception that is at best patronizing and at worst uncomprehending or even hostile. It is phallic criticism which chooses to place Thomas Pringle as the first South African English writer rather than Lady Anne Barnard, who has, by virtue of the longer time spent in this country and also by the fact of her precedence, a greater claim. But Pringle wrote poetry and Barnard wrote only letters, journals and travel descriptions, and was, moreover, seen as superficial. Laurens van der Post, for instance, writes:

The first phase [of English literature in South Africa] begins with the appearance on

our scene among the 1820 Settlers of a crippled Scot, Thomas Pringle. It is true there was the talented and charming Lady Anne Barnard, a daughter of the gifted house of Crawford and Balcarres and author of the ballad "Auld Robin Gray", whose letters from the Cape written some twenty years before Pringle have a technical claim to be called the beginning. But I overlook these because they might have been written anywhere in the world, their local colour going no deeper than the colour of its surroundings with a chameleon. But in the six years that he spent in Africa Pringle took the nature and the problems of the country deeply upon himself ... and as a result left us a record in prose and verse of his single-handed encounter with South Africa.... For all that, ... Pringle remained a foreigner writing about Africa in English. (145)

Once one enters the realm of non-"foreign" literature, Schreiner is, of course, the "first" in English: there seems no room for sexist responses here. Yet the literary reception of Olive Schreiner's work has left a legacy of hostility. As Pauline Smith notes in her 1905 Diary, after attending a meeting of the Oudtshoorn Literary and Debating Society, Schreiner was discussed with "scorn" as "that woman"; Smith infers that the men present must have been "jealous of the fact that the only writer of real note in S. Africa has been a woman, not a man" (2 May). And Melina Rorke, whose mother was a friend of Schreiner's in Kimberley, writes:

The men were frankly alarmed at the idea of a young woman who wrote books and who might use their persons or their expressions for copy, and the women unanimously decided that it was unladylike to write for publication, even though she did have the delicacy to use the masculine nom de plume of Ralph Iron; they themselves never wrote anything except letters, or perhaps a diary for their own eyes - "to be destroyed when I die". (53-54)

Schreiner's From Man to Man, which is, among other things, about one woman's desperate need to be listened to, includes a scene where Rebekah's husband refuses to read a letter she has written him; one (male) critic unashamedly shares that reluctance (Clayton 92), and another condones the husband's "long series of infidelities" - and presumably the sense of male ownership of women that Schreiner uses these infidelities to portray - on the grounds that Rebekah could not have given Frank sufficient sexual response, which she should have (asserts the critic), "even if it has to be pretended".⁹

When criticism is not hostile, it may patronize: in the late twenties Hector Bolitho, attempting in good faith to explain the preponderance of women writers in Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand, argues that women are better able to "restrain their ecstasies" and "discipline their minds", an advantage fully experienced by "new" colonial women (Sarah Gertrude Millin and Ethelreda Lewis, alongside Smith), "whose lives were so ordered that they were the prey of introspection and long, inactive periods" (Woman [London], September 1928, BC 236 C5.8). Herman Charles Bosman praised Smith's "love stories", claiming that "her approach is essentially feminine", the stories "very tenderly told", but that she does not attempt "the furthest flight" into reality, where "stark tragedy has also got its tinsel

side and sorrow is the mask for a carnival" ("The Truth of the Veld" 99). More recently, too, South African critics insist on seeing Smith in feminine terms, generally stressing the qualities of compassion and forgiveness to the exclusion of that second, ironic voice that feminist criticism has alerted one to, and ignoring her (albeit muted) feminist critique. But this is a later topic.

Feminist criticism has made what are by now commonplace contributions in international criticism: the revision of literary history, with the attendant set of questions regarding a literary tradition for women; and the discovery that in literature written by women there are important and hitherto unrecognized modifications or subversions of the ways in which women have been inscribed in literature as well as of the literary genres, techniques and metaphors handed down by a patriarchal tradition. Moreover, just as gender complicates the reading of texts, so does it the writing of texts: feminist criticism, more and more concerned with sexual difference, foregrounds a relation between sexuality and textuality where desire is seen to articulate itself in language.⁹

As a woman writing in a colonial context Smith places her texts at the intersection of colonial literature and literature written by women, at the very point of cooperation, in other words, of the concepts "colonial" and "female". Recent feminist critical

theory is particularly well-suited to a study of colonial literature, for it is interested in the way that a text inserts itself into the dominant discourse. Colonial literature, like literature written by women, may offer a set of more or less aggressive, more or less well-hidden subversions of the ideology of the dominant class, or else may see its interests as identical to those of that class. In both these literary types there is a particular relation between literary text and ideology, or between literary text and the received social text: ideology being a generic term for the production of meaning by the dominant class, and social text being the analogous term for the "interlocking group of cognitive and emotional structures" (Rachel Blau DuPlessis 2) which organize our experience (and indeed make it possible) and are popularly known as social conventions. (The notion of a social text, or social script, adds a fruitful suspiciousness about what appear to be instinctual or natural acts or feelings, but are in fact patterns of behaviour that have been learned in specific cultural and historical contexts.)

It is in the nature of a colonial literature (which is to say, it is in the nature of the current reading of colonial literature) to foreground the values that are in the process of being imposed upon the indigenous people, and strictly maintained in the face of real or imagined cultural threats, whether it participates in

the process of asserting these values or casts doubt on their validity. Similarly, women writers (or their feminist readers) will generally be conscious of their relation to a patriarchal culture, whether - again - they promote or question that culture. In a colonial literature written by women, there is an entwined set of relations to examine: the relation of colonial text to metropolitan text, and the relation of feminine text to masculine text.

Literature by women has been spoken of elsewhere as a "literature of the colonized" (see, for instance, Showalter's "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" 197), albeit with the understanding that there are specific cultural and historical differences within such a grouping. Within the concept "colonial", too, there is a variety of stances: the different access and different attitudes to power allow one to include within the general concept "colonial" - which means simply "of the colony" - the literature of both colonizer and colonized. (The former will shade into metropolitan literature and the latter into a national literature.) Similarly, literature written by women is not necessarily antagonistic to the (colonizing) patriarchy.

One of the major contributions of recent feminist criticism has been to identify in the feminine text tones of unease, dissatisfaction and anger that exist quite apart from the controlled ironic tones that New Criticism, with its yen for ambiguity, would find. The

feminist emphasis on the "second" voice is an emphasis on the disruptions in the authorial voice, disruptions that become visible to the alert reader in, for example, the narrator's use of submerged plots, the deployment of images that present an other than placid or controlled atmosphere, the generic modifications and disjunctions in the text. The disruptions may be both sought after and fought off: writing can be a subversive activity for women that, like other subversive activities, is often forced underground, into the unconscious of the text. More complicatedly, subversion may not necessarily stand in simple opposition: there is often a coexistence, what Michel Foucault has called the "strategical integration" (102), of dominant and dominated modes of discourse: "not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are" (100). Not only are the voices of the dominated necessarily mediated "through the allowable forms of dominant structures" (Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" 200), but they may also speak in support of a status quo that protects their own position.

In other words, a feminist approach does not mean that women are to be seen in any simple sense as victims of patriarchy. To illustrate: one of the startling discoveries in reading South African literature as a colonial literature, and in comparing some of the strategies of early twentieth-century fiction written by

white women to those of recent revolutionary fiction written by black women, is to see the extent to which women tend, finally, to write in support of their national group: the polarized concepts of masculinity and femininity, in particular, are used by women writers as much as by men to reinforce patriarchy in its aggressive reaction to an alien and threatening culture; such is the stance of nationalism, whether black or white. The example of Laretta Ngcobo informs us that women's liberation is seen as subsequent to and not intertwined with black liberation: she is, in other words, black first, obedient to the argument made by Frantz Fanon (and others) that "women - a conservative force - should be emancipated after a revolution" (qtd. in Juliet Mitchell, Women 17). So subversive has feminist writing seemed to Ngcobo that she abandoned entirely a book in which she was tracing the double oppressions suffered by a black woman in South Africa, and instead wrote a novel, Cross of Gold (1981), about a young man becoming a revolutionary (Interview 189-90).

The political implications of being a feminist in a racially-defined world is of enormous significance: at one end of a historical spectrum issues the white nationalist's argument that women ought to be white first and women second, and at the other end the black nationalist's argument that women ought to be black first and women second. Because she is a white woman of a liberal-humanist vision, Smith to some extent

vacillates along this spectrum of possibilities: in final alignment with the white rather than the black or "mixed" races, and yet at times in sympathetic identification with those races. Her position is conservative, and yet if one takes the care to see it in the context of this historical spectrum, one sees it as historically determined in the way of (to return to the above example) a contemporary black, radical, exile writer, whose writing is banned in this country, a writer, that is, like Ngcobo.

The comparison of a white woman who speaks from a position of political power over blacks and a black woman who speaks as one of a group for centuries exploited by whites will seem a specious one from a certain moral perspective, and yet the suggestion in both cases that it is up to women to maintain the family unit while men are out there fighting for change lays bare what is ultimately a limiting social perspective, one that issues from a frontier mentality in which the patriarchal family unit becomes a symbol for all that is stable and true. That Smith is herself locked into such a position ought not to be seen as unusual.

Whatever the specific cultural and historical differences at work, then, women writers experience their gender "as a painful obstacle or even a debilitating inadequacy" (Gilbert and Gubar 8), and their various narrative strategies may be read as

proceeding from the fundamental experience of becoming a subject within a society that insists on sexual division: "a person is formed through their sexuality" (Mitchell, Introduction to Feminine Sexuality 2; emphasis in original). Obviously there are dangers here. Calling a writer "female" automatically denotes a function that is given its context by that unspoken qualifying phrase: writers are male. I have no desire to perpetuate the legend that women are honorary writers, to recall that epithet so useful in South African cultural life. Nor have I any desire to suggest that women have biologically determined feelings, that they therefore have special concerns and special ways of looking at the world. However, because of the positions that women are assigned in a patriarchal society, women writers have had special burdens and have often even felt special challenges as writers, whether they have taken them up or not. Women constitute themselves as subjects in response to the ways in which they are constituted by society; the images within which they are trapped become the burdens under which they become writers (or the burdens under which their fictional characters are created), burdens borne, fretted at, or resisted. Some women writers have simply adopted masculine ways of looking at the world, projecting on to women the definitions and values that keep women "in their place"; others have done so less simply, demonstrating in their texts varying forms of unease

with that masculine perspective. Some, conscious of the challenges handed them by a male-dominated tradition, have explicitly adopted and defended femininity, which becomes a weapon against the masculine world; others have rejected femininity as a natural attribute and have spoken of it in terms of socialization; still others have imagined an androgynous perspective from which they speak. These are different responses, and yet they proceed from gender-specific socialization.

THE QUESTION OF TRADITION

Because of these different responses, women are not seen to form a homogenous group, and in South African literature, where critics have been at pains trying to establish tradition, one cannot easily speak of a tradition of women writers. To take initially the question of tradition among white writers: all local women writers will probably have read The Story of an African Farm at some time in their lives. Doris Lessing did when she was fourteen, as she notes in her Afterword to the novel: "I had only to hear the title", she said, "or 'Olive Schreiner', and my deepest self was touched" (274). Yet The Story of an African Farm seems to have had impact not because it spoke to women but because it presented Africa, "Africa the magnificent", says Lessing, "mine, and everyone's who knows Africa" (274), a gift for male South African writers as much as female.

Similarly, a woman writer will read and respond to writing by men as well as to writing by women: it is William Plomer's Turbott Wolfe (1926) of which Nadine Gordimer says in 1965, "the only novel of poetic vision to come out of our country since Olive Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm" and whose inaccessibility to her as an aspirant writer she so regrets ("A Wilder Fowl" 167).

Again, part of the task of the South African writer, whether male or female, has been to evade a local tradition and to look elsewhere for models. Smith did not read Schreiner and Millin until after The Little Kargo and The Beadle had been published, and, reared in a British system, read British classics before turning to the French and Russian "naturalist" writers that Bennett introduced her to, as well as the more general field of contemporary literature. Gordimer talks of specifically rejecting the available South African literature: "our parents were busy reading Francis Brett Young and Sarah Gertrude Millin", she reports ("A Wilder Fowl" 166), alluding to the sentimentality and mediocrity of vision that seem so carefully nurtured in colonial life, on the one hand, and to a poisonous morality of racial purity on the other. If one traces in her early stories the kind of self-conscious sensibility portrayed by the colonial writer Katherine Mansfield, one sees in her later novels the kind of connection between individual, society and history

presented by George Eliot: her models are primarily European. And it is this metropolitan image that Gordimer has determinedly projected. In a set of interviews in 1965, for instance, published under the heading "A Writer in South Africa", she speaks of having been influenced by various European thinkers, most notably E.M. Forster and Albert Camus (24). Yet by the early eighties it becomes possible for her to admit to having been influenced by Smith, by her "choosing subjects from the ordinary life around her" ("A Note on Women and Literature" 4).

Looking back, then, from the perspective offered by Gordimer's fiction, and putting aside known or admitted facts of specific literary influence, certain aspects of a more precarious (and specifically female) tradition start to emerge: allusions and echoes that speak, if not of influence, at least of an awareness on the writer's part that her various group memberships include membership of a group made up of women. The heroine of Gordimer's "The Bride of Christ" (Livingstone's Companions, 1971) is called Lyndall; the title of "A Present for a Good Girl" (The Soft Voice of the Serpent, 1952) are the words on the mug so prized by Smith's Deltje (in "The Pain") of whom Gordimer's character is an urban equivalent; Helen Shaw in The Lying Days (1956) smiles at the title of a chapter of a book on popular psychology that her father brings home - "'How you think

with your blood: The problem of prejudice'" (190) - and thus measures her distance from the kind of thought that formed writers like Millin.

Here is the start of a conversation beginning to take shape for us among South African women writers. Yvonne Burgess publishes "Outeniqua Holiday" in 1969, parodying Pauline Smith; Menan du Flessis's Anna in A State of Fear (1983) is a character conceivable only after Gordimer's Rosa Burger of Burger's Daughter (1980). In Sampie de Wet's Nine Stories, published in the fifties, there are various indications of a response to Smith. De Wet's story "The Pain" (which alludes to "Desolation" as well as "The Pain", and seems to take as its partial source Smith's reading of her own life, available to de Wet through A.B.) concerns a young woman who uses her pain to establish a world "soft and warm and close" (36), protecting herself against her father's marriage to a second wife by a pain that entirely subdues her body but for the "restless and continuous plucking" of her hands at the sheet (38).

In searching even before this for "tradition" there are to be found links and continuities and sets of intriguing comparisons. Still keeping within the group of white women writers, one sees - in this tracing of connections - how political differences manifest themselves in differences of literary structuration. In From Man to Man (1926) Schreiner's Rebekah adopts the "coloured" offspring of her husband's union with one of

the domestic servants to bring her up as "one of the family"; Millin's Mrs Burtwell and Edith in God's Step-Children (1924) have the same opportunity but reject it, insisting instead on explicit servant status for their wards. The story of Smith's Andrina in The Beadle re-orders this narrative moment: Andrina, a servant, is called "one of the family" but is then seduced and abandoned in the way that a servant is. The irony of her treatment by her seducer and by her "family" of employees is an irony that expands to a fullness of meaning only once the reader knows the antecedents in Schreiner and Millin. Similarly, Millin's "sins of the father" theme, renamed "the skins of the father" (116) in Lewis's The Harp (1924), was redirected by Smith in The Beadle, published two years later. Although Lewis has her male character gradually learn to have compassion for and be a father to the "coloured" child, she is simply providing a humane or "feminine" face to the morality of racial purity that remains unquestioned. Smith's emphasis on the positive effects of genetic mingling between English and Afrikaans and her relegation of the sins of the fathers theme to a bitter and narrow outlook on life is a quietly made and oblique comment on these inherited ideas: the South African Dutch themselves had been formed by "the mingling of two races" (Beadle 27).

Why such a comment is so obliquely made by Smith is

one of the questions that will be addressed through this study. The mediatory role assumed by women writers, their sympathy for the oppressed and their simultaneous entrapment within the oppressive group on whose behalf they may desire to mediate may complicate their narrative stance, as Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea makes explicit. To some extent it is the assumed position as mediator that typically distinguishes the South African woman writer from her male counterpart, as Gordimer has suggested: Schreiner wrote Trooper Peter Halket while "men were preoccupied with imperialist, materialist expansion up half of Africa"; Smith evolved a prose style to deal with her interest in "a harsh rural working life in a particular time and place" while "most men writers were imitating European modes and writing of Africa as an exotic playground"; Millin took up "the rough and menacing presences of the dispossessed who had no claim on the attention of the leading citizens she entertained at ... the judge's [her husband's] table" ("A Note on Women and Literature in South Africa" 7). But, to make the distinction clearer, one needs to see the place of such mediation both within a structure of power and within a context where it is given to women to mediate and to conserve.

Smith's liberal-humanist stance, combined with her upbringing in a Little Karoo community, explains to a large extent her cultural shift towards the perspective of the Boer and against the "superior" colonial

perspective (a shift which will be more fully detailed in due course). However, as recent critics have pointed out, Smith is neither fully a part of nor fully remote from the community of which she writes. Tony Voss defines the "contradictory impulses in the writer's personality" as a sympathetic identification with the rural poor she grew up among, against which works the "metropolitan, intellectual eye" ("Die Pêrels van Pauline" 111-112), and Stanley Ridge talks of a "dualistic technique" and "fruitful tension", the "classical opposition of stereotype and immediate experience" (209-211). Smith's ambivalence is, in these examples, part of the colonial predicament.

Yet there is an additionally complicating factor, and one that has not hitherto been raised in analysis of women writers in South Africa. Smith's political awareness may also be seen in terms of a feminist recognition (however underplayed and ambivalent this recognition may finally be) and in terms of her awareness of herself as female. One of the simplest examples is offered in the references to Jews in her 1905 Diary and 1913-14 Journal, which are essentially prejudiced: "The feeling between the Jews and Christians is not a very friendly one, but the Morrises are nice people" (7 June 1905); "I like Ada [Morris] - she is so un-Jewish - but P.L. seemed very "Jewy" (10 June 1905). A turning point comes on 20 April 1914, when Smith meets

a Jewish woman in the Langkloof, about whom she writes: "her loneliness and misery made us feel quite wretched, for no woman can be so lonely and outcast as a Jewish woman is on a farm out here, I think, visiting no one and counting no one her friend in any sense of the word." This woman will become the model for Esther Sokolowsky in "The Miller" and Esther Shokolowsky in The Beadle, as carefully named by the narrator as she is unnamed by the community - "the Jew-woman, who went by no other name in the valley" (Little Karoo 61) - and will be used in "The Miller" to teach Andries Lombard the lesson the author herself seems to have learnt. Smith's role here gives special emphasis to her designation of herself as "olive branch" in her 1905 Diary (7 June).

The question of the relation between Smith's political stance and her femaleness is, in a more subtle way, complicated by the fact of her regionalism. That she sometimes uses a story-telling mode in which the act of narration is foregrounded - as in "The Schoolmaster" and "The Pastor's Daughter", for instance - is just one of the features to place her with a group of regional writers, not necessarily female (one thinks particularly of writers like Guy de Maupassant, William Faulkner, Herman Charles Bosman, Bessie Head and Ama Ata Aidoo) whose use of such a narrative position helps provide "authenticity", so important a part of the regional or colonial fictional enterprise. It also provides an

impression of cultural relativism, of a constructed reality that is different from the authorial and authoritative reality of metropolitan literature: the stories told draw attention to their existence as a "presentation" of a world, even, perhaps, of an alternative discourse. Smith's incorporation of Afrikaans constructions and rhythms into her British discourse is obviously pertinent here, and so of course is her frequent emphasis on the feminine (or otherwise powerless) voice.

However, the regional writer has, by definition, separated himself or herself from that region (psychically, as in the case of a William Faulkner, or physically, as in the case of most others), and with this separation come feelings of both relief and loss. Engaged in the precarious activity of presenting to a metropolitan audience the beloved aspects of her particular region and at the same time its moral or spiritual limitations, Smith colours her regional stance with a mood fundamentally elegiac and therefore fundamentally ambivalent: time tragically passes and yet time must pass. The extent to which she feels sympathetic to the community about whom she writes is the extent to which she suppresses her political sense of the oppressions and exploitations suffered within and under that community, and the extent to which she suppresses this political sense is the extent to which

she is emotionally caught within a patriarchal order. In this respect she is similar to Noni Jabavu, a writer who also left her home region to go to school in Britain at an early age, and whose attitude to patriarchy also seems to be, perhaps not surprisingly, constructed in terms of her attitude to her own father. Jabavu's longing for a secure and loving relationship with a benevolent and firm-handed father takes over the direction of her autobiographical narrative, and effectively neutralizes the carefully detailed scenes about female subordination. Smith's attitude towards patriarchy is more obviously ambivalent than Jabavu's, yet, as in Jabavu's case (and in many ways Head's too), Smith's nostalgic yearning is at odds with her more adult political sense.

Although one would not wish to call Smith a "feminist" writer, it is true to say that she is working within a tradition established by Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, a tradition which has been seen to take up a specific position, suspicious to varying degrees, in relation to prevailing cultural assumptions about women. For instance, in Smith's texts, women who were "doves" before their marriages become, with marriage, "nervous hens". Like the major nineteenth-century women writers, Smith is concerned with the position of women: what kinds of choices women had about the lives they led, what kinds of marriages, and marriage contracts, were offered to women, what fates

awaited women who did not marry, who were seduced, who bore "illegitimate" children. She shows some interest in role differentiation, and in socialisation.

Smith, like other women writers, works with the metaphors that fit or describe a Western patriarchal culture and, like other South African women writers, works with the metaphors of colonial culture: in terms of both contexts she shows herself to be seeking, and then pulling back from, transformation. For example, one of the basic metaphors of Western culture is the family, which very often stands for the patriarchal culture itself. She shows a profound interest in the family: in the relations between husband, wife and child in a patriarchal unit. Her interest in the dominant position held by males and the position of subservience held by females suggests her desire to explore one of the fundamental social institutions of Western culture; her presentation of the ways in which women adapt to or sometimes attempt to modify and extend their social roles, and her scrutiny of the shackled lives lived by many women - wives, daughters, and what Christina Stead has referred to in For Love Alone as "the great unwanted" (108) - provide some kind of disruption of a patriarchal orientation. Moreover, if the treatment of women, in Smith as in other colonial writers, characterizes the patriarchal culture, this culture is seen to be one out of which spring other forms of oppression. Smith's notion

of "service" will become one of the important clues here.

Within the context of colonialism, there is a deepening in significance of certain metaphors. In Jane Eyre, for instance, Charlotte Brontë's "mad" Bertha, the figure of the imprisoned wife, is a Creole from the West Indies. In the novel no significance beyond that of the exotic and unregulated is attached to this particular aspect of her history; it is not in this respect that Bertha is offered to our scrutiny. Yet, as Rhys's re-reading of Jane Eyre shows, there is significance to be attached to her origin: not the significance of an exotic fury, but the significance of cultural rage, the rage of the oppressed. In Wide Sargasso Sea Rhys borrows the Bertha-Rochester relationship in order to develop it as a metaphor for the colonial relationship: one writer in a line of colonial women to do so. In the colonial novel women become part of the culturally available imagery to be deployed in the discussion of oppression.

Part of this change, or re-focussing, may simply stem from the fact that the context of colonialism invites a different kind of reader activity, a particular degree of alertness to versions of colonial oppressions. Thus Rachel Blau DuPlessis, writing about Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm, will see the main set of characters as symbolizing "the political problematic of South Africa", with Waldo as "African"

(21), so that there becomes visible in the text a covert concern for racial oppression:

Waldo "is" the black African. He is despised in an analogous way, and his inventions are broken. He is described as wild and unkempt, paralleling descriptions of the tribal blacks. He does the work assigned to the native and also makes wood carvings reminiscent of African art. Finally, he is described as muttering like a "Kaffir". (203, n. 5)

Whatever representation of reality the text may "consciously" depict, the particular perceptions, misperceptions and blind spots, combined with the slant of the reading present, determine the text that is read. One particular cultural moment offers to another a set of available images and metaphors, whether in fully-fledged, "manifest" form, or in a germinal, "latent" form. The "problem" of South Africa is always present to a reader of South African texts; that the country is both racist and sexist (quite strikingly so) invites one to see, or ask questions about, a particular relation between blacks and women: if Waldo is Schreiner's "African", Andrina is Smith's.

This leap of the imagination is made possible not simply because Smith is demonstrably concerned with women as an oppressed group (and therefore in some kind of analogical relation with other oppressed groups) but because she is, quite explicitly, concerned with the poor. Here she departs from the Austen-Brontë-Eliot tradition. If Smith deals at all with the bourgeois or, in rural terms, the landowning peasantry, it is on the

female dependents within that class that her concern focuses - as in "Anna's Marriage"; in her stories generally she is interested in the economically dependent and deprived.

Smith's use of the oral tradition is another indication of where her heart lay. While she includes in Platkops Children two stories told her by Katisje, the black nursemaid ("The Jackal" and "Trinka's Wedding"), Smith's tales come specifically from the Dutch-Afrikaner population, whose stories she enthusiastically collected on her return trips to South Africa and which formed the basis to the majority of her Little Karoo stories. As Harold Scheub has pointed out, both "The Cart" and "The Horse Thieves" are trickster narratives, used in both an American and an indigenous South African tradition. Smith's incorporation of the trickster motif not only into the stories that quite explicitly recall the oral tradition but even into the more literary descendents of that form signals to us her desire to be part of a folk tradition.

In The Little Karoo especially there is a close attention to the world of poverty, ill-health, and dependency. This is a world quite similar to the one perceived by the 1932 Carnegie Commission Report on The Poor White Problem in South Africa, as I have said elsewhere (Driver, Pauline Smith 24). If Smith at first sees this world as inhabited by a class of rural Dutch

in the first quarter of the century, her journals and letters, as I shall show, reveal a gradual change of focus. It is in a sense a trick of history that Smith wrote about rural Afrikaners rather than rural blacks. Although The Beadle is also to some extent indebted to the naturalistic tradition as it was imported to Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and absorbed into the British realistic tradition, it makes a radical departure from it, displacing naturalism in favour of idyll. This displacement is one of the strongest signals in Smith's texts of a fundamentally ambivalent stance.

BETWEEN WORLDS

As a colonial writer, Smith stands between two worlds, the world of her Little Karoo childhood, to which she returned for several lengthy writing and research trips, and the world of her adult life - her London publishers, Arnold Bennett's library, her continental holidays, and her home in Dorset. These two worlds represent and contain different sets of audiences: the British and the colonial readership that made up most of Smith's de facto audience, the élite group of Afrikaners whom Smith periodically referred to as providing a desired audience, and the circle of family and friends who stood as something like a censorship board which Smith might either satisfy or flout. These two worlds also present,

if one looks first to Britain, a moment of transition from the tradition of social, regional or domestic realism represented by such writers as George Moore, George Gissing, Thomas Hardy and Arnold Bennett to the tradition of psychological realism that takes one into the modernist movement represented by such writers as Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield. And if one looks to South Africa, there is a moment of transition from the norm of rural, organic communities to urban and industrialized life, as well as from polygenetic to monogenetic theories of race that claimed on the one hand that racial differences between Europeans and Africans were innate, and on the other that Africans were of the same species as Europeans, even if they might rank "below" them and require time to "evolve". Smith stands at these points of transition, not always in the conservative position. Offspring of a British liberal-humanist tradition, she is both patriotic towards Britain and yet deeply concerned at British imperialism; middle-class in values and yet conscious of the exploitation of the working-class and sympathetic to its aspirations; committed to such concepts as "progress" and "civilization" and yet nostalgic towards a rural past and seduced by the idea of an organic community; progressive in her racial attitudes and yet frequently blind to the specifics of colonial racist practice.

And, then, if we look at her as a woman writer,

there is another, more private, position that she adopts, a position quite clear to readers conscious of the ambit of her life: this has to do with her relationship with her family, and primarily with her father, which is written into her fiction in so complex and elusive a manner. Much of the complexity and elusiveness has to do with the relations between a particular beloved father and the Father as represented in social, cultural and religious government; it also has to do with the ways in which Smith adjusted her position vis-à-vis patriarchy in terms of her private position. Of course, my distinction between "private" and "political" has a limited function, since "private" desires are culturally organized and have cultural implications; as has so often been said, the "private" is "political". Smith's literary relation to the father and father-figures is closely bound up with and illustrates a more general and extremely problematic relation between women writers and the Father, on the one hand, and the Mother, on the other.

In another sense, then, we may see Smith as standing between worlds: between the world of the manifest and the world of the repressed, switching from one voice that is controlled and neutral to another that speaks with an urgent desire, and switching also from a voice compassionate and comforting to another angry and vindictive. These sets of voices reveal a degree of

ambivalence in her work: part of my thesis is that such ambivalence in Smith takes the form of contradictory pulls between a text that initially appears to be simply about compassion and self-sacrifice, and a subtext that desires (in the more or less conscious manner of women writers before her) to correct a patriarchal order which abuses and yet demands compassion and self-sacrifice from women. But then there is also another subtext that is obedient not to patriarchy as a system but to the particular father, a text that obeys with unconscious desire the script that unites father and daughter. In other words, the notion of "subtext", so useful to feminist critics, is here complicated: there is not one "subtext" to hear, but two: and the deeper of these two is the hardest to hear because it seems to accord with the superficial text, the text that critics have generally read as accepting patriarchy.

If as a colonial writer Smith lacks a sense of firm location, she lacks it also as a woman writer, who must manage - and manoeuvre between - the risks of speaking for herself against prevailing norms, the risks of speaking an inherited language that has denied women the tongue with which to speak for themselves, as well as the risks of trying to express yearnings both inexpressible and forbidden. Without wishing in any way to establish crude and simplistic connections between her life and her fiction, the presentation in her novel and stories of triadic relations between fathers (or

father-figures), mothers (or mother-figures), and daughters (or powerless males) is a presentation wrought of her own complex desire.

I have already suggested that one of the more interesting critical discussions in the last few years in this country has had to do with the question of Smith and the politics of race. Against her work has been tested a variety of assumptions, some involving a search for "universal" values, others asking a set of questions that arise from the specific South African setting of her fiction. A few critics have found Smith's work admirably silent about "local" political issues, several have felt it to be too silent about such issues, while others have made an effort to find in her work examples of political inquiry and criticism adverse to the dominating South African ideology. A little of what is at stake for the South African academic/critic engaged in presenting or mediating local writers to the reading public is implied in Jean Marquard's suggestion that Arthur Ravenscroft may have been "over-optimistic" in his essay "Pauline Smith" in finding Smith critical of the Van der Merwe's treatment of their indentured children in The Beadle ("Pauline Smith and her Beadle" 19). On the other hand, Geoffrey Haresnape's essay on "Barriers of Race and Language", which picks up and extends Ravenscroft's point, uses the phrase "temptingly bland" (194) to suggest the way that many South African

critics have desired to see Smith.

While this particular study also discusses Smith and the politics of race, it does so within the context provided by what Gayle Rubin has called a "sex/gender system" (159), and its findings obviously also stem from a critical position open to scrutiny: criticism, no less than fiction, speaks the writer's desire. The general intention is to show that while Smith recognised some of the developing socio-political problems in twentieth-century South Africa, she experienced a variety of constraints as a white, female South African writer writing in English both for a local public and for a British audience, in a period characterised by the memory of the Anglo-Boer War at one end and the advent of the Second World War at the other. To these various constraints Smith did indeed respond with silence, but a silence that reads as an incomplete and gradual muffling, before her full retreat into that final silence, the silence of a writer who can no longer write. Her fiction, which always in some sense turns upon silence, may usefully be set within this gradual retreat into silence, explaining it, explained by it.

Silence is worked into the very texture of Smith's prose. The language is lucid, bare, at times even toneless, the images restrained, the emotions briefly stated, the rhythms quiet and predictable. Climactic moments are very often moments of ominous immobility, as in "The Schoolmaster", where Jan Boetje's violence

against the mules makes the placid daily flow of life stop in a way that has his action read as a crime committed against nature itself. One recalls those points in The Beadle where the characters stand still for an instant, watching, being watched, captives on some archaic frieze. The silence in Smith's texts is often menacing, and it may be a sign of absence, deus absconditus, but it may also be innocent, in harmony with nature. Such are the two silences in "The Pain". One is provided by familiarity and regularity, the constantly murmured words of comfort and love; the other is a theft and an emptiness, mirrored in the blank walls of the modern hospital, the white sheets, the impersonality of the little frilly caps that the patients must wear. While Juriaan and Deltje live comfortably within their own silence, others, like Andries Lombard, Piet Pienaar, Aalst Vlokman and to a lesser extent Toontje Dampers, are possessed by a silence that cuts them off from themselves and from God.¹⁰

Many of Smith's stories are about language and silence, expression and repression, focussing either on women or on male victims of the Law of the Father. In the foreground of a number of Smith's stories, notably "The Pastor's Daughter" and "The Schoolmaster", stand figures in the process of breaking their silence. There are various linguistic crises. "Anna's Marriage", like "The Pain", deals with the theft of language, figured

here as a set of possessions, and most notably a musical box. In "The Miller" and "The Father" words that ought to be spoken are kept back. In "The Miller" they are hoarded, as unnaturally as unsown seed; in "The Father" they are held in secretive lust, like a miser's gold. In "The Sisters" words are spoken and unspoken, as Marta first breaks and then conforms to the Law of the Father. In "The Sinner" words held back are now released, restoring the family unit and, in some sense, the Father's Law, even if the father is simply a "fool". In "Ludovitje" the words spoken in glossolalia entice outsiders into a cultural system, while schoolteacher and schoolchildren sing the descant. In The Beadle, too, language and power are closely associated.

As one reads further and further into Smith's correspondence, her journals, and her autobiographical publications, and then back from there into the fiction once again, one begins to see the extent to which her writing dramatizes, over and over, from different perspectives and searching for different solutions, the "problem" of a woman writing in a patriarchal culture. "Between worlds" in so many senses, Smith is above all between the worlds of culture and nature, fixed by that dangerous dichotomy so useful to a patriarchal and colonial society. As a woman she is identified with nature, as a writer she desires identification with culture. The following chapter will amplify this (necessarily crude) formulation, and will place Smith in

the framework offered by this thesis.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1 Most of the newspaper and magazine articles and reviews referred to in this study, as well as Pauline Smith's correspondence and unpublished writings, are among the material gathered in the Pauline Smith Collection, University of Cape Town Libraries, Cape Town, whether in original or photocopied form. Regarding newspaper and magazine pieces, if the place of publication does not appear in the title, it is cited on first reference only. The bibliographic entry under Works Cited accords with the catalogue compiled by Leonie Twentyman Jones, which means that any individual items within her categories are not individually cited. In my text, when such items are individually referred to, numbers for each item are given, on first reference only for the major (and more easily located) items, such as a set of travel notes or a manuscript, but on each occasion in the case of reviews and letters. The number beginning BC 236 alerts one to the fact that the item referred to is in the Pauline Smith Collection. Occasionally letters not in the Pauline Smith Collection will be used; with an explanatory note on first reference, when necessary; these letters are listed under Works Cited in the normal manner; that is,

according to the MLA Handbook (1984).

2 Smith refers to the manuscript as "Winter Sacrifice" and, later, "Winter Sacrament" (BC 236 B11). The correspondence between Bennett and Cape (BC 236 D11) includes a letter from Bennett to Cape: "A title [Green Were My Lands] had been chosen for the novel, but Miss Smith fully agrees with me that it will not do. When another one is decided upon I will let you know at once. I can see no hope of it being in your autumn list" (14 April 1928). By 7 May both Smith and Bennett had signed the contract, and Cape writes, "I think everything is now in order."

3 In 1958, a year before her death, Smith had been handed an illuminated scroll (BC 236 A2.3) signed by various white South African writers and academics, including Guy Butler, William Plomer, Alan Paton, Roy Macnab, Anthony Delius, Dan Jacobson, Nadine Gordimer and Laurens van der Post. Charles Eglinton published an academic essay on Smith in 1960, making reference to teaching Smith to university students, and Haresnape began academic research on Smith in the early sixties (see Driver, Pauline Smith 223-228, for a bibliography of work on and by Smith).

4 The recent edition of The Little Karoo has a foreword by Butler, and reprints the original introduction by Bennett as well as the later preface by Plomer. All references in my text to The Little Karoo

are, however, to the earlier edition, as reflected in Works Cited.

5 Biographies are being prepared by Harold Scheub, Sheila Scholten and a person who prefers not to be named at this stage.

6 The clearest evidence of this wider debate may be discovered in a recent edition of Critical Arts (3.2.1984). The debate on Smith revolves largely around the question of "universals". In his foreword to the South African edition of The Little Kargg Butler argues that Smith's work is distinguished "from much of the meticulously accurate description in some South African writing of the social realist school" by means of her "subtle integration of the temporal circumstances of her characters with their ultimate destiny.... Her method of characterization is by ontological predicament, rather than by class dynamics or psychological determinism" (viii). Jeanne Heywood argues that Smith's characters "are archetypal. They date as little as the characters from the Old Testament whom they resemble. There is no attempt at the political or psychoanalytic definition which we almost expect of South African writing today. This is one of her strengths. Great writing never explains, it illuminates. She has no axe to grind, no point of view but that of a universal vision of men and women, living, loving, hating, against a background of veld and sky.... her concern is with the timeless" (11). Haresnape, whose earlier work (Pauline Smith) falls into a similar category to Butler's and

Heywood's, revises his approach in "Barriers of Race and Language", and urges critics to end the "sanitizing process" that stresses Smith's "non-controversial role as depicter of noble, sincere South Western Cape rural characters" (191). He feels that "one might, by concentrating overmuch on the decorous Victorian-influenced surfaces of her style, tend to miss ... [her] subtle, indirect critique of the rural society" (191). This view is in accord with that promoted by Arthur Ravenscroft in "Pauline Smith". P.A. Gibbon also takes issue with what she calls "universalizing categories" (215), focussing specifically on Jean Marquard's phrase "primitive and unchanging aspects of human behaviour" (Introduction to A Century of South African Short Stories 25) to speak of Smith, but goes beyond Haresnape in suggesting that Smith's own universalizing might be seen as a silencing device that transforms any implicit social critique into nostalgia and idealization. Sheila Roberts, too, suggests that Smith is herself something of a "sanitizer", although she does not use the term (235-236), and asks, like Gibbon, where the black farm labourers are. J.M. Coetzee ("Pauline Smith and the Afrikaans Language") comments on Smith's validation of the Afrikaner-Israelite myth as politically irresponsible, a finding with which Stanley Ridge and Marquard, in their different ways, disagree, Marquard suggesting that Smith be exonerated from "the suspicion of ideological unsoundness" ("Pauline Smith and her Beadle" 17). A.E. Voss argues that

Smith failed to locate her fiction in the historical specificity of the period during which she wrote ("Die Pêrels van Pauline").

7 This is by now a cliché in literary criticism and has been generally accepted. See, for example, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar; Ellen Moers; Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own; and Terry Eagleton, especially 215.

8 C.M., reviewing From Man to Man, writes:

In spite of her talk about equal love and trust it is implied that the physical side of their union was for her a concession. It is true that the letter was written after a long series of infidelities, and that Frank is presented as the constitutionally unfaithful man, but it is impossible not to read back from the letter and by the light of it, and of Rebekah's long entry in her diary, to find excuses for Frank in the nature of his wife. One says, brutally, that it was enough to drive him to a coloured servant. Between equal responses - even if it has to be pretended - and denial there is no safe ground in marriage, and the best advice to give any wife is never for a moment to let her husband imagine that her inclination is less than his own. (Clayton, Olive Schreiner 90)

9 I am particularly indebted to the following texts of feminist criticism: Shirley Nelson Garner et al.; Gilbert and Gubar; Margaret Homans; Annette Kolodny, "A Map for Rereading" and "Dancing Through the Minefield"; Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism; Moers; Tillie Olsen; Joanna Russ; Showalter, A Literature of Their Own and "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness".

10 For some of the general ideas on silence I am indebted to M. Picard; for some of the specific ideas to

Cherry Clayton, "The Style of Poverty", 157-158.

CHAPTER ONE

OBEDIENT TONGUES, UNRULY MEMBERS: SOCIAL SCRIPTS AND THE FEMININE POSITION

There exists not at the Cape that marked difference in the manners of the two sexes which we find in Europe. In conversation the women are free and unreserved, and very often not only listen to, but make use of expressions by no means to be reconciled with English ideas of decency and propriety. They are not the disciples, they might be the models, of the school of Mrs Wolstonecraft [sic]; they call every thing by its right name, and seem in general to think that action which men may perform with impunity ought equally to be allowed to themselves. Yet with all this, they are more humane, more affectionate, more disinterested than the men, whose manners they serve to soften and refine; and thus do they still support the natural excellency of the female character. (Semple 31-32)

MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY ON THE FRONTIER

The colonial enterprise has depended on the myth of frontiersmen, aggressive, strong, confident and commanding. Sex-stereotyping hardens under such an ideal. As far as male immigrants are concerned, the myth is that the colonies attracted at least at first a fair proportion of males either too adventurous or too rebellious for British society. In Middlemarch Mrs Cadwallader asks why Casaubon did not get Ladislaw to emigrate: "That is how families get rid of troublesome sprigs" (415). In William Plomer's Turbott Wolfe Friston overhears his father "being advised to 'send him

out for a bit to the mission-field: that'll tame him down'" (55). There were, of course, other kinds of discards from nineteenth-century Britain: Rider Haggard, however he turned out, was sent to the Foreign Office because he failed the army entrance examination, having originally been intended for a military career because of his apparent intellectual limitation. Indeed, his mother had described him as "'heavy as lead in body and mind'" and his father as "'only fit to be a greengrocer'". Sir Henry Bulwer, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, took him on as a junior secretary (Elwin v-vi).

The myths regarding colonial women were also an adjustment of the actual situation. Despite the kinds of activity in fact demanded of frontier women, women travelling into the interior or women acting as governesses or domestic workers in outlying parts of the country (and there is no doubt that the majority experienced lives considerably more physically demanding than British women of more or less the same class did), the Victorian cult of womanhood became a necessary balance to this machismo: the more that tenderness and frailty are expunged from the male, the more they are required, at least as ideals, from the female. The literary stereotype is of young women sweet and solemn and pious in the manner of Victorian women, who can also load a gun, like Marie Marais in Haggard's Marie (1912).

There seems in the early literature to be

refreshingly little sense of the "angel in the house" figure popularized by Coventry Patmore and Charles Dickens: what we have instead are colonial women sitting astride horses, handling guns, leading teams of oxen, what Brian Roberts has called "ladies in the veld". These are the images promoted by Melina Rorke and Elsa Smithers, both writing about the last decades of the nineteenth century; the autobiographical I that they deploy is followed by a set of verb forms more startling than those constructed for Margaret Atwood's feminist narrator in Surfacing, who merely catches and cleans fish and explores underwater. The young Melina Rorke, who has a "natural instinct" for handling a rifle, kills a Matabele with a "heavy ten-bore shotgun" (225) and has as her secret ambition the desire to be the first white woman "to enter the new town of Bulawayo" (137). Elsa Smithers at fifteen is "superbly strong"; well before this she has learnt "to handle the oxen, to drive the wagon, and to shoot for the pot" (36); at twelve she used to drive the ox cart (accompanied by two young black boys) to Pilgrim's Rest from their farm "Klipheuwel" to sell vegetables, a two-day journey over the precipitous Blyde River pass, near the top of which she would outspan for the night. The author's story is unashamedly boastful, as adventure stories are meant to be; it opens with what must be a standard justification for such publications: "'My dear Elsa, you should write

a book; the story of your life is so exciting!" (1).

Yet if the model being rejected is feminine timidity and physical limitation (presented to us in the person of Elsa's mother), the essentials of femininity are not lost: "Strange as it may seem," says Elsa, "when at my confirmation the Bishop laid his hands on my head, I heard quite clearly the rustle of an angel's wings" (100). In a similar fashion Melina Rorke tells us that she comes to be called "the Florence Nightingale of the Boer War" (281), nothing harmed by the fact that she ran away from school at fourteen to get married and by fifteen or so had to put to her breast a set of mongrel puppies to drink up the excess milk after feeding her baby, for the black woman helping her had said, "'No, not a Kaffir baby. Never - that would be wrong" (43).

Compared with contemporary societies in the mother countries, the structure and motives of colonial societies have demanded a more rigid adherence to the tenets of patriarchy, as well as to the tenets of racial domination. The racist practices that developed out of the set of nineteenth-century beliefs regarding racial purity required an exaggeration of machismo: how else to keep a majority people under control? But it is what effects the combination of colonialism and racism have had on the concept of femininity and ensuing patterns of literary behaviour that is the real topic here. The overwhelming evidence is that, however precarious a state the family occasionally seemed to be in, the white

South African family maintained itself in respectability: roles were sharply delineated and the feminine value of meekness upheld and usually obeyed.

During periods of social and economic change, the notion of the family becomes particularly important. Within the colonial context the imperative to maintain traditional family structures will have a good deal to do with the imperatives regarding racial purity. The American colonial model suggests that the position of white women in the South differed from that in the North precisely because of the different presence and status of American blacks. "In the South, women suffered from a patriarchal society where men took black mistresses and regarded their wives as ornaments" (Ernest Earnest 58). White women from Europe were literally imported en masse to South Africa to marry white men (an interesting parallel to the importing of slaves). For instance, the "Lady Kennaway" sailed into East London in 1857 with 153 young Irish women to marry German legionaries settled in the area (see Steinbart 129, 190, 192). Sophie Levisieur recounts in her memoirs how the marriage en masse made, at least on one occasion, for easy divorce: "'Don't worry, my dear woman,'" one husband allegedly said when his wife asked for a divorce, "'I don't suppose I was ever married to you. We just picked any girl we found when we got out of the church'" (58). The family is a political rather than ethical unit.

Along these lines, too, one may see the imperatives to women to maintain traditional family structures. Socialization, the "passing on of sound values", is a task given most particularly to the mothers of the race. In 1904 the Cape Census found what it called "a not unsatisfactory state of affairs" among families "of the European race", since a minimal number of the wives were employed "in occupations ... unlikely to interfere with the proper performance of their home duties" (qtd. in Cherryl Walker Women and Resistance in South Africa 14). And women in their role of wives would keep a working class "stable and contented", as Percy FitzPatrick of Rand Mines announced in 1903 (qtd. in Belinda Bozzoli The Political Nature of a Ruling Class 96).

It was in the interest, then, of a capitalist society to rationalise its desire to have women play traditional roles as wives and mothers by means of the argument that women were innately incapable of assuming other kinds of roles in the economic structure. In 1912, when Madeline Una Wookey had been granted her articles of clerkship by the Provincial Division of the Law Society on the basis of wording in the Cape Charter of Justice to the effect that "such persons as may be instructed in the knowledge and practice of the law, etc., may be enrolled as attorneys", the Incorporated Law Society successfully argued that "the word 'persons' included only male persons", and Madeline Wookey was not enrolled. One of the Law Society's plaintiffs reminded

the court that Roman Dutch Law states that "nearly the whole of womankind by reason of an inborn weakness is less suited to matters requiring knowledge and judgement than men" (qtd. in Jill Baikoff n.p.).

The insistence that women were first of all wives and mothers had a particularly useful effect within the colonial racist context: any potential sympathy with blacks or feelings of solidarity on the part of white women for black women were redirected into feelings of protectiveness towards the white family. The obvious example is in the granting of the franchise to white women during the late twenties, whereby the newly-politicized group of women who formed the local feminist movement was useful (precisely because of its politicization) to the conservative constituency. When General Hertzog, desiring to reduce the importance of the black vote in the Cape, decided, in a strategically brilliant move, to grant the vote to white women, the suffragists played right into his hands. At the 1926 Select Committee hearing on women's suffrage, Aletta Nel testified that as a woman she favoured giving the vote to black women, but not as a South African, and Mrs Grant concurred: "Should we women be so wonderfully just, when after all, the white men in this country are not entirely just to native men?" (qtd. in Walker, The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa 48).

One aspect of the ambivalence regarding the role of

women in the colonies now begins to clarify itself: women were, on the one hand, expected to be humane and compassionate and, on the other, to imitate male attitudes when necessary, however unjust. The mediatory role that women have been cast in does not require that they cast themselves in that role, does not, that is, legitimate any assertion of responsibility: women are objects, not subjects, in the process of exchange.

The Cape of Good Hope Labour Commission (1893) provides a particularly poignant example. The orthodox view is expressed by one Annie Clegg, Servant's Agent in Cape Town: "'Girls ought to go into service at twelve years of age. My experience teaches me that it is bad for servants to be able to read and write. They get hold of the cheap literature and read that and 'Young Ladies' Journals' instead of doing their work. I prefer a girl who can neither read nor write'" (15). Also asked to speak to the Commission was Dr Jane Elizabeth Waterston, who obviously grows hot under the collar at the attitudes adopted by the Committee on the topic of compulsory education, and, equally obviously, is doomed to failure, since the men she is addressing are unlikely to welcome her eloquence and strong feeling. In the South African context, sexism and racism go hand in hand, as Anne Firor Scott notes regarding the American South: "Women, along with children and slaves, were expected to recognize their proper and subordinate place and to be obedient to the head of the family.... It was

no accident that the most articulate spokesman [sic] for slavery were also eloquent exponents of the subordinate role of women" (17). Waterston makes a final but futile appeal to the mentality that could see women only as servants - "Those who can read and write are better servants than those who cannot" (70) - for the woman who speaks it contradicts so visibly the desired stereotype.

What is to be examined here are not the contradictory attitudes held by a patriarchal world but the specific manifestations of these attitudes in women writers, and - finally - the effects on the ways that one of the writers projects herself and her desires into her writing.

Lady Anne Barnard's letters and journal writings, written at the end of the eighteenth century, make frequent irritated reference to her feeling of feminine limitation: when she leaps out of a runaway carriage and hurts her head only slightly, she complains at the fuss, "The world fractured my skull" (71). She longs to be permitted to keep a proper record to write down the information she continually has access to, but this is what men and not women do (88). She longs to hear the truth that men refuse to tell women when there "is real or supposed danger in question" (73); she longs to make a more significant difference to the world around her than her duties as honorary First Lady entail. She jokes about the surprise with which her childlessness is

received, particularly amused when it is women whom she sees as harassed by childbirth and childrearing who so question her. But Barnard continues to engage in those most feminine of literary activities: letter-writing and keeping a travel journal.

Certainly by the time Smith comes to write, over a hundred years later, one is conscious of a greater literary freedom for women. It is not only quite appropriate for her to keep, without apology, a detailed record of what she did and heard on her writing holidays, a record that was from the beginning – even before she met Arnold Bennett – a writer's diary; it also seems appropriate for her to dream, as a child, of being a writer ("Why and How I Became an Author" 67). She is not the only South African woman writer to have been granted considerable status as a writer (one may speak in this vein of the colonizing class rather than the colonized: women in this group are the last to be heard). In the nineteenth century, the colonial women sufficiently educated and sufficiently leisured to produce long works were welcomed by their (generally British) publishers, who liked popular tales of adventure involving women pioneer figures as well as stories detailing the fauna, flora and indigenous life of an "exotic" country. If eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fiction was hospitable to women in Britain, and was even once almost directed by women (Figes, Sex and Subterfuge 3-10), so was it a little

later in South Africa. By the twentieth century, academics like W.H. Bell were writing newspaper articles like "The Stupidity of the S.A. Male" about the "overwhelming predominance" in the "world of letters" of "the feminine element" (The Cape, 12 April 1929, 16).

Smith's 1905 diary, kept on her first return trip to the Little Karoo after an absence of ten years, opens with an account of the "curious idioms" of Cape girls - "'Ach now, you know what?' ... 'Ach but its [sic] hot, come let us go by the stoep so long?'" (7 January 1905) - an initial attempt to capture the flavour of Dutch-Afrikaans speaking rhythms that would become so distinctive a part of her prose. It includes detailed observation of South African society and scenery, clearly intended to be worked into fiction. Her 1913-14 Journal, which is the record of her second, longer trip back to South Africa, is interspersed with political comment - about the 1914 railway strike, for instance, and the "sickening" reaction of the middle class (8 January 1914) - as well as detail on, for instance, tobacco farming (5 January 1914), detail that would distil into a paragraph in "The Sinner" on how tobacco is cut, hung in open shelters to dry, and stripped on a dewy night so that the leaves would twist rather than crumble (Little Karoo 70-71). Here is evidence of a greater freedom permitted women (as well, presumably, as the influence of the French naturalistic tradition which

Smith was reading at the time). Nevertheless, Smith felt, as had Barnard before her, the barriers between her and certain kinds of subjects. On one occasion she discussed with Thys Taute, an informant in the Little Karoo, the sexual mores in remote rural regions:

He explained the very short time which is allowed to pass between the death of a first wife and the taking of a second, partly (after the wildest grief) by the life out here, where in so many cases the widower is left absolutely helpless on a farm, four or five hours, perhaps a day's journey from neighbours, and with, as a rule, a large young family to provide for. Marriage is his only way out of the difficulty in many cases, for here again the poor white question crops up and he can't get a white woman to come as a ... servant. The whole question is bigger than this, but as Thys said, after a silence, and very solemnly and seriously, "It's a subject I can't very well discuss with you, you know, P". (25 April 1914; emphasis in original)

The critical climate (which also accords higher value to poetry and drama than to fiction) demands a certain kind of fiction written by women and demands, too, certain patterns of behaviour from women writers. If it was appropriate for Smith as a child to dream of being a writer, it was equally appropriate that there was, even at this early "innocent" stage, a choice to be made: she and her sister Dorothy used to joke among themselves that, of the two of them, it was her sister who was to be the wife and mother (see letter to Swinnerton, 19 July 1944, BC 236 D9.279). Smith's decision "to be the writer" is, even so, kept with considerable difficulty, and later in her life one sees

her vacillating between the ideas of "mothering" and "writing", as she begins to insist, in a variety of ways, that she would have made a better mother than her sister did (see, for example, letter to Swinnerton, 19 July 1944, BC 236 D9.66), and turns back to children as an audience.

Barnard's apologetically feminine interpretation of authorship is thus maintained: Smith's career is bracketed by a set of sentimental children's stories, started when she was sixteen or seventeen, and revised and published finally when she was fifty-three; it is retarded by the large correspondence she entered into with friends, to the irritation of Ethelreda Lewis ("The Stranger Within My Gate" 215); and it disappears into an apology to Sarah Gertrude Millin at not having her "masculine" ability to enter a generic tradition inaccessible to Smith: "Tell me if there is anything I can do for S.A. - as a writer - But my writing is all so simple - my brain not masculine in its grasp of affairs like yours - " (11 September 1939, BC 236 D5.78). Moreover, while Smith's choice of the naturalistic short story form for The Little Karoo increases the text's voice of political commitment, her choice of idyll for The Beadle mutes that political commitment: her shift from naturalism into idyll bespeaks an increasingly nostalgic and decreasingly political stance that is, to an extent, determined by a desire to be feminine which contradicts the desire, spoken of to Millin, to write

with a masculine pen.

This fundamental ambivalence, which is endemic to the position of the woman writer and particularly evident in a society as patriarchal as South African society, has a more general context. In Psychoanalysis and Feminism Juliet Mitchell summarizes Freud's theory of child development in order to foreground the construction of ambivalence:

At first both sexes want to take the place of both the mother and the father, but as they cannot take both places, each sex has to learn to repress the characteristics of the other sex. But both, as they learn to speak and live within society, want to take the father's place, and only the boy will one day be allowed to do so. (404; emphasis in original)

Since the female, like the male, desires to be the phallus for the mother, she initially repudiates and represses the condition of femininity. A "secondary feminine identity within the law of patriarchy", acquired through her gradual realization that "she is not heir to the phallus", is fully confirmed with her symbolic seduction, in which the girl is both seduced into the father's definition of femininity, and persuaded "to learn the arts of seduction, of winning love" (404). There are various important implications here, which will be returned to later; the major point now is that the female learns that her acceptance by the father depends on her own acceptance of femininity. Although she still desires "to take the father's place

and be the phallus for the mother", she submits by "establishing herself as its opposite", "becoming the representative of 'nature' and 'sexuality', a chaos of spontaneous, intuitive creativity.... all that is loving and irrational" (405). This is the Father's Law, disobeyed by a number of women and, most notably for our purposes, by women who wish to become writers. The constant struggle, for the woman writer, is a struggle against the internalized strictures of socialization. If these strictures are apparent in the demands by literary critics (and other readers) that women writers should write "like women", they are all too well-hidden in the mythologizing that forms so important a part of the social script which inhibits women writers.

WOMEN AND NATURE, WOMEN AS OBJECTS OF EXCHANGE

Freud's argument in his Civilization and its Discontents that "The work of civilization has become increasingly the business of men", whereas women "represent the interests of the family and of sexual life" (293) bases itself on a conceptual separation between culture and nature, and what has been a standard association of men with culture and women with nature. Women's consistent association with natural reproductive powers - with conception, pregnancy, childbirth and nurturing - could not compete, as Simone de Beauvoir has noted, with the male creation of objects that transcended nature: he

"remodels the face of the earth, he creates new instruments, he invents, he shapes the future" (64). Such control superseded any control that women may have had over nature in the form of agriculture; and, of course, traditional agricultural tasks have been easily devalued. During the first part of this century, an observer of indigenous South African life noted how young girls were used to fight locusts: "for a month or two they were made to walk naked through the lands without stopping from dawn to sunset. They were given a hut to sleep in and cooked their own food. Everybody was forbidden to speak to them or interfere with them in any way" (Smithers 64). Thus was the connection between women and nature continually reestablished and controlled. Industry and technology are, in comparison with agriculture, more detached and more powerful ways of controlling nature; these became the preserve of men. The controller of nature became, however presumptuously, the controller of the Father's Law, to speak in Lacanian terms, and its social institutions.

The implications of such a hierarchized dualistic process are various. Since women are associated with nature, they are seen as the bearers of such qualities as sentiment and feeling, expressiveness and spontaneity, emotion and affect, generosity and altruism, self-sacrifice and self-denial; that is, those features associated with the nurturing function of mothers and the maternal instinct. And alongside these

qualities exist others: passivity, for example, and dependence, timidity and vulnerability. Such associations become self-fulfilling prophecies for women.

Men, on the other hand, are seen as the thinkers and the pioneers, active, courageous and effective. There is something absurd, as Mary Ellman notes, in the characterization of the male mind as expansive and exploratory simply because of the male reproductive function. Why were women not seen in these terms? "[E]ach month the ovum undertakes an extraordinary expedition from the ovary through the Fallopian tubes to the uterus, ... a daring and independence absent, in fact, from the activity of the spermatozoa, which move in jostling masses" (13). But it is not feminists who have controlled these definitions.

The process of dichotomising has been seen as unfortunate for both men and women: women, dissociated from culture, have generally had to accept a low valuation of themselves, usually deriving their value from their "natural" functions and qualities, and men, in power over nature and yet in fear of it, have had to cauterize in themselves all such "natural" qualities, keeping only those associated with warfare and sexual aggression. The fundamental dualism involved gives rise to a profound ambivalence and, hence, complex processes of repression. If, as G. Rachel Levy proposes in The

Gate of Horn, fertility was first worshipped in neolithic times in the form of female potency and then controlled in the form of agriculture (qtd. in Homans 38), we have then not only a dualism involved in the two notions of worship and control of the same concept (fertility) but also the dualism involved in the sense of difference that must necessarily be established between self and that natural process. In Of Grammatology Jacques Derrida claims that the difference between nature and self, which is a difference that establishes culture, arises through the incest taboo, whereby the relationship with the mother (nature) is displaced and seen as "other":

The natural woman (nature, mother, or if one wishes, sister), is a represented or a signified replaced and supplanted, in desire, that is to say in social passion, beyond need....

The displacing of the relationship with the mother, with nature, with being as the fundamental signified, such indeed is the origin of society and languages. (266)

As Margaret Homans has noted (38-39), this theory ignores the circumstance in which the woman (whether mother, daughter or sister) will also need to displace any natural instincts towards incest; will also, that is, need to see nature as other in order to enter culture. In Middlemarch Will Ladislaw reminds us that men are poets and women poems, so that the implicit question of the text (since it is written by a woman and is about a woman desirous of "some illimitable satisfaction" [25]) becomes: how does a poem get to be a

poet? This is, more or less, the key moment for feminist literary criticism. It is men who wield the pen, instrument of culture; if women write, they must also see nature as "other", a process more complex for those traditionally associated with it. Such displacement of nature complicates a woman's sense of her identity and role.

In Psychoanalysis and Feminism Mitchell stresses that women are not simply "confined to a natural function" but that they are given a "specialized role in the formation of civilization" (407). This specialized role is what Claude Lévi-Strauss identifies in his discussion of women as objects of exchange, and what prohibits or inhibits women from assuming other roles.

The incest taboo is, in terms of Freud's thesis, the cornerstone of patriarchal society; from it derive the laws of exogamy. In his Elementary Structures of Kinship Lévi-Strauss argues (as he himself summarizes in his Structural Anthropology 58-59) that "the complete set of marriage regulations operating in human societies, and usually classified under different headings, such as incest prohibitions, preferential forms of marriage, and the like, can be interpreted as being so many different ways of insuring the circulation of women within the social group or of substituting the mechanism of a sociologically determined affinity for

that of a biologically determined consanguinity." Leaving aside the argument that Lévi-Strauss has generalised about human societies, many of which do not have systems of unilineal descent, and without extending for now into the discussion regarding the syntagmatic relation between marriage systems and linguistic communication, one may accept (within the context of patriarchy) the validity of the notion of women as objects of exchange, argued by a number of social anthropologists indebted to nineteenth-century theories of social Darwinism, from M. Mauss, in his The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies, to Raymond William Firth, Elements of Social Organization.

The notion of women as objects of exchange is a particularly fruitful way of approaching South African literature, which figures women, both black and white, as objects of exchange both on a literal level in relation to the laws of exogamy, and on a metaphorical level in relation to woman's mediatory function between nature and culture. In the literal sense, women become the coin that establishes connection between different groups, sometimes spent, sometimes hoarded, sometimes stolen. In the metaphorical sense, women provide access to a natural world, that is, a world innocent of the vices and disadvantages of civilization.

South African history and literature - like other colonial histories and literatures - are full of examples of women being used as objects of exchange, either

between one cultural group and another, or between the world of nature and the world of culture. Krotoa, or - as the Dutch called her - Eva, who was offered by the Khoisan Cochoqua chief Dedasoa to Jan van Riebeeck to be a servant and mediator (or, later on, an informant) between the Dutch and Khoisan, has entered South African myth as the original "Hottentot Eve", to use Stephen Gray's terminology, the "pastoral ambadressess, temptress, mediator and, ultimately, miscegenator" (38-39); Gray has already documented some of the ways that she changes "her shape and her effect with the differing pressures of the Hottentots as a political factor in the course of South African history" (39) in his Southern African Literature: An Introduction (38-71), and they need not be repeated here. What needs to be stressed, however, is that Gray's set of examples suggests to us the extension of this mythic figure into a mediator between nature and culture as well as between national groups. At one end of the time scale, Le Vaillant's Narina (Le Vaillant's term, Khoi for flower) has the young black woman educate him in love: "in her naive and touching language she confirmed all that was impressive in my first impressions of Nature" (qtd. in Gray 49). Then comes William Plomer's Nhliziyombi, "an ambadressess of ... holiness.... what has been killed by ... our obscene civilization" (Plomer 31). And at the other end of the time scale is Fugard's Lena, a

character also presented in terms of the woman/nature association, for Boesman and Lena operates from the assumption that Lena's mode of expression is in childbirth. As Gray puts it (the inconsistent use of the pronoun suggesting a phallic dis-ease):

The central irony of Boesman and Lena is that Lena the earth-mother, the life-giving figure, whom we feel should be endlessly fertile, is not. Lena is so physically battered and impoverished that her children have been stillborn. One never really worried too much about the fate of the Hottentot Eve, because before Fugard she had always been able to procreate so successfully that if she herself was subjected to an humiliating and degrading life, one always felt that her offspring would have the chance to make it one day - a bitter observation, but a true one. (70; emphasis added)

Gray presents the myth of the "Hottentot Eve" as one of the central myths in South African literature. Equally important in terms of his thesis, and revealing in terms of mine, is the Adamastor myth.

The Adamastor myth, one of the original myths to feed into South African literature in English, was originally presented in Canto V of Luis de Camoens's The Lusiads, called "Rounding the Cape" in Gray's collection, Writers' Territory. This is Camoens's version of William Blake's Albion (Milton, Book 2, pl. 39, ll. 40-42): Adamastor's "enormous body became this desolate cape", "these limbs that you see and this face were projected over the watery spaces" (5). The myth has always been taken to be about race, and specifically about the black man's frustrated desire for a white

woman. In Laurens van der Post's terms, the figure is "a gigantic black shape with negroid features" who has dared love a "white nymph":

Here, in the form of a poetic intuition and parable, is the history of Africa. The black man received from the European many of the gifts resulting from his Roman virtues; but just as the Roman denied the Etruscan, so the black man was denied the white love of which Camoens' nymph is the image, and in the process his heart was turned to stone. (161)

But if Adamastor is black, he is a white man's idea of black. As already noted by Gray, reading Roy Campbell and Douglas Livingstone, this myth "expresses the white man's anxieties about Africa" (37).

What also needs emphasis is that the myth is an expression of male, rather than specifically white male, "anxieties about Africa". Rereading the Adamastor myth certain meanings insist: meanings obscure to the male poets like Campbell and Livingstone whose poems ignore Thetis's point of view and thus the critique of male power that is offered via the myth.

Adamastor is one of the Titans, a giant son of Earth and Sky, who feels overwhelming desire for Thetis, Peleus's wife, but cannot speak to her directly because he is "so ugly and monstrous" (5). In battle with Jupiter and Neptune's fleet, he threatens to take Thetis by force. But Thetis, "with a modest, beautiful smile", says, "'Well, I doubt if a nymph can satisfy the love of a giant. But if it's a choice between my honour and interminable war, I will save the oceans so much

destruction'" (5). Yet when Adamastor runs towards her "to fill myself with that goddess who was the life of this body of mine", he finds that he has changed to stone and that she herself is now stone. The goddess Thetis has turned from a beautiful young woman into "a cold mountain, bristling with thickets", her gorgeous face ... no more than a rocky cliff" (5). Stone clutching stone, this is the outcome of Adamastor's desire, the depersonalising and egotistic desire that looks for its satisfaction in force, combined with the desire of masculinity to bring an end to itself - imaged in this case in the brutality of warfare - by fusing with femininity. Adamastor now knows that "brute strength alone could not overcome the new gods of heaven" (5). Thetis of course does not turn into stone (as the otherwise ambiguous reference to her being the sea suggests): she is simply experienced as stone: Adamastor's brutal desire creates his own reality, or, as Jean-Paul Sartre puts it in his Introduction to Albert Memmi's The Colonizer and the Colonized, "the dehumanization of the oppressed ... becomes the alienation of the oppressor" (xxviii).

While it would be fanciful to place Adamastor as the white colonizer-figure with only the masterful behaviour to go on (that his skin has a clayey pallor may well mark him as Khoi; see Cronin n.12), the tale is certainly one of brute strength and oppression. Reading the canto as a story, then, about masculinity and

femininity, with masculinity seen in its crudest aspects as belonging to an age-old unpolished Titanic culture, allows one to read, instead of the myth of a "menacing and inimical" Africa (Gray 27), a myth about power destroying itself. Thetis, who has offered herself as a corrective to such power, her honour in exchange for destruction, is devitalized within the bounds of Adamastor's control, but also exists beyond it, as an idea, as a symbol of indestructible nature, unharnessed femininity, the sea. Thus is Thetis's power controlled in terms of the male perspective and yet also available as a potent image for women. In a similar way, Thetis's refusal to valorize the male notion of female honour ("'But if it's a choice between my honour and interminable war'") indicates an alternative possibility for women - if still problematic - that sets itself against the conventional patterns of exchange for women.

The relation between women and nature has already been well-explored in literary studies, if not systematically, but less in relation to colonial literature (where it is so useful a concept) than to mainstream British and American literature.¹ Less well-explored is the closely-related concept of woman as an object of exchange,² which will be the focus of the section after the following one. First we need to look at some of the difficulties and possibilities posed for women in their conventional association with nature.

WOMEN AND METAPHORS OF LAND AND SEA

In the Adamastor myth, Camoens subdues Thetis's revolutionary statement about her "honour" by inscribing her finally as a part of nature, the archetypally feminine sea. However, within the symbolic system of a patriarchal culture, the image of the sea has often offered itself as a subversive one for the colonial woman writer; it may signify a force that has remained uncontrolled by the colonizing/civilizing power and that also offers the woman an unrepressed sexual life, a knowledge of life beyond and below the surfaces that civilization has imposed. In Stead's For Love Alone the sea is seen in this way, as it is in Gordimer's The Lying Days and, much earlier, Kate Chopin's The Awakening, "sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace" (Chopin 893); Atwood uses the Canadian lake to a similar purpose in Surfacing. Ruth Miller's poem "Submarine" presents the boat as a "sleek phallus" rammed into the sea by "the lords / Of the earth and sky", but the sea "Gathers a muscled push" and heaves back: "Rivets melt like motes, bulwarks sway gelid / The steel is mothed and butterflied. There are no more men" (57).

Within the British tradition, too, the sea acts as a punitive natural force, a force that acts against fathers and father-figures. For instance, in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda the sea punishes

Gwendolen's husband for presumptuously believing that he could handle the sea as he could handle a horse.

Gilbert and Gubar offer this and other examples from the nineteenth-century British tradition of what is in effect a response by women writers to the nature/culture dichotomy (497-498). In Persuasion it is life at sea that offers to women "an egalitarian society", away from the drawing room; Austen's "trust in the beneficence of nature" is further demonstrated by her having Dick Musgrove drown at sea (Gilbert and Gubar 180). In The Mill on the Floss it is the river in flood that stands as the natural force, acting now against the mill as a symbol of culture in a way which, as we will see, is recalled by some of Smith's texts. Indeed, Eliot continually referred to the nature/culture dichotomy in her texts, speaking of the "deep cunning" of nature in its opposition to culture, and even associating women with "precisely the traits she felt urbanized England in danger of losing" (Gilbert and Gubar 499).

If the sea has been a compelling image for women writers, and particularly for those in a colonial tradition, it is surely to some extent because the sea provides the passage to a preferred world. In an obvious sense the sea plays a part in the colonial idea of the journey outwards, back to a (paradoxically) more civilized world of Europe, where the heroine feels that she will live a fuller and less hypocritical life. Thus Helen Shaw in The Lying Days, Teresa Hawkins in For Love

Alone, Antoinette Cosway in Wide Sargasso Sea all, very differently, yearn for that world. In Smith's texts, however, the idea of the journey is differently defined, as will become clearer later: the important journeys are journeys north, into the increasingly uncultivated land, not to a preferred civilization.

To some extent, however, the sea enters Smith's texts in a standard fashion, as a place of illicit sexuality, as reflected in the pretty sea shells that adorn the hand-mirror that Koba Nooi offers Niklaas Dampers in "The Sinner". In The Beadle the "little mirror ... rimmed with pink and white shells" that Andrina takes from Tant Jacoba's "brown, withered breast" (22) speaks to the two women of a guiltless (if still illicit) sexuality; it is sinful only to the sinner himself, Aalst Vlokman. The idea of the mirror is obviously important here too, but the point is that mirror is connected with sea (as in the figure of Venus). Both Gordimer's The Lying Days and Stead's For Love Alone posit the sea as a place where women may discover a sexuality that has been forbidden them as young women, and may look beneath the surface (figured in terms of one kind of mirror in Gordimer's text) of the lives lived around them and the image thrust upon them by society. Smith will refer to water in a comparable way: the emblem in "The Pain" for a culture seen in terms of contamination is tank water, lifeless

and without nourishment, as opposed to the bubbling stream water of the rural regions, and the past. In "The Doctor" and "The Schoolmaster" the image of the river in flood is an idea that signifies, though in a complicated way, the breaking of patriarchal control; the image of the flood of blood in "The Sisters" is an equivalent moment.

The ideas of cultivation and wildness are often treated with ambivalence in writing by women. In Wide Sargasso Sea Antoinette's desire to go on a journey has to do largely with her desire to escape her ambiguous position in the West Indies as Creole, the "white cockroach" shunned by West Indian and British alike. The ambiguity of her position is figured in the novel in terms of her relation to the wildness of the land by which she sometimes feels protected - as an indigene - and sometimes excluded - as a colonizer. In The Beadle, as we shall see, Andrina reveals a comparable ambivalence towards the Aangenaam valley, "closed to the north by the Zwartkops range, which, like a jagged bar of steel, cut Platkops off from the Great Karoo" (7).

As Annette Kolodny has argued in The Lay of the Land, the feminization of the colonial landscape (which has exploited the linguistic gender given to analogous terms in most Indo-European languages) has provided for male colonizers a metaphor that satisfies both their desire to master and control an alien land and their desire to find comfort and protection in it. But for

women the male colonization of the land, whether in life or in literature, means that, as de Beauvoir notes, "nature represents what woman herself represents for man: herself and her negation, a kingdom and a place of exile; the whole in the guise of the other" (710-11). This, she makes clear, is a representation afforded "the young girl, ... the woman who has not fully abdicated" (710), the woman, that is, caught in the Symbolic Order that associates her with nature. Such a representation is particularly poignantly commented on in Chapters 12, 13 and 14 of Stead's For Love Alone (1945), where Teresa Hawkins makes a journey into the Australian countryside, "running away" (137). In the wood she hears a cry pealing out into the night, "ringing tremendous, from the things on the land, from some martyred and bleeding field, or a giant old tree being murdered" (158); fleeing that terrible cry, which seems to come from herself and nature, she moves further into the valley, but feels "hunted": she sees a man exposing his "father's nakedness" to her (166). She abandons her journey into the valley; she will be raped or murdered (as the land was) if she goes further.

In an essay on nature in Australian literature written by women, Dorothy Jones points out that nature may offer itself as a metaphor for abused and exploited womanhood, as an idea in terms of which women writers may assert female power, and even as a space which

represents "her body and her sexuality" (261, 269). Yet she does not, in my view, sufficiently emphasise the fact that land and nature have already been defined in terms of a male Symbolic, although she quotes the section from De Beauvoir quoted above. It is difficult for women writers to adopt nature as a place of (their own) female power without slipping back into the other disadvantageous associations with nature, and to deploy images of the land in the way that their male colleagues and antecedents have. Just as men, who are customarily the authorities, the authors of perception, the creators of the dominant I, have seen women as "other" both in an idealized and a negative sense, interpreting women within the chivalric code as "the fix't foot" (to quote John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning") and the "proper heat and center" (John Crowe Ransom's "Winter Remembered"), or within another code as punitive, threatening, destructive - the "Great Mother" or the "Terrible Mother", to use Erich Neumann's terms - so is the colonial land itself treated with ambivalence: the womb turns into a grave; Mother Earth sprouts or else is dust. The mother's body is figured as a "beautiful land" to be explored, and the exploration will lead to what has been lost in civilization. This is Joseph Conrad's "heart of darkness" and E.M. Forster's Marabar caves, the truths issuing from which are both wonderful and terrible: wonderful because they offer unity, the merging of self into other, and terrible

because they offer annihilation, the collapse of the self into Other.

Such images abound in the fiction of male colonial writers like Rudyard Kipling, R.M. Ballantyne and Rider Haggard. Haggard's work is of special interest because of his particularly explicit combination of romanticism and misogyny. His fiction has people continually going into the earth in one way or another, an earth which is, of course, characterized as female, as in King Solomon's Mines:

Before us, rose two enormous mountains, the like of which are not, I believe, to be seen in Africa, if indeed there are any to match them in the world, measuring, each of them, at least fifteen thousand feet in height, standing not more than a dozen miles apart, linked together by a precipitous cliff of rock, and towering in awful white solemnity straight into the sky. These mountains, placed thus, like the pillars of a gigantic gateway, are shaped after the fashion of a woman's breasts, and at times the mists and shadows beneath them take the form of a recumbent woman, veiled mysteriously in sleep. Their bases swell gently from the plain, looking at that distance perfectly round and smooth; and upon the top of each is a vast hillock covered with snow, exactly corresponding to the nipple on the female breast. (66)

The explorers, burning with thirst, continue their search for water. They scramble up a hillock:

... there, sure enough, in a deep cut or indentation on the very top of the sand koppie, was an undoubted pool of water. How it came to be in such a strange place we did not stop to inquire, nor did we hesitate at its black and unpleasant appearance. It was water, or a good imitation of it, and that was enough for us. We gave a bound and a rush, and in another second we were all down on our stomachs sucking up the uninviting fluid as

though it were nectar fit for the gods.
Heavens, how we did drink! (69)

They, "needless to say", adds the narrator, "found no more water" after they had left this ambiguous cleft; it is only when they get to Sheba's Breasts that they find sustenance again, this time in the form of melons, "dead ripe". Just at Sheba's left nipple, "a vast smooth hillock of frozen snow ... blood-red" (72) in the setting sun, they find a hole in the snow, the mouth of a cave, into which they creep. Warmth they do not find there, and one of their company, a "Hottentot", dies; to their horror, they find inside the cave another dead man. No one has been nurtured by Mother Earth. But perhaps because they have made their sacrifice, they discover on coming out of the nipple what seems to be the right side of the body:

Behind and over us towered Sheba's
snowy Breasts, and below, some five thousand
feet beneath where we stood, lay league on
league of the most lovely champaign country.
Here were dense patches of lofty forest, there
a great river wound its silvery way. (80)

They come to "scattered bushes which grew more and more frequent, till at last [they] found the road winding through a vast grove of silver trees" and a "brook, of which the banks were clothed with dense masses of a gigantic species of maidenhair fern interspersed with feathery tufts of wild asparagus" (83). This is "a Paradise"; the dangers that the woman's body offered them are now past. The men are successfully re-born.

In writing by both men and women, the "new land" of the colony offers itself as an "old" place, a place of disorder and darkness, a place of withdrawal from civilization, a place where "truth" might be found, the space of the Mother, as opposed to the Father. In J.M. Coetzee's Life & Times of Michael K Michael lugs his mother's body along the road to Prince Albert, scatters her ashes on the earth, and plants pumpkins, in an attempt to evade the Father's Law, the Symbolic Order: "I am not in the war" (189; the author invokes Heraclitus's "War is the father of all" in his epigraph). The withdrawal from the space of the Father may be seen as a revolutionary or subversive activity: to draw again from Life & Times of Michael K, the essential self, the pre-linguistic self, is a self not classified "black" or "white" or "coloured", which is a classification in terms of the Father's Law.

A writer, says Roland Barthes, is a person who plays with the body of his [sic] mother (60). The body of the Mother is the place of the "self" before it became the subject in language; the appropriation of the Mother's body is an appropriation of that "essential self". According also to Melanie Klein, whose theory of artistic creation is expressed in her "Love, Guilt, Reparation", the creative artist is impelled by the desire "to re-discover the mother of the early days" who is lost in actuality or in feeling: the work of art

stands for the mother's body, which is being regained in the act of creation (234). This appropriation may be metonymised in various ways, but one of the simplest is in terms of appropriation of land, given the association of mother and nature. In other words, the relation between women and land being discussed here has significance beyond the question of accessibility to women writers of imagery from the natural world: whatever fusion takes place, nature must be seen as "other" in the process of literary creation, which, to return to the passage from Derrida quoted above, displaces in order to signify.

In so far as the Mother is nature, her body exists before language and before culture as a place of disorder, an attractive place because it questions a Symbolic Order that is not easily accessible. Although the re-assertion of the Mother that has been made possible by Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is of revolutionary significance for women, offering women a revolutionary space, a space that seems to be, because they are women, more accessible to them, it is still a dangerous space, precisely because it is still the space of the Mother (or mother) that the daughter may not want to be. It is in such a difficulty that exist some of the tensions that we will discover in Smith's fictional texts, as well as in the reading she provides of her own life.

As I will argue in relation to The Beadle, Andrina

is driven to a wilderness that is beyond the "toll-gate" of civilization; she enters a space that has not been controlled by the Father's Law. Yet she does not define this as the place of the Mother: although that reading begins to appear, it is carefully edited out. This space is defined as a revised and softened version of the space of the symbolic Father. That Andrina becomes, also, the virgin mother, the woman both womanly and not entered, places her in a special position within the terms of the Father's Law.

It is, then, of particular significance to us that in Smith's 1913-14 Journal she rejects the conventional association of land and Mother, speaking of her love for the Little Karoo in terms that present the land as male: "P. feeling as if she was as much part of it all, the veldt, the rocks, the hills and the sunset, as she could ever be part of a husband, if she married" (3,8, p. 2). The fusion of subject and land is seen as a sexual fusion, as convention permits, with the female merging with and being annihilated by the male. If Smith in this instance adjusts the convention by having the landscape as male, she also adjusts it by giving to the female self a subjecthood that belies the passivity conventionally involved for the female part. And this leads us to the other complexity within the culture/nature script that Smith negotiates in her particular way.

WOMEN AND EXCHANGE, WOMEN AS AMBIVALENT MEDIATORS

The concept of women as objects of exchange suggests, most obviously, that women are the possessions of the Father. On the frontier, women are sometimes rare commodities: the idea is expressed explicitly and shamelessly in L.H. Brinkman's statement in The Breath of the Kargo (1914), "A horse, a gun and a wife are three things that should never be lent out" (42). Such a stance finds obvious correlatives in the sexual jealousy of Piet Pienaar in "The Father", the possessive pride of Jan Redlinghuis in "The Sisters", and the acquisitiveness with which Jan Beyers in The Beadle goes about his wooing. As possessions, women are given in marriage in order to bridge the gap between two groups belonging to the same race: Katherine Simms' Lightning on the Veld (1948), A.C. Jordan's The Wrath of the Ancestors (1950; tr. 1980), and Nadine Gordimer's A Guest of Honour (1970) provide different examples of such exchange. With the intrusion of racial barriers into the "natural" law of exogamy, however, the law terminates. Marriages and other sexual liaisons across the colour bar are now not officially approved. The impact that this structural change has on the novel is far-reaching and fascinating in its implications (see Glenn for some of these), for marriage has conventionally been used as the major standard mode of closure in the novel, and marriage possibilities and the

possibility of marriage provide a major structuring device for fiction. It is short-sighted, then, of critics to complain about the "obsession with inter-racial sex" in South African fiction, as Kenneth Parker does in his introductory essay to The South African Novel in English (13).

As Van der Post puts it in his discussion of the Adamastor myth: "The black man received from the European many of the gifts resulting from his Roman virtues; ... [but was] denied the white love of which Camoens' nymph is the image." Black writers of the forties and fifties, accepting the idea of the white woman as a "gift" denied them, refer to other ways they may "get" white women. For Can Themba, even if white women are one of the "things" prohibited a black man, he can still steal them: "seeing the white girls coming up King George Street, the sunlight striking through their dresses, ... I feast for free every morning" or, stealing in the other way: "I have gone to get a white girl and avenged with her what the whites do to our sisters" (2-3; 9). In the sixties and seventies, as part of Black Consciousness, black writers repudiate this imposed desire as a way of asserting their autonomy and independence from once-borrowed Western concepts (see, for example, Es'kia Mphahlele's "Mrs Plum" in In Corner B and Mongane Serote's To Every Birth Its Blood).

In The Beadle "inter-racial sex" comes in a different form. The legitimate partner for Andrina is a

fellow Afrikaner, Jan Beyers; the resistance on the part of Andrina's secret father to the idea of a relationship between her and Henry Nind is to an extent explicable because Nind is English, and a member of a race to which the South African Dutch feel hostile. To Linda de Neyssen, however, local postmistress and matchmaker, marriage between Andrina and the Englishman provides the romantic because slightly impossible ending to Andrina's narrative.

There are three points to suggest here, though not yet to develop. First, such a fictional moment provides illustration of Lévi-Strauss's theory regarding "marriage rules and kinship systems as a sort of language[,] that is to say a set of operations designed to ensure, between individuals and groups, a certain type of communication." The "message" is constituted by "the women of the group who circulate between clans, lineages or families."³ Aalst Vlokman desires no such communication between English and South African Dutch. He is attempting, we might say, to take control over Andrina as "word", and to "give his word" to Jan Beyers. But Andrina slips out of Vlokman's sentence; and constructs one of her own. Secondly, Tant Linda's desire is also, then, a narrative desire, one in conflict (however naively) with the Law of the Father. And, finally, Smith's interest in woman and exchange suggests both an interest in patriarchy, in its effect

on women as well as in its imposition of restrictions on love and sexuality, and an interest in the relation between women and words. If Aalst Vlokman's attempted prohibition of the Englishman is the attempt of a man who sees himself as the father (he is the subject, and Andrina the object, of patriarchal exchange), the text presents, as I shall argue later, Andrina's increasing subjectivity. Yet it does so with an obliquity, discretion and ambivalence that is repeated in some of Smith's other texts, and that is part of the pattern for a woman writer entrapped within patriarchy, and specifically within the particularly crude dichotomising of culture and nature that occurs in the South African colonial context, where the concepts of masculinity and femininity have been sharply polarized, and where the idea of the Father has taken hold with particular force. Smith's position is also, when we look at in terms of the politics of race, complicated by the ambiguous social and domestic demands placed on women under a patriarchal order that is at the same time in control of a subject race. Such ambiguous demands complicate women's status as objects of exchange, and give to their mediatory roles a profound ambivalence.

The culture/nature myth has it that women, being associated with nature, offer men recovery of their essential humanity, the "natural" attributes that have been repressed by the requirements of civilization. This accession to the natural is figured in fiction as

a moment made possible for men by the idea of romantic love or marriage (just as it seems to make possible for women accession to power or culture); love or marriage humanizes men, and empowers women. That love or marriage may also entrap or disappoint women means that within fiction written by women there are a set of ambivalent attitudes towards, most particularly, marriage: as a metaphor for an entry into culture it proves unsatisfactory.

In her Women and Fiction: Feminism and the Novel 1880-1920 Patricia Stubbs writes of the congruence in British life of two moments that have much to do with the shaping of the relation between women and fiction. Industrialization began to create an artificial split between public and private life, placing upon women - who were increasingly excluded from the public - the burden of feeling or sentiment that the pressures and loci of industrialization lacked or denied. At the same time the novel came of age, a form "characterized by its absorption in private experience" (x-xi). These associations may, of course, have had little to do with the empirical world (working-class women did not live the private lives that middle-class women did; nor do most black women in South Africa); nevertheless, the novel has come to focus on women as private or domestic beings rather than on their installation into culture or the public sphere.

Stubbs argues that the preoccupation of the novel with "an intensely personal world of individual experience" has been "peculiarly damaging to women. For within bourgeois society women are confined to this private, largely domestic world, and have become the focus of a powerful ideology which celebrates private experience and relationships as potent sources of human satisfaction" (xi).

Working in terms of this myth, the most active positive roles given to women in fiction are in fact their roles as mediators. Most women writers repeat the convention: Charlotte Brontë's Shirley provides a set of obvious examples. As a general rule, we might say that in the British context women act as mediators between the classes, whereas in the colonial context they mediate between the races. (Noni Jabavu, who stands so resolutely between the British and the colonial context, incorporates into her texts - most explicitly in Drawn in Colour - a mediatory function that combines notions of race and class.)

In South African literature a number of white women writers present female characters as mediators between the races; the authors themselves will thus stand in this mediative position. When Schreiner's Rebekah in From Man to Man adopts the offspring of her husband's union with one of the servants, she is not only correcting a patriarchal sin but also trying to educate her sons against the mentality which takes women as

owned. In God's Step-Children Millin identifies the South African "tragedy of mixed blood" as a sin of the white fathers, the white men "who had sown seeds of disaster in a clean land" (84): men the planters, women the land. (In her Preface to the 1951 edition of the text she confirms male responsibility: "white fathers blending their blood with outcasts, and disowning their offspring [xii]). The affair that Gordimer presents in Occasion for Loving (1963) between a black man and a white woman is seen by one of the characters, Jessie Stillwell, as potentially mediatory. More importantly, Ann Davis's inability to carry through with the affair is a betrayal: Jessie Stillwell stands in shame on behalf of Ann and of all white women, "drawn up before Tom as before a tribunal" (288). Plomer's Turbott Wolfe, published at the same time as The Beadle, suggests that white men cannot bridge the gap created by colonial racism while white women are able to, presumably because they are innocent of the power that colonialism and racism imply. Plomer cannot have his character Turbott Wolfe copulate with Nhliziyombi for he would thus characterize him as the coloniser-figure: it is left to other men in his world, "even the immaculate Bloodfield" (31) to exploit black women. The "steely intangible barrier" (42) between black women and white men is the sword of colonization, the sword that divides so unequally. No such sword exists between Mabel van

der Horst and Zachary (white woman/black man), and Flomer gives the task of breaking the colour bar to Mabel, a woman not only natural - we hear her speaking "with the intimate grace of an animal" (67) - but also fertile enough for her task of cross-pollination; she carries in her hand "a short branch of wattle, sprigged with pollinous flowers" (65). Women, by virtue of their association with nature, assume a natural mediatory role.

When Margaret Ballinger was nominated by a native electorate for parliament (becoming, later, a native representative of the Cape Province in the House of Assembly), "many electors suggested that a woman might restore to them the rights which had been stolen by men. 'It was the great White Queen who gave us the vote', they said. 'Men have for years been gradually taking the vote from us.... Perhaps a woman will save the Bantu'" (Ruth First and Ann Scott 238).

The patriarchal world offers, however, another instruction to women: "the father's absolute authority ... is exercised through the agency of the mother" (O. Mannoni 58). In Perceval Gibbon's Margaret Harding Mr Samson asserts, "'A white woman belongs to her own people and must stand by their way of lookin' at things.'" Mrs Jakes agrees: "'A respectable woman doesn't let a Kaffir come near her if she can help it. She never speaks to them except to give them orders. And as to - marrying them, or being friendly with them,

why, she'd sooner die'" (187).

South African history is full of examples of politicized women being brought back into line. Cherryl Walker cites the case of a group of Voortrekker women making a deputation to the British High Commissioner in Pietermaritzburg, shortly after the British had annexed Natal in 1843, volubly asserting their right as women to political activity. The Commissioner was scandalized: "'I endeavoured (but in vain) to impress upon them that such a liberty as they seemed to dream of had never been recognized in any civil society.... I considered it a disgrace on their husbands to allow such a state of freedom'" (Women and Resistance in South Africa 10). What becomes obvious to us is that the task assigned to women to provide the feminine face to a necessarily ruthless process of civilization is so clearly contradicted that the situation for women becomes, to use the Freudian concept that R.D. Laing popularized, a "double-bind". The fact of race is, of course, a major complicating factor, as it was also in the American South: as Anne Firor Scott shows, "the need to maintain the slave system contributed to the insistence upon perfect, though [sic] submissive, women" (17).

Colonial literature periodically suggests that the arrival of women in the colonial outposts tightens up racial divisions (see E.M. Forster's A Passage to

India and Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Heat and Dust, for example), much as, one might say, the presence of women sanitizes men's language. (Writing about Australian colonial women, Anne Summers uses the term "God's police" for one aspect of white women's duties in the colonies.) Women rarely deny the need to have their bodies protected from black sexuality. This is to say that any theoretical stance that insists on seeing women as colonized, along with blacks, ignores the ways that indigenous women have functioned both to serve white women and thus to keep them in a leisured class, and to protect them, acting as surrogates for the kind of male lust that was not suitable for their white counterparts. Birch Bernstein presents a group of sailors "dragging two Hottentot women after them into the bush" while one bystander notes, "'Some of those men after three months at sea are as near to savages as the Hottentots. Better that they consort with such than they annoy our women" (17). Indeed, this situation (analogous, presumably, to a British situation where class functions while a South African usually thinks of race) is one of the givens of South African society, extending also into this century, "coloured" women often providing young white men with their sex education and even functioning as second wives. Daphne Rooke's novels, set in Natal and Zululand in the first half of the twentieth century, deal with just this kind of inter-racial intercourse, seeing it as the basis for the competitiveness and

malicious jealousies between the young white ladies of the house and their personal servants. The fact that women share a common fate under male dominance guarantees competition rather than cohesion. The sexual fears experienced by white women run through Millin's fiction, where white men are seen to prefer that combination of the exotic and the submissive offered by young black, coloured or Malay girls to their masters. These fears and jealousies form part of the basis of apartheid legislation: if the colour bar gets tightened when women enter the colonies it is not simply because the white men wish to protect them from lustful black males.

Because of the set of contradictory attitudes towards black women, and because of the double-bind that characterizes women's social and political roles, it is quite appropriate that female displays of unease at the cruelty built into colonial racism too often emerge in the form of sentimentality (which is another way of defining the limits of feeling): "It was at Mac Mac", writes Elsa Smithers, "that I saw for the first time natives put in stocks. I used to feel terribly for the poor creatures and longed from the bottom of my heart that they should be given at least a bit of sacking to sit on" (45). Very much earlier the young diarist, Sophia Pigot had suffered at hearing "3 Hottentot boys [being] flogged at night" and at seeing 270 naked slaves

on a small brig, although she presents without further comment an incident regarding indentured British labourers: "the Cart went to G. Town [Grahamstown]. Mrs Comley and Mrs Marshall went without leave. Papa rode after them to put Mrs M. in the trunk. She ran away" (83).

Mrs M. does not offer herself as an image of female oppression with which the upper-class Sophia Figot feels identification. That white women have generally had servants evaporates much of the sentimentality, and also informs our reading of the myth about the industrious white colonial or pioneer woman, a truth unwittingly presented in some of the literature written by women. Sophie Levisieur's grandmother "was a wonderful organiser and housekeeper, so there was no need for her to do the actual work" (41). The tasks of Elsa Smithers's mother are presented in more detail:

[Mama] had learnt from the Dutch women to arrange domestic details comfortably installed in a chair; indeed, hampered with a crinoline as she was, it would have been difficult for her to take a more active part. It must not be supposed, however, that my mother was idle or lazy; often she sat at a table working her sewing-machine. The servants would bring her the pots and pans and ingredients, so that without moving from her seat she could prepare the most delicious food.... What a wiggling there would be in store for Pulane and Effrodia if they ... committed some ... trifling error. Mama was kind to her servants; at the same time they knew there would be trouble if they paid no attention to her "Phakisa" or "Maak gou" (Hurry up), two expressions constantly used in South Africa. (64-65)

It is this kind of female participation in exploitation

that must make us treat with irony statements that white women coming to Africa helped to make the country "liveable" (Leviseur 20); the femininity they offer has clear limits.

The periodic and sentimental sense that white women may have of an identification with blacks generally or black women specifically, by virtue of their shared oppression or shared femaleness, is given short shrift in Gordimer's story, "Happy Event", in the collection Six Feet of the Country (1956). Here the white woman has with ease an abortion to get rid of a foetus that would spoil her holiday, while the black woman, getting rid of a baby that will mean the loss of her job, is arrested on a murder charge. The white woman gives her nightdress to the black woman because she cannot bear to wear it again, after her unpleasant experience in the hospital: it is this sentimental gift that finally puts the black woman in jail, for it provides police identification of the corpse of the baby. For Gordimer, sentimentality imprisons rather than liberates.

Sentimentality towards the black domestics is particularly evident in Smith's Platkops Children, where Katisje sings with joy at her good fortune to be a domestic in the white household:

When Sunday came and old Katis',
 In patchwork dress and kapje,
 Stood on the stoep to show herself
 What ayah was more happy? (207)

Yet in the adult texts, The Little Karoo and The

Beadle, there emerges a tension between such sentimentality and a more highly politicized stance. For instance, the idealized presentation of Jafta in his red-and-yellow post-cart, "grinning with delight" (Beadle 19), is set against his ironic imitation of the church-bell that had once rung for his father as slave (20) and that now rings for the people of the Aangenaam valley. Similarly, the picture of Classina October waving the cow-tail in "The Miller" (64) expands in significance against the scene of family prayers in The Beadle: Classina is part of the Thanksgiving in "The Miller" while the "Jew-woman" is not, precisely because she has been processed through the Christian patriarchal tradition: "'Make me to be obedient to my mistress, oh Lord', prayed Spaasie.... 'Make me to run quickly when my master calls,' prayed Klaas" (Beadle 144). Moreover, recalling the comments about sexual competitiveness in Millin and Rooke, and domestic labour in Smithers and Levisieur, one reads the comment about Classina October's lazy good-nature (Beadle 115) with particular interest, for if it is, in a simple sense, part of a pattern of idleness versus industriousness (where Nind's "lazy content" [20] provides a parallel), it also comes to us as part of a context both of labour relations and of incipient sexual competitiveness. Andrina is, at least here, the mistress figure, who is able to usurp Classina October's function as servant; she desires (or the

author desires, for her) to take the coffee cup to Nind with her own hands (116). In "The Doctor", too, which, as I shall argue later, is in some ways a source for The Beadle, Petchell competes with the black domestics for the pantry keys in order to become the "Drostdy Mees" (Part 1, [3], BC 236 B8).

In Flatkops Children the black women function as agents of culture, in the place of the mother, scolding and moralizing. Whatever bond white women may feel towards black women because they are both allegedly part of a natural realm, hold marginal positions in culture, and are objects in a process of exchange, is also erased by their common and competitive struggle for a place in culture, a favour granted by the benevolent Father.

Schreiner provides a particularly clear example of such a turning point. Consistently in her speeches and pamphlets she had seen the freedom she argued for as not bound by "race or sex, or speech or colour" ("Letter on the 'Taal'", The Cape Times, 10 May 1905; qtd. in Schreiner Letters 391) to the extent that her widower felt justified in formally dissociating her from the Enfranchisement Act in 1930: her solidarity is with women rather than whites. Accordingly, From Man to Man uses a narrative moment that recurs in the colonial novel, where the husband/lover has sexual intercourse with a domestic servant (For Love Alone and Wide Sargasso Sea, referred to earlier in another context, both offer equivalent examples), and is thus

characterized as self-styled "master": for him, women are simply sexual instruments, objects in his power. Through this notion of sexual service (a notion that will also be seen to be important in The Beadle) the sex act becomes a generic part of the master/servant relationship. Nevertheless, From Man to Man carries into this moment the implication that the heroine is humiliated by discovering the husband's intercourse with a (black) domestic servant: he has stooped particularly low. So, although Rebekah adopts into her own family the child of her husband's union with the black domestic, she dismisses the mother (whom Schreiner then dismisses from her novel, and in a sense has always dismissed - the woman has not, for instance, been named), having seen in her attitude an insolence and competitiveness that she cannot endure. Rebekah's intense jealousy has been at work on other occasions. However, on this occasion, when Frank's sexual choice has blurred racial (and thus class) distinctions between "madam" and "maid", the image of her whitewashing the room in which the act takes place takes on extraordinary significance: it speaks of racist disgust, going beyond, that is, any proffered implication of "whitening" or correcting the patriarchal sin, or of the sympathetic identification hinted at on one occasion: "Rebekah knew that it was with that girl even as it was with herself that day" (301). Schreiner's feminist impulses, which

might have allowed her to see Sartje's mother as victim, are overruled by racist impulses; indeed, her ultimate inability to shift her focus to the complex political events affecting not white women's lives but the lives of thousands of black South Africans reduces her stature as a pioneer in progressive ideas by reminding us that she was a white South African, with that peculiar white South African blindness which Nadine Gordimer has spoken of (see, for example, "Living in the Interregnum" 21), and which is so perfectly presented in these words in *From Man to Man*: "Nothing important had happened at the farm since Rebekah left, except that one old batch of Kaffir servants had left and another had come ..." (95).

In Millin, too, one discovers a set of ambivalent attitudes towards the female mediatory role. As I suggested earlier, she speaks in her own voice of racism being a patriarchal sin, "sown" by the "seeds" of the white fathers. Yet, as Gordimer will do later, Millin recognises female complicity in racism. She has Mrs Burtwell protest against Rev. Burtwell's acceptance of Deborah, the "half-caste", in their home: Mrs Burtwell neither wants Deborah to share a room with her own daughter nor to act as a sexual lure for her son, and all that mollifies her is the idea that Deborah will help in the house. Mrs Lindsell, too, is more rigorous in her racism than her farmer husband, objecting to his partnership with a "Hottentot" farmer: again, Mr Lindsell calms her by pressing on a weak spot, reminding

her of the prosperity that this partnership will bring: "... you should be the last person to cavil at any means I take for increasing my wealth. Our daughters will need to have a rich father" (115). (The Lindsell girls are unattractive to men: both Mrs Lindsell's materialism, or consumerism, and her unsatisfactory genetic heritage are thrown at her here.) However, there is occasionally visible in Millin's fiction a crisis of consciousness, objectified in one instance in God's Step-Children when Edith Lindsell forces her young ward Barry Lindsell to tell his wife that he has "coloured blood":

Walking about in the garden outside, she visualized the two of them together facing their problem, their lives disrupted perhaps; and a pang of pity for them went through her heart she would have given, she felt, anything in the world to make them happy again. She could not understand herself. (271)

This sudden surge of sympathy - feminine "pity" - within the female observer leaps out of the text with such force that it seems even to drop into that other ontological sphere, the sphere of the female authorial "observer", despite the distancing phrase "she felt". Yet the author will not give "anything in the world": will not give up what are for her the materials of her novelistic craft, and, like Mrs Lindsell, shifts back into a position of female complicity in apartheid. Millin, desiring to South Africanize a literature that has depended on British class structures for much of its dynamic, needs this reading of racial structures to

provide her South African tragedies (see Coetzee, "Blood, Taint, Flaw, Degeneration"). Her solution in God's Step-Children to the sins of the fathers is to have Barry Lindsell stop his individual acts of procreation and unending "miscegenation" (blood being what it is for Millin): he enforces, in effect, the "solution" of apartheid, a solution tragic in Millin's terms yet (to her) both socially and artistically necessary. Millin as female writer does not distance herself from this as a male solution to a male problem: apart from the momentary subversion, her voice is not a rebellious "feminine" one. Although her argument that miscegenation is tragic permits illimitable pity for the victims of the tragedy, she nonetheless takes up a masculine position in culture, as both rigorous law-maker and, of course, as novelist.

Perhaps Millin's withdrawal from "pity" is one of the reasons why Smith called Millin a "masculine" writer. She has, in any case, equated the "feminine" and the "simple", to recall the quotation referred to earlier: "But my writing is all so simple - my brain not masculine ...". Certainly Smith felt keenly the difference between Millin's South Africa and her own: "yours is an unknown country to me - mine is so much narrower, so much more limited, than yours... I find always when I begin to deal with things that I'm driven to the simplest of causes - of loves- of hates - & can

only give expression to my people through these" (16 February 1928, BC 236 D5.7). Smith's apologetic stance here is characteristic, but not altogether sincere. As in the case of her relationship with her sister, she quietly defers, privately disagrees, and yet seems to need the inferior position: "a quiet timid old maid, often ill-healthed, ill-educated, ill-read - dominated always by a strong-willed Bachelor of Science younger sister whose assurance that her judgments of men, women & events is [sic] right adds always to my own wavering doubts" (letter to Swinnerton, BC 236 D9.149). Her apparently self-depreciatory avowal to Millin that her own writing is "simple" is, despite what she says, a term of praise (as, presumably, is "feminine" too): in her letters to others she affirms the value of simple prose. "I do not think, myself, that anything that has not a fundamental simplicity or directness can ever be lasting - just as it seems to me too that vehemence cannot be lasting, for when its force is spent its virtue as vehemence has gone", she writes to Swinnerton (4 July 1935, BC 236 D9.25), and in another letter speaks of the necessity of clarity that has dominated her work, even to the point of bareness (letter to A., 23 January 1947).⁴

Smith's entire literary career speaks to us of an awkwardness regarding the fit between femininity and literary creativity, and her texts continually address this issue. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned how

Barnard, South Africa's first writer in English, longed to be able to engage in what she called a writer's activity and keep a notebook, and to hear more than the versions of the truth told to women. At the same time, anxious about the limitations of her vision, she is apologetic, in the feminine manner. In one of her letters to Sir Henry Dundas, Secretary for War and the Colonies, she writes:

I am perfectly convinced that you must receive along with this such numberless letters from others so much better qualified to give you an account of every thing worth your knowing, that it would seem almost conceited folly in me to describe things as they appear around me, or still more to give my miserable female notions on any thing, was it not for the above reason, that your friendship for me will contrive a general apology for every thing silly or erroneous & while all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye, all will seem rose color & interesting to that partial pair of black sparklers with which you read the Epistels of your female friends.... (35; original spelling)

There is in another of Barnard's letters to Dundas a particularly poignant scene in which she is presented with a young black girl whose tongue is held down by a ligament: the child is speechless. Barnard, who had always wanted a more active and useful life than she had, longed to help: "How I wished that I durst have set it a-going with my scissors; but while I looked the child began to roar." Characteristically conscious of an audience prejudiced against women who talk, Barnard jokes: "as it was a girl, I thought it possible I might do more harm than good by giving liberty to an unruly

member" (117).

Barnard castigates herself for her inability to help: "Jesting apart, I feared the locked-jaw, which I have sometimes heard was the consequence of any injudicious step of this kind; and, like a coward, I did nothing from the terror of doing ill" (117); she thus remains feminine, without the cultural function she had desired. Her reference to "every thing silly or erroneous" in her own account contradicts and silences any evidence of her "unruly" tongue, and reads, of course, as an apology for the latent desire to disobey. Here is the kind of complexity of voice that will later become apparent in "The Sisters", Smith's story about the release and curbing of a woman's tongue. Here, too, is the kind of contradictoriness evident in Smith's remarks about her tasks and duties as a writer. Her constant difficulties with stance and tone will become apparent to us first in the reading that Smith gives of her own life, as it is written in her journals, letters and autobiographical writings, and then also in her fiction.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1 For the general relation between women and nature, see Susan Griffin, and Carol P. MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern. These two texts are not specifically related to literature, however. Homans (12-40; 215-236)

provides useful theoretical discussion of women writers and nature in the context of Romanticism; Gilbert and Gubar enter a wider-ranging discussion in relation to nineteenth-century women writers (to which I am also generally indebted) although the discussion is dispersed throughout the text and not given a theoretical framework. For other discussion see Elizabeth Abel et al; Dorothy Jones; Annette Kolodny, The Lay of the Land and "Honing a Habitable Languagescape", Annis Pratt; Eric J. Sundquist.

2 The standard sociological text is Gayle Rubin's invaluable essay, "The Traffic in Women". For discussion relating to South African fiction, but not feminist, see Ian Glenn, Reproductive Modes and Marriage Markets.

3 This section, quoted and translated by Edmund Leach (110; emphasis in original), is used here because it is a more literal translation than the one given in Structural Anthropology (61). Leach objects to Lévi-Strauss's claim that "the phenomenon considered in the two cases [marriage and kinship, and language] is identically the same", on the grounds that an object given is no longer possessed by the giver, whereas a word passed does not imply loss of possession. In fact, there are many cases where the word is no longer yours to give once you have given it: in a marriage ceremony, for instance, or in the making of a promise ("giving

one's word"). The word given is no longer the property of the giver.

4 Pauline Smith entered into a correspondence with a person who used to write, just as Bennett had, frankly and confidentially, on the understanding that Smith would destroy the letters as she received them. This she apparently did. Although the person here named A. gave her side of the correspondence to F.G. Butler (whom she knew as a noted figure in literary and academic circles, not as a friend), she asked that neither her name nor personal details be divulged in the course of any use being made of the letters. I am indebted to Professor Butler for letting me read these letters.

CHAPTER TWO

PAULINE SMITH : RECEPTION, REPRESSION AND SILENCE

- To seek death has never seemed to me strange or criminal - to seek it as an escape from futility I can understand - (letter to Millin, 12 June 1930, BC 236 D5.17)

She didn't write it. She wrote it, but she shouldn't have. She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but she wrote only one of it. She wrote it, but she isn't really an artist, and it isn't really art. She wrote it, but she had help. She wrote it, but she's an anomaly. She wrote it BUT....
(Joanna Russ, front cover)

DENIALS AND PROHIBITIONS

On one occasion when Pauline Smith was responding to a story about Olive Schreiner's difficulties with writing, she said to Sarah Gertrude Millin how "comforting" it had been "to a timid person like myself whose first book was written, as it seemed to me at the time, on the verge of old age & the grave!" (3 July 1927, BC 236 D5.4). Arnold Bennett's response to From Man to Man, on the other hand, was characteristically professional: in a review entitled "Author 34 Years Over a Novel" he chided anyone who took more than two years over a novel (Arnold Bennett: The Evening Standard Years 24). Smith's timidity would not have been eased by that attitude.

Nor would it have been eased by the public's expectations of her, which had been fanned, so

professionally, by Bennett. In his introduction to The Little Karoo he had claimed that Smith was more than simply a short story writer:

I ... had to answer many times the question: "Who is Pauline Smith?" I would reply: "She is a novelist." What are her novels?" came the inquiry. "She hasn't written any yet," I would say, "but she will." (11)

A reviewer in I.P.'s and Cassell's Weekly (London) was one among many to speak of Bennett's claim: "It is to be hoped that Miss Smith will soon fulfil this authoritative prophecy" (28 March 1925, BC 236 C1.28). She did, of course, but The Beadle was her first and last novel. One of the reviewers of The Beadle spoke of an "early promise" that must still grow "to a maturity", giving a double edge to the suggestion that she "may by posterity be acclaimed as the foremost woman writer since George Eliot" (The Lancashire Daily Post, 3 February 1927, BC 236 C2.38).

While Bennett's encouragement obviously played an extremely positive role in Smith's literary career, it is also possible that his management of her career increased her diffidence regarding her work. Reading through the reviews of The Little Karoo one is continually struck at the reception of Smith as Bennett's product, his "discovery", as The Evening Standard (London) put it (12 February 1925, BC 236 C1.1). In a column in The Evening Standard (29 March 1928) Bennett challenged magazine editors to accept

stories with "a tragic ending" (Arnold Bennett: The Evening Standard Years 142); the almost immediate publication of "Desolation" in The Woman's Journal (London, April 1928) was a direct response to that challenge. In his column on 10 October 1929 Bennett responded triumphantly: "It is not true that editors always insist on a happy ending. Two of the most melancholy and tragic short stories of the century have appeared in popular periodicals: Pauline Smith's 'The Pain' and 'Desolation' (Arnold Bennett: The Evening Standard Years 312). It was Bennett who submitted Smith's work to magazines: some successfully, as in the case of "The Sisters", which he sent to The New Statesman in 1915 (it appeared on 21 August) and others less so. For instance, before "The Pain" was accepted by Middleton Murry for The Adelphi, Bennett had sent him what he called "a sketch by a girl named Smith" (Letters of Arnold Bennett, ed. Hepburn 192).

Smith herself generally adopted an apologetic manner towards her work. To Winifred Holtby, for example, she writes of her "Three small books - each of them the accident of emotion - not intelligence" (28 September 1933).¹ Sometimes she recognises the part her own melancholy plays here - "in those days I feel I've written nothing that has been worth while.... Other days I feel more courageous & think perhaps 'The Pain' & 'Desolation' were worth while!" (letter to Millin, 19 June 1930, BC 236 D5.18). She continually expresses

surprise at the "kind" and "generous" words spoken of her - from "'Kappa's' praise of The Beadle in The Nation" (letter to Swinnerton, 5 January 1942, BC 236 D9.50), to Cape's "pleased and enthusiastic" reception of Platkops Children (letter to Millin, 4 May 1935, BC 236 D5.56). She admits that it is "a sort of weakness" that makes her think "of my work as of no account compared with that of others", but immediately uses that "weakness" to deny what friends have called her "unselfishness": "I know in my heart it is not really unselfishness but a sort of weakness that makes me put myself always in the other person's place" (letter to Millin, 27 August 1935, BC 236 D5.59). Such a severe and complex perspective on herself is constantly at war with her sense of her literary (and moral) integrity.

After reading Swinnerton's edition of Bennett's Journals she felt A.B. to be "so poor & feeble that I was plunged into the depths of despondency" and calls it a "sketch" as further amendment to that first sub-title, "'... a minor marginal note'" (letter to Swinnerton, 14 December 1932, BC 236 D9.10); she is "not at all surprised" that the American publisher reading the book had found it "impossible at the present [financial] time to consider its publication", and simply hopes that it may find its way into a volume of tributes at a later date (letter to Swinnerton, 23 February 1933, BC 236 D9.15). By 1934 there are frequent hints of embarrassment

at being able to produce only a book of children's stories; these were the re-worked stories of her childhood (started, in fact, when she was sixteen or seventeen) which Smith offered to Jonathan Cape in the place of the novel she had formally contracted to provide in 1928, and which were published under the title Flatkops Children. Even when she sees the stories in publisher's proof they seem "poor and trivial stuff" to her (letter to Millin, 4 May 1935, BC 236 D5.56). Moreover, her letters suggest that she felt that these stories may have worked - at least for some people - not because of intrinsic merit but because of their whimsical use of pronunciation and spelling. She writes to Millin:

... a little while before Mrs Townshend's death I re-wrote one of the stories for her in ordinary English. The result was so curiously & unexpectedly lacking in something neither of us could define that she begged me if ever I put the whole series into order for publication, as she wished me to do, to retain the childish medium. Mrs Lewis did not see the two versions - only the childish one, which she never questioned - I told Wren Howard when I sent Cape's the Ms that I was doubtful about it - and he wrote back that in spite of the readers it might lose he was glad I had retained the childish medium which he thought expressed the children better than any other could - (27 August 1935, BC 236 D5.59)

Millin, in the letter to which Smith is responding, had obviously criticized Flatkops Children precisely because of "[t]hat medium of childish talk". Although Smith makes an effort here to defend the stories, using terms like "begged" and "wished", "never questioned" and "glad" to describe the stances of other critics (as opposed to the

term "offend" that she uses to point to and subtly degrade Millin's response), she says that Millin's criticism is "just" and, in the same letter, talks of her "lack of faith" in herself:

You know Sarah I have never been able to think of myself as a writer - Whatever I have written seems to me somehow the accidental outcome of emotion - or of A.B.'s belief in me & insistence that I should justify that belief.

She was gratified to discover that Platkops Children "has sold well out here", if not in England (letter to Swinnerton, 15 February 1936, BC 236 D9.29), and planned to continue with archival research for her new novel, but for the next twenty or so years of her life would produce nothing more.

Millin's reception of her texts may well have played a part in counteracting whatever positive effect Bennett may have had on Smith's self-esteem and, hence, her productivity. In one of the South African reviews of The Little Karoo Millin spoke of Smith's ability in diminutives - "her writing is pitched in a minor key", "limited in range and volume", "a little song in the twilight", "not... a writer of significance, and it is hardly likely that she ever will be" - and suggests that Ethelreda Lewis (Millin was also reviewing The Harp) is "different" from Smith because she is "individual", while Smith may be likened, for instance, to the American "genius" Ruth Sukow with whom "even to compare a writer" ... [like Smith] is a compliment" ("Two New

South African Writers: A Study in Perspectives", The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 14 March 1925, BC 236 C1.21). One of the implications of Millin's essay is that it is easier to be a well-received writer in South Africa than abroad: she refers to the "not ... altogether discriminating attention" given local writers, and takes care to mention that the stories which Smith published in The Adelphi - "that austere and distinguished journal" - revealed a fast "falling off": "The Pain" may have been good but nothing else "touches" it.

Millin's reaction was known to Smith, for the review was among her collection of press cuttings. She and Millin had met in February 1927 at an evening reception held for her at the Writers Club in Johannesburg, and remained friends until Smith's death in 1959. Even had Smith been the kind of person capable of ignoring or shrugging off adverse criticism, her continuing contact with Millin, a writer always confident, always successful, who produced a wealth of short stories, novels and other prose works, would be a continual reminder of the difference between them, and of the low esteem in which her friend had held The Little Karoo. There is, moreover, the impression that Millin patronized Smith, for she found Smith's letters "practically all so unbearably full of good will towards me": "Most of them concerned her ill-health and her feelings towards me", she adds, explaining why it was

that she did not keep (or, it seems, read) all of them (letter to R.F.M. Immelman, 5 May 1961).

Smith's extant letters make only two references to Millin's approval. The first is a shy appreciation of the news that Millin is to re-read The Beadle: "I wanted to send you one of the American copies which had just reached me from Doran - But I didn't quite like to - I'm always shy of giving my books to people & didn't want to burden you with one you didn't care for - But I wished you did care for it enough to want to possess it!" (3 July 1927, BC 236 D5.4). The second is to Millin's apparent change of mind regarding The Little Karoo when it was reprinted in 1950 in Cape's The Traveller's Library; Smith is gratified since Millin "does not so easily [as Barbara Shaw, the illustrator of Platkops Children] give praise to fellow-writers" (letter to Swinnerton, 2 July 1950, BC 236 D9.194). Smith, continually referring to Bennett's attitude towards her in terms of "faith" rather than respect, showed pathetic gratitude to those friends and critics who did acknowledge her worth. Reading Holtby's harsh review of a recent book by Murry she confesses herself incapable of judging him, for "my own feelings are always softened by that early welcome to 'The Pain' - which proves that I could never be a critic or reviewer or anything unprejudiced, I'm afraid" (letter to Holtby, 27 March 1935).

If there had been, in Smith, some feeling of regret at her one-time reception by Millin, she barely showed it. And again, when Swinnerton left out all mention of her in The Georgian Literary Scene (1935) there is only the slightest evidence of discomfort on Smith's part. (Swinnerton would not have realized that Smith might feel her absence from this book; he undoubtedly thought highly of her.) In his book he refers to virtually every writer working in Britain at that time, including Katherine Mansfield. Bennett has a chapter to himself. Smith is not even mentioned. That she may have felt this silence at some level of her consciousness is suggested in a passage in one of the letters to Swinnerton:

Please give my greetings to your wife, and tell her I very much hope that she likes Platkops Children just as children - And thank you once again for your letter [praising Platkops Children, and making the suggestion that for easier reading the "apostrophic inverted commas" should have been abandoned] - It made me proud and humble, both - I felt as if I had, most unexpectedly, won a small 'P.S.' to the Georgian Literary Scene! (I mean postscript - not Pauline S!) (14 October 1935, BC 236 D9.28)

It seems quite appropriate that Millin was the only friend of Pauline's who was welcomed as a visitor by Smith's mother and sister, with whom she lived at Broadstone, Dorset, for they were themselves cool about her achievements as a writer, although apparently not at the start of her literary career. Smith's first meeting with Bennett in Vevey, Switzerland, in December

1908, which was her first contact with the world of professional writing, had once had the full approval of her mother, who was pleased to be able to recognize in this stranger the style of "Jacob Tonson", a pen-name Bennett used when he wrote in The New Age. Yet this meeting, so fortunate for Smith, opened up a set of problems with her family, who were shocked when Bennett divorced his wife Marguerite in the early twenties and had a child by Dorothy Cheston, only later marrying her. Dorothy Webster, Pauline's sister, refused to allow him to have anything to do with her son, something of a nephew to Bennett since the child's father was his great friend, Alex Webster: "(My sister on hearing of Virginia's existence [i.e. the daughter] removed her boy from Arnold's car [? care] - a gesture which satisfied her spiritual pride, hurt Arnold, & I suppose pleased M. [Marguerite] - but would most certainly not have pleased the boy's father, Alex Webster)" (letter to Swinnerton, 26 November 1933, BC 236 D9.21). And so, in 1933, Smith talks to Millin about the domestic constraints placed on her by her sister:

... my friends are not her friends - she will not have them as friends - sits in judgement on them - & makes it impossible for me to have them here - You do not come under the ban, I'm glad to say, but it makes it always a little difficult for me & is one of my great troubles here" (24 April 1933, BC 236 D5.26)

The set of children's stories that Smith began to write in 1899, after her father had died and she had stopped formal schooling, had been a venture shared by

Dorothy, who acted as her literary agent at least when Smith was out of the country,² and no doubt the Scottish sketches published in the two Aberdeen newspapers, The Evening Gazette and The Weekly Free Press and Aberdeen Herald between 1902 and 1910 (not 1905 as stated in Driver, Pauline Smith 4), were also received with sympathy, for they lightheartedly and whimsically represent a slightly eccentric but genteel family life.

There is no record of her family's initial responses to the short stories that appeared in The Adelphi, but Smith obviously began to feel defensive both about The Little Karoo and The Beadle when she returned to South Africa: "you will see that instead of doors being closed against me they are being opened to me", she asserts to her mother on 10 November 1926 (BC 236 D8.2), and insists subsequently that "[t]here were people there who declared that The L.K. & The B. were doing such good political work between Dutch & English that I ought to remain out here for good!!" (14 February 1927, BC 236 D8.11). It is also with a tone of aggrievement that Smith writes to Dorothy from Oudtshoorn about The Little Karoo and The Beadle having apparently been praised "on the wireless ... as 'two of the most beautiful books in the language' ... Did neither you nor A. [Alex Webster] 'listen in' to the literary talk that evening?" (2 May 1927, BC 236 D8.34).

These references explain only something of her family's disapproval. One may speculate that they disapproved on grounds of sexual immorality, and masked their disapproval with the rationalization that the South African Dutch would feel insulted by their portraiture in The Little Karoo and The Beadle as a "suspicious" and "cunning" people. Smith herself frequently refers to Dutch attitudes and rarely to her presentation of Andrina, but in one letter to Millin, soon after The Beadle had been banned in Boston, writes:

Somehow Boston has not hurt me as once it might have done - I think I got all the hurt I could bear from my own people when they read The Beadle in typescript - I had not learned then to say "That for you" to anybody on earth - It needed all the strength I had - & I was miserably ill - to hold out against their contempt & criticism for what I felt, as a writer, not a moralist, was right. (17 May 1927, BC 236 D5.2)

In "Sabie, 1926-27" she notes that a friend made there found in Andrina a "sense of [morall] rightness": "what he liked about Andrina was her knowledge that she was right in what she did though others called it sin - He thought it 'fine' that she had no regrets for this, & as it ought to be -" (8 January 1927, BC 236 B.34). And in a later letter to Swinnerton she recalls that for her mother The Beadle was "a shocking book for her daughter to have written" (5 January 1942, BC 236 D9.50), and subsequently writes to him of her sister's attitude: "to this day I do not know if she has forgiven me for writing The Beadle - of which she does not possess a

copy!" (10 February 1946, BC 236 D9.113).

As a moralist Smith distinguished herself as non-judgmental. A letter to Holtby after Vera Brittain's Testament of Youth had been published in 1933 gives some indication of her willingness to accept unconventionality, although what she calls here her "bad English" transmits a slight awkwardness on her part: "You do not know how much it meant to me that you came to me that morning at the hotel - I still think of it with surprise - (as I think too of your beauty - I hadn't remembered how beautiful you are.... And something of that beauty shines in your friendship as one realises it in Vera Brittain's book -" (24 October 1933). On another occasion, staying in Sea Point with her aunt, they spotted a couple on an "illicit" weekend: "A.J. [Aunt Jean] laughed and said 'poor young things. Let's hope they're enjoying it!'" A woman they were talking to "nearly turned and knocked us down for our immorality! She was quite fierce about it. Her morality was altogether so aggressive ..." (1913-14 Journal, 26 January - 19 February 1914).

The morality of her mother and sister was obviously of a similarly "aggressive" kind. Smith calls her mother "Calvinistic" (letter to Swinnerton, 29 March 1945, BC 236 D9.77). She frequently refers to her sister's bitterness: the marriage of her son Paul to a woman whom Dorothy disliked or disapproved of precipitated what Smith later called a "terrifying

bitterness", and she adds: "of all the things life holds for us I think I fear bitterness of spirit most - It holds a terrifying power of evil" (letter to Swinnerton, 14 August 1952, BC 236 D9.244). Smith explains that for her sister bitterness is seen as "somehow a part of righteousness" (letter to Swinnerton, 19 July 1953, BC 236 D9.271) but that for her it emanates from "a strong sense of possession - even of those whom she loves & who have a right to live their own lives" (letter to Millin, 21 December 1953, BC 236 D5.136); "She can never feel, as alas I feel! - that people have the right to make their own mistakes & suffer (& through suffering learn wisdom) if suffer they must, for them -" (letter to Millin, 22 August 1954, BC 236 D5.137). As late as 1952, when Smith received a letter from Virginia Bennett, Bennett's "illegitimate" daughter, her sister says "'My God!'" and leaves the room, and Smith notes that she will not be able to entertain Virginia, either, in "my sister's house & home" (letter to Swinnerton, 25 November 1952, BC 236 D9.261).

The moral disapproval felt by Smith's family seems also to have been displaced on to Smith's use of the name Henry Nind for the Englishman in The Beadle: Joy Smith, related to Pauline's family, recalls a suggestion of this:

...there's a man in [The Beadle] you see, you can't call him a hero, he's a villain really, an Englishman, and - it's most unfortunate, I can't think what possessed her, I've always wondered - but she gave him a name which is very much our family name - not Smith, it's Nind, and she offended them all, you see, so the family never had much to do with her....

It's a surname, and it's very much in the family. My grandfather was a Nind, there were a lot of Ninds you see, a lot of Nind cousins and things and she put her foot in it, I can't think what possessed her to do it except that I think she lived in a world of her own, it never occurred to her that it mattered. She thought it was a pretty name, or an uncommon name.... There was a Mr Charles Nind who went out to Africa, she might possibly have met him, one of the uncles, he was in De Beers or something. She might have got it that way, but it was most unfortunate. Look at the result! (12)

There was, in fact, a Charles Nind who had worked for De Beers at the turn of the century, the son of a priest called Philip Henry Nind.³ The archival records of De Beers Consolidated Mines show that Nind's apparently illustrious career was marred by a heavy debt with the Cape of Good Hope Bank: under the shadow of this debt he left Kimberley in April 1883 to become mine manager of Langlaagte Estate & Gold Mining Company Limited, fell out with the director/owner, J.B. Robinson (a person nobody could get along with), and resigned both as director of De Beers and as mine manager. Although Cecil Rhodes reinstated him as director, this seems to have been on sufferance.⁴ Nind continued to speculate heavily, again getting into what he called a "debt of honour" to the sum of over 17,600 pounds (this was the partial amount owed and paid off, over a period of more

than sixteen years, by April 1917, seven months before his death).

If the characterization of Henry Nind in The Beadle as an irresponsible Englishman nagged the Smiths as an invocation of one of the family's black sheep and an insult to their relatives, the alleged use of a different or additional model for the Englishman also created difficulties for the author. This is suggested by Babette Taute, the grand-daughter of the Tautes who owned Mill River, the prototype for Harmonie in The Beadle. In her essay "Pauline Smith at Mill River" Babette Taute remembers a young South African alcoholic being rehabilitated at Harmonie, "English" by virtue of the fact that he had been to an English public school:

He had joined the RAF [Royal Air Force] at the start of the 1914-18 War, or soon after, when he was eighteen. He came through the war physically unscathed, but could not settle down to civilian life afterwards and became an alcoholic. Dr Owen Snow of George, our family doctor, asked my grandmother to allow him to stay on the farm for a time. He was of medium height with dark, curly hair and very blue eyes. He brought a gramophone and a collection of records with him, and also books of poetry my family had not yet read; I presume they were World War I poets. My father gave him a horse to use whenever he wanted to, and his fiancée, an English lady who came out to South Africa and visited him here, though not for long, used to go riding with him as well. After "the Englishman" had been back to his home in Johannesburg one Christmas he acquired a motorbike, went to George quite often, and all the plans for his rehabilitation were foiled. My grandmother did not feel that she could keep him after that, and he returned to his family, and shot himself soon afterwards. (49)

There was, indeed, a South African by the name that

Babette Taute has given me, at the school she has identified, who went into the 1914-18 war in 1914, was a Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force, and died in 1926.⁵ In any event, to Smith's own family's disapproval was added the disapproval of Edith Taute, who threw her copy of The Beadle "on to the top of the tallest wardrobe in the house", forbidding her children and grandchildren to read it.

What worried my grandmother was that most people who knew us would recognise the setting and the people described in The Beadle. So much of the actual life here was described in Miss Smith's books. Virtually all she changed in the setting was to turn the partition in the attic, made of vertical wooden strips, into lattice work and bring it down to the pantry, and move the red rocks in the sluit from their position near the mill down to the garden. And so many of the characters were recognisable, with only a few details changed. We did not know why "the Englishman" had committed suicide; superficially he seemed to have everything his heart could desire. But my grandmother was afraid that if his people read the book they would think that something like that had really happened on the farm, that there had really been an affair between "the Englishman" and the tenant farmer's daughter. Even worse: it might be surmised that a member of her own family had been implicated. (49-50)

The story that Babette Taute recalls is that, although Smith had shown close interest in the tenant farmer's daughter working in the Mill River homestead at the time of "the Englishman's" stay, Arnold Bennett had "persuaded" her to change the plot; the implication is that through Bennett's influence she added the seduction and the illegitimate birth that a person like her would

not have thought of (49). It adds a particular poignancy to this story to hear that Smith apparently found the offending scene between Andrina and Nind particularly difficult to write: according to Ethelreda Lewis's fictionalized version, Smith says, "I had to - pray - for strength, the will, to get that page over and not shirk the truth" ("The Stranger Within My Gate" 213).

Smith herself claims that Bennett did not change her work - "... I think only twice did he suggest an alteration in any sentence I had written" (letter to Swinnerton, 3 June 1947, BC 236 D9.102) - but contradicts this impression by speaking of taking a "difficulty" to him that he would, with "a word, a phrase, a few curt sentences of suggestion or criticism" clarify (A.B. 62). Moreover, that she showed him unfinished work at least indicates her openness to change. And change he did propose: "When, as in the case of "The Father" - the last short story I wrote before his death - a scene he thought necessary was impossible to me because I could neither see it nor feel it grow, he accepted, though he still regretted, my inability to write it" (A.B. 62-63). In the case of The Beadle, which Smith had been sketching since 1923, Smith and Bennett together "went through the story ... as I saw it - and with every point he tussled, refusing to pass on to the next till he had this clear. This almost harsh insistence upon clarity of detail, this sharp

questioning of every statement I made about my people as I saw them the way he tugged at them, shook them, worried them in his determination to try their truth and their strength" (A.B. 63-64) tested to the limit her "voice and courage ... and I could tell him no more, damning and intolerable", until he broke the silence with his characteristically generous praise, "'I wish to God ... I had thought ... of this myself!'" (A.B. 64; two final ellipses in the original).

One cannot be sure to what extent or in what way Bennett might have re-directed the story of The Beadle. There is no record of a visit by Smith to Mill River or even to South Africa between the 1913-14 visit and the 1926 visit, although there is nothing to deny the possibility either. Taute maintains that Smith destroyed her diaries of this period (50). She was only a year-old baby in 1913 and recalls being about twelve when "the Englishman", the bywoner's daughter and Pauline Smith were assembled in the house (in private conversation she dates "the Englishman's" stay by her first menstruation). Whatever the "truth", the topic here is the reception that Smith felt her writing to receive, and there is no doubt that The Beadle caused ill-feeling among both her immediate family and her Little Karoo friends:

After considering the matter for a long time, my grandmother wrote to Miss Smith and told her she felt she had betrayed the friendship she had always enjoyed here, and had also

abused the hospitality extended to her, and my grandmother and Miss Smith were estranged for many years; although she stayed here again, the old intimacy was lost. This must have been a great shock to Miss Smith. After her parents' death, Mill River must have seemed like a second home to her. (50)

The strain between Smith and the Taute family is attested to also by Kathleen Taute, Babette's aunt, who wrote to Arthur Ravenscroft in the mid-sixties "one or two letters ... [showing] affection and admiration for P.S. but tinged with some edginess".⁶

Disapproval about The Beadle must have swept through the small and insular community in the Oudtshoorn and Langkloof region. Olive Bridgman, another local writer of about Smith's age, gave a talk to the National Council of Women at Oudtshoorn after Smith's death, which terrifyingly - to use Smith's word about her sister - judged not only the sexuality depicted in the novel but also the friendship with Bennett, two features inextricably linked in Bridgman's mind:

Of her friendship with Arnold Bennett we cannot speak intimately, for her family ... hardly approved of it. Arnold Bennett was separated from his wife and living with another woman and although the friendship with Pauline was largely based upon their common literary interests, the domestic situation detracted, in many eyes, from his desirability as a friend however greatly the heartfelt admiration from a man of acknowledged literary repute may have encouraged an inexperienced author.

Many have regretted that this influence went so far as to make itself felt in her work subsequent to the publication of The Little Kargo.

Passages in this novel were such a

departure from the delicacy and reticence of her short stories that they were openly ascribed to his influence and it was in vain that her well-wishers asked her to delete them. It was perhaps in gratitude for his help and advice that she allowed them to remain, although other advisers contended that the narrative would have lost nothing by their omission. (1)

Bridgman's talk ends with the remark that "The Beadle was the one book [Smith] did not give to her Oudtshoorn friends. Perhaps she felt that some of it at least was more of Arnold Bennett than herself." Astonishingly, Smith is accused by the same speaker of too much indebtedness to her father as well, this time for The Little Karoo stories:

These stories are strange, strange indeed when one considers them as having been written from the memories of a child of twelve. It is true that Pauline returned from time to time to the Little Karoo for her moving story "Desolation" was written while staying with friends in Beaufort West before its inclusion in the little book of short stories, and it may be that then, the emotional maturity of the woman was called forth to interpret the impressions of the child; but some critics have been tempted to believe that there was more in it than that. Could these mature, significant studies of humanity have been based solely upon the memories of a child, however imaginative - had not her father's mind influenced her? Had she not perhaps been left notes of his cases which she could consult? (3)

Were this talk the speculation of an outsider it would not be worth listening to. But Bridgman was one of the Little Karoo community, and from the evidence of other information presented in the talk (for example, the genesis of "Desolation", which, as I shall be noting, is corroborated elsewhere), is clearly in some sense

part of the voice of the community, expressing the morality of a group of sentimental and narrow-minded people as protective of "morality" as were Smith's mother, sister, and the authorities who banned The Beadle in Boston. However successfully the writer had pushed aside her anxieties about exposing herself to judgment, she could not fail to confront now the reaction of her close family and friends.

THE WOMAN AND "THE MASTER"

It was not simply because of her family's lack of hospitality to her literary friends that Smith lived a life that was, but for her travels in South Africa, so circumscribed and quiet. Bennett's attempt to include her in a literary circle had little success. From an early age, records the author, she had been painfully shy (letter to Swinnerton, 12 November 1951, BC 236 D9.232), and what she calls her inexperience in life and literature, "shortcomings [of which] I was painfully aware" made her "awkward and silent" in company (A.B. 13). Although she belonged to The Writers Club in London, she says to Millin in 1928 that she had "only twice had courage to set foot there" (11 May 1928, BC 236 D5.8). (In the same letter she explains her timidity in terms of her "purse" and "wardrobe".) Bennett's stories about her quietness in conversation are well-known, for Smith took care to record them in

A.B., stories which are enlisted both to demonstrate Bennett's protective and affectionate attitude towards her and to give Smith opportunity to reveal herself with what has come to be a characteristic self-mockery. In her memoir of Bennett written shortly after his death, she writes of the evenings spent with him and his wife at Fontainebleau:

These evenings which I have called uneventful, and which were in fact to influence all the rest of my life, had at times their moments of alarm, for A. had determined that under his direction I should acquire not only the art of novel-writing but that also of carrying on a conversation. In the first art his labours met with some reward, for the early chapters of my novel pleased him. But in the second I remained so hopeless a failure that he was driven at times from a ruthless severity of rebuke to the helplessness of laughter. It was laughter that overcame him at the close of a day which had brought us the only important visitor of the season - an American whose mysterious calling took him on intimate business to all the courts of Europe. With this visitor, whose talk to me was amazing, we lunched, sat for some time over coffee in the salon, and drove for some hours in the forest. After his departure we retired early to our own rooms and it was then that A., in the methodical act of spreading out his trousers to press beneath his mattress, suddenly disappeared from M.'s view with those garments gasping "That girl! That ... girl! One whole day with X. and not ... one word to him!"
(A.B. 19-20)

In Florence, where he, Margu erite and Smith spent a disastrous holiday, staying in a small pensione "almost aggressively English" (28), suffering "the treacherous winds of the treacherous Florentine spring" (28), with Bennett and his wife engaged in argument and Bennett himself anxious about his work, there is a hint of

Smith's extraordinary anxiety about talk:

But if my failure in my work on my novel neither exhausted his patience nor shook his confidence in the "artist" in me, my failure as a conversationalist was less easily borne. For this failure I may have been as greatly at fault as he held that I was, but to my natural habit of silence was added a weakness of throat and a lowness of voice which made talking, at the best of times, an effort to me - and these were not the best of times. Illness was upon me, and upon him was the creative strain of one of his greatest novels. Having written "so many thousand words" of Clayhanger he would come down from his room to meals in need of mental relaxation and entertainment, and with a master's right, as it seemed to him, to demand, or at least expect it of his chosen pupil in the art of conversation. Yet invariably his pupil failed him. In the obstinate, expectant, and more and more gloomy silences which he himself maintained while awaiting my next remarks a paralysis of nervousness and distress would seize me - which pressure under the table from the concerned and exasperated M. only increased. In the horror as of a nightmare I would watch his head sink slowly on to his upraised hand,肘ed on the table, and await his deep, protesting groan. How our friendship survived those meals - so vexing to him, so exasperating to M., so painful to me - I don't know. But it did survive, though to the end of it, in any company, he would suddenly pause in his own talk to break into my silences with a rebuking and embarrassing: "Yes, well ... but we will now await ... a remark from P." (30-31)

The "paralysis of nervousness and distress" and a "horror as of a nightmare" link contextually with her "failure" as a writer, as does her "illness" link with Bennett's "creative strain". These are connections similar to those repeatedly drawn in her fiction between guilt, illness and expression. They contradict the other view of Smith that is occasionally presented in her 1913-14 Journal as a person confident in argument:

In the evening at supper Thys got me to talk again, till at last all were famished and I still had a course to get through. Then in the parlour he made me talk again, surprising me into expressing all sorts of ideas on all sorts of subjects! "Wait now," he would say "Polly's talking", if anyone tried to interrupt. We always went to bed at 9. And to-night someone asked Aunt Jean the time after the dining-room clock had struck, by Aunt Jean's time it was only 8.45. "Now wait now, there's still a quarter of an hour for Polly to talk. Go on P," and off I set again. Once he asked me suddenly, apropos of nothing, "And did he think you a promising young bud, that Arnold Bennett?" P. "I think he did once, but now I'm afraid he thinks there was a grub in the bud." (20 October 1913)

No doubt Smith found talking to Thys Taute easier than talking to Bennett, for she felt politically better-informed than he was; perhaps, too, she enjoyed presenting to her mother and sister (an audience for her journal) a talkative self. In 1934, invited to dine by Sir Abe Bailey in Cape Town, she becomes too ill to take up the invitation - "The attack came very suddenly - as great a shock as was my invitation!!!" (letter to Cecil Sibbett, 6 April [1935])⁷ - her phrasing here particularly suggestive of the form her anxiety typically takes.

Geoffrey Haresnape has spoken of Bennett's death in 1931 as one of the possible causes of Smith's small literary output, for gone now was the encouragement that she seemed to have counted on: A.B. "is the only considerable work which she achieved without Bennett's help and chivvying" (Pauline Smith 23). There is no doubt about the impact that Bennett's death had on her:

she writes to Millin that "the friend whose help & guidance meant more to me than anything else on earth - has gone" (note added 9 April 1931 to letter dated 25 March 1931, BC 236 D5.19), and says later that "Arnold's death has made the world forever a changed place for me" (24 October 1931, BC 236 D5.21); to Holtby she writes that Bennett's death "has meant for me ... a hopelessness about my work that I don't seem able to overcome" (14 June 1931). On the other hand, Ravenscroft in his essay "Pauline Smith" claims that Smith was not in the relation of "studio pupil" to Bennett, for his judgment on her first writings - her Scottish sketches, the children's stories, and the opening chapters of a novel - "really confirmed her own instinctive reaction" (46-47); he points to Smith's response to Bennett's Imperial Palace, discussed in A.B., as illustrating "a fundamental difference of moral outlook between them" (50), and asserts that Smith's gratitude to Bennett "did not ... significantly influence the conception and artistry of her own stories" (50).

It is not, of course, the vexed question of artistic influence that is at issue here, but rather the question of the way Smith sees herself in relation to Bennett. Ravenscroft wishes to stress that, through her "diffidence" and "modesty", she exaggerates Bennett's influence; he does not see the exaggeration itself as

important. Although he speaks of Bennett as "magisterial", taking himself altogether too seriously, he does not take a critical stance towards Smith's construction or presentation of a relationship with Bennett. Nor does he take a critical stance towards Smith's relationship with her father, either here or in his later essay, "A Personality and a Place". Both he and Haresnape agree in this respect, commenting on Dr Smith as a perfect mix of severity and tenderness (Haresnape Pauline Smith 30-31; Ravenscroft "A Personality and a Place" 35), Haresnape going so far as to qualify his claim that Bennett was a "father-figure" to Smith by asserting that her humorous and affectionate description of him as wearing his clothes "a little stiffly" (A.B. 54) "is not the way in which she would have understood and described her father" (Pauline Smith 31).

The case is considerably more complicated, as a dose of feminist suspiciousness will reveal, and has significant repercussions on the reading of her fiction as well as on the reading of her life as a woman writing. The point, once again, has less to do with what was "really" the case than with the way in which Smith sees or constructs these two relationships. It is quite as reasonable to suppose that Smith introduced into her admiration of Bennett reminiscences of his "human" characteristics - "the high-pitched voice and difficult stammer", the "jaunty swagger" that caused

negative comment (A.B. 11), the abruptness (12), the domestic fussiness (16), the small "vanities" (54) - in order to modify or correct any impression of both recent adulation of Bennett and her earlier adulation of her father. What becomes clearer and clearer as one delves further into her presentation of self is that Smith structures a father-daughter relationship between herself and Bennett, generally comfortable, occasionally balked at, and consistently unequal.

Smith says that she continually drew strength from Bennett's persistent belief in her ability as a writer:

... I asked him if I had not better give up writing altogether, for I could not, it seemed to me, with all my work as bad as it now appeared, have any talent deserving of his interest. This drew from him a sharp, amazed: 'Do you think I'd be ... such a damn fool ... as to waste all this time upon you if I didn't know ... the stuff's in you?' And to the end he stuck to his belief in me, crying again and again in later years with that same amazement at my despondency: 'But if I believe in you why can't you believe in yourself?' (A.B. 30)

Significantly, her trust in Bennett was all the easier since he was not blind to her shortcomings. When he had demanded, in his downright Midlands way, to see "all the little I had written since leaving school" (14), which included the Scottish sketches, the children's stories and the opening chapters of a novel, he not only quelled her agitation by insisting that "as a would-be author it was my immediate duty to cease to be shy about my work" and that writing was a "'job' to be frankly discussed and tackled like any other" but also spoke with

frankness about her limitations:

After tea, while his wife sat and sewed, he lit a cigarette and told me bluntly that 'anybody' could have written the Scottish sketches (which had found publication): that not everybody could have written the children's stories (which had never been published): and that though if I finished my novel a publisher would probably be found for it, the artist in me (having achieved the children's stories) must know just how bad the novel was.

No one had ever before called me an "artist", and though I could not believe myself to be one, there was indeed something within me which knew how bad my novel was and leapt to the justice of his verdict. His damning of those opening chapters gave me a confidence in his judgment which no praise could have won, and brought me so overwhelming a sense of relief and release that it was as if he had broken down for me an imprisoning wall and drawn me out into the open air. I destroyed my novel and never afterwards regretted it. And I made a friend whose honesty and sympathy, patience and understanding, were never to fail me. (14-15; emphasis in original)

Most important, her reminiscences make explicit connections between Bennett and her father. (Both Haresnape, Pauline Smith 30-31, and Clayton, "The Style of Poverty" 164 note some of these connections.) Her father had to a large extent directed her reading and had insisted upon "a just use of words" (A.B. 18); his death had brought to her "a fatherless wandering life [which] had made my reading so haphazard that much of the best in modern literature was still unknown to me" (18). In the place of her father, the teacher, came Bennett: "But here now, in this quiet room [in a house in Fontainbleau], by one of the moderns himself, was the

world of modern literature, in France and Russia as well as in England, revealed to me" (18). She stresses the sense of companionship felt in Bennett's presence:

"enriched ... by the companionship - I know no other way of expressing it -" (19), as she does in relation to her father: "All my happiest memories and my most formative impressions were those of my South African childhood and my father's companionship" (13). In the disagreements between Bennett and his wife she sympathises with him rather than her:

A's seeming harshness in dispute I could understand, for I had learned in childhood from a stern and silent English parent to appreciate the justice which governs severity as I felt it to govern A's Five-Towns bluntness of statement. I could appreciate also that exercise of self-control in argument which A., handicapped by his stammer and dependent always upon the patience and goodwill of his listener for a hearing, had learned in so hard a school. (21-22)

In Bennett is offered her not only her father's personality, but more significantly, the image of a father to her image of herself as a child: it is in the nursery, when he is with his daughter Virginia, that she sees in him again, "as long ago as I had seen it, that Victorian severity founded upon justice which I had known in my own childhood" (82). She recalls with immense nostalgia a period of approaching illness when she sat opposite Bennett in an unheated carriage travelling from Milan to Florence, rolled up in a rug like a cocoon, feeling "[s]afe and warm", Bennett remarking "'... you're a child of three now!'" (27); she

recalls too the sudden emotional dependence:

At first the prospect of dining with him or drinking China tea with him alone filled me with alarm, for the art of conversation was not yet mine. But that fear passed after the first of our quiet evenings together - evenings that were to be spread through all the remaining years of his life - when, as we drove through streets whose brilliant changing lights he called upon me eagerly to note, I asked despairingly, with the memory of my long silences grown suddenly heavy upon me, if I had bored him, and was answered as the very young might have been answered by him: "That is a question that should not have been asked ... a question that should not ... have come into your mind." (56)

Child now with Bennett, as child she had been in the world of her own father, Smith finds, through Bennett, an aspect of her Little Karoo world both validated for her and restored to her. Bennett has, Smith notes, a special capacity for finding "romance" in everyday life - a baker mixing dough at night in his cellar, the light through the grille shining across the pavement, "an 'underdog' of industry brought for an instant thus vividly into our ken" (21) - and, when he (like a father) takes her to a circus, he restores to her the "romance" of her Little Karoo world, a world that she had lost:

I had seen no circus since my childhood in South Africa, and was thrilled, like a child again, when A. announced that if we were good he would take us to this one. Good we may have been - taken we certainly were: walking through the lamp-lit star-lit streets to the tent and being shown there, as the elite of a small country audience, to the only baize-covered seats it boasted. Before these seats all the important events took place, and to us, as to royalty, after each event the

circus-master made his deepest bow. How good or how bad the performance was I was incapable of judging. Here for me - in the sawdust of the ring and the naphtha flares, in the trotting ponies and their gaily spangled riders, in the painted clown and acrobats - was romance as long ago I had seen it with the eyes of a child in a small Dutch dorp in the Little Karoo. (21)

Bennett's capacity for finding "romance" in the everyday world is, of course, a capacity strongly emphasised in her characterization of her father in Platkops Children, who had the ability to turn an ordinary visitor to their household into a Queen Victoria:

An' altho' we had been inspectin' the Queen all the afternoon, when we saw the lady in the bonnet we were so serprised that we jes' sat on the table and looked. An' the only sound in the room was Pato's hiccups.

An' then our father, lookin' all roun' the room, said Where's Mr Manners? An' we remembered about the kneelin'. An Paoli got off the table, an' Pato with her, an' knelt down. An' so did Six an' Nickum, jes' like a hist'ry book.

An' our father said, Your grayshus Majesty, be pleased to look upon your subjects, Pato and the Paoli one, Six and Nickum D.

An' she said she was very pleased indeed to see us, but would we please get up now to let her see which was which? (42)

It is also the father, and not the mother (so absent a presence in Platkops Children), who knows how it is that a little girl in heaven can fit a bustle dress over her angel's wings.

Even at the times when their two worlds seemed impossibly far apart (despite the way that Bennett continually talked to her of his own, more glamorous

one); Smith strives to make connections between Bennett's world and her childhood world. Speaking in A.B. of Bennett's "noble" house at 75 Cadogan Square, she finds a "centrepiece of wax-and-feather flowers" that takes her back to the toll-house on the Outeniqua mountains which forms so crucial a locale in Platkops Children and The Beadle:

Here on our journeys over the mountains to the sea we had always outspanned for a meal, and while the meal was preparing had sat in the voorbuis where one of the chief ornaments had been just such a bouquet under a glass shade, on a bracket on the wall. On the opposite wall hung the crude and much more exciting picture of a race being run on a bright green race-course. (76)

Just as she turned her back on this picture (she had been so taught by the domestic servants, for horse-racing was a "sin"), so does she on the parts of Bennett that do not take her back to her own world: "And in something of that old childish habit I think I must from the first have turned my back on the mirrored doors at '75'" (76).

After Bennett's death, Smith would turn to other writers for the fathering qualities that she found in Bennett, most notably to Frank Swinnerton. However, even in Sarah Gertrude Millin she strives to find connections: Millin has Bennett's "power to work" and his "common sense" (letter to Millin, 12 June 1930, BC 236 D5.17), which for Smith is akin to detachment (see letter to Millin, 8 January 1931, BC 236 D5.18), and gives advice similar to Bennett's, as in

establishing a "regular routine for work" (letter to Millin, 17 November 1950, BC 236 D5.115). She also finds a link between Millin and Bennett by virtue of their insomnia (letter to Millin, 16 October 1934, BC 236 D5.51). Bennett was a constant point of reference for her, and, behind him, her father.

As far as the publication of her work went, Bennett most certainly "fathered" her, posting "The Pain" to The Adelphi without consulting her, acting "as self-appointed literary agent ... through all its minute and troublesome details" (61), settling terms with publishers and editors that she, in her diffidence, protested, drawing from him remarks about how she lacked "all business sense" (letter to Swinnerton, 15 January 1947, BC 236 D9.100), and even a "cold and patient rebuke":

So, patient and unyielding, would run his argument until he had gained his way, but only on questions of business did he ever thus ruthlessly impose his will upon mine. (Ruthless, however, on this point he was, even to the extent on one occasion of a bombardment by telephone and wire against some contemplated step on my part whose foolishness, he later declared with coldness and severity, had cost him a full day's work.) For the rest I was free, after the resolving of any difficulty I took to him, to follow my own course in that clarity of vision which a word, a phrase, a few curt sentences of suggestion or criticism from him, always restored to me. (A₂B₂ 62)

Her personality as well as her literary career posed for him a pleasing problem, one that he was determined to master. Of the first evening that they spent discussing

her work, he records (10 October 1909):

Last night I began talking to Pauline Smith about her work, though I had some difficulty in getting her to talk. She gave me a notion of a half-formed scheme for a novel - nothing really but a dim idea. I enlarged it and straightened it out for her, and by my enthusiasm lighted hers a little, indeed much. I poured practical advice into her for an hour, such as I don't think she could have got from any other living man, and such as I would have given my head for 15 years ago. I told her exactly what to think about to-day and it was arranged that she should report to me to-night how far she had proceeded and that we should go further with the plot. After dinner to-night she began to read. It is true it was one of my books. I gave her a chance and waited for her to put the book down. Then after about half an hour I said: "I shan't let Pauline read any more of my books, she doesn't do anything else." She smiled, and murmured: "Just let me finish this." I then played a sonata, and then ostentatiously waited. No sign. She kept on reading till 9.30, and then went straight to bed. I now feel that the next word spoken between us as to her novel will have to come from her. (Journals, ed. Swinnerton 196-197)

Bennett was used to the image of "the master": he had taken similar interest in other younger writers, writers such as Siegfried Sassoon and Aldous Huxley as well as Frank Swinnerton, and clearly enjoyed the role. On 21 June 1924 he writes in his journal:

Well, I have done something there [with Smith] anyhow, with my much-criticised will-power! I have saved that woman's mental life for her. She is 41 or 42; she is unwell half the time, she is (she says) a worse sleeper than I am. Yet I knew she could write; and I swore I would make her, and I have done and I have changed her whole existence. So that's that. I get nothing out of it except the contemplation of her first-rate work, on reading which I say: "That's me, that is." (Dorothy Cheston Bennett 223)

This moment seems to come with Smith's shift from

the first draft of "The Miller",⁹ in which, Bennett felt, she had not sufficiently placed her "strange and little-known state of society" (A.B. 58), to "The Pain", or at least to the first half of it, which more successfully exploits "the quality of rareness and remoteness in the material with which [she] dealt" (58). Again in A.B. Smith herself records the exuberance of delight and pride on Bennett's part:

Yes, this was what was the matter with me, and though it was curious to him that he had never thought of this criticism before, now that he had thought of it he realized, he said, how clever he was, if slow in the uptake!

With my next short story, which had lain for long in my mind, I tried to do as A. had suggested, but, half-way through it, was so oppressed by a sense of failure that I sent my half-finished manuscript up to him in despair. A few days later I came myself to town and dined with him alone one evening as usual. After dinner, in his study, he produced my MS., his verdict upon which I had not dared to ask, and circling round the table like an excited schoolboy, waving the manuscript above his head, stammered triumphantly: 'Now you've done it! Now ... you've done it ... And I ... have shown you ... how to do it!' His delight and satisfaction, and my own relief, brought me suddenly close to tears - and as suddenly his mood changed. 'Now', he said firmly, 'you go home and finish it.' (58-59)

Bennett's satisfaction in her work is set in contrast to his negative attitude toward his wife's literary efforts, an attitude with which Smith herself is in sympathetic agreement. Bored in the Anglicized pensione in Florence, "with no natural outlet for her energies", Margu rite wrote a set of stories, on her husband's encouragement. "There was, in particular",

says Smith, "a story about a cat. Three-fourths of this had pleased A., but the last fourth must, he said, be rewritten: it was not good" (29). The argument, Smith notes, continued for days. Subsequently, Margu rite sent to a magazine a "short article . . ., written from a French-woman's point of view", the point of view that was always set so vehemently against Bennett's quintessentially English one. To Margu rite's triumph, the article was accepted:

Her excitement was intense - had she not always said that A. was wrong and she was right about that short story in Florence? - and so swift was her vision that it was as if in those brief moments she saw the whole world of literature opening to her, and made me see it so too. Her enthusiasm delayed her dressing, and it happened later that A. coming in to the dining-room for breakfast found me there alone. He gave me a curt greeting and asked if I had heard the news. I answered that I had, for M. had come up herself to my room with the editor's letter to read to me. He stopped short, looked at me blankly, then jerked out: 'But haven't you heard . . . the "Lusitania"'s . . . been sunk?' And I remember still the sharp high note of his amazement: the sudden silence of the room: the clear bright air of the May morning as we looked out upon it through the many-paned windows: and through all my dismay my strange feeling of guilt that I had not heard his news before. (43-44)

Thus, in a passage from A. B., which can have no justification other than this, is Margu rite's writing dismissed, and Bennett's authority (whatever the response of the French magazine) vindicated. Once again, Smith takes the side of the father: Margu rite, not quite so absent in A. B. as Smith's own mother is in Platkops Children, is nevertheless diminished.

While Smith likes to give, in the discussion of her and Bennett's relationship, the sense of being occasionally dominated by this blunt and forthright man, and while she uses for him the term "master" both in A.B. (29) and "Why and How I Became an Author" (69), there are also indications that it was a relationship which thrived on a certain amount of decisiveness from her and a certain amount of fairmindedness from him, or on what he calls "sheer magnanimity and obstinacy mingled" (Journals, ed. Swinnerton 197). The characteristic mixture of possessiveness and self-righteousness that Smith found so troubling in her sister was absent in Bennett. When Smith felt herself called back to England from Paris because of her sister's illness, Bennett urged her not to go: she would miss the opportunity Paris was offering her, and her sister, not dangerously ill, was being as well looked after without as with her.

Having said this much in those abrupt curt sentences which, with the pauses of his stammer, gave weight to his utterances, he left me free to come to my own decision - withdrawing as it were from my unspoken mental conflict yet watching it to the end with that strange mixture of sympathetic understanding and almost ruthless detachment which gave his friendship, his genius, and his whole outlook upon life each their peculiar value. He was, in fact, one of those rare beings who not only recognizes but respects the right of another to hold his own opinion and to make his own mistakes. He watched me, without further comment or attempt at dissuasion, make one of mine now. (A.B. 24)

Similarly, there is in Smith's presentation of their conversation about her work a pleasing sense that

Bennett would, having given his "master's" advice, leave her "free to come to [her] own decision". Her account of their conversation regarding The Beadle gives this impression, for in Bennett's final line of praise - "'I wish to God ... I had thought ... of this myself!'" - there is a final submitting on his part to her authority. In A.B. Smith points out that his first greeting to her was a greeting to a "fellow-craftsman": noticing her playing badly at a nearby bridge table, Bennett sends her a note: "I know why you play badly. You are thinking of something you are trying to write" (13). This equalizing tendency continues through their friendship, for Bennett continually refers to her as "fellow-artist", even when she is producing nothing (see A.B. 34 & 37). Although the account of Smith's success with "The Pain" is taken as, in part, Bennett's success, he is again seen to hand back to her her responsibility: "'Now ... you go home and finish it.'" Although he found it difficult to talk about his own work in progress, and rarely did (see A.B. 67), he would sometimes hand to Smith finished, unpublished work: she read Riceman Steps and Imperial Palace before publication (see A.B. 68 & 70), and gave him the encouragement that he needed while he was writing a play called The Honeymoon (Found 210).

There seem to me to be two particularly important (and endearing) gestures. First, Bennett manages to

offset her use of the term "master" to apply to him, when he sends to her, on receipt of "Desolation", a telegram using the word "masterful".⁷ Secondly, at a time when Smith may have been self-conscious as the older unmarried sister attending her younger sister's wedding, there came a sign to her from Bennett of her identity as writer and "fellow-artist". In the context of wedding gifts to her sister, she too was given a present: that this is a gesture appreciated by Smith is suggested in her own wording: "They [Bennett and Marguérite] gave her a wedding present, and me the bound manuscript [of Bennett's novel The Card]" (letter to Swinnerton, 30 June 1945, BC 236 D9.82).

RECONSTRUCTING CHILDHOOD

After Bennett's death, Frank Swinnerton offered himself as the "father" that Smith once again seemed to be looking for, but whether it was due to a diminished confidence in him as "one of the moderns" on Smith's part, or a less intense engagement on his, or the absence of the enabling advice that she had been used to from Bennett, or, more simply, her increasing ill-health and despondency, Swinnerton did not restore to her her faith in herself in the way that she felt Bennett consistently did. There had been another literary friend particularly important to Smith, who "after A.B. ... [had] meant more to me in her interest and concern

for me than any other literary friend I had in England", Emily Townshend, author of Creative Socialism (1924), whom Smith had met in 1929 when Townshend was eighty. But she died in 1934, leaving Smith feeling "numb and desolate" (letter to Millin, 15 June 1934, BC 236 D5.42).

As Smith herself noted, she leapt at Swinnerton's offer of help "with almost embarrassing promptitude" (letter to Swinnerton, 9 August 1932, BC 236 D9.3). "Ever since Arnold's death", she notes in the letter that followed, "I have felt at sea about many things in life - my work most particularly. Now I begin to see things more clearly again, & thank you for helping me to do so" (15 August 1932, BC 236 D9.4). It was Swinnerton now who helped her negotiate with Cape over the publishing terms, despite the fact that she already had a literary agent (she used J.B. Pinker, who had been Bennett's agent too, and after Pinker's bankruptcy moved to Richard Steele). Swinnerton would continue in this role, when asked, and no doubt became used to Smith's stance: "I will not do anything further until I hear from you -" (letter to Swinnerton, 18 August 1932, BC 236 D9.5). She enjoyed demonstrating to him the lack of business sense Bennett had commented on, noting, for instance, that a BBC fee she had thought "riches" was a "scandal" to other writers (15 January 1947, BC 236 D9.100).

During a period of just over twenty years (August

1932 - April 1953) Swinnerton received two hundred and sixty-eight letters from Smith (apparently his to her, as with Bennett's letters to her, were not preserved): letters written with the same frequency as the letters to Millin,¹⁹ but, probably, half as many as she wrote to Bennett, assuming that she answered the weekly letters he wrote to her (see letter to Swinnerton, 13 September 1951, BC 236 D9.225). Smith had finished the tribute to Bennett that is so revealing about her attitude towards him and so affectionate, loyal and honest a portrait: it was this tribute that brought together Swinnerton and Smith, for in July 1932 Swinnerton writes to ask her, about it, and in early August she sends him the manuscript. She initially accepts Swinnerton's authority because of Bennett's opinion of him as a critic: once again, Bennett becomes the main authority, the primary point of reference. Swinnerton had, of course, also been under Bennett's tutelage, and was also to spend time paying tribute to Bennett, bringing out a collection of his letters (1936), editing his journals (1954), and writing a memoir (1978). As late as 1944, when Smith and he exchanged letters about his recent work, Smith writes: "you are right - Arnold would have been pleased about that article (& the completion of the novel)" (23 January 1944, BC 236 D9.64). Their relationship is thus set as co-pupils/disciples of the "master".

Yet Smith strains to cast Swinnerton in another role. When she refers, for instance, to Bennett's claim that "Frank Swinnerton & I were the two best psychologists he knew", she is quick to add that Swinnerton's novel Elizabeth "confirms me in the belief that he was right about you - I've never been at all sure about myself" (26 December 1934, BC 236 D9.24). When she reads Swinnerton's critical work The Georgian Literary Scene she speaks of the "new light" he has cast for her on authors and books that she knows, defending the absence here of a "highbrow" approach to literature (one that was also absent in Bennett's criticism) and yet silences this discussion with one of those self-depreciating phrases that characterize also her letters to Millin: "But I'm no good at expressing my feelings about literature at all" (letter to Swinnerton, 4 July 1935, BC 236 D9.25). Smith includes Swinnerton in the group of "fathers" made up by her own father and Bennett. When Swinnerton, who followed Bennett's footsteps in literary journalism, published a "How to Write" article in John O'London's Weekly, Smith wrote to him: "It took me back to my childhood - to my father's insistence upon the 'just' use of words, & upon simplicity as the foundation of all that is best in English prose.... How much I owe to that insistence in my childhood - to Arnold's insistence so many years later - & now ... to yours!" (16 February 1951, BC 236 D9.209).

In 1944, having been long struggling to find a "story" to direct the cluster of Little Karoo characters who had assembled for her (letter to Swinnerton, 5 January 1942, BC 236 D9.50), she praises Swinnerton as a "professional writer" whose achievement made her "humble" (23 January 1944, BC 236 D9.64), and calls once again upon Bennett, that other supremely professional writer, who had tried to make her promise never to destroy anything she wrote, and whose faith in her she so badly wants to justify. What Smith needs is made abundantly clear in a letter to Swinnerton three years later: "... always when I spoke to [Bennett] of what was in my mind for my characters as I saw them, a question from him revealed them still more clearly to me - & I could see why they should behave as I knew they must - I put this badly" (3 June 1947, BC 236 D9.102).

Swinnerton was not, it seems, given manuscripts to read after A.B., beyond the "Background to Platkops" which Smith had once thought of including in a new edition of The Little Karoo (see letter to Swinnerton, 12 July 1949, BC 236 D9.158). Had he looked at the ms. for "Winter Sacrament", the proposed novel whose characters Smith had been assembling and re-assembling for some twenty-five years, and which Norah Cundall had been typing for her, he would have seen the author moving over well-trodden territory, with her nostalgic vision, which had once been complicated by a profound

sense of tragedy and loss, now little more than sentimentality. There is, in different ways, an extraordinary sense of stasis, and one of these ways troubled Smith: "It is as if they, & I, were waiting for something to happen" (letter to Swinnerton, 5 January 1942, BC 236 D9.50).

At various points in her life Smith makes quite clear how used she is to seeing "life" in terms of its narrative possibilities: in her 1913-14 Journal she sometimes refers to herself as "P." (as on 20 October 1913, for example), and presents conversation in the form of dialogue; in her letters she periodically shifts into story, sometimes quite explicitly: in a letter to Swinnerton, for instance, she talks of going to court with her niece by marriage (who was applying for money due to her from the Royal Air Force): "It was like something out of Dickens - very strange! You are quite right - people are just as queer as those in your books sometimes are, but I had never thought before that I might be one of them at a Tribunal!!!" (14 September 1951, BC 236 D9.226).

She was also repeatedly struck by the narrative possibilities being offered by her own household, composed of herself and her sister and two aunts as well as "Giles" and "Annie", "our nice middle-aged Dorset maid", who had been "with" them since the mid-thirties (see letters to Swinnerton, 10 November 1944, BC 236 D9.75; 5 May 1946, BC 236 D9.92; 5 February 1950, BC 236

D9.183; 3 April 1950, BC 236 D9.187): she is amused and alarmed at the atmosphere of craziness. Discovering notes that she has made about her grandmother's family (where there had been a Keats and Coleridge connection),¹¹ she wonders whether it would not be better for her to create from this source, and, by implication, her British experience, rather than to struggle with a story that remained obscure to her, to write "something very light, short & simple & easy to read ... Something that would not cost me the 'blood tears & sweat' that the S.A. stories have done" (letter to Swinnerton, 20 April 1950, BC 236 D9.189).

Smith also speaks of her great-aunt Isabella, "one of the ugliest old women I ever knew - and one of the finest - ... slightly humped-backed but when well over 80 could still curtsey & dance a minuet better than could any of her great-grand-nieces" and whose "queer surprising story" she wishes she could write (letter to Millin, 11 December 1950, BC 236 D5.117). Perhaps responding in the way that he felt Bennett might have responded, given Bennett's lack of interest in the Scottish sketches written during her adolescence, and given Bennett's insistence, as early as 1929, that she finish her novel before starting on the three-act play she had been thinking of (see letter to Millin, 15 May 1929, BC 236 D5.12), Swinnerton advised Smith to keep working at the novel. Years before, when Bennett had suggested that she abandon a novel that was no good, she

felt as if he had broken down for her "an imprisoning wall" (A.B. 15). Nothing was now to draw Smith from the prison of her "Winter Sacrament".

"Winter Sacrament", whether one reads the typescript or whether one reads about it in Smith's letters, strikes one as sentimental in ways that The Beadle (and "The Last Voyage") only hint at. Of the various characters who appear in the draft, the only one Smith mentions in her letters is Susannah, who brings her "very real though strange comfort" (letter to Swinnerton, 14 September 1951, BC 236 D9.226), a similar kind of comfort, presumably, that the children of her friends seemed to give her.

Quite possibly part of the sentimentality of "Winter Sacrament" also stems from an uncertain sense of audience: Smith speaks to Swinnerton of feeling like "the old Jew woman" in "The Miller", "who dares not be sure that her cake was good enough for a Christian thanksgiving, but hoped it might be good enough for the children at Harmonie" (3 April 1950, BC 236 D9.187). She had always got along well with children: one of the best photographs of her is taken while she is reading to two children, their faces enraptured, hers absorbed (see Driver, Pauline Smith 141; these are the Reinecke children, not Van Heerden children). She liked this aspect of herself, remarking on it in letters with frequency: in a letter to Swinnerton, for example, she

says, "Virginia [Bennett] often writes to me - Children often do" (4 July 1935, BC 236 D9.25; see also letters to Swinnerton, 19 July 1944, BC 236 D9.70 and to Cecil Sibbett, 18 August 1939). A letter written to Olivia Swinnerton shows a quirky sense of the ridiculous, likely to attract a child and yet also make her conscious of a strange, adult world, the same kind of ability, though focussed differently, as the ability revealed in The Little Kargo to make the unfamiliar both familiar and strange:

And I must tell you that I travelled down here [Mersham, near Ashford, Kent] in the train with an old lady who was so careful of her new hat (I was trying too to be careful about mine) that whenever we came to a tunnel she put a large newspaper all over it on top of her head!!! (I didn't do that!) It was all very solemn but most surprising - And more surprising still, when suddenly, from under the newspaper, she said to me "Are you Miss Webb?" I said - "No - I'm not Miss Webb" - She said "Oh - you look just like Miss Webb - Just like Miss Webb going for a holiday to Folkestone!" - And that ended the conversation - So I know what Miss Webb looks like - but who is Miss Webb? (n.d. [end July 1948?], BC 236 D9.130)

There is evidence of an unusual ability to comprehend and sympathise with a child's perspective. Responding to Swinnerton's regret that Olivia is shy with her, she writes:

I do not regret it - I understand it because I am still in some unreasonable way so close to my own childhood - I've never acquired the wisdom of age which I ought to have acquired long ago, & which when I was young I thought came naturally with advancing years! And when without words, because in her emotion and shyness, she could not speak them, Olivia brought out of her cupboard & from various places in that little room, small gifts I had

given her years ago, & held them up to me with that strange mute beseeching for understanding, I did understand, & was most deeply moved - (1 November 1940, BC 236 D9.44)

Much the same point is made in a subsequent letter, when she talks of a butter dish given her that would be more appropriate as a model sirloin dish for Olivia's dolls-house:

- I tell you all this because that butter-dish has made me think so often of Olivia, & made me realize as I so often do now, that I am really still a child at heart myself, & that that is perhaps why I have not been able of late years to fulfil Arnold's hopes of me as a writer - ... This sense of failure is always with me now - (letter to Swinnerton, 5 January 1942, BC 236 D9.50)

Once again one is recalled to a Smith who, desiring to be a part of her childhood world, identifies with the child (whether Bennett's Virginia or Swinnerton's Olivia) who is with the father. She writes to Swinnerton that she thinks of Olivia "as having so much the same sort of companionship that I had with my Father.... the understanding between us was, I think, the same" (12 November 1951, BC 236 D9.232). The complication is that this desire must carry with it - as Smith realises - its own sense of failure, a sense of failure quite characteristic of women who have been schooled from an early age in dependency, and who are then required by society to show courage and independence, or, in this case, to become a writer rather than remain a daughter. For what Smith also wanted was the "wisdom" her father had possessed "&

which I expected some day to possess [but which] has escaped me" (letter to Swinnerton, 1 November, BC 236 D9.44). She writes to Millin in 1941: "When I read of all that has been crowded into your life, my own seems still the life of a child & nothing more - &, at this moment, a rather tired child - oppressed by sorrow & a little frightened of the cold!" (2 November 1941, BC 236 D5.93).

If Smith rationalizes her failure to write as childishness (which we may link with the notion of femininity, discussed earlier), she also rationalizes her inability to continue with her novel as an inability to "invent". Swinnerton had obviously praised Flatkops Children as revealing a "quality of imaginative insight", for Smith quotes that phrase back to him, and adds that she lacks "invention" (letter to Swinnerton, 14 October 1935, BC 236 D9.28). This "lack" has once been of service to her, for it gives to the Little Karoo world of which she has written the status of reality, and to her own work the quality of authenticity:

... in my work I could get down nothing which I did not "see", or, often painfully, feel and know to be true. I could not make situations to suit the needs of a story as a story - all I could do was to describe, often after a long waiting, that slow development in the lives of my characters which lay outside my will.
(A.B. 62)

Now the lack of invention is associated with another lack:

... you were right once in saying that I had imagination rather than invention as a writer - And to lack invention is a great handicap

for a novelist without much faith! Your wealth of invention & your mastery of it, so that it never out-stripped the sympathy & understanding of your imagination, impressed me very much.... (letter to Swinnerton, 30 October 1939, BC 236 D9.39; emphasis in original)

Whatever "sympathy & understanding" Smith may have, she has neither invention nor "mastery" nor even "faith". Moreover, the insight regarding invention, which was her own and thus (for her) open to question, is now falsely ascribed to Swinnerton's authority. Swinnerton's only part here had been to suggest that if she lacks invention, it is because her "quiet life ... has hampered" it and (one assumes) to reiterate the honorific "psychological novelist" once placed upon her by Bennett and taken up by her (letters to Swinnerton, 15 February 1935, BC 236 D9.29; 26 December 1934, BC 236 D9.24). The distinction between "invention" and "imagination" is, of course, part of the conventional dichotomy between culture and nature, and masculinity and femininity: males invent, females feel.

Whatever rejections and ambivalent responses Smith may once have heard in her immediate world and the critical world seem now to have been internalized by her. She creates a set of father-figures whom she is bound to disappoint, and continually makes sure that her correspondents are aware of both the high standards set her (by herself and others) and her failure to reach those standards. She repeatedly expresses surprise at the positive reception of her work, and she returns

again and again to praise given her by Bennett, continually straining to deserve it. Only rarely is her recollection of admiration received not tinged with denial or self-depreciation. She recalls Holtby's "high opinion" of The Little Kargoo, an opinion of particular value to Smith because Holtby had "knowledge of" the country (letter to Swinnerton, 14 October 1935, BC 236 D9.28), and when Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country was published in 1948 remarks that it was "as true to his part of S. Africa as I hope the L.K. is to mine" (letter to Swinnerton, 18 November 1948, BC 236 D9.135). Such remarks remind one of the occasional defiance she revealed in her attitude towards her mother's and sister's disapproval of her adult fiction: any defiance now would be against herself.

ILLNESS AND ILLEGIBILITY

Smith's destructive disavowal of her literary abilities is actualized in physical destruction against the texts themselves. Part of her writing technique, it seems, was to cut ruthlessly: "All the little I myself have written has gained by cuts which I had often found bitterly hard to make at the time, but which I have never afterwards regretted" (letter to Eleanor Lewis, 22 April 1948);¹² this, she explains in the same letter, is because "it is always better to say too little (leaving the reader anxious for more) than to say too much

(leaving him either wearied or indifferent)." But there is another kind of destructiveness here. Smith tore up the first third of a novel begun before she had met Bennett, and which he had condemned (A.B. 15; "Why and How I Became an Author" 68); and she tore up the work that she did in France on the next novel, after an illness in Italy ("Why and How I Became An Author" 69). It was the second act of destruction that drew Bennett's disapproval, for this novel he had liked, writing in his journal on 19 November 1909: "Last night Pauline Smith read me the second chapter of her South African novel and it was excellent" (The Journals of Arnold Bennett 1896-1910). Smith told Swinnerton that "Arnold used to try to get me to promise never to destroy anything I had written - It was a promise I would never give for I knew it was one I could never keep - " (23 January 1944, BC 236 D9.64). Throughout her life Smith continues to "write & destroy - write & destroy - & lie in the dark & grieve over my failure -" (letter to Millin, 15 May 1929, BC 236 D5.12). Even her story "Desolation" drew from Smith this destructive desire: "I did not dare to re-read it lest I should at once destroy it!" (letter to Millin, 16 February 1928, BC 236 D5.7).

If Smith's destructiveness regarding her work is mirrored in what Swinnerton later called an attitude "morbidly modest" (Arnold Bennett 1), it is also mirrored in physical ill-health. Smith points out on

occasion that her family had inherited various "'family' weaknesses": her grandfather and his wife Pauline "both died young, in their thirties - a tragedy that has beset our family in each succeeding generation since then"

(letter to Swinnerton, 22 November 1951, BC 236 D9.234).

The interview with Joy Smith, her second cousin, suggests that these weaknesses were due to the fact that Pauline's father's parents were first cousins (10).

There were, in particular, heart problems: both her mother and her father had died of heart failure, as did her nephew Paul (see letters to Swinnerton, 15 November 1945, BC 236 D9.87; 26 June 1951, BC 236 D9.230).

Smith's father had, again according to Joy Smith, lung problems that had taken him to the Little Karoo air, as Smith would herself go as an adult. She also suffered from a slight curvature of the spine, as had her great-aunt Isabella, "which caused much of my own ill-health as a child" (letter to Swinnerton, 15 November 1945, BC 236 D9.87). It is "Aunt Izzie" to whom Smith likens herself when she sees the portrait painted of her by Grace McNair - "'grim' alas was the word for her, & grim I fear is the word now for me" (letter to Swinnerton, 21 November 1950, BC 236 D9.202) - and whose own ill-health so fascinated her in 1912:

She suffered also from weakness of the eyes - & for 6 weeks was kept shut up in a darkened room in a four-poster bed with the red curtains drawn - when the Doctor ... came to visit her he had first to put his head down on the bed in the dark & wait till his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness & he could see his

patient. ("Boston Notes", BC 236 A3.3;
emphasis in original)

Smith's own sickliness apparently kept her in proximity to her father during her childhood, "corking medicine bottles in his surgery" instead of "romping" with other children, according to Bridgman (1), sometimes going with him on his rounds in the country region instead of being at school (see letter to Swinnerton, 10 August 1952, BC 236 D9.253), and on at least one occasion being read to instead of going to church (A₂B₂ 18; I make the assumption that it is her father reading to her). As her brief essay called "School" (BC 236 B21) shows, much of her and Dorothy's education was received from "a régime of governesses who taught us at home", although before and after that they (or Pauline at least) attended school, first "in a small, bare, scrubbed room" in a "grey stone house in Queen Street", and then the Girls' School in Oudtshoorn, "a large partitioned room behind a tailor's shop at the lower end of Church Street", until the new building was completed. To this new building, "the School on the Hill", Pauline went "for only a few weeks, for soon after it was opened I grew ill and my next school, after many months of idleness, was in Scotland".

Pauline was, then, in the eyes of her father the doctor, not too sickly to be sent, with her sister, to school in Aberdeen: the two little girls left in early 1895, Pauline about to turn thirteen, Dorothy ten.

Their father, in the colonial manner, believed that "one reason why you are away from us ... [is] that you may see and hear all that is to be seen & heard which is anything worth" - in this case a Clara Butts [sic] concert (letter from Dr H.U. Smith, 2 April 1898, qtd. in Ravenscroft "A Personality and A Place" 37).¹³

Another reason may have been his view of the climate: "I don't think you are either of you lazy but like all children born in a hot climate you haven't that superabundance of energy which more lucky children born in England have" (letter from Dr H.U. Smith, 10 November 1897; qtd. in Ravenscroft, "A Personality and A Place" 37). To what extent the schoolgirl suffered from illness cannot now be established. What is suggested in her essay "Miss Griffiths" (BC 236 B22), a piece about her English schooling, is a marked lack of energy (perhaps a manifestation of the despondency after her father had died: "as 'new girls' [our] slowness became proverbial". For Pauline this schooling was cut short by illness (see her letter to Ravenscroft, 28 March 1952; qtd. in Ravenscroft "A Personality and A Place" 42).

Smith displays a variety of symptoms of illness, which present themselves to us as signs of her unconscious self, whether we take the conservative position of orthodox Freudian analysis, where "the body symptom - the cough, the paralysed leg, the blindness which had no known physiological cause -

expressed an idea not available to consciousness" (Mitchell, Women 280), or a Lacanian perspective, where the symptom in illness is "a formation of the unconscious ... the true speech of the unconscious ... translated into an enigmatic signifier" (Anika Lemaire 206). Smith's symptoms offer themselves as manifestations of a destructiveness against self that mirrors her physical acts of destruction against manuscript material. Even more interesting is the hypothesis that Smith's illness is addressed to her father the doctor: the symptoms of illness are signs to be read specifically by a doctor - "the truth ... that the patient cries out" (Lacan 167) being a secret truth to be discovered beyond what is expressed.

The child's illnesses in Platkops Children are quite clearly presented as messages to the father: "An' the Paoli one's throat got worse an' worse. An' at las' she went an' lay by herself on the big feather-bed, thinkin' of our father an' mother an' Six an' Nickum an' Tycho an' everybody" (79); "An' by the time we got home the Paoli one's throat was quite better. An' Six says it was all that ole harmonyum. But our father says, How will Paoli be able to go to boarding school?" (81). Smith's father's response, as reported here, is the response of such an expert in secret truths. But there are always secrets beyond the secrets to be found, truths beyond the discoverable truths. If Smith's

father found the deepest (Oedipal) secret, there is no suggestion of it: he did not, in the manner of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's father, give her a sexual childhood "artificially prolonged" through illness (Maynard 1). It would seem that Smith's father is, at least consciously, refusing to respond to the child's invitation.

Whatever the psychosomatic causes, the several references in Platko's Children to a "sore throat" and a "constricted throat" indicate the presence of a weakness in health (although it is obviously related to a child's emotion). In her 1905 Diary Smith refers to being in bed with neuralgia (13 February), and on 4 April writes: "as usual, a splitting headache". In her 1913-14 Journal Smith refers to an attack of croup and bleeding (26 January - 19 February 1914). In A₂B₂, too, she speaks of a "weak throat" (29). In Paris in 1910, with the Bennetts, she records that, because of the devastating floods in France that year, "about our hotel there hung a disturbing odour of river-mud and disinfectant" (25); in Milan, just over a week later, sleeping in a "little 3 franc 50 room ... up in the roof under the tiles ... reached by way of the laundry" (26), Smith receives her "first warning, in acute neuralgia, of approaching illness" (26), followed by a "bitterly cold" journey to Florence, in an unheated carriage (Bennett carefully economising), "snow-storms sweeping across the Lombardy plains" (27). In Florence "the cold winds had quickly affected my weak throat" (29) and

illness "was upon me" (30); even with the approaching spring she suffered "recurring indisposition" (32), making speech "still more difficult for me, and my throat seriously worse" (32). Treated by an Italian doctor, who diagnosed it as "'squinzia'" (quinsy) Smith began to make "a slow and melancholy recovery" (32). Added to the oppressive anxiety caused by "the sense of failure not only in my work and in the art of conversation, but in life generally" (32) came an anxiety that she should not delay the group's return to Paris, for Bennett, "whose time-tables were always strictly adhered to, had made an appointment for a certain date" (33). However, Smith became dangerously ill with "that malady of the ear whose warnings I had failed to recognize"; her sister was sent for from England, and she was moved to the Casa di Cura of the Blue Nuns.

It seems to be at this point that she had the throat operation that would have such a devastating effect on her throat in subsequent years. Of this period she says: "My illness in Italy led, in its after-effects, to a narrowing of my life - and the despairing abandonment of my novel" (A.B. 34). Throat haemorrhages, presumably from the scar tissue, seemed to become a regular feature of at least the next twenty years of her life. In 1928 she writes to Millin about "the worst attack of haemorrhage" she had had for two

years, surprised because it has occurred in the comparative warmth of Florence. At times Smith was philosophical about the inconvenience of the haemorrhages, and even sometimes quite gay: she writes to Millin of a later stay in Florence, where she was attended by "a queer country Doctor, without a car & telephone, or, so far as I could discover, a stethoscope, [who] came to my aid when I had haemorrhage, & spreading a fine cambric handkerchief across my bosom lay down his head upon it & assured me that my lungs were perfectly sound!" (9 October 1928, BC 236 D5.11).

But if Smith calls these haemorrhages "stupid", she has a different name for the other regular feature of her life: "dreadful attacks of neuralgia which keep me helpless in the dark" (letter to Millin, 15 May 1929, BC 236 D5.12). The neuralgia, perhaps also an effect of her operation, or perhaps one of the symptoms that the operation was intended to cure, at first affected her eyes: in a letter to Mrs Gray, 8 September 1927,¹⁴ she says, "a spell of neuralgia in my eyes has held me up again", and there are periodic references in the years that follow to days spent in darkness, and days of work lost: "in darkness for 12 hours at a time & [left] wretchedly depressed & hopeless when they are over (letter to Millin, 2 January 1928 [i.e. 29], BC 236 D5.6).¹⁵ The neuralgia spread also to her ears: again in a letter to Mrs Gray, 5 September 1928, she writes

that the "noise & vibration [of the typewriter] affected the ear and made the pain worse". In 1950 Smith used the term "neuritis", which had developed into shingles down her left side.

The story through the late twenties, thirties, forties and fifties is one of increasing misery: bouts of influenza and neuralgia, worse when she spends the winters in England but still bad in Italy and South Africa; by 1938 she is becoming similarly ill in summer too. With the removal of her appendix in 1932 she also had an exploratory operation (letter to Swinnerton, 3 October 1932, BC 236 D9.8) and speaks subsequently of "internal weaknesses" which demand that she stay close to a doctor (letter to Millin, 27 February 1936, BC 236 D5.62); in 1942 she has a calcified cyst removed from her abdomen. Exactly when her rheumatism and arthritis begin is not clear: during her convalescence in 1932 she has rheumatism (letter to Swinnerton, 3 October 1932, BC 236 D9.8), which her mother had also suffered from (letter to mother, 11 April 1927, BC 236 D8.20), and she speaks of rheumatism in her "'writing wrist'" in 1945 (letter to A., 9 January 1945). In 1947 one of the fingers of her right hand has been "contracting" (letter to A., 31 August 1947), and in 1951 the arthritis in her right hand is so bad that she must have the lumps removed for fear of losing the use of it altogether (letter to Millin, 27 June 1951, BC 236

D5.120). The operation does not provide a complete cure: in October she says that the hand needs massaging before it will straighten out (letter to Millin, 11 October 1951, BC 236 D5.112).

The family heart trouble that would eventually kill her also emerges. During the forties, and perhaps earlier, she began to have a series of heart collapses: she reports in 1947 that she has had one "worse than any before" (letter to Millin, 25 April 1947, BC 236 D5.106), and in 1953 the "most shattering heart attack" leaves her an invalid through the year (letter to Millin, 9 February 1953, BC 236 D5.130). Perhaps her heart has always been weak, for her father chides her in 1898 about running to catch a train "when you are strictly ordered to do no such thing: your headache just serves you right" (letter from Dr H.U. Smith, 27 May 1898).

What is striking about some of the letters to her father is the tone of adult weariness: "I'm so tired of everything" (letter to father, 18 June 1898 BC 236 D7). Also evident is a marked anxiety about work and exams. From her father's side of the correspondence, there is frequent, if benevolent, scolding about spelling mistakes, use of slang, and bad handwriting, perhaps alleviated by his insistence that she is not being educated "simply to pass examinations", as Ravenscroft suggests ("A Personality and A Place" 40), though for me that "simply" would refer to an additional, more

mysterious and therefore more frightening purpose to education. From her side there is, at least in one letter, depression about not performing with perfection: "Our school exams are at last over, & I'm very down. I have only 90 in composition, & 92 in dictation. Mabel has 95 in composition"; "They have made me 2nd equal with Gertie Rust in Class places, I think. I do wish I was not so bad"; "Mr Booth is so nice. He wanted me to promise not to look at a book of lessons before the local exams, because he thought I was working too hard. I did not promise however. I don't know why everybody thinks I've been working too hard, as my marks are so low ..."; "... they say I may have 100 in Arithmetic"; "The French was very easy, but I had such a headache that I've made heaps of little slips"; "I can't tell you how glad I am to have no more exams. I am tired of them"; "We have got our reports mine is not at all good - I hope you won't be very disappointed" (letter to father, 18 June 1898, BC 236 D7).

This letter was written after she had received a letter from her father that said, "Why only 50 For Arithmetic and how do you manage to be so good at Mathematics and so bad at Arithmetic: the things usually go together" (27 May 1898). The obedient 100% in Arithmetic may have again pushed her ahead of Gertie Rust and Mabel, to achieve the first place she had achieved in the previous year (see Ravenscroft "A

Personality and A Place" 40). Any connections at this early stage of Smith's life between her illness and her anxiety to succeed would not have been erased by her father's peremptory attitude, tempered though it was by fondness and humour.

According to Platkops Children Dr Smith had used "boarding school in England" as a threat to the little girls:

An' that night at supper our father said, all of a sudden, like he always does, If ever I hear of little girls walking on factory walls like jackals, I beat.

An' we said Oh, father!

An' he said again, And if ever I hear of little girls throwing stones from an upstairs window I send them to boarding-school.

An' we said Oh, father! an' got off our chairs in a mos' tremenjous hurry an' climbed on his knee.

An' he said Well, perhaps not boarding-school. However bad and ugly they were he didn't think he could spare his little daughters to boarding-school in England just yet. (204-205)

It is without surprise, then, that one reads in "Du-Pa Carel's" of Paoli using her illness as a ruse to stay with her family - "How will Paoli be able to go to boarding school" (81) - a ruse repeated in "How Paoli Went to Cape Town" (164-165). It is without surprise, too, that one discovers in Smith the desire to enter another temporal dimension altogether, which will be forever prior to the time for boarding school (little girls at home are beloved, but at school in England are "bad and ugly"):

An' up at the top of the mountains our father made Koos stop the buggy, an' the Paoli

one felt the little soft wind blowin' about by itself like always, an' flappin' the buggy tent. An' that was the only soun' in the world. An' far down the other side of the mountains was the monkey fores'. An' after that Adams's. An' after that, far an' far away, the sea. An' Paoli thought How instrornery it was: Pato in Flatkops an' Paoli on the top of the mountains!

... An' when they got [to Adams's] an' outspanned, Paoli said, like she always does when she gets there, Can't we jes' stay here for ever, father?

But our father said No, not yet. Wait till Paoli came home from boarding-school in Englan'.

An' it always gives Pato an' the Paoli one the awfulles' feelin' of nothin' inside you when people talk of boardin'-school. But Adams's in the mountains makes you think how glad you are that you're there, an' not jes' a little girl in Englan'. (57)

In terms of the text of her life, Smith's illness is one way of recovering that other dimension in time and space: of not making the journey over the sea that will lead to boarding-school, adulthood, and the loss of first the father and then a man who fathered her. In her fiction (as we shall see) there are other devices.

There is, accordingly, an appropriateness in the symptoms, for they speak of a desire to be an adult that is contradicted by a desire to be a child, and even of an ambivalence regarding her work, a desire to succeed as a writer that is contradicted by a desire to be seen as a failure. Moreover, Smith's handwriting, like her illness, may be seen as the symbolic objectification of a complex feeling about writing: the available specimens of her adult handwriting are so hard to read that one is forced to wonder if this writer wished to be read. If

her writing is ill-legible she becomes ill-eligible as a writer.

Smith's early letters to her father are written in a large hand, considerably easier to read than her later ones. There is a degree of ornateness that suggests careful formation of each letter which interferes slightly with legibility, at least for those unused to that hand. Her adult writing considerably simplifies that ornateness: whereas, for instance, she used to loop her t's rather than cross them, and to curl the main body of the p, so that the letter was doubly closed, later she often fails to cross her t's, or has the cross-stroke some distance from the t, and lets letters run into each other, generally forming them badly. The impression is of a hand writing faster or of not moving quite as much during the writing. The likely physiological cause is arthritis in the fingers, although there is no mention of arthritis in the twenties: Smith simply talks of the fact that she finds it hard to function in the cold. However, she is also, perhaps, imitating her father's hand, which was itself difficult to read: in a letter written to her just after she had turned sixteen, he said, "... why oh why was your writing so bad this time? Mother said it was even worse than mine and it was horribly difficult to read" (27 May 1898). One ought not to miss the severity here - it is her social duty "to cultivate ... the power of writing decently" (letter from Dr H.U. Smith, 27 January 1898; qtd. in

Ravenscroft, "A Personality and A Place" 40) - which is contradicted by the father's exemplification, despite what Ravenscroft calls the "good-natured ...

'competition'" over whose hand is the less legible ("A Personality and A Place" 40).

During her adult life friends would continue to complain about her hand. At the start of her correspondence with Millin, she writes:

No - I have no secret convictions about the legibility of my handwriting - These were shattered for me long ago by an irate London newsagent who, when I sent a maid to ask why he had not carried out an order for me replied severely: "Please tell your mistress I've tried to read her note with two pairs of spectacles & a magnifying glass, & I can't make head nor tail of it".... (17 May 1927, BC 236 D5.2)

How much effort was made to write legibly to others is not clear. In 1946 she says, "no one, I'm sure, realizes how hard I do try to write plainly" (letter to A., 17 November 1946). Certainly her notes to herself and her literary drafts are less legible than her letters. "I'm very apologetic about my bad writing though perhaps you have not guessed it!", she writes to Mrs Gray on 3 July 1927, explaining that her typewriter is packed. That there are few typed letters in all, and that there is no evidence that Smith read over her letters and clarified obscurities suggest that her effort at legibility was minimal. Moreover, it seems that the symptoms of illness follow the symptom of illegibility.

In terms of extraordinary difficulty with writing, ill-health, and even illegible handwriting, Schreiner provides an obvious parallel to Smith. Smith's throat trouble as a child and the appearance of respiratory problems, asthma among them,¹⁶ are - as with Schreiner - perhaps the most obvious of all psychosomatic manifestations, ones that have to do with the ability to aspirate/express, and with feelings of constriction and suffocation. Schreiner's most recent biographers, Ruth First and Ann Scott, write: "Seen impressionistically ... her illness 'is' the theme of her life" (19); she negotiated her various contradictory desires "and indeed the whole split between her public and private personae" (19) through her illness. I would, in the case of Smith, amend the insight regarding Schreiner, however, and suggest that it is useful to see not illness but repression as the theme of her life. (I will argue later that repression is one of the themes of Smith's work.) By repression I mean the desire not to speak/not to be heard; this desire stands in conflict with the desire to express oneself/to confess/to create. Repression is the work of the superego, the internalized father, the social law. Its presence has to do with the nature of what it is that one wishes to express or confess; its status here as desire (rather than simply a defence against a desire) emphasises the need (among others) of the female subject to become feminine.

I mentioned earlier that Smith's illness provided for her fiction a set of imagery regarding expression. At the simplest level, Platkops Children reveals the extent to which Paoli's emotional responses are almost invariably signalled by a sore throat: "A throat all dried up" (27), "sich a pain in her throat that she couldn't swallow" (79; see also 131); "the worse the pain in her throat got" (165); "the hammer in her throat" (165). In The Little Karoo and The Beadle, one is invited to read the various references to breathlessness and pains in the chest as references to an inability to express, and perhaps to confess. The symbolism of much of Smith's illness is profound: the throat that bleeds, the eyes that are blind, the hand that will not write. In "The Miller" the blood that pours out of the miller's throat, blood coming out instead of words, is a profound and disturbing statement regarding repression and distorted expression.

To the extent that Smith's life is a text, we may also give symbolic value to the calcified abdominal cyst that is removed in the early forties. In light of the way that Smith has constituted her writerly self, and to the extent that a baby is, for a woman, an object of self-expression, we may read Smith's cyst as a dead baby and dead expression, just as we may read her constricted and bloody throat as a powerful manifestation of an unfeminine and (in that sense) uncreative self. Schreiner's dead baby was for her a

symbol of her failure as a woman: the dead baby reappears in From Man to Man (in the baby in "The Prelude" to which Rebekah tries to give life, as well as in the person of Baby-Bertie - deadened and non-creative in so many ways - and more obviously in the form of the dead kittens), opposing Rebekah's fruitfulness and creativity. Invoking Lyndall's comment in The Story of an African Farm, "till I have been delivered I will deliver no one", Rachel Blau DuPlessis says that Lyndall's dead baby should be read "as a sign of her self-division between thralldom and independence" (27). I shall argue later that the child that Andrina produces is the oblique expression of authority, or attempted authority, over her own life.

On virtually every occasion in Smith's letters that her illness is mentioned, so is her writing; such connections date from her earliest extant adult letters, which start just after The Beadle was published in 1926. In her second letter to Millin she talks of being "miserably ill" then (17 May 1927, BC 236 D5.2); this is an illness that debilitates her, it seems, until July of the following year, with Smith ascribing the cure to her South African holiday - "Everybody here [in Cape Town] tells me I look 'a different creature' from the one who landed eight months ago - And indeed I feel it ..." (letter to Millin, 3 July 1927, BC 236 D5.4).

At times the symptoms of her illness are brought out as a reason - or an excuse - for not writing (for a

typical example, see her letter to Swinnerton, 30 June 1934, BC 236 D9.22). In 1928 she writes to Millin, "I can't work when I'm not well - I can't keep cheerful when I can't work" (9 October 1928, BC 236 D5.11), but adds, a few months later, that "though illness - attacks of neuralgia which keep me in darkness for 12 hours at a time & leave me wretchedly depressed & hopeless when they are over - is some excuse it is not, I know, sufficient excuse for my discontent with my work at present" (2 January 1928 [i.e. 1929], BC 236 D5.6). In A.B., too, her illness - that developing weakness of the throat - is sometimes offered as the reason why she does not engage in conversation to the extent that Bennett demands, and Bennett is even seen as a demanding and perhaps punitive man who does not understand the real reason for her silence. And then, always self-doubting, Smith will catch herself: "perhaps if I were really well I might achieve something again - perhaps if I could achieve something I would be well - " (letter to Swinnerton, 5 May 1946). Swinnerton had, in fact, already given her a "wise reminder" of the "healing" involved in writing (see letter to Swinnerton, 30 October 1939, BC 236 D9.39).

Different causal connections between her illness and her writing are made by her sister Dorothy, who, Smith reports, tells her that her health might improve if she stopped writing: "She has always believed that my

work (if it can be called "work") has made me ill & so added to the cares & difficulties of my family" (letter to Swinnerton, 25 November 1952, BC 236 D9.261). Smith also invokes the doctor's authority in this respect: it is he who confines her to bed, forbids her to type, sends her back to the "comfort" of her sister's house from which she has escaped in order to write (see letters to Swinnerton, 5 May 1946, BC 236 D9.92; 30 May 1952, BC 236 D9.248). But Smith doubts the motives behind her sister's advice: her illness simply adds to the burdens of one who, in Smith's view, "must have" them (letter to Swinnerton, 28 September 1952); her sister has always been jealous of her writing as "that part of my life which she herself can't control" (letter to Swinnerton, 12 May 1950, BC 236 D9.191). And it is, in turn, sometimes her sister's illness that confines Smith to the house, so that she cannot get to South Africa, away from the cold that (the doctor agrees) is so detrimental to her health, and get on with her writing - a repetition, perhaps, of the Paris episode where Smith's writing holiday with the Bennetts was curtailed, through her own anxiety, by her sister's illness.

Taking one's lead from these felt causal connections, and making, too, certain assumptions about chronology (in any case, certain chronological liberties are permitted in dealing with psychosomatic symptoms), one may construct, then, the following narrative of

Smith's life: the constricted throat that is operated on is not cured, but erupts periodically in a series of haemorrhages, and causes painful neuralgia that spreads to the eyes and forces the writer into a darkened room, unable to read or write. The neuralgia spreads to the ears, which become the more painful from the reverberations of the typewriter; she is forced to write by hand, but the hands themselves become arthritic. The connections between her ill-health and her writing quite clearly transpose cause and effect.

While the continual destruction of her work, which she refers to several times as the evidence of a promise that she could not give Bennett, has already been posited here as one of the symptoms of her desire not to write/not to be read, Smith generally explains this destructiveness simply in terms of despair: the work in progress is so far from the perfection she desires. While there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of such an explanation, even when the finished work evinces similar disparagement, I offer the possibility of another explanation (Freud's concept of overdetermination reminding us that one explanation does not necessarily exclude another): that Smith destroys or in another sense withholds her work because it is too close to her desires, too revealing of a self that she wishes to repress. This may seem to oppose her stated truth but it does not, in fact: she destroys her work

out of despair that it has not reached the perfection of silence that she desires. She writes to Swinnerton: "... all the very very little I have ever achieved has needed something like the 'fasting & prayer' that was necessary to some of the disciples before they could 'cast out devils'" (23 January 1944, BC 236 D9.64). The work that she despaired of had not successfully "cast out" the "devils" that had to be silenced before she could write the version she desired.

Smith's 1905, 1913-14 and 1926-27 journals were quite clearly written to be read by others: Holtby, for instance, was sent the 1913-14 Journal, or parts of it, to read (see letter to Holtby, 14 June 1931). This journal was intended for family, too; one comes across passages that are vigorously crossed out: too heated a set of judgments against members of the extended family and, it seems, against family morality (see 22 April 1914, for instance). When one comes, then, to the pocket diaries (BC 236 A1.1-6), whose virtually illegible entries alternate with empty spaces, with diagonal lines or the words "days lost in darkness" drawn or written across them, one may see these neuralgic days, too, as a silencing device, Lacan's "true speech of the unconscious" (Lemaire 206) now silence itself.

Smith does not, then, seem to have had what Virginia Woolf called a place for "writing out my mind" (A Writer's Diary 87; 20 March 1926), a diary that

permits the speaking out of the deepest self. If any writing had for her that function it was her fiction. Yet by the time that her fiction is produced in published form, with the devils cast out, there seems to be little indication of a deepest self: the neutral tones, the balanced prose, and the apparent transparency of the language, with its relative absence of metaphor, render what has been called so usefully a "toneless" prose (Voss, "Pauline Smith" 1). In her novel fragment, as I shall discuss later, the tonelessness has a particularly deadening effect.

Two conclusions need to be drawn here. First of all, Smith's emphasis on her relation with her father is a denial of the mother who was, according to Ravenscroft's research and described here in Ravenscroft's terms, a woman who "showed more interest in political and current affairs than in domestic mechanics" ("A Personality and a Place" 40). Ravenscroft himself enters the conspiracy between father and daughters: "'Mother gave me such a dinner today that I told her I was sure if the children were here they would have taken me down to the hotel & given me a proper dinner'" (letter from Dr H.U. Smith, 14 January 1897, qtd. in "A Personality and a Place" 40); "'I don't know what has come to Mother & her dinners now. Today there were portions of 4 different animals all in one dish for our dinner. I had mutton & beef &

Mother had chicken & kidneys'" (undated letter, qtd. in Ravenscroft 40). What Mrs Smith might have thought of the hotel's cooking and of family members who did not know a pot-au-feu (specifically, a Potée Normande) when they saw it is not known. Nor does her daughter anywhere discuss her mother's political interests.

Secondly, Smith's illness has a set of generalized meanings as well as specific ones. Earlier I referred to Mitchell's presentation in Psychoanalysis and Feminism of Freud's theory regarding child development, which makes explicit the way that the female learns to repress the characteristics of the male, while at the same time desiring to take the father's place, and a place in society and culture. One of the significances of this is that the female cannot assume power and must therefore assume a feminine identity within the law of patriarchy, which is at odds with the desire to write. There are various other implications here, to do with the very process of writing, that is, the process of choosing the words with which to write and the metaphors to express yearnings or desires. But what concerns us for the moment is the ability to put pen to paper at all. If the woman must become the representative of nature, Mitchell's "chaos of spontaneous, intuitive creativity" (405), this means that the act of writing is a struggle against the internalized strictures of socialization.

As has been argued elsewhere (Barbara Ehrenreich

and Deirdre English, Barbara Rigney) the struggle against the internalized father issues in various forms of illness. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, invoking what Ehrenreich and English call the "cult of female invalidism", explain such forms of illness in terms of an "anxiety of authorship", which they relate to the literary experience of nineteenth-century British and American women. The patriarchal theory of literature, in which male metaphors of literary creation are so extensive and overwhelming that "a proudly masculine cosmic Author is the sole legitimate model for all earthly authors", causes "enormous anxiety in those 'presumptuous' enough to dare such an attempt" (7): this anxiety manifests itself in a desire to disguise one's writerly self, to prevent or inhibit, in cunningly complicated ways, the act and the purpose of writing.

To speak generally about women writers, then, the desire to take up the pen is a desire that stands in opposition to the Law of the Father, and will be written into the text in one way or another, and in varying degrees, as a hostile or murderous impulse towards the Father; the higher the co-occurrence of hostility and socialized obedience, the greater will be the punishment inflicted, whether through illness, insomnia or other forms of self-destruction. Freud himself recognized, as he says in "Civilization and its Discontents", that "the woman finds herself forced into the background by the

claims of civilization and she adopts a hostile attitude to it" (51); this hostility cannot, however, be expressed productively against the male and is generally turned inwards, against the female, who is thus punishing herself for rebellious desires, harming herself on behalf of culture. It is this circumstance that accounts for much of the illness, hypochondria, insomnia, and anxiety suffered by women writers, and is as evident among other South African women writers besides Smith and Schreiner - Ruth Miller and Bessie Head most notably - as those of other nations.

Against this general situation, Smith's case adds its own specificities (although one would not claim that she stands in a unique position): her desire to take up the pen unfolds as a desire to be the pen for rather than against the father, albeit with a considerable amount of ambivalence. Her illness reads as the repression of hostility (which is so strong an element of self-sacrifice too), as the repression of the daughter's desire for the father, but also as the manifestation of that desire. Her illness is a story written in her body: the body itself becomes the text being written for the father. Smith continually creates for herself an environment where she is the child, a good child continually on the edge of being bad, a bad child trying to be good. We may use Michel Foucault's concept of the "transgressive hypothesis" here, in terms of which people commit

transgressions of a law that they impose (6); "the law is what constitutes both desire and the lack on which it is predicated" (81). Smith continually keeps in mind a punitive world and a punitive father: asserting the repressive Law of the Father, characterizing herself as (sometimes) transgressive, and as loved and yet always about to be not loved. Her fictional texts will also establish a set of dominant and dominating institutional structures and figures of authority, sometimes loving, sometimes punitive; sometimes revered, sometimes deflated. If, as Melanie Klein and Roland Barthes claim, the act of writing is an exploration of the Mother's body - as quoted in Chapter One - it is also an exploration of the Phallus. The writer establishes an institutional structure in order to adore and to destroy it: "sets it up" is the operative phrase. Insofar as the very act of writing is an act of hostility against the Father, certain kinds of writing constitute either a disguise of hostility or, even, an apology, and may become the more easily than an act that imitates the Father's act.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1 Pauline Smith's letters to Winifred Holtby are in the Winifred Holtby Collection, Hull Local Studies Library, File 2.44. I am grateful to the Humberside County Council for providing me with photocopies of

these letters. Whether there are other extant letters been Smith and Holtby has not been possible to establish: the first letter that I have, dated 28 September 1933, speaks of their having already exchanged "a dozen letters I think".

2 For this information I am indebted to Arthur Ravenscroft, "A Personality and a Place" 42. There are "twenty-four surviving letters ... [from Dorothy] to Pauline while the latter, with their mother, was on a visit to South Africa." These letters were given to Ravenscroft in 1964 by the Smith's cousin, Col. W. Cabourn Smith. I have not been able to consult them.

3 Charles Edward Nind, 1847-1917; born at Woodcote, Oxfordshire; educated at Marlborough; began his business career at Bombay and Burma; settled in Kimberley in 1881, becoming a Director of the old De Beers Company and served on the board of the new one from its foundation until his death. He was also Chairman of the Griqualand West Diamond Mining Company. This information is taken from his obituary and Eric Rosenthal's South African Dictionary of National Biography, qtd. in a letter to me from the archivist of De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited, Dr M.H. Buys, who also provided me with the information which follows.

4 The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting, 17 January 1894, read:

in consideration of past services rendered to the Company the Board consider that he should

be reelected, with the proviso that this should not carry with it any claim for further reelection, and that steps should be taken by him to make arrangements to enable him to resign when desired by the Chairman (C.J. Rhodes). He must remember that the seat on his retirement had been offered to and accepted by Mr Rhodes' brother, the representative of the Gold Fields of South Africa holding 20,000 shares in this Company.

5 Babette Taute has asked me not to publish either the name of the Harmonie visitor or the name of the school that he attended in England. I have a letter from the Headmaster of the school, however, and have communicated with "the Englishman's" South African relatives; both these communications authenticate many of the details Taute has given me, but do not provide any dates for his stay at Mill River. Aspects of Taute's story reappear in her two essays, "Recollections of Pauline Smith", and "The Truth About Pauline Smith's The Beadle".

6 Qtd. in letter to me from Ravenscroft. I have been unable to see the letters that he refers to.

7 Smith's letters to Cecil Sibbett are in the South African Library, Cape Town, under the number MSB 438. I am grateful to the South African Library for permission to quote from them.

8 A letter to Smith from Bennett (16 February 1923, qtd. in Ravenscroft "A Personality and a Place" 44) makes clear that she later revised "The Miller" on Bennett's general advice, for "The Miller" was "only a sketch" when Bennett saw it, not "a short story". The

published version bears as much of the sense of locale that informs the later stories. Smith had promised Bennett that she would destroy his letters to her and presumably did, but for these few that "give one a glimpse into the literary relation between Bennett and Smith" (Ravenscroft, "A Personality and A Place" 44). These letters and postcards from Bennett to Smith are in the Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds, but are not generally available to researchers.

9 See letter to Millin, 16 February 1928, BC 236 D5.7: "The latter [a long short story, unnamed] brought me a telegram from Arnold Bennett a few days ago with but one word of praise - 'Masterful'." A journal entry of Bennett's for 9 February 1928 reads: "After dinner I read 'Desolation', Pauline Smith's new short story. Very fine" (Journals, ed. Swinnerton 445-446). In other words, Smith's enigmatic reference in A.B. to a telegram of only two words, one of which was a word of praise, is here clarified. I was as tantalized by this mystery as was Clayton: "Infuriatingly she does not give the words" ("The Style of Poverty" 158).

10 On 5 May 1961 Millin wrote to R.F.M. Immelman, Chief Librarian, University of Cape Town: "I expect that, in my time, I must have had four or five hundred letters from Pauline"; "I received a regular monthly letter for twenty years [but] did not keep them all". Millin suggests that the "regular monthly letter" is in response to a monthly cheque sent to Smith, but my

evidence is that these cheques began only in 1952, which left Smith only seven years of writing time. Millin presented one hundred and sixty-four of these letters to the Pauline Smith Collection.

11 The brother-in-law of Smith's great-grandfather was Joseph Henry Green, surgeon at St. Thomas's Hospital, called by Coleridge a "dear Friend & Fellow Inquirer"; there was a later link by marriage (letter to Swinnerton, 22 November 1951, BC 235 D9.234). The family notes Smith is referring to are gathered under "Boston Notes", BC 236 A3.3, most of which seem to have been written in 1912.

12 Smith's letters to Eleanor Lewis, Ethelreda's daughter, are in the possession of T. Couzens, and will be catalogued in the Pauline Smith Collection in due course. I am grateful to him and Eleanor Wilkin (née Lewis) for permission to quote from these and from Ethelreda Lewis's unpublished autobiography, "The Stranger Within My Gate".

13 The weekly letters that Dr Smith wrote to his daughters, carefully preserved by them, are in the possession of Arthur Ravenscroft, who is engaged in research on Smith. I have been able to see one of these letters (see Works Cited), and take my other information from his essay, "A Personality and a Place", citing the date of each letter referred to as well as the page reference in his text.

14 Smith's correspondence with Mrs James Gray is in the National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown. I am grateful to NELM for permission to quote from them.

15 Smith has simply not adjusted to the new year's date. Although she dates this letter 2 January 1928 it was in fact written in 1929, while she was "holidaying" (that is, ill) in Florence; the winter of 1927-28 has been spent in Dorset, either in her little cottage called "Restharrow", temporarily rented, or back in her mother's house (see letter to Millin, 3 July 1927, BC 236 D5.4).

16 I have not been able to establish when the asthma began. In 1942 Smith writes to Swinnerton in a way that suggests it began well before the forties (7 December 1942, BC 236 D9.58) and, to the extent that some of her fiction draws from her own life, may well provide a biographical source for the references to breathing difficulties in "The Doctor" and "The Schoolmaster".

CHAPTER THREE

DAUGHTER AND FATHER, WOMAN AND PATRIARCHY

The first of my prayers ... was not for a pen but for "a beard like my father and a tail like my dog Tycho". The beard and the tail were never granted me. Yet it was with the same hopeful importunity that, a little later, I prayed: "Give me an orphanage and make me an author." (Smith; "Why and How I Became an Author" 67)

Cherry Clayton has suggested that Smith seems to have wanted to "become" her father by duplicating, as a writer, the sympathetic responses that he displayed as a doctor to the rural people he worked among:

When she returned to the Karoo in 1913, people remarked on her resemblance to her father. She certainly seems to have done her best to approach his own attitudes to the inhabitants of the Little Karoo, to come closer to him by "becoming" him, though he as a doctor had shared in their bodily ailments and all she could do, as a writer, was to "share painfully in the turmoil of the soul". (Clayton 165)

While the doctor in "The Pain" "might [to quote the text] know all that was to be known about the pain in Deltje's side ... [a]bout the pain in her heart and in Juriaan's [he and the matron] knew nothing ..." (13), and it is about this second pain, of course, that the author can write.

Smith's 1913-14 Journal alludes briefly to the anecdote that gives rise to "The Pain" (16 December 1913), an anecdote which was fused with her childhood favourite, "Rab and his Friends", by Dr John Brown. It had been told her by her uncle Tim, her father's

brother, an attorney in Oudtshoorn, whom Smith frequently used in her Journal to exemplify the type of English person who continually asserted superiority "to those who have been born and bred out here" (19 August 1913). Smith claims that her father understood and sympathised with the Dutch to a far greater extent, and "was one of the very few men who had made himself so much respected throughout the district that his influence is felt to this day" (19 August 1913). In fact, Dr Smith's reputation was so fine that his medical instruments were on display at the Oudtshoorn hospital that appears in the story "The Pain" (see her 1905 Diary, 13 January), and that was built a year after his death.

The doctor in "The Pain", then, is used to present the uncle's stance rather than the father's. Stanley Ridge has argued that "The Pain" distinguishes between the patronising response formulated specifically by Nurse Robert, but shared by matron and doctor, and a "more intimate and wholly unromanticized point of view [which] 'places' the condescending, outside perspective as ill-suited for discerning what is of value in the old couple's lives" (209). While my own feeling is that Smith's narrator steers an uneasier course that occasionally lapses into sentimentalization, the story - placed first in the collection - may be seen as something approaching an artistic manifesto of hers: her stance is intended to mirror the stance adopted by her

father towards his rural patients.

I have already noted that Smith's proprietary pride in her father's role comes through as much in the autobiographical Flatkops Children¹ as in her Journal: "An' old Mrs Solomon Barney said Was there ever sich a man as our father? An' we said No" (58). I have suggested, too, that Smith's non-fictional writing attests to a more complicated stance than this towards the father and father-figures: if "becoming" the father seems necessary to this writer, it is also a process fraught with complication. In "The Doctor", a short story found among her papers after her death and (the evidence is) suppressed by Smith during her lifetime, the father plays the role of a dominant and dominating beloved presence killed off and mourned by daughter and author.

THE DEVIL'S WORK IN "THE DOCTOR" AND "THE SCHOOLMASTER"

Given the pattern of Smith's destruction of her work, it is surprising that she did not tear up "The Doctor". Perhaps, as in the case of Schreiner's Undine, "the autobiographical element in it made her 'soft' to it" (qtd. in First and Scott 91) and also made it difficult to publish. It is also surprising to find no reference to it in her letters, especially at the times when she was castigating herself for not being able to write, and when she was asked for stories to anthologize, as she

was by Sarel Marais of Afrikaanse Pers during the late forties (see letter to A, 18 April 1948). Although "The Doctor" is unfinished, it has a 'beginning, middle and end', and would not have taken much work to revise.

The absence of reference probably means that the story was completed before 1926 (which is when the bulk of her extant correspondence starts), put to one side, and either forgotten or repressed, or kept secret. That the story is an early one is also suggested partly by the manner of typing, and partly by the spelling, orthography and style. Smith typed it herself, on the typewriter on which she had typed "The Pain", leaving out the space that would normally appear after the comma, an idiosyncrasy that characterizes the typescript of "The Pain" and the few available letters that she typed. After the thirties, Norah Cundall was responsible for the typing of manuscripts. Moreover, Smith uses the Dutch form veldt, as she does in her 1905 Diary (4 February; 17 February) (veld is used in her ts. of "A Visit to the Diamond Diggings", written in the late twenties), and spells the Afrikaans dokter either "dockter" or "docktor", loup "loup", rooi "roi", geld "gelt", baie "bia", and veldschoen "veldt-schoen". (The spelling of this last term is modernised in "A Visit to the Diamond Diggings".) Various English words are misspelt: "sudden-ness", "even-ness", "with-out", "encourageingly", and "vigourously". The most obvious

sign that this is apprentice work is the clumsiness of her attempt to render Afrikaans speech patterns:

"But nay, Docketor! For Betti's Virginie. Betti's Virginie she has the cold. With but a thimbleful of gunpowder, and a little sugar I will now make Betti's Virginie that she no longer has the cold. What think you?" (Part II, 3)²

Smith's 1905 Diary makes a reference to the Ghamka Valley (in the Ladismith district) that appears to be a source for "The Doctor": "That part of the district is very awe-ful and terrible and gave me the shrinking feeling that the Devil has had a finger in the making of it" (25 May). The story was probably written soon after 1905, but perhaps after 1908, for it is not mentioned as having been among the pieces that Bennett read at the end of 1908. In her 1913-14 Journal, Smith hears a story from Thys Taute about a German transport-rider who used to push his handcart across the desert "as a penance for putting out the eyes of his mules", a "sort of Evil Spirit" to the locals (20 October 1913); this is the anecdote that gets added to some of the ideas in "The Doctor" to form "The Schoolmaster".

In any event, the typescript of "The Doctor" presumably remained among Smith's papers through her lifetime (it is conceivable that it was in her sister's possession, but not likely); not used as scrap paper during World War II, as the typescript of The Beadle was, nor sent for pulping as part of the war effort, as other mss. and tss. were; not typed out (as were parts

of "Winter Sacrament") by Nora Cundall, minimally corrected,³ yet, in some way, it seems, treasured. After Smith's death, William Plomer went through her papers on behalf of Jonathan Cape, for whom he worked, but decided, quite appropriately, that "The Doctor" was not publishable. Surprisingly, the story was included in a teaching anthology of South African short stories, published by Juta in 1968; no doubt the editor was more impressed by the author's name than by literary merit or suitability for a teaching anthology.

Indeed, the remarkable feature of this story, for the literary critic, is its unfinished quality. Although the fact that it is composed, and therefore subjected to the control of language in the same way that instinctual impulses are subjected to the censoring ego, it is - to pursue the analogy between literature and dream - replete with signs apparently superfluous to the artistic construction of the text: of all Smith's texts, it provides the clearest invitation to psychoanalysis. And "The Schoolmaster", too, which grows so clearly out of "The Doctor", and which is also particularly open to psychoanalysis, is still (even as a finished story) characterized by "a force ... which is seeking to express something and another which is striving to prevent its expression" (Freud, "Revision of the Theory of Dreams" 14). "The Doctor" is, less discreetly than "The Schoolmaster", about these conflicting forces.

If "The Doctor" asks to be read in autobiographical terms, it is not as the kind of autobiography that an author forms and shapes out of her own consciousness but as the kind that emerges half-formed, with the mists of the unconscious still clinging to it. This story provides a particularly important glimpse into the unconscious of the writer, for it is clearly about writing. It is also a story about the writer's relationship with her father, in whom are conflated the symbolic and biological figures, and is, thus, a story about the relationship between the woman writer and the Father. It is worth noting at this point that I am assuming that the characterization of the individual father or father-figure in this and in other stories includes both the biological and symbolic fathers, concretizing and making specific an archetypal struggle between the writer and the Law of the Father, a struggle which is complicated - not eased - by the presence of the Oedipus. The concordance of the biological and symbolic fathers is affirmed in the well-known case of Virginia Woolf, who recognized that her father's death freed her to write - "His life would have entirely ended mine" (*A Writer's Diary* 138; 28 November 1928) - and has her fiction set about killing the angel in the house created by the Father's Law. Smith's fiction poses a set of related but different tasks. "The Doctor" is the first, and most defiant, if most chaotic, step. It is

also a story that tells us about silence and repression, amplifying and clarifying the hints that we find elsewhere in Smith's work and life regarding the difficulty she had with expression. And it is, finally, a story that invites us to return to her other texts, and to read them in terms of Smith's profound interest in the father/daughter relationship.

"The Doctor" offers a specific invitation to be read as a story that deals with a young girl's guilt regarding her role as story-teller. This guilt is set in the context of a battle between culture and nature, for it is these polarities that inform much of the imagery selected. The individual or biographical connections are themselves fascinating, particularly given the complex relation between Smith and her father, and will be extensively dealt with here, but there are also a set of general implications to do with women writing in a patriarchal context. Although these will begin to emerge during the biographical reading, they will be dealt with more fully after that reading.

Smith began writing in response to the death of her father, not with any suggestion that she was, as in Woolf's case, freed to do so, but instead "to set down for my own comfort the memories of ... happier days" ("Why and How I Became an Author" 68). In an obvious way her fiction may be seen as a means to recall to herself these happier days, and to recall also the memory of her beloved father. In a less obvious way,

much of her fiction returns again and again to that primal scene between "father" and "daughter", where the young girl is negotiating her father's desire and negotiating, therefore, her status as masculine or feminine.

The obsessively nostalgic pull of Smith's fiction and the extraordinarily melancholic response to the death of her father speak to us, in Freudian terms, of the presence of guilt. It is, therefore, particularly interesting (if also banal, given the other more general claims that I am hinting at) that, as biographical evidence suggests, Smith believed herself to be responsible for her father's fatal heart attack. As her sketch "Miss Griffiths" reveals, he had come from Dordrecht to arrange for his daughters to change schools, and spent the last day of his life making what to a man with a weak heart would have been arduous arrangements. Why a change of schools was necessary we do not know, but we may well suppose that the cause was Pauline's bad health: the two girls left the harsher climate of Aberdeen for the milder one of Hertfordshire. (Again, Smith left the new school soon after her father's death, through ill-health.) Couple with this assumption the biographical connection between Smith's father's death and her literary beginnings, and one may speculate that the act of writing thereafter brought with it a set of complex feelings of guilt alongside any

comfort derived from those "memories of ... happier days". It is on this basis that we will begin to read the connection drawn in "The Doctor" between literary creativity and the father's death, which is a causal one (although cause and effect now become transposed⁴) and the occasion for a considerable amount of guilt.

The major connection between literary creativity and the father's death appears through the link between story-telling and the devil's work. Petchell, the central figure of the story, establishes a "supposed intimacy with the Devil.... She could tell the same tale of the Devil six times over without the slightest variation - " (Part 4, 8). The Ghamka River is, according to oral tradition cited in this story, the abode of the devil; that the doctor is killed while crossing the river connects Petchell, via her link with the devil, to the cause of the father's death. The connection is more tightly drawn by means of Petchell's familiar and welcoming response to the storm that swells the Ghamka River in flood:

[C]louds had rolled, and were still rolling solemnly steadily up the Ghamka valley. The air had become breathless, oppressive. A warning hush was stealing slowly across the valley, across the veldt. It might last for several hours, or for several days. None could tell. But already, in the stillness, Petchell could feel - could almost hear - the strange movement of the veldt towards rain. Something stirred within her. She too moved - Towards what? She did not know, nor did she care. With Ludovic asleep in her arms she was free to answer the call of coming rain. And she answered it. The whirlwind under the fig-trees was forgotten. Rain came nearer and

nearer. And under the Karree boom forgetful of time, Petchell sat a-soaking and a-seasoning in the music of its coming. (Part III, 8-9)

Standing silent she caught the faint rustle of the willows swaying uneasily round the dam, of the poplars at the end of the house stirring in little gusts & spasms, of the leaves of the fig-trees fluttering gently about the deserted trestle. A loosened stone rolled slowly down a kopje. A jackal called. From a neighbouring kloof came the weird cry of a babiaan. The veldt seemed alive, expectant.

And as she listened darkness came out of the East, & with it, like a timid lover, crept the rain. (Part 4, 6)

Petchell has, moreover, been engaged in her "devilish" story-telling just at the time that the storm is gathering force, as if she might have called it up.

As the story turns out, had the new passes over the Ghamka River been completed, the doctor would not have had to cross at such a treacherous point, and would not have been killed. The final guilty connection to which I want to draw attention is one that is established at the start of the story: while the father speaks in favour of the new passes, the author has Petchell speak against them: she sees them as some kind of impertinence towards nature. Meanwhile, the father calls the daughter "impertinent".

The concept of impertinence is crucial to the story (all the more so since it is so awkwardly underlined). Impertinence is designed to disrupt mastery, to question the voice of science and culture. It is a concept particularly appropriate in defining the voice that

takes a feminist stance against the male establishment - as Luce Irigaray has found in her Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un (Gallop 81) and it is used in my reading of "The Doctor" in this feminist sense. Petchell wishes to keep nature as it so dangerously is; her father stands on the side of "progress", wanting to control nature and make it safe, welcoming the penetrative and phallic mountain pass, the pass that cuts into Mother Nature in a gesture that diminishes and controls "her". (Here, then, is the nature/culture opposition that will take this story from a tale about individual guilt into a tale about female guilt.) The father's association with culture is, in addition, affirmed by his association with hunting - it is a hunting trip from which he is being recalled to a young girl's sickbed - as well as his absorption in a book referred to as "The Tactics of War" (Part I, 1) and "his study of the Peninsula war" (Part I, 8). Petchell's association with the storm and the river in flood affirms her association with nature.

The culture/nature opposition permits us to identify the possibility of another opposition: if the doctor's science stands as a manifestation of culture, perhaps Petchell's stormy story-telling stands as a manifestation of nature. But before this potential opposition is clarified we must look at the other story-telling in "The Doctor", for there is a "story" presented from the young girl's sickbed. This "other" story appears, in more discreet formulation, at other

moments in Smith's fiction, and its significance will be lost unless we are at this point able to begin to note some of the repetitions and reworkings involved.

These repetitions and reworkings appear in two stories that are most obviously connected to "The Doctor": "Ou-Pa Carel's", printed as Chapter V of Platkops Children in 1935, and "The Schoolmaster", first published in The Adelphi in 1923 and collected in The Little Kargo.⁸ So much is carried through from one story to the next that one may even suppose Smith to be rewriting a single episode in her psychological life, an episode that also, as I will show later, informs The Beadle. As in "The Doctor", the setting for "Ou-Pa Carel's" and "The Schoolmaster" is a farm in the Ghamka River valley, presided over by O'Ma Delaport in "The Doctor", Grandmother Delport in "The Schoolmaster", and Ou-Ma Carel of Platkops Children. This is a setting characterized by, as in "Ou-Pa Carel's", "tremenjous great red rocks goin' high up in to the sky, an' white wild geese flyin' about among them, an' the river far away down below" (70), items which are repeated in "The Schoolmaster". In "The Doctor" the Roi Kranz hills have another contrast than the wild geese: "... suddenly, out of the red of the hills, flashed the white of the Roadman's tents. The white of the tents satisfied her as the rythm [sic] of the buggy had satisfied the Roadman" (8). The satisfying rhythms offered by the

buggy that drives in to the Ghamka Valley community and the white tents on the way out of it hold a significance similar to the "wild white geese"; there is in these images a sense of a world natural and beautiful. A "Ludovic" appears in "The Doctor" and is mentioned in "Ou-Pa Carel's", but in "The Schoolmaster" it is a cluster of children who provide the glimpse of the sexually immature world.

While Engela's illness in "The Schoolmaster" is simply presented as a "weakness of the chest which my grandmother thought that she alone could cure" (42) and extends into her inability to sing the song that her heart was "so full of" (48), in "Ou-Pa Carel's" the episode of illness is considerably more fully detailed, almost as fully as it is in "The Doctor". In "Ou-Pa Carel's" Paoli, frightened by the darkness, by noises outside the door and by being in an enveloping feather bed, gets into a panic during which she feels all over the bed for the pillow and for her sister but is unable to find them. Later in the story, as part of a separate incident, she develops a sore throat into which Alida peers, for which Ou-Ma Carel makes up the gunpowder and sugar medicine, and which occasions a letter to her father that hastens the child's return home. This is the story that ends, as mentioned earlier, "But our father says, How will Paoli be able to go to boarding school?" (81), a clear enough statement regarding a child's use of illness to stay at home, close to her

father, the doctor.

In "The Doctor", while the incidents regarding the frightened spell in bed and the illness are interwoven, so that the sexual metaphors become particularly apparent, the episode is displaced on to a little girl called, appropriately enough, Virginie. (One of the author's few revisions was to change the name from "Johanna Jacoba Katrinka, Joey for short" to Virginie.) Petchell stands as an older self, the budding storyteller. Having lost her doll, Virginie also "lost herself" in the bed, which becomes "a waste of hot blanket and sheet" (Part 4, 1). Fearful of diphtheria, all the women in the family, as well as Petchell, peer down her throat; Ou-Ma Delaport makes up a gunpowder medicine, and Virginie's suspected diphtheria is used to recall the doctor from his hunting trip. It is on his return that he crosses the river and is drowned.

The story creates a set of tensions in which, in effect, Virginie is judged by Petchell. The first tension is between Virginie's suspected diphtheria and the real cause of her illness: she has simply eaten too many cookies and is racked with fear that the devil will punish her for stealing. That the little cakes are "roi" (for rogi) adds to the sin involved in eating them: they belong to devil and king. The second, related tension is between Virginie's apparent need for the doctor and Petchell's resistance to that need:

Petchell does not really believe that Virginie is ill and does not want her father recalled. Within Petchell herself there are contradictory desires which repeat the tension between her and Virginie and allow us to see it as signifying contradictory feelings within a single female psyche: Petchell both calls up and welcomes the storm that causes her father's death, and is full of dread at the relentless rain, which becomes "an avenger now, no lover" (Part 4, 4). So, taking account of the processes of splitting and displacement, we have within this story a young girl's use of illness to get her father back, her guilt regarding that use, and her belief that this evil in her causes the death of her father. There are also a number of sexual innuendoes here, relating both to Virginie and to Petchell: getting the father back means more than simply recalling him. But these will be discussed later, when it is time to pick up the discussion about impertinence and story-telling.

At the risk of oversimplifying a complex situation (and referring now specifically to "The Doctor", which so clearly speaks the writer's unsorted fears and desires), it is possible to discern here a "logic" of guilt, which reads as follows:

Virginie's ill-health causes the doctor's death.

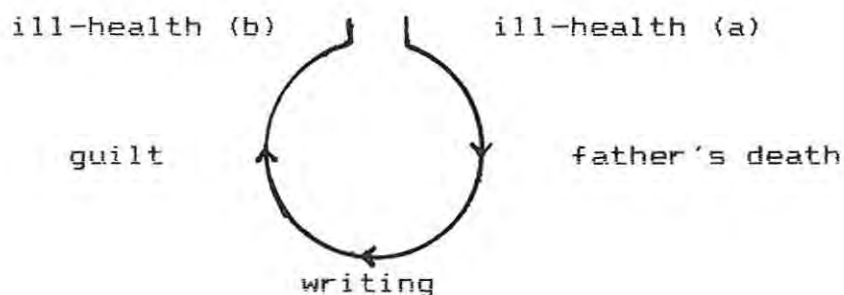
(Smith's ill-health causes her father's death.)

Petchell's story-telling causes her father's death.

(Smith's father's death leads to her writing career.)

However illogical the connection between the father's death and the story-telling, the fictional fact that Petchell wished for the storm that led to the father's death now explains the connection drawn in the story between story-telling and devilry; it is a fact that gives rise to guilt. The only way out of this guilt is to be another kind of self, the feminine self denoted by Virginia, but being this self also involves telling a story that lures the father to his death. In other words, the punishment of the self in the form of illness is itself an occasion for guilt.

In Smith's own life, too, the connections between illness and writing may be read in terms of this logic, given the complex biographical connections between her father's death and her literary career. First of all the symptoms of her illness read as a variety of ways to prohibit the emergence of the writing self, and to reassert the feminine self. But the production of illness forms what one may see as a blocked circuit, which may be plotted diagrammatically in the following way:



Assuming, moreover, that it was Pauline's illness that brought Dr Smith to England to arrange for his daughters to change schools, once the adult ill-health marked b) on the diagram has blended into or even successfully imitated the childhood illness marked a), the sequence that I have called a blocked circuit now becomes a vicious circle: evading writing by means of illness, as her own guilt would demand, does not free her from the circuit but leads on into a state of illness equivalent to the illness that caused the father's death, an illness that causes guilt.

"The Doctor" presents two ways out of this personal predicament. One way is to deny the power of the father, and even the love of the father, and to take up the pen and tell stories, regardless of the consequences. This is the way posited (however reluctantly) by Petchell. The other way out of the predicament is not to write at all, to refuse to take up the pen, in the manner of a Virginia. Enacting this refusal, the body chooses the kind of illness that makes it impossible for the writer to write, and that proclaims her as "feminine" in terms of the conventions of "the cult of female invalidism" invoked earlier. Smith's own strategy is to enter a world prior to the father's death, the world of the Little Karoo, the world of her childhood. Her entrance is an imaginative one, and takes place through writing (rather than through

madness). She meanwhile tries to deny that she is a writer, she insists that she lacks invention, she calls herself a feminine writer, she even sometimes becomes so ill that she cannot write. In these ways she might escape the fact that by writing she kills the father.

While I have been specifically discussing the presentation of an individual female psyche, presented in "The Doctor" and bearing interesting resemblances to the way that Smith presents her own life in her letters and non-fictional writing, there is a double-bind suggested in her life that illustrates the development of the female writer. While the female typically desires to enter the Symbolic Order as a feminine self, a self associated with nature rather than culture, and an object of exchange rather than a subject, the writer typically desires to master culture, and to assume the power of the (masculine) pen. Even within the definition of the feminine self there is a double-bind: the girl must both be the object of the father's desire and must also not submit to that forbidden desire. The forbidden desire becomes part of the repressed and yet its being repressed hinders the acquisition, for the female, of the phallus.

I have already suggested that Smith's adult illnesses may be read as imitations of her childhood problems with her throat, and even as a way of recalling to herself a childhood now gone, of becoming once again a child to be attended by her father and of remaining

forever in the idyllic world "at the top of the mountains", the world that preceded the rupture caused by being sent away to "boarding-school in England" (Platkops Children 157). The desire to remain an ill child, standing in contradiction to the desire to be an adult and a writer, would on its own cause feelings of guilt, which would then become stronger given the awareness, however repressed, of the sexual feelings that inform the young girl's desire to remain for ever with her father.

To what extent "The Doctor" is in fact a story about Smith's individual feelings of guilt concerning her father's death is, of course, simply a speculative issue here. The biographical connections already posited do not seem to be in question, and there are a number of others which one might present. For instance, that Smith's baby brother (called Jackie in Platkops Children) died of diphtheria, as Laura Miller informs us, adds a complicating factor to this speculation: it may have created a sense of family guilt revolving around the failure of the father to provide a cure; it may have to do also with the guilt of the survivor: the girl lives "at the expense of" the boy. What I am suggesting here is that, whatever specific biographical connections one might produce in order to discuss the presence of guilt in the story, it is the culturally organized guilt that is of particular interest. Along these lines, one

might argue that the presence of a more generalized guilt (the guilt attendant upon growing up in a value-laden world - or, more specifically, a Calvinistic world) is apparent elsewhere in her texts, most notably in the poem "The Jackal" in Platkops Children (originally published anonymously in The State [Cape Town] in June 1912), and that the source need not simply be confined to the father's death. The jackal, who lives in "Kama's Kloof", stands as a figure of conscience, who "knows / Just everything we do", and who comes "Sniff-sniffing round and round" when the little girls, who have "not been good at all", are lying in bed (30). Certainly Pauline and Dorothy were drilled - by father, mother and nursemaids - in good behaviour: terrified of cheating the Panorama attendant out of his sixpence, "Pato an Paoli jes' sat with their eyes shut" while the other children take a second look for free (96). Yet on the understanding that guilt concerns a relation to the Law of the Father, the associative links within "The Doctor" between story-telling, illness and disobedience (alongside the links between this story, "The Schoolmaster" and "Ou-Pa Carel's") tie this guilt specifically to a guilt connected with growing up female and desiring something other than "natural" passivity. And it is here, in particular, that it becomes fruitful to speak of more than "individual" guilt: the story of Smith's life is the story of a woman writing under patriarchy. That "The Doctor" also illustrates cultural

guilt specific to women will be revealed when one sees the extent to which this, like other of Smith's texts, turns on the topic of the Oedipus. If "The Doctor" is about the relation between the Oedipal plot and the writer's development, The Beadle is, to anticipate for a moment, a story about the acquisition of language and the taking over of narrative. Because such a reading issues from a critical perspective that sees each text as a Freudian story of pre-Oedipal and Oedipal development interpreted within the Lacanian discussion regarding the Imaginary and the Symbolic, some theoretical discussion of the relation between Oedipus and language is required.

PHALLIC DESIRES

The Oedipus is the story of the young girl's relation with the father and the Father; the story of her desires, which are constructed within the realm of his desires, the prohibition of those desires, which is the process of entering culture or the Symbolic Order, and the story of the metaphorical enactment of those desires, which is the process of mastering culture or "making meaning" of life.

According to Lacan, the original, unconscious and indefinable yearning is for the transcendental signifier, the unity of the self before it became the subject in language. Although this unity is spoken of as

"union" with the [M]other, Lacan is clear that its verbalization immediately loses the truth, for the verbalized or conscious desire is "lost in its real implication" and is conveyed "in a demand (that is, in spoken discourse and in accordance with the exigencies of culture) in which it will be only a metonymy of itself" (Lemaire 64). This yearning is "repressed and replaced by a substitute which names it and at the same time transforms it" (Lemaire 87); this is the desire to be "'a' father ... [which] replaces the desire for fusion, ... because the father reveals himself as he who has the desired phallus and as he who is able to use it in a socially normalized relationship" (87).

Lacanian theory, being a theory constructed within and concerning patriarchal culture, depends on the concept of phallic desire. The phallus is the signifier of the Symbolic Order, the Law of the Father; it is also the signifier of desire in a patriarchal culture, because of its status as potentially missing. The phallus is a copula, a hyphen (Lemaire 86), the signifier of the impossible identity of the self. Whereas Freud has been generally interpreted as having seen the Oedipal desire for the mother or father as the origin of the "problem" in a child's psychosexual development, I am taking the line, offered by Lacan, that this desire is metonymic: just as "the symptom is a metaphor, it is not a metaphor to say so, any more

than [it is a metaphor to say] that man's desire is a metonymy. For the symptom is a metaphor whether one likes it or not, as desire is a metonymy, however funny people may find the idea" (Lacan 175).

For the male the paternal metaphor is, obviously, less problematic than it is for the female: not only may the male be a biological father, but he may also assume a set of equivalent metaphors not so easily accessible to women: literary fatherhood is, of course, the metaphor that concerns us here. The metonymic process open to women, if one listens to Freud, is offered by childbirth: the mother's child will be the phallus of the mother. For the female, then, acting in terms of the Law of the Father, only the desire to be a mother is unproblematic, and then only if there is a legitimate father, an authority to preside over the mother with (phallic) child. The other metonymic desires, such as the desire to enter and found a new land, the desire to make meaning through forms of art, even the priestly desire to (say) hear confession and bestow forgiveness (to list desires which are pertinent in the study of Smith's texts), are problematized by their having been proclaimed by the Law of the Father as masculine prerogatives. The female who assumes these desires will do so at risk of her femininity. The crucial point here is that women's desires are constructed in terms of the father's desires: "to be the phallus for the mother" is a statement conceived in a phallic world. As Isak

Dinesen has written: "Adam had a time, whether long or short, when he could wander about on a fresh and peaceful earth ... But poor Eve found him there with all his claims upon her, the moment she looked into the world" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 187; my emphasis).

If, as Lacan notes, the penis is an empty signifier, and its erection as the phallus is an imposture, the woman's desire for the penis is a futile metonymic ploy for the phallus. Nevertheless, for both men and women in a patriarchal culture, the penis has been seen to stand for the phallus: the association of males with culture and females with nature has been predicated on such an assumption; certain cultural institutions have been male-dominated because of it; wives have obeyed their husbands because of it. In both Freudian and Lacanian terms, the female subject is marked as by an absence. The clitoris that might have acted as phallic metonymy (as the penis does) has been denied by Freud (sexual satisfaction via the clitoris is "infantile") and in some cultures is removed. Women gain satisfaction via the vagina, that womb-like empty space waiting to be filled. In other words, the manner of one's negotiation of the Oedipus depends on one's gender and also on society's understanding of "success".

If women who claim authorship subvert the conventional culture/nature paradigm as Garner et al note (24), they also subvert Freud's Oedipal narrative,

for the desire to be first a little mother and then a mother will not provide the woman writer with the phallic pen. If the "appropriate" desire for the female is for the penis (as signifier of the phallus) as a means to reproduction rather than production (as a means to mothering, that is, rather than, say, literary creativity), any other desires will either be repressed or will work in the psyche in more or less harmful ways. Indeed, any female desires, beyond the most abjectly obedient, are ambivalent desires. In The Reproduction of Mothering Nancy Chodorow has argued that female development is marked by two coexistent desires, the desire for the mother, which is a desire to be one with the mother, and the desire for the father, which is a desire to have the phallus as a sign of difference from the mother, as well as a sign of power. The presence of these coexistent desires is contradictory: the girl fears annihilation by the mother and fears to be simply without power; she also fears to transgress the social laws that inhibit female access to power.

The paternal metaphor allows the male to move in and out (so to speak) of nature, whereas the female who desires to evade aspects of her feminine identity will feel entrapped by any flirtation with nature. For instance - to pick up a point introduced in the first chapter - if the inexpressible union with the [M]other is metonymised as a yearning for the land as a space that exists prior to or at the early stages of

civilization, the female necessarily recognizes the land as "appropriate" female territory, the space where (the myth is) the female is already waiting to be penetrated and inseminated. Hence the yearning cannot go through to satisfaction in this way. The male, who is in control of the copula, as of copulation, does not so easily jeopardize his position in culture by becoming "one with" the land; his entry into a new land is spoken, after all, in terms of "discovery" and "victory", and is signified by putting up flags. In a comparable way, the desire for God has been made inaccessible to females except in terms of becoming the figure of the Madonna: she who is penetrated by God, and who gives birth to God's son. Males become popes, bishops, priests; "father" confessors.

Two points are being suggested here. First, the ambivalence that the woman writer may display both in her work and in her discussion of her work towards conventional male and female stances and metaphors, takes a particular course: it is not quite the same as ambivalence in the male. For instance, the creation of a "good" mother and a "bad" mother in The Beadle - which, as regards a male writer, would simply be seen as an ambivalence towards the mother, one image idealized and the other feared - is considerably complicated by an ambivalence towards that very goodness, for the "good" mother is also the mother whom the daughter fears to

become. In The Beadle Jacoba and Mevrouw van der Merwe provide the apparently positive images of mothering for Andrina, yet both are treated with subtle irony in the text: the narrator needs to measure Andrina's distance from such figures.

Secondly, apart from the expected ambivalence towards the figure of the father, who stands as an image of the Father, and who therefore may appear to the woman writer as both desired and awesome, beloved and oppressive, the woman writer may find it necessary to adopt for the creative self a paternal metaphor, since the maternal metaphor can be a problematic one. This means, for instance, that while "The Miller" may be read as a story about the female forgiveness of a male sinner who, in an unfatherly manner, withholds his seed, it may also be read as an examination of the curtailment of a creative process experienced by one who feels, as the miller does, oppressed by the Law of the Father.

My third point is a correlative of the first and second points. Taking, on Lacan's invitation, the difference between "inexpressible need" and "expressed demand" as the difference between truth and its metonymies, there ought to be no suggestion that a woman's desire for the father is a simple carnal desire: it is, instead, a complex and complicated metonymic process that stands alongside a set of other metonymic processes and is also in potential conflict with them. The desire to "be" the phallus is translateable as the

desire to "have" the phallus in carnal intercourse; but it is also translateable as the desire to create meaning through narrative. In other words, I am stressing in the analysis that follows that the desire to write is equivalent in status to the desire to "be" the phallus: both are metonymies for an inexpressible human yearning and may also be in conflict with each other, certainly as long as the act of writing is an act either of wresting the pen from the father or of entering a masculine domain. In the case of Pauline Smith, the desire to write is to an extent a desire to follow the example set by the father, to "become" the father, but it is also in conflict with the father, both in terms of the Law of the Father as well as in terms of Smith's particular biography. The guilt that the female writer in general and Smith in particular feels towards the act of writing results in an obedient recognition of the Father's Law (a constant recreation of the accuser-figure) and aggression against, or punishment of, the self: if the ill-health that results is - to speak of the woman writer in general - also a signal of her femininity, it is complicated in Smith's case by the biographical fact that her father was a doctor. And it is at this point that it is appropriate for us to return to the question of story-telling in "The Doctor".

As I suggested earlier, there is in this story an opposition between nature, presented in terms of the

storm, the river in flood, and devilish story-telling, and culture, presented in terms of war, hunting, the pass, and the doctor's and roadman's science. The abundance of sexual images, largely to do with the relation between Virginie and the father-figure but also concerning the relations between Fetchell, Ludovic, the roadman and the grandmother, establishes this as a story about masculinity and femininity in the context of culture and nature. Because the story revolves around story-telling, it may be read also as a story about the relation between the Oedipal plot and the writer's development. Whereas both "The Schoolmaster" and The Beadle will be seen to present the young girl's entry into Language via the Oedipal desire for the father, "The Doctor" attempts to separate the girl's sexual desire for the father from her activity as a story-teller. Moreover, there are two kinds of stories presented in "The Doctor": both stories are, in different ways, lies.

STORIES AND LIES

"The Doctor" opens and closes with reference to the relation between the daughter and the father. At the start they are travelling through the Little Karoo. The doctor had come from England during the early 1860s; Fetchell is his only daughter. She is seen to stand in a wifely relation to him, for her mother had died three

years after giving birth to her. Father and daughter are in a white-hooded buggy drawn by two "well-paired" horses and replete with sexual reference. It even stands, like the cart in "The Pain" and "The Sisters", as a marriage-cart. Not only does it have a satisfying rhythm, but horse-hair stuffing also protrudes in little tufts from the seat, and there are two valises held in place by "hairy leather rimpjes", with a water cask swinging below them. The buggy is old, "a disgrace to its owner", who has not had it repainted, nor the leather waxed; the "forlorn streamers" flutter down from the green lining of the white hood (Part I, 1). It does not bear to the outside world any sign that it is cherished beyond the facts that it is still in use and, by the detail of its description, much loved by the narrator.

There are other indications of a conjugal atmosphere between Petchell and the doctor. When "the swinging cask hit the rack" he groans gently and the girl laughs, puts her hand on his arm, and mockingly scolds him. Secondly, when the headmistress of the famous girls' school in Princetown cannot persuade the doctor to start a companion school for boys she first blames his wife (it is because of her weak chest that he needed to move to Flatkops) and then, when the wife dies, transfers her resentment to the daughter. Finally, the dynamic between father and daughter pivots on mock-jealousy when the father teases the daughter

about the roadman; and on a subsequent occasion the sexual nature of this dynamic is alluded to by means of a complicated kind of gainsaying:

"Don't you think there is a kind of daughterly impertinence that is refreshing?" [asks Petchell].

"Go tell that to the Roadman," chuckled the Docktor, pulling her ear.

Petchell climbed into the cart and took up the reins.

"I said daughterly," she said severely, and with a sharp click of the bough drove off. (Part 11, 7)

By common consent of father, daughter and narrator, the roadman serves as the new lover-figure, and his clumsily expressed desire not to displease the young girl presumably reveals his stance as suitor.

The triangular relation between father, daughter and lover is also revealed through recognition of one of the possible sources for "The Doctor" (and, hence, "The Schoolmaster"): Miss Marchmont's narrative in Charlotte Brontë's Villette. Miss Marchmont tells Lucy Snowe a poignant tale of thirty years before, when she expected her lover, "very soon to be her husband", to return to her.

"There he was: I saw him; but I think tears were in my eyes my sight was so confused. I saw the horse; I heard it stamp - I saw at least a mass; I heard a clamour. Was it a horse? or what heavy, dragging thing was it, crossing, strangely dark, the lawn? How could I name that thing in the moonlight before me? or how could I utter the feeling which rose in my soul?

"... But I was kneeling down in the snow beside something that lay there - something that I had seen dragged along the ground - something that sighed, that groaned on my

breast, as I lifted and drew it to me. He was not dead; he was not quite unconscious, I had him carried in; I refused to be ordered about and thrust from him. I was quite collected enough, not only to be my own mistress, but the mistress of others. They had begun by trying to treat me like a child, as they always do with people struck by God's hand; but I gave place to none except the surgeon; and when he had done what he could, I took my dying Frank to myself. He had strength to fold me in his arms; he had power to speak my name; he heard me as I prayed over him very softly; he felt me as I tenderly and fondly comforted him.

"'Maria,' he said, 'I am dying in Paradise.' He spent his last breath in faithful words for me. When the dawn of Christmas morning broke, my Frank was with God." (100-101)

The detail here about the sounds of approach is picked up in "The Schoolmaster" by "a heavy tramping of feet and a murmur across the yard" (54) and in "The Doctor" by "the beat of a horse's hoof" (Part 5, 6); here, too, is the unexpected death. (In "The Schoolmaster", of course, Jan Boetje is the horse-like object that Miss Marchmont confuses with her lover.) The lover-figure in Villette is split in "The Schoolmaster" into lover and father, a splitting that corresponds, in fact, to the splitting of Dr Graham and Polly's father in another part of the novel.

"The Doctor" proclaims itself as a story about a young woman leaving the state in which she is her father's little girl, and entering a world of sexuality still mysterious to her:

Fetchell was now nineteen & grown-up. Occasionally she tried to impress this astonishing fact upon her Father. The Dockter

greeted it always with an ironic chuckle. Petchell did not insist. She did not feel in the least grown-up. That mysterious something which she had expected to happen when she put up her hair & lengthened her dresses had never happened. It had not even happened when, afetr [sic] a struggle with Delia & Katisje she had gained possession of the pantry keys & so become the Drostdy Mees.... Would it ever happen? Did it ever happen? She asked these questions continually, but found no answer. (Part I, 3)

The clearest signal that this is an initiation story is, of course, the castration ceremony, disguised as a pig-killing. It is presided over by O'Ma Delaport, "aimed" at the children (directly at the males, indirectly at the females) and the source of considerable anxiety to Ludovic, who is initially unaware (unlike the narrator) that the castration is simply symbolic, for the feather in his hat is "swaying and quivering with his agitation" (Part III, 6). Petchell takes him to the roadman for male reassurance:

Aloud [she] explained, "It was a pig-killing"[.]

"Yes," said the Roadman. And added after a pause, "My pig".

"Yours!" gasped Petchell, horrified, she scarcely knew why.

"I had bought it. Provisions for my men." The Roadman spoke humbly, apologetically, and waited.

Petchell said nothing....

Ludovic continued to roar. The Roadman's hand travelled slowly towards the pocket of his store made corduroys. "Perhaps--" he suggested.

Ludovic's gaze travelled with his hand. Ludovics [sic] roars became sobs. And as the Roadman produced a cadoosie these sobs became sheepish broken chuckles. (Part III, 8)

This reassurance had, moreover, been planned, for as

soon as the roadman saw Ludovic's feather "subsiding" his hand "went instinctively to his pocket" (6).

However, it is not the male that concerns Smith here, but the female. The three stages of the world of feminine sexuality are characterised by a progression of images: the image of the throat proffered by Virginie to the doctor, the image of O'Ma Delaport as the castrating mother, and the image of Betti's kissing "my Man with the bald head". The world of "mature" feminine sexuality is initially presented to Petchell by the figure of Betti, not much older than her. While Betti had had to fight her father for six months' education, this is an education desired simply because it will lead to marriage: Betti wished to learn enough English to be able to accept the storeman's proposal of marriage in his language. The implication of subjugation is repeated, of course, in the image of Betti kissing that phallic "bald head". In the terms set by Betti's maturity, then, there is within her no sense of the conflict regarding language that is presented in The Beadle, where Nind's language attracts, controls and confuses Andrina. In "The Doctor" the presence of conflict is instead signalled in Petchell's reaction to Betti. Now that Betti is married to the storeman, her "intensity of feeling" for him and the "volcanic eruptions" that accompany her defence of him "astonished Petchell and left her speechless" (Part III, 4).

Petchell has no words for Betti; Betti's words leave Petchell without words. To Petchell's speechlessness now is matched the feeling of claustrophobia that she experiences in Virginie's bedroom and in O'Ma Delaport's house generally; it is only when she goes on to the stoep that she acquires "the power to breathe", and it is this power, of course, that becomes associated with the power of story-telling.

The earlier stage of sexuality that Virginie signifies to the narrator and Petchell is defined most clearly by Virginie's being too ill to attend the pig-killing ceremony that stands in this story as the initiation (symbolic castration) ceremony:

It was of course a calamity that the condition of Virginie's throat and Virginie's kop prevented Virginie's personal attendance on the pig. But such was the will of the Lord. And Virginie had more-over the doll which the Road man had given her. (Part III, 2)

Since Virginie's "bandaged head" is referred to so often, it would seem that she has entered that first stage of initiation: she has been constructed as feminine. What she is refusing, however, is initiation into the Law of the Father, for she refuses to attend the pig-killing that asserts, via O'Ma Delaport's agency, the power of the phallus. As her insistently offered throat suggests, she remains in the "problem" phase of female development: she is a figure constructed simply in terms of sexual desire for the father, and is not subject to the taboo. This is the aspect that

Petchell is attempting to negotiate.

Petchell, at other times suffocated by the "darkened sleep-kaamer" (sic), would also prefer to "escape" the initiation ceremony, remaining in a state of sexual ignorance. This ignorance is characterized by her bewilderment regarding the relation between Betti and her husband, by her belief that the Vergelegen fig-trees had never been planted but "had simply arisen out of the earth" (Part III, 1), and by her wondering if "what happened" to the other young woman would also happen to her. What allows her such ignorance - or innocence - is not recourse to Oedipal desire, the "illness" of childhood, but the world of nature:

Would it ever happen? Did it ever happen?
She asked these questions continually, but
found no answer.

To day the problem was forgotten.
Leaning forward in the buggy, answering the
call of the veldt with her whole being, she
was conscious only of an intense satisfaction
in the endless of [sic] kopjes & stones &
little brown bushes ... (Part I, 3)

While Virginie and Petchell have been usefully discussed as one psyche, the fact that they are indeed split is a signal to us of their different attitudes (or of a female's conflicting attitudes) towards the father-figure. Virginie offers her throat to the father, but Petchell, who knows that the illness is a lie and that there is nothing in the throat, calls up the storm by her story-telling and prevents the doctor from discovering the "truth" of Virginie's lie. Virginie, as her name suggests, is the innocent virgin, awaiting

fulfilment; she is an image of the female self who refuses to complete her initiation into culture, who refuses to give up her desire for the father and enter the realm of the Father's Law, in which the desire for the father is taboo. Her refusal means that her stories will contain nothing, or at least nothing but stories about the young girl's desire for the father, which are stories which Petchell wishes to avoid. Petchell's stories, on the other hand, are Brontë-esque, tempestuous and strange: she is an image of a different kind of disobedient self, who refuses culture in an active rather than a passive manner, and becomes an image of nature untamed.

That Petchell comforts Ludovic, takes him in her arms, carries him to the adult world where she and the roadman are, quite permissibly, flirting, and that it is because she is holding the child in her arms that she is able to respond in the way she does to the approaching storm provides a foreshadowing of Andrina in The Beadle, who has a child but remains, in a sense, inviolate. Andrina is impregnated by a shadowy Christ-figure; Petchell is impregnated by the storm: "Something stirred within her". Male agency is denied. Moreover, Andrina's journey away from Harmonie recalls Petchell's response to the wildness of nature. Nevertheless, these two responses have different political impact: the space that Petchell imaginatively

inhabits is a space in impertinent and aggressive opposition to culture rather than (as in The Beadle) more simply beyond it. It is this sense of opposition that necessitates the death of the father. Petchell's attitude to the initiation ceremony is a refusal to valorize the phallus.

I noted earlier that the narrative desire manifest in "The Doctor" is to separate the girl's sexual desire for the father from the activity of story-telling. The concept of impertinence in the story clarifies this. Petchell's refusal of culture is impertinent, as I suggested earlier: the doctor says, while stroking his beard, that if she does not attend the pig-killing but remains instead with him her presence will be an impertinence (Part III, 6). And her story-telling is a final gesture of impertinence.⁶ Where the complicated definition of story-telling begins is at the point where Petchell first uses the term "impertinent": the pass that the roadman is cutting is an impertinence against Nature, because it is "unnecessary" (Part I, 8). The doctor, alerted by this term, begins to say that she herself must then be impertinent, being unnecessary; Petchell picks up his implication, and both says it for him and denies it:

"Then -" began the Dockter slowly.
The girl interrupted him firmly.
"No, You're not going to say it, Father. My existence is not impertinent. You need me. I need you. We can't get on without each other."
"Accident! Sheer accident! If we

hadn't met each other twenty years ago we should never have needed each other now. The demand came simply because of the existence of the supply. Nature never tolerates waste."
(Part I, 8)

The complexity of the association between nature and the woman writer is here clarified. If it is "natural" for the female to remain marginal to culture (not to have the pen) so is it "natural" for the father and daughter to need and love each other: "Nature never tolerates waste". This is the situation that the girl's story-telling changes: the death of the father insists on his wastefulness, and the wastefulness of the love between them.

The death of the father in "The Doctor" has served two functions for us. It provides an initial signal that this is a story about patriarchy, "the law of the hypothesized prehistoric murdered father - that defines the relative places of men and women in human history" (Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism 409), and it also signals the fictional presence of guilt, in "universal" terms (that is, the guilt commemorated in the totem meal, a ritual which the initiation ceremony reenacts) as well as in specific female terms (as the guilt that results from opposition to the Law of the Father). I spoke earlier of the circularity of guilt, illness and writing in Smith's personal experience, an individual case which illustrates the general experience of women writing in a patriarchal culture. Such circularity precludes escape. The fictional incident of the

father's death also leads into circularity, partly because of the nature of time in fiction (the death has occurred and is also always occurring and always about to occur), but largely because it stands as the death of the symbolic as well as the individual father. However often the father dies, the Father is never dead. There always exists both the guilt at the death and the desire for the death: such desire turns into dread.

Something of this dread - a form of Oedipal dread - is suggested early in the story. During the conversation between Petchell and her father about nature, waste and impertinence, the doctor says, "Some day the simple accident of its existence will make that new pass of Frew's [the roadman's] necessary to you" (Part I, 9). The phrase "simple accident of its existence" is, of course, a terrible foreshadowing of the doctor's accident: because of his death Petchell learns that the pass is necessary, which is to say, the symbolic sacrifice of the Father is a moment that determines the Law of the Father. Once there is entry into culture there is no escape: culture's Law is that there is no final death of the Father.

If Petchell becomes an image of the active woman, the woman with the pen, she is so through the death of the father. But the very writing of the story becomes a trap for the woman, because it must always take place in culture. Petchell's desire is for a place without

culture. For her the "natural" mule-track will give the father and daughter sufficient access to that heavenly place over the mountains: "we'll buy [the old toll-house] and go there for our summers" (Part I, 9). But, just as Mitchell argues that in the yearning for a "pre-capitalist golden age", the "songsters" are "only humming the descant" to a capitalist song (*Psychoanalysis and Feminism* 411), so too is Petchell inevitably concerned with "passing" into culture.

"The Doctor" ends as it begins, with the desire of the daughter for the father. It is the roadman, the lover-figure, who brings in the body of the dead father, and in this way are conflated the figures of "father" and "lover". The "problem" of Virginie has not, after all, been solved.

One of the critic's constant concerns is about the ways that Smith made it possible, and impossible, to continue writing. How does she go on, after "The Doctor"? The strong similarities between "The Doctor" and "The Schoolmaster" suggest that Smith was rewriting a psychological episode, attempting to unlock once and for all - or get around in another way - the Oedipal entry to culture. If culture's Law says that there is no death of the Father, it says also that writing takes place through the repression (not the eradication) of Oedipal desires. The narrator's solution in "The Doctor" - an attempted eradication of wasted love - is not a solution the author can maintain. In "The

Schoolmaster", and The Beadle after it, there is a different approach to the Oedipus.

RESURRECTING THE FATHER

In "The Schoolmaster" Jan Boetje is given a devilish aspect: he is a "small dark man with a little pointed beard", cheeks "thin and white", like "the Widow of Nain's son, risen from the dead", a man who is on his way to hunt for gold (43). He is driven into Nooitgedacht by the storm, even as if he had sprung from that "abode of the devil" mentioned in "The Doctor".

The figure of the devil in "The Schoolmaster" initially seems to stand in opposition to the man of science in "The Doctor". However, that Jan Boetje is a man on his way to plunder the earth for gold, and that he is a schoolmaster and thus representative of culture (which includes, for instance, the world of story-telling that Engela will herself enter) places him as synonymous with the hunter and the doctor, despite the fact that he has sinned (an unnameable sin), and looks like the devil. In some sense, then, the father in "The Doctor" is transformed into Jan Boetje in "The Schoolmaster". We will need to ask why.

The answer comes through the transformation of the relation between culture and nature. One of the most significant similarities between "The Doctor" and "The Schoolmaster" is the imagery regarding knowledge of or

access to the "other" world. In "The Doctor" the world beyond comes to Petchell again in the form of a distinction between inside and outside. Inside it is dark and airless; outside Petchell regains "the power to breathe" (Part 4, 6). In "The Schoolmaster", the inside/outside distinction is repeated. Because the wagon-house has no window, the schoolchildren sit close to the open door "to get light", looking out "[b]eyond and above the orange-tree ... [at] the peaks of the great Zwartkops mountains", learning "such a geography as had never before been taught in the Platkops district" (45). These similarities are additionally linked through Smith's references in A.B. to the knowledge that Bennett brought her: it was "as if he had broken down for me an imprisoning wall and drawn me out into the open air" (15), "drawn to a hill-top where keen airs blew through new worlds of thought that were mine for the taking" (19). That nature and culture are here associated rather than opposed is important in my reading of Smith's development.

As already noted, Gilbert and Gubar argue that one of the actualizations used by nineteenth-century women writers of a "free and fierce Nature" is the devil, outcast and rebel: such writers as Jane Austen, the Brontes, and George Eliot made frequent use of Satanic anti-heroes and Byronic figures, outsiders with whom female narrators might, covertly or explicitly,

sympathise. The devil in "The Doctor" (rather than the doctor himself) and Jan Boetje in "The Schoolmaster" are such figures. Smith's desire now to make doctor and schoolmaster (and thus doctor and devil) equivalent figures is a desire to erode or fool the nature/culture opposition (as well as a desire to work out a different relation between daughter and father).

The structural and other similarities between the two stories have already given to the doctor and schoolmaster equivalent positions in relation both to the action and to Petchell and Engela. The father in "The Doctor" was, the narrator tells us, nearly a schoolmaster: in the later story, of course, Jan Boetje becomes one. And, of course, not only do both doctor and schoolmaster die, but the news of their deaths, as the comparison with Villette revealed, is also introduced in similar ways. While Miss Marchmont in Villette spends her last days preparing for reunion with her lover, of whom she thinks more than of God (101), Engela in a different way imaginatively transcends Jan Boetje's death: she inhabits the space that he inhabits and imagines the place where he lives. Engela, like Miss Marchmont, asserts her right over the body of the male, and even becomes, though treated like a child, the "schoolmaster" herself, just as Miss Marchmont becomes "quite collected enough ... to be the mistress of others". Particular significance is given to the fact that Jan Boetje has "a little pointed beard that looked

as if it did not yet belong to him" (43; my emphasis). The narrator has seen him as a feminine figure, even before his symbolic castration.

In "The Doctor" incestuous desire is the repressed topic of the story: whereas in "The Schoolmaster" Engela is able to shower the body of Jan Boetje with a physical love she had been unable to demonstrate before, in "The Doctor" such love cannot of course be demonstrated. If the major similarity between the doctor and the schoolmaster is that one is a father and the other a father-figure, the major difference is that the doctor is killed but the schoolmaster is symbolically castrated; in a manner comparable to the maiming of Jane Eyre's Rochester, the father-figure has been made both accessible to Engela's love and not a phallic figure. The woman's assertion of the male's lack permits her too to enter culture, just as Lacan's recognition of the male's lack has been a source of strength to many feminist critics.

While the two worlds that are opposed in "The Doctor" are the world of "normal" female development into culture, represented by the progression from Virginie to Betti, and the world of untamed nature, represented by the association of Petchell and the devil, the opposition in "The Schoolmaster" is now defined differently: it is an opposition between the worlds of the grandmother's love and Jan Boetje's love.

In other words, while the culture/nature opposition of "The Doctor" is consonant with a male/female opposition, in "The Schoolmaster" the female may enter the male or masculine domain, just as the male enters the female or feminine.

The comparison of "The Doctor" and "The Schoolmaster" holds within it a further invitation: to use one story to read the other. In "The Schoolmaster" Jan Boetje's presence is reflected in spatial terms - the masculine, even animal life of the stable turned schoolroom, and the world opened up through geography; in "The Doctor" it is the other world, the feminine world, that carries the weight of the spatial imagery, and is, correspondingly, presented in terms of suffocation. The reader may, of course, transfer this suffocation to Engela's world, in "The Schoolmaster", for she suffers a "weakness of the chest"; the imagery from "The Doctor" highlights for us the stifling quality only hinted at in "The Schoolmaster" regarding the grandmother's love. If we continue the comparison across the two stories, we may even see the huge gulps of air that Petchell breathes in from the approaching storm as a desire for the storm that, in the later story, will blow Jan Boetje in to Nooitgedacht. This is how the father in "The Doctor" is turned into Jan Boetje in "The Schoolmaster", and the transformed presence of the father becomes for us the story's motive.

In other words, using "The Schoolmaster" to re-read

"The Doctor" (just as Smith uses it to re-write the earlier version), we may see Petchell's breathing in of the storm not now as a desire to kill the father but as a desire for the father that inadvertently kills him. The text of "The Schoolmaster", which is in the nature of a re-vision of "The Doctor", is, like "The Doctor", a story about the desire for breath (breath with which to sing the joy in a young girl's heart, breath with which to become a teacher, breath with which to tell one's story). Unlike "The Doctor", "The Schoolmaster" permits the expression of love between daughter and father-figure; it may be read as an attempt to circumvent the necessity of the father's death by introducing castration instead. Of course, Jan Boetje does die, but it is the loss of Jan Boetje (the father's loss) that opens Engela's chest and throat - "And suddenly I knew that for Jan Boetje's sake I had the strength to do it" (53) - and that allows her to take his place. The death is retained in order to have the body returned to Engela, but she has, in her vivid imagination, loved him already - as the intense physicality of the stable/schoolroom scene suggests - and has nurtured him in the wilderness. It seems that such love has been permitted by Jan Boetje's castration, which is merely underlined by the mulehood and his appearance in death as a mule: "Across his chest, where the strap of his harness had rubbed it, the skin was hard and rough as

leather" (55).

"The Doctor", then, poses a problem regarding female creativity that Smith's later texts return to: most clearly "The Schoolmaster" but also, as I shall show later, The Beadle. One kind of solution is to "become" the father and to leave behind the world of the unregenerate feminine; this is the solution offered in "The Schoolmaster". Another kind is to "absorb" the father and to retain femininity: this is the solution offered by The Beadle. If the narrator of "The Schoolmaster" is in some sense Jan Boetje, so perhaps is the author who stands behind her: in "Paoli in England" in Platkops Children we discover that one of the stories that Paoli's grandfather loved her to tell him was about how she used to be a horse, pulling trees through the woods, "blind in one eye" (112). Like amor matris, the father's desire is a desire felt by the father and a desire felt for the father: Jan Boetje's Oedipal narrative is Engela's too. There is nothing surprising in the connection between desire for and desire to be, as the etymology of the word "copulate" suggests, but it is this connection that Smith's texts need (quite properly) to silence. The Beadle is an even more successful attempt to deal with and silence the father's desire. Before moving on to The Beadle, however, we need to look more closely at the relation between telling one's story and what is in effect a tug-of-war between the worlds of masculinity and femininity,

the worlds of the Father and the Mother.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1 It is generally accepted that Platkops Children is autobiographical: see Haresnape, Pauline Smith 34; Ravenscroft "A Personality and a Place" 35; Scholten 139-41. The autobiographical quality is confirmed by the dedication to her sister of "These memories of our South African Childhood" and by the correspondence between the text and certain known details of Smith's life. For instance, the reference in "Ou-Pa Carel's" to "Paoli's Jew" (69) who likes her so much, her father guesses, because he misses his own little girl in Poland, is matched by a comment in a letter to Millin, 24 July 1935, where Smith refers to the "'Pole Jew' who was kind to me as a child" (BC 236 D5.58). She also makes various confirmatory remarks in her letters: for example, she signs herself "the Paoli one" in a letter to Mrs Gray, 18 January 1938, and identifies the "Aunt Jane" as her own aunt, Jean Wallis (letter to Swinnerton, 15 December 1946, BC 236 D9.99).

2 The (posthumously) published version of "The Doctor" varies slightly from Smith's ts., partly because the editor A.D. Dodd had difficulty with her ms. additions, either misreading them (Rik in Part II, 4 becomes K.R. in Dodd 10), or leaving them out (see Part II, 3 as against Dodd 9). I am referring therefore to the ts., using Smith's own division of the story into

the ts., using Smith's own division of the story into parts and her pagination, and keeping to the numerical system that she employed.

3 The few ms. corrections often add to the misspellings: "guttaral", "Landrost", "Naachtmaal", "sausage-making", for instance.

4 The concept of causation in psychoanalytic terms is neither of the logical nor the empirically verifiable kind, but the kind of "illogical" or back-to-front kind referred to in Freudian analysis.

5 Since Smith began writing some of the stories that formed Platkops Children as early as 1899, it is impossible to assert that "The Doctor" is a source for, or first draft of, "Ou-Pa Carel's". "Ou-Pa Carel's" was either written in the 1930s when Smith was revising the set of stories written earlier, or was, perhaps, one of those written from the time of her father's death.

6 In The Beadle the term "impertinence" is used in the context of the relation between Nind and Andrina: the question he asks himself about whether Andrina is a woman or a child, was "[i]n the stress of his own emotion, his desire", an "impertinence" (126). Meanwhile, Andrina's desire for Nind is a "presumption" (32). The awkward underlining in "The Doctor" has now disappeared, and the term remains as the quietest reminder that the relation between Nind and Andrina transgresses barriers other than the racial one.

CHAPTER FOUR

SMITH'S DOUBLE PLOT: WOMEN COMPOSED AND WOMEN COMPOSING

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

But I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. (1 Timothy 2: 11-14)

"But when one comes at last through the pain and the sorrow to peace, surely that peace is the peace of God. Surely it is so, my child. Surely it is so." (Beadle 197)

"THE PASTOR'S DAUGHTER": TRICKING THE MOTHER

There is no story more illustrative than is "The Pastor's Daughter" of Smith's remark about herself as a quiet and pensive trickster: "... I lie low like Brer Rabbit and say very little and think all the more" (1913-14 Journal, 19 August 1913). "The Pastor's Daughter", is like "The Cart" and "The Horse Thieves", a tale in the trickster tradition, but here the trickster motif - obvious in "The Cart" and "The Horse Thieves" - is deeply embedded and extremely subtle. We read "The Pastor's Daughter" initially as Niccoline Johanna's "love story", its depth provided by the way it revolves around sets of gradually revealed ironies. These ironies are, in fact, tricks.

First of all, the "little white dress" that Niccoline Johanna is sewing for her niece Christoffeline is being re-made from the wedding dress that Niccoline Johanna was to have worn on her marriage to Paul Marais,

and the "niece" Christoffeline is in reality Paul Marais's daughter, not, after all, a blood relation of Niccoline Johanna's. Secondly, Niccoline Johanna's engagement to Paul Marais was cancelled so that Niccoline Johanna could look after her father once her mother, suffering from breast cancer, had died; in fact, Niccoline Johanna's mother and father die in quick succession, but Niccoline, now free to marry, hears that Paul Marais has married somebody else. Thirdly, when Paul Marais's wife leaves him and he hears subsequently that she has died, he and Niccoline Johanna again arrange to marry; but the wife has not in fact died, and once again claims Paul Marais. When she dies, he too falls ill, and dies soon after her, thus repeating (though in reversed chronology) the pattern set by Niccoline Johanna's mother and father. And thus it is that the story ends with that final reversal or trick: a wedding dress being turned into a dress for a "daughter".

The story works on the system of a double turn that recalls the trickster pattern that Smith has used elsewhere. In the trickster narrative of the oral tradition, as Harold Scheub points out, there is a dual or parallel arrangement of images, one set manipulated by the trickster to duplicate a vision or model that he has proposed. In "The Horse Thieves" and "The Cart" there is in fact a triple turn: in the first movement

the trickster figures are presented with the desired reality of the character (the sheep inspector in "The Horse Thieves" and the Englishman in "The Cart") who will, in the second movement, become the dupe, as the trickster figures set up a situation that will both parallel and mock this desired reality; in the third movement the trickster figures themselves become duped. "The Pastor's Daughter" offers a comparable reformulation of the trickster/dupe dichotomy.

The simplest structural division in "The Pastor's Daughter" has to do with the two sets of marriages, deaths and resurrections in the text. The absence of the mother is the initial situation which will facilitate Niccoline Johanna's marriage: "When Paul Marais asked me to marry him I thought at once how glad I should be to get away from my mother" (99). The mother, potentially the dupe, turns the tables on Niccoline Johanna: although her absence as mother (that is, as beloved mother and as kindly mother) has promised to become a real absence (she is about to die of breast cancer, a sign of the distortion - or absence - of motherliness), her illness extends for just long enough to allow Paul Marais, the lover, to find himself a substitute. In the second sequence, the progression from absence to death is repeated: Paul Marais's wife (who was never truly wanted) leaves him and then "dies", a situation parallel to the mother's announcement of her impending death. This "death" lasts just long enough

for Niccoline Johanna and Paul Marais to believe that there will be time for them to marry, as if in triumphant reversal of the first sequence in which they were duped. For a moment, then, the other woman - whether mother or wife - has become the trickster-turned-dupe; Niccoline Johanna and Paul Marais assume the superior position of trickster, the ones who are in charge of the narrative.

However, the wife (like the mother before her) is not truly dead; and when she does die, she is followed by Paul Marais: Niccoline Johanna remains the dupe after all. Her consciousness of this, so poignant a part of the story, is presented in terms of the relation between her and Magdalena Fourie. During the first sequence, before Niccoline Johanna is duped, she feels superior to Magdalena Fourie: "When I went to the Bible-class I tried even to sing, I was so happy. When Magdalena Fourie looked at me with her great flat face I did not feel a fool. I stopped singing, but I thought to myself, 'It is Magdalena who is the fool'" (107). During the second sequence, however, the relation shifts: "When I could no longer hear his horse on the road I went to my own room and cried as if my heart must break. And always I said to myself: 'Who was now the fool in the Bible-class, Niccoline Johanna? Was it Magdalena Fourie?' Yes.... All that night I saw Magdalena's flat face looking at me when I tried to sing

in the Bible-class" (109).

The trickster motif is unrelenting: twice Niccoline Johanna is duped. She has had, at the beginning of the story, only the illusion of mastery over her fate, for if there is, then, the promise or vision of a new world for her, it is at each point snatched from her grasp. Nevertheless, Smith has her character assert mastery in the only way available to her. If she cannot transform her vision into reality, she can at least transform an element out of that promised or illusory world: the wedding dress becomes a dress for her "daughter", the child she should have had by Paul Marais. And it is this transformation, of course, that provides her with a story.

The double plot is a textual mode for emphasizing the inescapable fate that has befallen Niccoline Johanna; her life is one of entrapment and subjection. It is also a textual mode for defining a little more clearly what one initially thinks of as "fate": in both sequences the barrier to Niccoline Johanna's happiness is the bonding of the family, a bonding which initially keeps Niccoline Johanna in - so that she cannot find her own family with Paul Marais - and which subsequently keeps her out - so that she cannot enter Paul Marais's familial realm. That family bonds are part of the topic here is signalled further by Paul Marais's references to Englishwomen, to whom bonds to the mother and father are less important than sexual love: "May God forgive you

and your promises, Niccoline Johanna, but surely my grandfather was right when he chose him an Englishwoman for his wife and I will do so also'" (102). Paul Marais is himself tricked by this vision or pattern for he marries an Englishwoman, to whom a new sexual love is more important than the marital bond: "But the day that he died he sat up early in the morning, while it was yet dark, and spoke of his grandmother the Englishwoman. All that day he spoke of her and at sundown he died" (111). Niccoline Johanna's mastery over this dual trickery becomes the clearer if we see her acquisition of Christoffeline as an acquisition of family. Unlike Miss Havisham in Charles Dickens's Great Expectations, Niccoline Johanna does not simply hang up her wedding dress to grow mouldy with age. She takes a degree of control over her own narrative, becoming, in some sense, the trickster-artificer-artist figure that is implied in the trickster tradition.

Reading "The Pastor's Daughter" as a double plot out of which Niccoline Johanna emerges foregrounds yet another feature that might otherwise have remained obscured to us. It places in a symmetrical equivalence the mother and the wife, the women who bar Niccoline Johanna from her own sexual fulfilment. The sexual competitiveness between mother and daughter is initially signalled by the mother's otherwise inexplicable choice of name for her daughter: "The only thing that my father

had wanted for himself was a daughter and it was not until he had been many years in Platkops that I was born. And then my mother gave me a man's name after my father himself - Niccoline Johanna for Niklaas Jan" (98). The tonal quality of the words "And then" corroborates what has been hinted at in the previous sentence: that Niklaas Jan's wife withholds from him the only thing that he desires. The imposition of a man's name, in a literary context in which names (Dientje, Deltje, Engela, Vlokman) carry a weight of meaning, to some extent suggests maternal control that is coloured for us with the sense of authorial control: the mother is directing/authoring her daughter's life, and she is doing so in the Name of the Father. The imposition of a man's name neutralizes or de-feminizes the daughter and at the same time, since it is the father's name, binds the daughter familiarly to the father, insisting, therefore, on the presence of desire curtailed by taboo.

In the light of what we have said about the trickster pattern, it is surely now the daughter's power of authority that surfaces in the naming of the next little girl: "His wife wrote that the child was to be called Niklaas Jan if it were a boy, and Niccoline Johanna if it were a girl. I asked them to call it, rather, Christoffeline after my mother" (110).

The name Christoffeline may simply read as a bitter reminder of who it is who has stood between Niccoline and true rather than feigned motherhood. In a more

complex rendition, however, Niccoline Johanna refuses to authorize her own father's name for the child, refusing thus to repeat the pattern set by her mother, a pattern that ruined her whole life. Interestingly, the name is still based on the male root, as other names of Smith's characters are: Johanna, Jacoba, and, most notably, Andrina.

There is an even more complex reading here: if we have seen the mother and the wife in a syntagmatic relation to each other, then so may we see the father and the husband in a syntagmatic relation. At first the father and lover are opposing types. Paul "nearly always got what he wanted and made you want him to get it" (98). Her father, on the other hand, "was but a child in the ways of the world and never would he learn to care for himself" (101). As the patterning of the plot has already suggested, Paul Marais becomes the father: "He was weak like a child when he came to me. It was terrible to me to see him so weak. He who had been always so sure of himself did not know now what he must do" (108).

By naming the daughter after the mother, Niccoline Johanna asserts a relation that is to the daughter's advantage (as long as daughters desire fathers). Taking hold of the narrative, she rewrites the plot, reasserting a relation that would have been more to the advantage also of herself as daughter, that is, a

syntagmatic relation between mother and daughter, a pattern in which the mother is replaced by the daughter. It is surely no coincidence that in this narrative of a daughter's desire, the husband-cum-father Paul Marais is named after the author of the text: had the narrator/author been like Niccoline Johanna's mother, insisting on a tabooed relation between father and daughter, forbidding the daughter's "normal" sexuality, she would have named this child Pauline.

In the trickster narrative the narrative thrust has to do with control: the trickster manipulates reality so that it will fit his desire, at the expense of the dupe. Thus, as Scheub points out, in the Trickster Rabbit narrative, Rabbit boasts to a young woman whom he wishes to impress that he rides Fox, his rival-in-love, like a horse. The story unfolds to reveal Rabbit's authorial control: by means of a variety of devices Rabbit manoeuvres Fox into a situation in which he is in fact riding him like a horse. Talking specifically of Keats's "The Eve of St Agnes", whose structural model is the trickster tale, Scheub notes: "For that brief time and in that dream-like space, the two worlds are in harmony, the parallelism complete, the realms of reality and artifice one. The artificer is the artist, the hero, the trickster" (7). In "The Pastor's Daughter", too, the narrator becomes artificer, creating - against enormous odds and virtually insurmountable social and familial constraints - her own artficed world, rewriting her

life of abandoned daughter/abandoned woman not only into motherhood (a life that contradicts the minimal possibilities offered by the flat-faced Magdalena Fourie) but even into a love affair with the forbidden Paul Marais, whom she goes to nurse (leaving, significantly enough, her cow behind for those who may need milk). And, at the level of the dreamed reality of repressed desires, what Niccoline Johanna gains, through the love affair with Paul, is union with the father, that other forbidden love. The mother/wife figure is thoroughly tricked.

The idea of writing one's own story lies at the centre of this text: it is buried within Niccoline Johanna's references to learning to sing - "When I went to the Bible-class I tried even to sing, I was so happy" (107); "All that night I saw Magdalena's flat face looking at me when I tried to sing in the Bible-class" (109) - as within the references to her sewing, which, like spinning and weaving, stands for the creative, formative power of women. The dress that Niccoline Johanna sews for Christoffeline is a dress that she makes for her new, ideal, dreamed self, a metonymy for that reconstructed self, and a metaphor for the creation of a narrative that focuses on fulfilment instead of ending with the way it started, that is, with self-sacrifice.

The way that the dual set of images speak to and

even read each other in the text engenders, then, another text, a text about the fulfilment of unconscious desires, submerged as well as one has come to expect in Smith, who tends, as always, to "lie low". "The Pastor's Daughter" is indeed a story that skates extraordinarily close to unconscious desires:

For many days after that I thought I could not live. I could not forget how ill Paul looked, and I trembled all the time to hear that his wife had killed John Gordon. When Delia dropped her pails I thought: "They have come to tell me." For the least sound my heart would stop and I would think: "They have come to tell me." At the morning market they said to me:

"But you are ill, Niccoline Johanna! What is then wrong with you?" And I could not tell them. (109)

What the reader knows, but Niccoline does not now emphasise, is the narrative moment that would have followed Paul's wife's murder of John Gordon: as Paul has told Niccoline Johanna, his wife has threatened to kill John Gordon, and then to kill herself. This is why Niccoline Johanna "trembled all the time to hear that his wife had killed John Gordon". If this story is a confession of the identity of the child Christoffeline, it is a masking of another truth: what Niccoline Johanna can never speak of is her desire for the death of Paul's wife.

"The Pastor's Daughter" is, then, a story about acquiring a child and telling the "true" story (even while obscuring another); that the story is told while Niccoline Johanna is engaged in making a dress for that

child further determines the link, uncovered by Freud, between "child" and "phallus", or child and creative power. As Julia Kristeva has argued, through the child the woman has access to the "other", that is, to the symbolic and ethical systems: "If pregnancy is a threshold between nature and culture, motherhood is a bridge between the singular and the ethical" (qtd. in Garner 365). The child puts the mother in touch with the infinite or with "God", on the one hand, and with the world of acknowledged social function, on the other. In "The Pastor's Daughter" there is no clear suggestion that Niccoline Johanna is avoiding biological motherhood, though one might see her decision to stay to look after her father as a decision not to take the road to motherhood. But the point is that the author is refusing motherhood for Niccoline Johanna, not only because this is the way that the author can tell a story (who wants stories about women who fall in love, get married and have babies? Where is the story?) but also that this is the narrator's entry into story: it is (unmarried) Niccoline Johanna, not her (married) mother, who has a story to tell. In The Beadle, too, it is Andrina, not Mevrouw van der Merwe, who has a story: "If in her youth love had ever been for her a passionate adventure of the body or the soul, it was in all things now but a serene and gentle attitude of mind" (16). In the romance tradition, story for women ends with marriage. If motherhood has seemed to be for some women

writers an appropriate metonymy for literary creativity, the combination of marriage and motherhood threatens to negate that creativity, for marriage provides a reminder of the phallus that stands between the mother and the Symbolic Order. (Motherhood has used the phallus as a bridge to the Symbolic.) Perhaps, too, the fact of male penetration provides this reminder; perhaps this is why Niccoline Johanna's author, letting her speak her story, gives her motherhood but keeps her virginal.

The Beadle reveals a similar strategy, combining motherhood with innocence. To the extent that Andrina is an Eve-figure, associated with the Edenic garden and the fall, she recalls the line of Eve-figures that Gilbert and Gubar cite from the nineteenth-century British tradition: a line that extends from Eliot's Dorothea as "an admiring Eve waiting to be instructed" by a Miltonic Casaubon (217), to Mary Crawford in Austen's Mansfield Park, "a damned Eve" with her almost successful "libidinal outbreak in paradise" who is repressed by her father (166), to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, whom - Gilbert and Gubar argue convincingly - is a Satanic and monstrous Eve-figure, presented increasingly clearly in female terms, the creative woman "fallen" (234). Like Petchell in "The Doctor", the source of Andrina's creative power is nature. Unlike Petchell, Andrina negotiates rather than evades the Oedipus.

It will, no doubt, seem outrageous to speak of Andrina in terms of "creative power" and "authority": to most readers her passivity, gentleness, self-sacrifice and innocence are the features that dominate her character. Her association with nature seems to emphasise rather than redirect such feminine features. And yet, as I shall show, both through her association with nature and through close attention to the design of the novel we may begin to revise our reading of her function in the text. There remain, however, a variety of problems in reading The Beadle which are posited by contradictions in the narrative, contradictions that the text attempts to smooth and silence as it follows to full satisfaction its own desires.

ANDRINA, THE GARDEN AND NATURE

Andrina is a child of nature: "She had Klaartje's clear blue eyes, the colour of the winter sky, and Klaartje's fair, glossy hair, the colour of ripe yellow mealies" (10) - "innocent" and "artless" (10), and either blushing (31) or flushed (52). Her breasts start forming during spring, when "the corn was already up and the fresh young green of the mealies was showing through the dark grey soil" and the veld "was gay with spring flowers" (19). And it is at this time too that she is preparing for her First Sacrament, "many strange new emotions [sweeping] through her heart, her mind, and her

shy young body" (31), a "new" Andrina (31), one troubled by "a strange, new, exquisite fear" (33) about approaching maturity. Andrina's Sacrament dress is patterned with flowers, and the appropriate place for it at the end of the novel is draped over a bush, in another spring: "Those little pink roses - those little blue flowers.... [The beadle] went up to the bush and touched the dress" (200).

Andrina is, above all, associated with the garden at Harmonie, "a tangled wilderness of roses, wisteria, and plumbago in early bloom" (47). She spends day after day there - when she is not in the church - with her two wards, Jantje and Magdalena, specifically at the "rose-covered arbour" (50), and is sought out there by Aalst Vlokman, Henry Nind, Jan Beyers and the pastor. The garden at Harmonie is a feminine space: Freud's tangled wood or thicket. It is peered into and intruded upon in much the same way as is the walled garden in Charlotte Bronte's The Professor and Villette: here too is a set of paths, a garden gate, an overlooking window, various features by means of which men gain access to women.

As Gail Finney suggests in her essay "Garden Paradigms", "the garden image tends to embody an idealized alternative to social reality as portrayed elsewhere in a given work or experienced by the author" (21). The garden in literature may stand as the Garden of Eden and also the Medieval and Renaissance Garden of Love; The Beadle conflates these two imagistic sites. It

also presents the garden as a space at the very point of colonization. These different functions converge and diverge.

The image of the garden is generally significant in the social location of fiction. Industrialization has meant the neglect of the garden, which then becomes, like the farm, an object of nostalgia, "a landscape of mind in which the movement in physical space corresponds to a movement in consciousness" (Leo Marx, qtd. in Annette Kolodny, "Honing a Habitable Languagescape" 202). The Beadle, like Platkops Children a pastoral text, elegiac in mode, makes just enough allusion to the non-agricultural world beyond the Aangenaam valley for us to know that it is there: the Shokolowsky grandchild has replenished his stock from a townsman's bankruptcy. The industrialization that is beginning to take place in the wider world comes across to a far greater extent in The Little Karoo, which refers to it specifically in "The Pain" by means of the hospital and the notion of hospitalization, and in "Desolation" by means of the orphanage and the notion of the defamiliarizing of the family, and the introduction of factory as replacement for home industry. In addition, The Little Karoo presents a world of hardship through drought.

If Harmonie is the fertile space within the wider land of physical and spiritual drought made evident in The Little Karoo, the garden epitomizes that fertility

most clearly. Moreover, as Finney says, the garden may offer opposition to its context: if the garden stands in the midst of a tangled landscape it may act as an image of cultivation, control and restraint (22); the context defines it. In The Beadle, where the context of a monetary and mercantile world is almost silenced, the farmland itself becomes context, a context of cultivation (that mediate version of culture), the rebellious heart of which is the feminine space of the garden.

As a place of sexuality, a burgeoning and almost wild place, a place of plenty, this garden, much as the dress, seems to figure as a metaphor for Andrina's sexual development. As in the work of her nineteenth-century forebears - Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Charles Dickens, for instance - Smith uses the garden in order to map the development of character from innocence to maturity, for the Garden is the place of the Fall and also of Redemption. When Jan Beyers first goes to the garden, disappearing into the poplar bush to find Andrina, Tant Jacoba spreads out the flowered Sacrament dress on the bed, smooths out its creases and draws her hand "slowly over the little pink roses, the little blue flowers" (64), crying at the thought of Andrina's loss. It is left to Tant Johanna to correct this precipitate sadness: spreading the dress on the bed was "unreasonable" (65); it must go back into the wagon-chest; Andrina's sexuality is not to go to Jan Beyers

after all.

Just as the flowered print dress is kept, like a secret, in the wagon-chest (86), so is the wild garden walled; in the same way Andrina's beauty has been imprisoned by the lattice-work in the pantry (31). Whereas Andrina's other dress had flattened the "firm round breasts" (91), so that her heart flutters wildly under the plain bodice (103), the wearing of the Sacrament dress shows her breasts off to advantage - "It was Jacoba who held up the new dress and drew it over her shoulders and buttoned it across her breast. It fitted. The miracle was complete"; "'See how it sits at the neck', she said" (91) - and spurs both Aalst Vlokman's anxiety about Andrina's sexuality and, one assumes, Henry Nind's interest.

The room that the Englishman requests to sleep in is outside and apart from the house, "built against the high stone wall which surrounded the garden and having in that wall a small square window" (49), a room from which he can see into and have easy access to the garden. And the contribution that he makes to the tangled garden is a set of bulbs, brought to please Tant Linda who is the intermediary in the affair between Andrina and Nind. "Tan' Linda had at once conceived the romantic hope that the young man would add the flower-garden to his other interests as a pupil-farmer" (48-49).

The Englishman begins to "loiter" in the garden only when it becomes the "playroom of Jantje and his baby sister" (49), for then it is frequented also by Andrina. Although the Englishman has come to Harmonie specifically to be a pupil-farmer, he - as loiterer - has not the careful husbanding attitude towards the land that the local men have, and that Jan Beyers is learning.

The Englishman's attitude to life in general and to farming in particular was incomprehensible to this young and earnest Dutchman, who had all his father's intense love of the lands, but little, as yet, of that patience and faith in awaiting the slow fulfilment of the promises of God in nature and in man which gave to Stephan van der Merwe his nobility of mind. In the Englishman, who lived only, it seemed, to laugh and to ride and to shoot, Frikkie could see no promise of a farmer whatever, and that he should pose as one was an insult which for some time he had strongly resented.... And on the subject of the Englishman as a pupil-farmer he broke his silence now.

"No, what, Mijnheer!" he said. "Though you should ride about our lands for still another hundred years, it is not a farmer that you will be when they come to help you out of the saddle." (100)

Nind is not a farmer, but an exploiter: "The freedom, the sense of space, the sharp, clear invigorating air filled the young man with an exhilaration of spirit which was almost triumph" (19). His coming to Africa is likened to his coming to Harmonie, as is his leaving: "But he would leave Harmonie at once.... A little abrupt perhaps, but no more abrupt than his coming to Africa had been ... " (140; second ellipsis in original). And his coming to Harmonie is likened to his appropriation

of Andrina: "The present - with its right to that complete freedom of action which he had exercised in coming to Harmonie and which he would not hesitate to exercise again, when need arose, to take him from it - alone was his. And in the present, with Andrina's gentle acquiescence, he would take his pleasure" (117).

Nind comes, we are told, from "the world which sent out judges and administrators to its colonies, and soldiers and sailors to the borders of its empire" (138). His nature as colonizer is intensified by the language differences between him and Andrina, which are, at various points in the text, used to his advantage: although his mangling of the Afrikaans language gets him nowhere with the miller, it brings Andrina to him as interpreter (39) and then as pupil (41). Andrina's misunderstanding of the word "Adorable" as "greatly beloved" (43) puts her further in his power; the meaning of his careless inquiry about the birth control techniques that he assumes she is using is again obscured from her because of his use of a code - "all right" (183) - that she does not comprehend.

Like other men in Smith's fiction, Nind needs a constant reminder of his power, just as the colonizer needs to conquer new lands: he turns his attention from Andrina to Emerentia and Lettice for "that provocative suggestion of impudence which never actually becomes impudent" (141) and which Andrina, in her docility and

subservience, cannot give him. Moreover, the text also by implication identifies Nind as one of the English who had stolen the land of the Afrikaner. Tant Linda's defence of the Steenkamp's nobility against Nind's contempt for them draws upon their greatness "before the English took our land from us" (114): their lowly station in life is due, Tant Linda argues, to English attitudes. Nind is, then, in the colonial tradition a robber of both land and woman. The text's explicit references to Nind's exploitativeness and irresponsibility give a revisionary aspect to the conventional association of land and woman.

It may seem that Tant Linda's naive and romantic hopes regarding Andrina and the Englishman characterize her as an agent in the colonial exploitation of Andrina, even if a comic agent, for of course she is always one step behind them. However, just as the tendency in the novel to present Nind as exploiter and Andrina as exploited is redirected and silenced, so is Tant Linda's role given a different purpose. Her role is clarified through her relation with the garden.

The image of the garden has already been seen as corresponding to the image of the flowered dress, and in terms of this conflation Tant Linda and Tant Johanna have an apparently similar function. Tant Johanna, who is characterised by the shears with which she cuts out Andrina's dress, an operation which terrifies Tant Jacoba, functions in the novel as a castration figure,

the woman in charge of Andrina's development into feminine sexuality. Johanna is the figure who repeatedly forbids the relation between Aalst Vlokman and Andrina: in Freudian terms, she forbids Andrina from having the phallus. Despite the apparent connection, through the imagery of cutting and snipping, between Tant Linda and Tant Johanna, and despite the fact that Tant Linda is associated with the sharp knife with which she cuts cuttings for the garden, she is in many respects Tant Johanna's opposite.

The other oppositions make this clear. In the pairing of Tant Johanna and Tant Jacoba, Johanna is the harsh and bitter one; in the pairing of Mevrouw and Mijnheer van der Merwe, Mevrouw is the compassionate and forgiving one. Mevrouw is a revised version of Jacoba, a matriarchal figure, one who has both children and food through whom to connect with the world: Jacoba's poverty "limited her efforts to coffee-making" (13). Tant Linda and Jacoba are connected through their similar attitudes to Andrina's love. It is to Jacoba that Andrina speaks of the Englishman:

At last the silence was broken, and Jacoba, drawing the girl more closely towards her, asked:

'Who was he, then, that stranger in the yard?'

'The Englishman from Princetown,' answered Andrina. And once again she drew her slender fingers round the little pink and white shells. (23)

While it is Jacoba who is capable of thinking, "'Could

one put love in a halter and say: 'There you shall go, but you shall not go there?'" (166), Tant Linda is the exponent, albeit comic, of such freedom. It is Tant Linda who tries to arrange the love affair between Andrina and Nind that breaks the taboos of the Harmonie community.

However, if other characters are arranged in terms of opposites - in terms, that is, of difference - it seems that Tant Linda stands alone, a law unto herself. Certainly Tant Linda is like Johanna (a woman who cuts), like Jacoba (a woman who desires love between Andrina and Nind), and like Mevrouw (a woman who keeps a garden), yet she also departs from all three. There is about Tant Linda something anarchic, even transgressive. It is she who is prepared to acquire new slips for the garden "by theft if necessary" (120). In her duties as postmistress, too, she breaks rules, "cheerfully" ignoring the book of postal regulations, and doing the weighing of packets and parcels not with the regulation weights but with "a flat-iron, little bundles of pence and halfpence tied up with string, two smooth flat stones and a hammer-head" (23), again a law unto herself. And as matchmaker she breaks social codes.

It is quite appropriate, then, that she presides over the garden, a space unfarmed and uncultivated, and therefore - within the general context of industriousness and productivity - a subversive space. Moreover, there is no horticultural classification here,

nor social order:

From the rock paths led to various corners of the garden, but there were no formal beds, and there was no attempt at order. Among the rose-bushes, lilies, petunias, verbenas, fuchsias and geraniums grew as they pleased, and with them grew those countless 'slips' planted year after year by Tan' Linda with her long steel knife.... And, thanks to her efforts, the garden became every year a little more of a wilderness full of strange and beautiful and unexpected things watered by the stream from the mill. (48)

This nature is not shaped and nurtured, balanced and moderated, in the way of Harmonie, a place characterized by equilibrium and balance, but is nature run wild, a place of mixture. As far as Tant Linda's relation to the garden is concerned, this is a useless garden, filled to overflowing with the superfluities of passion; it is a garden un-gardened, and if it is planted, it is a woman who is, at least at first, the planter.

If Tant Linda is to be read as a revised version of Johanna, a castrating mother who assists in the development of female sexuality in the (transgressive) way that the daughter desires, there is also a sense in which she gives back to the female garden that which was once cut. She disorders, as it were, the distinctions of female and male imposed by a Johanna (and a gentler Jacoba), giving to the garden a sense of plenty that signifies a burgeoning female sexuality, unlimited, disobedient, and profligate. Tant Linda, we are told, "thrust" the cuttings "into the soil with her knife"

(48), a woman substituting for a male. She is as profligate as a patriarch figure, for she takes cuttings "from every house she ever visited" and "never by any chance remembered the names of her cuttings" (48). Although "[a]ny more active form of gardening was impossible for Tant Linda" (48), her garden nevertheless "flourished and flowered" (48). In a novel in which names (and the process of naming) carry metaphorical weight, Tant Linda's surname, de Neysen, links her (phonologically at least) with the Afrikaans *naai* - to sew, to fuck - and a (metaphorical) act of literary creation. Indeed, in this respect one is invited to read a metaphorical relation between author and gardener; Tant Linda stands, in a lighthearted way, as an authorial figure, creating her own story; writing a romance that opens "'My beloved [X], long, long have I loved you ...'" (89), and that freely substitutes one young woman for another: "'Give me your letter and I will now change the name ...'" (76). In Tant Linda's romantic world, there is an absence of propriety, and the only order is the most basic order: males and females should (indiscriminately) couple.

Tant Johanna is one kind of seamstress, Tant Linda is another kind: Tant Johanna's sewing (though she sweats over the garden of Andrina's dress) is associated not with plenty but with barrenness, as her name - Steenkamp - suggests. *Mevrouw van der Merwe*, however,

renders the garden a useful garden, something akin to a vegetable garden.

Kolodny speculates, in the context of American colonial literature written by women, that the female identification with small farm or vegetable garden is an identification with "'the middle landscape'" (using Marx's term), "an ungendered semi-rural terrain" in the place of the invaded, feminine space. Small farms and grazing lands offer themselves as more hospitable to women, who cannot easily identify themselves as penetrating and husbanding the new land, whether the explicitly gendered "virgin soil" or the tangled forest ("Honing a Habitable Languagescape" 199-202). Mevrouw van der Merwe fits the model that Kolodny has found, for she is a cultivator figure, whose relation with the garden opposes Tant Linda's: through Mevrouw's agency, the garden is not altogether superfluous, but is a space of home remedies (but not scientific medicine), a space of mediate culture:

Though her flower-garden was a wilderness left to Tant Linda's erratic enthusiasms, there was no plant or herb, no veld root or leaf or berry, whose virtues she did not know. The patience which Stephan van der Merwe exercised in the planting and harvesting of his lands his wife practised in the distilling of her drops and in the gathering of medicinal roots and herbs from every source that was known to her. A small cupboard in the larder was given up to her liniments and oils, her dried orange and pomegranate skins, her little bags of roots and leaves. (119)

Mevrouw van der Merwe acts as pastor, besides doctor (118), presiding, in the name of the Father, over an

order in which birth and death take their appropriate place: there are neither mysteries nor secrets in this world which cannot be contained or anticipated. Despite the hints of Tant Linda's misrule, the garden, like Harmonie itself, is ordered, walled and, in the sense that it is made part of a social process, gendered.

To sum up, then: First, the garden stands for disorder - a sexual transgressiveness figured in terms of the natural - in which the concept of "harmony" is defined as the absence of social taboo. Secondly, it represents the dangers attendant on the wild and natural space into which all men wander at will. Thirdly, it is a space that, like Mevrouw van der Merwe, has shifted out of passion and into the fruitful: no more and no less than this. The third space is the space that is most appropriate to Harmonie. Only in its potentialities does the garden stand as a space that is in contrast with the regulated spaces of Smith's fiction, the bare, white, square schools and churches and orphan-houses, where the children are rigorously divided into two groups, "the boys to the right and the girls to the left" (57), the sexes kept apart.

That is why Andrina must find another space. She makes a journey from Harmonie across the mountains into an undefined and unidentified Losberg, a wilder area, dotted with untidy bushes, which mirrors in fascinating ways the garden at Harmonie, except that it is no longer

walled, windowed and pathed; it shows greater freedom, that is, of the signs of (male) cultivation. Insofar as this space is the symbolic solution to the harmony of Harmonie, the harmony itself - or the nature of that harmony - seems to be the problem.

The veld that Andrina goes to, beyond the walled spaces of Harmonie, is wild in a way that the Brontes and Eliots and Dickens could not have envisaged, a wild(er)ness that has nothing of the exotic to interfere with the natural, and that is even spoken of in terms of a "wide grey lake" (197), in terms of neutrality and even of absence. It is the very plainness of such a landscape that renders it natural. This space is characterized by "bush". Yet it mirrors the garden at Harmonie, where "the stream made an island of a smooth, pointed, upright red rock" (48), for in this new valley in the Losberg district there is another "clear stream", this time one that waters Cortes-dorp: "From the toll-house one looked down upon it as upon a small green island in the centre of a wide grey lake" (197). Here, in reverse (for land becomes water) is the garden at Harmonie. Again, one of the major features of the Losberg wilderness is the bush on which Andrina hangs her Sacrament dress, so that it is covered with little roses. In the garden at Harmonie there is also a bush, sprinkled this time with real rather than painted roses, a rose-bush among the various rose-bushes where Jantje and Magdalena play. Insofar as Andrina distinguishes

this bush from the surrounding bushes, so that Vlokman can find his way through the "bush", and insofar, too, as she covers it with flowers, she is the one who imposes order and who gardens. To recall the metaphor used earlier, she is the author of this space, the author of her text, and the text that she authors makes a space for Aalst Vlokman.

The bush at Losberg, besides functioning metonymically as the veld, is also, of course, the "burning bush": it burns for Aalst Vlokman, the little pink roses and the little blue forget-me-nots giving him his God's sign of forgiveness, "like a sign from the Lord" (200), a sign also presented in the guiding "finger of God" (202). In Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (a text to which The Beadle makes a number of allusions), the rose-bushes outside the prison offer pity and kindness to the condemned man; in The Beadle, more emphatically, the bush offers Aalst Vlokman a haven, and a place of forgiveness. In a way that could not have occurred in the walled garden at Harmonie, he and Andrina have come together, and they have done so by entering nature, a place governed by natural laws rather than the laws of society. The wilderness is hospitable to a woman bearing an "illegitimate" child as well as to a man who seduced where he had not been allowed to seduce. For these two transgressors of social taboos, the Great Karoo offers a

home, a place that suggests, as in the replacement of farm or gendered space with veld, a place of nature untouched by culture or by the Father's Law. It is this, as well as the idea of Andrina's control, that has such crucial implications in terms of the direction of Smith's text, but that also, as we shall see later, opens up a set of contradictions for the reader.

That such a vision is an impossibly idyllic one is nowhere admitted in this particular text, but it enters - or is expressed by - the writer's literary imagination in the short story "Desolation", written two years later. The Great Karoo, to which the grandmother Alie treks, is not, after all, the haven in which she can make a home for her grandson: the garden may be "a wilderness" but it is now "in the drought" (148). In The Beadle the "dry and thirsty" land (an allusion to Ezekiel 19: 10-14) is shaded for Jantje in The Beadle by "the rock in his grandmother's garden" (48): no such protection occurs in "Desolation", although it is what Koos (like Alie) expects (133). Family home has become orphan-house, and "only the old whitewashed gaol" is unchanged (148).

In the altogether more optimistic The Beadle, however, the idyllic world has a stability that is suggested by the patterning within the text, a stability made up of the sense of both inevitability and eternity in the manner of Biblical hermeneutics, whereby the "true" story is heralded by the past. One of the

effects of this progressive pattern is to give the sense that Andrina (unlike Alie) has control over her world, the control of creativity. Another of the effects is, paradoxically, of silencing. Nevertheless, The Beadle offers, or begins to offer, an alternative to the Law of the Father. Recalling the transmogrification in "The Miller" from "dove" to "frightened hen" (57) that characterizes so clearly the typical shift for Smith's women as they move into marriage, the emblem for this alternative life is offered by the image of Andrina "flying through the night like some strange, white-hooded bird". That her flight is "towards the church" (57) suggests that the church itself will be redefined. There are other re-visions, to use Adrienne Rich's well-known term: in The Beadle Andrina enters "an old text from a new critical direction" (Rich 90).

REVISING THE TRAGIC PATTERN

That The Beadle intends itself to be seen at least to some extent as a revisionary text is manifest in its rewriting of the tragic pattern of Klaartje's life. This pattern makes allusion to the conventional endings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels about women, where, if women did not graduate from courtship into marriage, they generally died. Nineteenth-century literature written by women contains sporadic examples of endings which comment upon the pattern of

conventional romance; Charlotte Brontë's Shirley presents with minimal ambiguity two marriages that are deaths for women; her Villette presents death for the male instead, as a way of ensuring that Lucy Snowe's life proceeds more happily than, say, Dorothea Brooks's in Middlemarch, who has to repress her vocation.

Olive Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm presents the script which narrates the standard pattern of women's lives: "A little bitterness, a little longing when we are young, a little futile searching for work, a little passionate striving for room for the exercise of our powers, - and then we go with the drove. A woman must march with her regiment. In the end she must be trodden down or go with it; and if she is wise she goes" (166). Lyndall is trodden down, dead before the promise of union with Waldo (Schreiner's version of a "feminized" hero) can be achieved, but the possibilities remain: "When I am with you I never know that I am a woman and you are a man; I only know that we are both things that think. Other men when I am with them, whether I love them or not, they are mere bodies to me; but you are a spirit" (186). In From Man to Man, too, there is a final evasion of physical union between Rebekah and Drummond: the woman, for once, is not the object of exchange. Yet while Bertie, the beautiful, stupid and lovable woman, is trapped in a combination of two of the narrative patterns open to women - from seduction to prostitution, from courtship into domesticity as a death-

in-life - Rebekah had freed herself ethically and financially to enact another pattern. However, perhaps because of the same reasons that inhibit Brontë's writing of Lucy Snowe's love affair, she stops short of physical union with Frank. It is in a comparable manner that Andrina frees herself from the narrative conventions offered her by Klaartje's life: seduction and abandonment; seduction and "illegitimate" childbirth; death and dishonour.

The relation between one plot and the other in The Beadle is an explicit relation, constantly referred to by Aalst Vlokman. His fears that Andrina will repeat Klaartje's story draw the reader's attention to the ways in which she avoids repetition. In our reading (rather than his) the plot in which Klaartje comes to the end that her name signifies is rewritten into a plot in which Andrina avoids the feminine trap of passive seduction, turns it to her own advantage by acquiring a child, and finds a place for herself where there is none of the disgrace that hounded Klaartje. Even if Smith is not inserting into the text the radical disjunctions caused by what a critic has recently described as a common (in twentieth-century literature written by women) contradiction between "love and quest" (for, in The Beadle, "love" has become "quest")¹ she is, nevertheless, to use Rachel Blau DuPlessis's terms, writing "beyond" the romantic ending (4).

In many novels it will be apparent that it is not only the writer or reader who is creating plot: the characters themselves are continually engaging in strategy and continually reading events in terms of their own perceived or desired plots. In Persuasion, which Smith periodically spoke of as a favourite text, with Ann Elliot the character "who means most to me" (letter to Millin, 11 December 1950; BC 236 D5.117; see also letter to Swinnerton 15 February 1936, BC 236 D9.29), Ann Elliot is continually persuaded into other people's plots; the turning point comes when she begins to speak out for herself, and most particularly against the "plot" of her father and his heir and namesake, Mr Elliot. "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story", she tells Captain Harville; "the pen has been in their hands" (200).

Similarly, the object of the plot in The Beadle is Andrina: everyone is plotting her life. Her mother's story is a plot for her, a narrative pattern that she at first enters. Aalst Vlokman tries to re-arrange this plot by having her marry Jan Beyers (although his authority to do so is in question). Tant Linda tries to plot Andrina's life by marrying her, first to Jan Beyers and then to Henry Nind, narrating her story first in the direction of low comedy or bucolic romance, and then in the direction of idyllic romance. Henry Nind also tries to plot Andrina's life: he arranges for a return visit to Harmonie so that he can see her, he procures paints

for Jantje to keep him "well-occupied" (108), and he even empties his bottle of ink into the garden in order to provide an excuse to go to the post-office to see Andrina (79) and thus "write" another episode regarding his relation with the girl/the garden. In a novel about writing, this is indeed a profligate action.

With much the same effect, Andrina is watched: Jacoba watches the beadle watching the post-office door for Andrina (22); Vlokman watches Andrina through the bedroom window, unable to see what she is looking at (43); Nind watches while Andrina works (33); the beadle and Johanna watch each other watching Andrina (87). Point of view is a controlling perspective, a perspective whereby one creates the reality that one perceives. The point at which Andrina takes control over perspective is when she watches Nind reading the letter from Lettice (147); it is at this moment of her greatest dependency on him that she breaks away, and begins to create her own destiny. And this then leads into the point at which she takes control over her narrative: if she has already changed the plot of her mother's life by actively responding to her seduction rather than being, as it seems Klaartje was, raped, she now refuses to feel guilt or shame; she will not die in sin, but will remain innocent.

To some readers it has seemed that Andrina is obedient to the plots that are narrated for her. The

narrative thrust of the novel is, in these terms, the tragedy of Andrina: as Nadine Gordimer has put it, "She comes to grief as she came to be born: through a human being who does not accept the responsibilities of human involvement" ("For Andrina Destiny was Bitter" 102). Yet Andrina does not come to grief. On being abandoned by and banished from the Harmonie community, she establishes an alternative family outside that community. This is much the kind of moment presented in some of Bessie Head's fiction, whereby the tragedy created by the failure (or needs - depending on one's perspective) of a patriarchal community is redirected into a romantic solution: love conquers regulation. If the force behind the dominant narrative thrust is the Law of the Father, with the initial part of The Beadle about the inscription of the female adolescent into society, what Andrina offers to the story is a re-inscription of the female, not (it seems) into the existing community but into a group that is, in a sense that I shall explain, beyond it. What this reinscription involves is clarified by even closer attention to patterns and plots in the novel, and specifically to what we may think of as mirrored plots.

The subtle shifts within the text between plot structures come to us synchronically or vertically as well as chronologically or horizontally. If the chronological pattern is provided by seductions and journeys, first Klaartje's (the end) and then Andrina's

(the beginning), the synchronic pattern is provided by the existence of various levels or planes in the adult world and the childish world. We may schematize a tripartite division of levels of plot: a plot of the play-play or childish world that revolves around Jantje and Magdalena, Jantje and Andrina, with the miller as ogre; a plot of the sexually mature world that revolves around Andrina and Jan Beyers, Andrina and the Englishman, with Aalst Vlokman as the ogre; and a plot of the ideal, supremely natural world that revolves around Andrina and her newly born son, Andrina and Aalst Vlokman, with Hans Rademeyer the transport-rider as the boatman, a Charon offering transport to the other world. Vlokman, who was once the "ogre" in Andrina's world, is now "ogre" no longer. The presentation of these three levels conveys a neatness that orders the chronological stages of a young girl's developing sexuality - a movement from latent sexuality into full-blooded (if still innocent) sexuality into motherhood. This apparent neatness is transgressed by the rich and complex manner in which the three levels are juxtaposed, with characters palimpsestically standing for one another, shifting places, expanding in function and adopting attributes from one another.

The structural transgressions mean that these worlds are not simply coexisting worlds, but that each one mirrors and thus speaks to and reads its "other".

Jan Beyers's proprietarian courtship of Andrina, for example, mirrors Henry Nind's altogether more sophisticated, but quite as possessive, approach; the predatoriness of this latter courtship is figured for us in Jantje's play. Jantje crouches behind a rose-bush, a leopard "waiting to spring out at little Magdalena as she passed" (66), ready to devour Magdalena, as it were. In much the same way is Jan Beyers ready to devour Andrina, for despite the fact that her "slim young body" lacks the "plumpness" that Toontje might have offered him, he is attracted by "the thought of the two plough-oxen" (66). Andrina, herself associated with Magdalena - for she presses the child's "soft warm body against her breast as if by this contact she might strengthen her resolve" (68), and faces Jan Beyers "[o]ver Magdalena's fat shoulder, as over a rampart" (68) - retreats as Beyers becomes more insistent, moving closer and closer to the "rose-bush behind which the leopard lay ready to spring" (69).

The play between Jantje and Magdalena stands in a structural relation, then, to the play between Jan Beyers and Andrina. The idea of the predatory is given comic overtones in the movements of Jan Beyers and Andrina, but is, paradoxically, allowed to emerge in this other plot, through the mists of the fairy-tale atmosphere: the leopard/prey motif is a motif with obvious resonances in a text that presents a patriarchal and exploitative community. Andrina's distress at being

valued in terms of an extravagant dowry - two oxen have enormous value in this poorest of poor lands - is a real rather than mock distress. Its status as reality is thrown into sharper focus by the way that Mevrouw van der Merwe has to recover "from the shock of [Jantje's] attack" (69).

Jantje's play-play world carries yet another mirror-image of the adult and profoundly serious world. In the garden at Harmonie, as I have noted, there is a stream:

In the stone wall little arches had been made for the entrance and exit of the mountain stream, and in the centre of the garden the stream made an island of a smooth, pointed, upright red rock. Round this red rock, this dear island, this enchanted castle, Jantje loved to sail his little twig boats. He loved just here, where the waters narrowed before parting, and narrowed again after meeting, to jump across the stream. He loved just here to lie flat on his stomach and let the water slip through his thin fingers like a living thing - to catch it, toss it, and see it fall, in showers of diamonds, to lie glistening on the red rock.... Nothing on all the farm of Harmonie, in the lands, in the veld, or up on the mountain-side was so dear to him as this enchanted spot. (48)

Jantje is not the only figure who is endeared to the land. Aalst Vlokman, we are told, also loved the land, now the wider land of the Aangenaam valley rather than this smaller, child-size valley:

... always in the evenings when his work was done he would sit, silent and alone, smoking his pipe on a low plank bench in front of the house. From this bench he could see all that part of the valley which made his world - the lands which he worked for Mijneer van der Merwe: the square white church where he served

the Lord as beadle: the straight grey road along which the men and women of the Aangenaam valley came to Harmonie farm for Sacrament: the drift across the river and beyond it the little whitewashed store kept by Esther Shokolowsky, the Jew-woman: the poplar grove below Mevrouw van der Merwe's flower-garden where great red mountain rocks stood out among the flower-beds: and high above the garden the whitewashed, corbelled gables and dark thatched roof of the old Harmonie homestead, beautiful against the ever-changing pinks and purples and greys of the Teniquota mountains.

All this small world - the sights, the sounds, the very smell of it - Aalst Vlokman loved with a bitter, brooding intensity for which he had no words and which brought no comfort to his soul. (8)

In both descriptions there is, although differently coloured, an air of possessiveness coupled with profound intimacy, the possessiveness and intimacy, in fact, that characterize the experience of Nind, who - as I have already discussed - assumes a triumphant stance over both land and woman. Thus Smith establishes a connection, via Andrina and the land or garden, between Vlokman, Nind and Jantje. In the grouping made up of these three, males are colonizers and the woman the colonized.

The land is nowhere more obviously a woman's body than it is at this moment of Jantje's scrutiny: quite clearly, he is in love with the little arches, with the stream, "just here, where the waters narrowed before parting, and narrowed again after meeting", and with the miniature "smooth, pointed, upright red rock". Towards the end of her Literary Women, Ellen Moers suggests that women writers often create a "sexual drama in the

landscape" (254), landscapes "charged with female privacy" (261), a "'complicated topography of the female genital parts'" (254; quoting Freud), "external, accessible, a prominent, uneven terrain" (257). The day trip that Jan Boetje and Engela make in "The Schoolmaster" to the "little ravine" with its great red rocks ...[where] the wild bees make their honey, and the white wild geese have their home" (48), so significant a contrast with the wagon-house, and its "darkness that smelt of tobacco and brandy and hides" (50), is a journey into this "complicated topography", the steep banks, the red rocks and the small stream providing a hint of what is hinted at in The Beadle in its adult and childish forms.

In the larger or adult world, a world of which Jantje is sometimes fearful, "the cluster of great red rocks" "rose" behind the mill and the miller's house, and around them flowed the mill-stream that "[d]own in the valley below ... flowed through Mevrouw van der Merwe's garden" (36). The mill in the mountains that seemed to Jantje to be "an enchanted castle" (36) also reappears in the garden: "Round this red rock, this dear island, this enchanted castle, Jantje loved to sail his little twig boats" (48). In this mirrored space "the tall, gaunt, black-bearded miller [who was] closely related to an ogre" (36) is absent, and Jantje may play to his heart's content around the "smooth, pointed, upright red rock" (48), and may "lie flat on his stomach

and let the water slip through his fingers like a living thing" (48). What has been forbidden is now permitted. Moreover, any sinister atmosphere that the text has presented by means of the interconnecting images of love, scrutiny and ownership becomes transformed and muted. In other words, the text that speaks of a relation between male (colonizer) and land (woman) turns into a sexual drama that leads us out of sexual politics and into romance. Moreover, the romance is now being defined not as a romance between Nind and Andrina, but as one between father and daughter. Just as Andrina turns Klaartje's illegitimate sexual act and the illegitimate child into the (morally) legitimate, so is the father-daughter romance tabooed by society now legitimated in a natural world.

The specific geography of the text repeats itself, then, from garden to mountain to wilderness, in a set of mirrored images that repeat, in particular, a set of sexual references, making the implications clearer. The images of land, stream, bush and garden draw together at different moments Andrina and Nind, Andrina and Jantje, Jantje and the grandmother, Andrina and Vlokman, presenting an adult-child pattern, a grandmother-grandson pattern and also a father-daughter pattern. Andrina and Jantje's relationship reads as a displaced "sexual drama": Jantje's protectiveness towards Andrina and his desire to go with her on a "secret" journey

"right in[to] the deep silent heart of the mountain" to a house "mysterious to [his] imagination" (36-37) displace on to a child's world "the sexual drama" that is so feared by Aalst Vlokman, in which Nind (and Vlokman himself) will treat Andrina like a "doll" (95). When the sexual drama becomes extended into one between Jantje and a (grand)mothering garden ("The garden at Harmonie, called always Mevrouw's" [47]; the rock is the rock of his grandmother [48]), and even, more specifically, between him and his grandmother, for it is at her whom he springs like a leopard out from behind a bush, an atmosphere of sexual transgression in these various sexual dramas is more clearly introduced.

Besides the repetition of the "topography of the female genital parts" at the end of the novel, by means of the repeated geographical conformation of stream, island and bush, the bamboo whip that Jantje plays with in the garden (50) reappears more forcefully as Hans Rademeyer's whip, again bamboo, which is played with as noticeably in this novel (189, 200, 201) as the whip is in George Eliot's Middlemarch. This whip is not dropped, however, but cracked and boasted about: it is the whip of a functioning fatherhood, and a positive image. As it becomes clear that the relationship now in focus is the (transgressive) relationship between father and daughter, so do any negative references to fear and coercion become transformed into positive ones. The image of the colonizer has been dropped, as has the

image of proprietarian love.

Aalst Vlokman and Andrina have come to another "Harmonie", a place with a stream and an island, a bush and a whip. But instead of the homestead with its orthodox family unit, its church and its mill, there is only an isolated "toll-house" inhabited by two elderly women (one white, one coloured) and a "coloured boy to till her lands" (197; the lands belong to the white woman). The only church is a slow-moving wagon driven by Hans Rademeyer, a wagon in which Andrina nests, a place equivalent in terms of safety to the wagon driven by Juriaan van Royen in "The Pain" and of far greater safety than the cart driven by Jan Boetje in "The Schoolmaster", out of which Engela is thrown. This is not a church into which one is admitted after catechism, confirmation and confession. Sin is forgotten rather than forgiven: "'And if I let none that have sinned travel in my wagon who then would travel in it, Andrintje?'" (192).

Recalling the various configurations of characters spoken of earlier, where Andrina is constantly at the centre, being watched and therefore controlled, these curiously static moments "naturally" culminate in that final and original tableau, the Holy Family: "Was not her dear Arry safe for ever in her heart? Was not her love this little round bald head held close against her breast? And was not Christ this old, old man who sat by

the side of her bed?" (203). It is into this tableau that the transgressor, Aalst Vlokman, is permitted to enter, in a manner that (in so far as Andrina is the Holy Mother and her son the Holy Child) places Aalst Vlokman in the position of God: "'Come in then, Ou-pa,' ... 'Come in then and see the little grandson that you have, with his round bald head'" (203). The pictorial effect is emphasised by the repeated reference to "round bald head", which also draws a subtle visual connection between child and grandfather, and recalls the "bald head" that Betti kisses in "The Doctor": the head of the husband, and the phallic head. Andrina, through her active participation in her own seduction, through her choice of her own journey, through her refusal to feel shame at bearing an "illegitimate" child, is the centre of this new tableau, and the agency of her new status. Aalst Vlokman is, quite literally, "at her mercy", not she at his. She has slipped out of the mundane world of social taboo where fathers are fathers and daughters are daughters, and into the divine world, where, as has already been prefigured by the relations between Vlokman, Nind and Jantje, Father becomes Husband and Son.

The re-vision in The Beadle, then, largely involves the rewriting of a tragic pattern so that, at the simplest level, the young seduced woman finds a social group to which to belong, and at a more complex level, the daughter finds a place for herself and her father

that exists beyond the world of legitimacy and taboo. Thirdly, Andrina rearranges a Christianity that divorces the spiritual from the physical and that both promotes and forbids love, so that she is defining her own religious and sexual terms; her fusion of the spiritual and the physical is comparable to her (attempted) fusion of the masculine and feminine, split into Love and Vengeance in the figures of Mevrouw and Mijnheer van der Merwe.

While the pastor in The Beadle is not altogether negatively presented, he is seen to have two limitations: he does not recognize in Andrina's consciousness the association of the physical and the spiritual ("And was the pastor God that he might read all that lay in the heart of the young girl ...?" asks the narrator [58]), nor does he preach Christ's humanity. For Andrina, the discovery of Christ's humanity is an objectification of the fusion of the spiritual and the physical.

Andrina's confirmation in the church is continually presented as a metaphor for her sexual experience, and her sexual awakening as a metaphor for her religious experience, a capacity that Vlokman recognizes in the "half-spiritual, half-sensuous joy" shining in her eyes (52). While Andrina's direct and joyful response to sensuality has a tinge of reluctance at its initial stages when she notices her developing breasts - "If she

had known how to make them small again she would have made them small" (91) - in sexual consummation "there was for her now no absolute cleavage between the joy of her body and the joy of her soul" (128). She responds to the Englishman as Christ, who has at first been a "vague and shadowy figure" to her (93):

All that new sweet joy which she had been assured would be hers when she joined the church and, as an acknowledged child of God, partook of the Sacrament, was now indeed hers, and though it reached her through the Englishman and not through the Redeemer of the world, she had no doubt that it came from her Heavenly Father. In all that concerned her love for the Englishman she saw, in her shy and gentle ardour, evidence of that care of the Heavenly Father for His children of which the pastor had spoken. It was God - for what did she know of the boredom of Princetown? - who had brought the Englishman back to Harmonie. (110)

Her "service" to the Englishman, a repeated image that draws force from the use of the term in its religious context, leads her further into the perception of him as Christ:

Marriage? She shrank from that presumptuous thought as from a sacrilege. No, no. God forgive her, she was not worthy of marriage with the Englishman. To be such a wife as the Englishman needed was beyond her power. It was not as his wife that she was fitted to serve him. It was not as his wife that she was fitted to love him before the world. Such honour was not for her. She knew it! She knew it! Was not her dear Arry as high above her as were the heavens above the earth? (146)

The irony here is as unmistakeable as it was in the ironic authorial interpolation of the earlier passage: "for what did she know of the boredom of Princetown?"

We have, after all, just been told of the Englishman's "careful carelessness" (145). Andrina has chosen the wrong Christ, just as she initially chooses the wrong father, searching for the "evil" Herman du Toit whom it would be dangerous for her to meet (192) when Aalst Vlokman is her real father. The true Christ is Hans Rademeyer, in whose tenderness "was the tenderness of Christ made real to her" (192). For Smith, the "rich young man who was no doubt public school and Oxford" (1913-14 Journal, 9 April 1914) is rejected for the "cheerful, simple kindly old man [who] made his living by driving a wool-and-transport wagon" (189); the text also invokes "the humanity of Christ, not the Divinity", a topic about which she shows strong feeling in her Journal (25 April 1914).

Yet, obviously, in the very presentation of Andrina as a Madonna-figure there lies a quality of passivity that mutes the impression of re-vision given elsewhere. The quality of innocence that, combining with sensuality during her relations with Nind and becoming therefore a radical statement about female sexuality, becomes indistinguishable from the concept of female innocence that has been used by a Christian patriarchal tradition to keep women as private, domestic, natural and owned. The image that the text employs to close the novel returns the heroine to patriarchy: the rebellious Eve has become the institutionalized Mary.

Despite any sense given here of Andrina's own

purposiveness, the overall impression for the reader is of an inevitable destiny and an unfolding of scene after scene that denies Andrina's agency. The text shifts its narrative focus along its different plots, contrasts and palimpsests with ease and a sense of purpose. This is the effect of a structure of repetition and adjustment: even with the adjustment the basic structure remains. Consequently, the fact of Andrina's purposiveness - never emphasised - is muted by the sense that she is overtaken by a destiny metonymised in that insistent "finger of God" or that "straight grey road" (193), although these are referred to in the text specifically in relation to Vlokman's destiny; these are images out of a patriarchal world, images of culture. This sense of the inevitable may appear to contradict Andrina's purposiveness (just as it renders invisible one's sense of the author's contriving craft): Andrina, like the author, is led through her narrative by circumstances beyond her control, in a kind of divine version of the naturalistic connection between character and social order that occurs in The Little Karoo.

The text's purposiveness and clarity of purpose are suggested also by the clear and apparently transparent and referential prose, that almost toneless prose referred to earlier: words seem to mean what they say they mean. If Smith has wrestled with language, there is here no evidence of it. She stands in apparent

control, a control that, as her letters have suggested, is constantly striven for in her writing. However, the truth is, of course, that the writer, as subject, cannot completely manage her own discourse, for she is continually being produced by this discourse even while she attempts to transcend it: to quote Jacques Derrida, "all subjects are inscribed and implicated in the scene that they claim to interpret" (Taking Chances 19-20). And the result is that there is before us a text that displays, not a straightforward narrative structure after all, but a "system of internal energies and tensions, compulsions, resistances and desires" (Peter Brooks, xiv) that the author has not been able to "cast out".

There is a set of contradictions and lapses in the text through which is glimpsed the writer's difficulty with story, as we are invited beyond the story about a young girl who bears an illegitimate daughter and finds a father, to the other, more secret, story. For instance, the precise relation between Aalst Vlokman and Klaartje is presented in a contradictory way. At first Vlokman appears to us simply as Klaartje's lover, so that his sin is the sin of refusing to confess paternity, of refusing to assume his rightful and dutiful position as father. Johanna constantly taunts him about this:

"Tell me now, Aalst Vlokman, is it for you to say how Andrina shall dress?... By what right should you say it? Is it for you to

choose the man that Andrina shall marry?... By what right should you choose him? Is it for you to give your plough-oxen to the man that she marries?... By what right should you give them? What is Klaartje's child to you? Answer me that, Aalst Vlokman! Answer me that!"

It was not Aalst Vlokman who spoke, but Jacoba.

"Johanna," she cried imploringly, "Johanna!"

"Be still, then, Jacoba!" cried Johanna sharply. And to the beadle she said, grimly, triumphantly: "Well you know what your right is, Aalst Vlokman, and well I know it. Make known your right to all the world and afterwards it will be for you to say what Andrina shall wear and whom she shall marry. But not till your right is known to all the world shall you say it!". (95)

Subsequently it is revealed that Vlokman "took from ... Klaartje that which she would not give me" (180), and he stands before us as a rapist: that is his sin. We have, however, been told that Vlokman had "saved" Klaartje's life (83). The "truth" here is that Vlokman's sin is unnameable, even by the narrator; he is no more and no less than the male transgressor, committing the forbidden sin, penetrating the member of the family (Klaartje) whom he is not allowed to penetrate rather than the one who is permitted to him (Jacoba). It is this transgression that the narrator has had to screen from herself even while sanctifying it.

Similarly, by reinscribing Andrina into a family unit that is presided over by a male God (although Andrina had once seen God in Mevrouw [31-32]) she mutes the other ways in which she seemed to offer redefinition. Like God, Aalst Vlokman presides over the

text in the form of giving it its title, an apparent oddity in a novel which is in other ways the daughter's bildungsroman. In terms both of the world that has been created and the text that has been written, the emphasis remains on the desire of the father: world and book obey the Father's Law, a Law that speaks the father's desire for the daughter, the construction of the daughter's desire for the father, and the prohibition of the enactment of these desires.

In Freudian cultural analysis, it is precisely the fact of the father's desire that has been repressed. Freud's initial "trauma theory" regarding women patients (in which he believed their accounts of having been seduced in childhood by their fathers) was revised into a reading, not of the father's unrealised desire for the daughter, but of the daughter's fantasy. As Juliet Mitchell notes in her Psychoanalysis and Feminism, Freud dreamed the repressed father's desire back into this story, but - astonishingly - read his dream as a fulfilment of his wish "to pin down a father as the originator of neurosis and put an end to my persistent doubts" (9).² Nevertheless, the dream itself insists upon its status as desire: if it exists as wish fulfilment, it is the fulfilment of the wish of the father and not the careerist. I am not suggesting that one read the dream as insisting on the fact of the father's seduction: Freud was mistaken to feel the need

to choose between actual seduction and childhood fantasy.³ The father's desire to seduce is sufficiently traumatic for the daughter, and inscribes her into the Symbolic as an object of desire, an object of exchange, a being associated with what is desired in nature, and permitted to enter the domain of the Father, or culture, only on these male terms. To some extent Andrina as Madonna escapes this inscription - she remains inviolate by having a child by a father whom she will not name (171, 188) - yet remains the possession of God. That she has a child is, as I shall argue in the following section, both a statement of authority and, at least in this case, a return to feminine passivity.

Because feminist critics have recognized that the daughter can escape the limitation of paternal metaphors of creativity only if she manages to rewrite herself, they have insisted on the story that follows the story of Oedipus, that is, the story of Antigone, "the rebellious daughter who becomes a hero by defying the patriarchal state" (Garner et al 25). Andrina's story begins as a story of defiance, rather than desire, but returns, finally, to being a story within the Oedipus.

BECOMING THE PEN FOR THE FATHER

The Beadle, like "The Schoolmaster", turns upon the literary drama of Oedipus, "that "specimen story of psychoanalysis" (Shoshana Felman 1022), which means, in

Lacanian terms, that it is about language and writing, mystery and plotting. If the "roots" of detective fiction, according to Richard Macksey, "reach back to the Oedipus narrative" (846), that archetypal plot is here most particularly evident in the ideas of "mystery" and "secret", or what Gordimer has virtually described as a "gunpowder plot": "The guilt of Aalst Vlokman ... is like a train of gunpowder he tracks helplessly, on the soles of his shoes, through the book" ("For Andrina Destiny was Bitter" 102). The mystery is both in the past and in the future (such is the nature of destiny) and revolves around the story of a transgressive sexual relation between family members, presented - in its muted way - with "cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement", to quote Freud on Oedipus (Interpretation of Dreams 363). As the title of the novel suggests, it is Aalst Vlokman's "secret" that must first be discovered: "'And who is Aalst Vlokman ... that he should go naming Andrina to young men in the valley?'" (65). Andrina will take over the "secret", while Tant Linda, now ignominiously ousted from her role as writer, will attempt to read it: "'What then, Jantje.... Is it a secret that you have? Or is it ... Andrina that has the secret?'" (130).

The plotting in The Beadle has to do with taking control over and then releasing the secret. The "dispossession of the possessor of the story" that Felman (1046) finds in the Oedipus narrative is less

the motivation for this narrative than is the redefining of the secret. Andrina takes over the secret from Vlokman in order to take the guilt out of it, providing a relation between Andrina and Vlokman that is, then, comparable to the relation between Engela and Jan Boetje: the young woman takes over on his behalf the story of the father or father-figure, telling it in a way not open to the father, because of his guilt.

Exactly what this guilt involves is similar in The Beadle and "The Schoolmaster". Like Jan Boetje, Aalst Vlokman carries a curse, as his name - vloek for curse in Afrikaans - suggests. His curse is not that he has (in the manner of Oedipus) murdered his father or that he is the son of his father and his own wife, but it is in a more generalized way the sin of sexual transgression: he has loved where he was not allowed to love. This sexual transgression becomes the sin of the father, handed down to Andrina: it is the sin of father-daughter desire. It is this complexity in particular that the narrator has had Andrina deal with: she has constructed a relationship with Vlokman that is altogether free from the taint of sexual transgression, and that allows him both to be the father and not to be the father.

In "The Schoolmaster", it is his own sin that Jan Boetje fears. In The Beadle, too, Vlokman fears his own sin, but it is made manifest to him through the body of

the Englishman, who is Vlokman's palimpsest. Both are irresponsible fathers, not claiming their issue; both are imposters, pretending to be what they are not; both are seducers, both travellers, both outsiders. This is "why", at the deeper levels of the psychological plot, Vlokman is so distressed at the relationship between Andrina and Nind: he must resist the narrative pattern that brings them together because he must resist his own desire. Like Aalst Vlokman, Jan Boetje initially aims to control his narrative in a way that his destiny will be averted - "'... am I a man to be trusted with [Mevrouw's] grandchildren'" (44) - and in his terror at the approach of his destiny (that is, his sin) is driven to an act of symbolic castration; his becoming the mule that he thus blinds suggests, of course, that it is he who is blinded/castrated. This blinding, says Felman, "is consciousness' last gesture of denial" (1033); an equivalent moment of self-blinding occurs, of course, in *The Beadle*, where Vlokman breaks the mirror given to Andrina that Johanna forces him to look into (96).

Both these stories create a space for the transgressor which is to some extent simply a metaphor for the spiritual realm of forgiveness. In "The Schoolmaster" this is a space clearly offered by the daughter-figure, who renders "the wilderness" hospitable by teaching Jan Boetje "which berries he might eat" and "which roots and bulbs would quench his thirst" (47); that she is thus able "to guide him so" (47) places

their relationship in structural affinity with that between Vlokman and Andrina in The Beadle. Jan Boetjie's space is beyond the Nooitgedacht community: the Rooikranz drift that is presented in the narrative is a heavenly space (initially distinguished by "the great red rocks", the "white wings of the wild geese" and the "blue sky") to which Engela raises her eyes at the end of the story, able from where she sits to see "the peaks of the Zwartkops mountains so pure and white against the blue sky" (54). The physical space where Engela feels herself to be with Jan Boetjie - the schoolhouse that was also a wagonhouse, with its "darkness ... of tobacco and brandy and hides" (50) - contains only his memory, and physical union comes only with death:

That night I went alone to the room where Jan Boetjie lay and drew back the sheet that covered him.

Across his chest, where the strap of his harness had rubbed it, the skin was hard and rough as leather. I knelt down by his side, and pressed my head against his breast. And through my heart there ran in farewell such foolish, tender words as my grandmother used to me - "My joy and my sorrow.... The light of my heart, and my treasure." (55; ellipsis in original)

However, The Beadle differs from "The Schoolmaster" in that this spiritual space becomes also a physical space in which father and daughter come together. Its very quality of the idyllic or unreal is a quality that the text intends, just as it intends to mute any hints of inequality or coercion between male and female that insist elsewhere (more of this in the following

chapter).

In "The Schoolmaster" Engela learns "at last to forget the weakness of my chest and to make a good teacher" (53-54); moreover, Smith hands over to Engela the privilege of narrating this story, even though she is unable - or unwilling - to understand it: "God knows what meaning my message had for me, ... but it was as if I must die if I could not send it" (53). In The Beadle it is again necessary to the text to retain for Andrina a quality of innocence regarding, or ignorance of, the "meaning" of the "message" from daughter to father, and, indeed, to deny to Andrina the presence of an unconscious that will betray the true "meaning": it clearly seemed simpler to the author not to hand an I the narrative function lest through this I would appear a tone of voice that the author might not have been able to control, as occurs, if slightly, in "The Schoolmaster" and "The Pastor's Daughter". The symbolic equivalent in The Beadle to narrative authority is not, then, the use of a first-person point of view but the idea of "fulfilment".

"The Schoolmaster", "The Pastor's Daughter" and The Beadle are characterized by a yearning for sexual fulfilment (that is, for the nameless beyond, accessible through sexual love). In The Beadle it is Nind who uses the term that Andrina, in her innocence, does not understand: "'Fulfilment?' murmured Andrina.

'Fulfilment?' She did not understand, nor did the young man stop to explain" (127). "The Pastor's Daughter" reveals, as I have argued, that this yearning is a metaphor for the yearning to take over one's own narrative, and is satisfied in the arrival of a child. It is in this way too that Andrina reaches fulfilment:

As once she had gathered her dear Arry into her arms so now she gathered his unborn child to her heart - in an infinite and courageous tenderness. What was it that Christ had said to His disciples? "I will not leave you comfortless." (184)

If the desire to make meaning is expressed through desire for the phallus, the issue of the child is an expression of meaning, and the symbolic pen that the woman is in search of.

Although the theme of father-daughter desire in Smith's texts generally relates to paternal metaphors of literary creation - the idea of becoming the pen for the father - the idea of maternal creativity is introduced into the text. As Sandra M. Gilbert points out, the metaphorical link between literary creativity and male sexuality - the pen/penis metaphor - had begun to be less exclusive from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: until the mid-nineteenth century, Gilbert argues, "the literal or literary 'mother' of a child is merely an inert vessel; by the end of the century most male artists had begun to approach the childbirth metaphor with a new wariness" (Balbert 135), generally adopting a defensive movement toward

devaluation or even dread of the female. Freud's definition of the vagina as an absence waiting to be filled with the generative power of the penis, nothing more than a refuge or home, falls within this general context of male defensiveness. By the twenties, albeit with a characteristic mixture of idealization and anxiety, D.H. Lawrence was to write: "All this talk of young girls and virginity, like a blank white page on which nothing is written, is pure nonsense" (qtd. in Balbert 141).

This changing sense of the implications of female sexuality, the product of developments in ontogenetics and anthropology, and added to by feminist emancipation, had already affected Olive Schreiner. For an image of silenced expression, for instance, she turns to menstrual blood, as occurs in other literature by women (see Susan Gubar). In From Man to Man Rebekah strides up and down rehearsing to herself what she wishes to write; she holds her pen against the back of her skirt, and like a drop of tell-tale female blood it spreads through the material, a female pen bleeding, Anne Barnard's "unruly member" cut, destroyed and silenced: Rebekah's prose will never be read, nor will her letters to her husband (at least not in this ontological sphere).

To counteract this image, Schreiner gives Rebekah a different kind of creative issue. Now it is for her children that Rebekah makes up stories, stories aesthetically pleasing, useful and heard. Maternal

creativity is connected in Rebekah with activity rather than passivity, with an intellectual drive, with a worldly wisdom that rejects the "innocence" of Bertie (Rebekah says that Bertie should have lied about having been seduced), and above all with the power to change patriarchy. In Smith, however, the moment retains its conventional passivity.

Andrina's act of generation is performed in an "uncivilized" way, on a skin laid out on the floor, no doctor mediating that birth, her association with the "natural" informing the way in which she creates for herself a family unit from which she had (through society's notions of inherited sin and performed sin) been barred. Similarly, the text retains in the concept of motherhood the idea of passivity and gentleness that cuts across any sense of creative power. Using the image of "a-soaking and a-seasoning in the music of [the rain's and the storm's] coming" that had been used in "The Doctor" (Part III, 8-9), Smith has Andrina absorb "the religion of her race ... much as the telegraph poles had absorbed the humming of the winds, to give it out again in a gentler music of its own", like Thoreau's "telegraph poles, 'a-soaking and a-seasoning in music'" (134). Smith would hold on to this image of literary creativity through her life; she uses it in a letter in 1945, for instance: "Do you remember how Thoreau writes somewhere of 'telegraph poles a-soaking and a-seasoning

in music - & the music of the winds blowing around them - Let your mind 'be still' enough to absorb what is enduring in the memories of your experiences & I think the power to express yourself will come" (letter to A., 3 August 1945). The raging wind of nature that gave Fetchell her creative power in "The Doctor" is now a quieter wind.

Nevertheless, in a novel that has made much of dualisms (spirit/flesh; justice/mercy; master/servant) there accrues particular significance to the image of absorption, giving to Andrina at least a passive corrective power. Andrina is the Mother who epitomises the female will to absorb the "other": "The Great Mother would reclaim all individualized life into the undifferentiated Source, drawing all articulated meanings and distinctions into herself" (DiBattista in Balbert 83). It is in this sense that Andrina provides a corrective to a dualistic patriarchal world: the birth is a new beginning. And yet, as I have suggested, it begins from the beginning of the world as created by God the Father, whose story has already been written. The Father's Law is again imposed. (As the next chapter will show, the writer's identification continues to be with those figures, whether male or female, who are characterized by lack of power: her sympathy lies with the victims of an inescapable law.)

If Smith's own life and career have been read as a vacillation between "the darkened sleep-kamer" of the

passive virgin-figure and the active world of writing, her fiction carries a set of corresponding vacillations. The Harmonie setting of The Beadle signifies both enclosure and entrapment, the security of a childhood world and yet the sense of a world closing in - "The plain itself was closed to the north by the Zwartkops range, which, like a jagged bar of steel, cut Platkops off from the Great Karoo" (7) - an atmosphere which is anticipated in her 1913-14 Journal: "[The hills] seemed always to close in, making the valley a sort of rounded basin, not the long open kloof it really is" (15 October 1913). Andrina's development is measured by her journey away from Harmonie. In order to escape that enclosure, that virtual circle of mountains (the blocked circuit, the vicious circle, entrapment) she must move straight out; in fact, she adopts the movement north that is made by Schreiner's women, Lyndall in The Story of an African Farm, and Rebekah and Bertie in From Man to Man (though there are significant differences). Andrina's voyage is towards freedom: the freedom of Losberg, Uitkyk, even Cortes, with its reminder of "eagle eyes" staring "at the Pacific". Yet, once out of this world, she signals to her father: she takes off her dress and hangs it on a bush in the veld; he sees it when he passes. In a sense, of course, her journey has been undertaken as a quest for the father, whom she first falsely believes to be Hans du Toit. That she now finds her true father,

that she lures him out of the real world of Harmonie (a world in which he too has been trapped) and into the ideal world opened up at the toll-house that Paoli has longed for in Platkogs Children - "Can't we jes' stay here for ever, father?" (157) - that she now has a son (in Freudian terms, a phallus, a pen) and at the same time becomes the virgin figure who is thus eternally owned by the father and inviolate - these comprise the fruits of her quest. These are the desires that the text of The Beadle follows. She "has" her father and she "has" writing, and she has them without shame. In this way Smith fulfils that childhood wish spoken of in "Why and How I Became an Author":

The first of my prayers ... was not for a pen but for "a beard like my father and a tail like my dog Tycho". The beard and the tail were never granted me. Yet it was with the same hopeful importunity that, a little later, I prayed: "Give me an orphanage and make me an author." (67)

Writing, beard, tail and children; these are the phallic objects of desire. The masculine beard, or tail, becomes the pen; the writing itself is feminine. The children are unmothered and unfathered, which means that the father is neither usurped as lover nor recognised as the one so shamefully desired.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1 DuPlessis in particular argues that there is a contradiction between love and quest in many nineteenth-

and twentieth-century novels; my own reading suggests that the contradiction is between marriage and quest. Moreover, this use of the term "quest" (so much wider a term than in its conventional usage) develops from ego-psychology, contradicts Lacanian theory regarding the "split subject", and makes simple assumptions about "truth" and "identity", rather than recognising, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's terms, the futility of "humankind's ... common desire for a stable center, and for the assurance of mastery - through knowing or possessing" (Derrida, Of Grammatology xi).

2 This preserves, as O. Mannoni points out, the original "trauma theory" so that the dream becomes simply the fulfilment of the wish of the psychoanalyst or careerist, if not the father (qtd. in Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism 9).

3 Luce Irigaray sees the careerist's dream as part of the seduction: "It would be too risky, it seems, to admit that the father could be a seducer, and even eventually that he desires to have a daughter in order to seduce her. That he wishes to become an analyst in order to exercise by hypnosis, suggestion, transference, interpretation bearing on the sexual economy, on the proscribed, prohibited sexual representation, a lasting seduction upon the hysteric" (qtd. in Gallop 38).

CHAPTER FIVE

DEFINING PATRIARCHY: A CHAIN OF OPPRESSION

In her mind she [Winifred Holtby] began to substitute the noun "woman" for the noun "natives", and found that these fiercely held, passionately declared sentiments of white South Africa coincided almost word for word with the old arguments in England against women's enfranchisement, women's higher education, and women's entry into skilled employment. She even perceived - as Olive Schreiner had perceived before her - a close relationship between the two forms of subjection (Vera Brittain 200)

Y. said once that she knew I thought them prejudiced, and I'm afraid they are. But we always are quite friendly in our discussions and I lie low, like Brer Rabbit, and say very little and think all the more. (1913-14 Journal, 19 August 1913)

Smith is continually attracted to the Little Karoo world by its patriarchal nature, and periodically refers to how "Russian" the atmosphere is, with the "shepherds [sic] houses, bijwoners & all ... [around the homestead] like a Russian landowners [sic] house with the buildings for his serfs around -" ("Mill River 1926", 8 December, BC 236 B31). She is drawn to the "beautiful and peaceful sight [of] the natives and poor whites at work in the yellow lands with sickles" rather than machines or even scythes (1913-14 Journal, 1 December 1926). In 1934 she goes so far as to say that the life on one of the farms near Knysna was "all pleasant and patriarchal and Russian" ("Wagon Trip", BC 236 B41). Evident throughout her letters and journals, however, is a

concern for the poor and underprivileged, and at the same time an emphasis on the oppression of women, that contradict any appreciative attitudes toward at least this patriarchal society.

Recalling that Smith liked to think of herself as a "psychological" writer (see her letters to Frank Swinnerton, 26 December 1934, BC 236 D9.24 and 14 February 1936, BC 236 D9.29), one may see a particular concern in her work with the psyche of the rural Afrikaner poor, who feel themselves - as she sees the terms set by the Israelite myth - tested by God. Smith's Afrikaners experience oppression by forces natural (drought), supernatural (God) and social (the British) and, while preserving a set of positive provincial values threatened in a larger culture, are nonetheless psychologically damaged by their sense of oppression, seeking compensatory control over others: "And with each succeeding act of injustice towards himself the Dutchman has been driven to a deeper, fiercer belief in his race as a persecuted but chosen people whose pilgrimage is not yet over" (Beadle 28). Part of this pilgrimage involves the acting out of the "bitter contempt" felt for the heathen (28). This, after all, is the logic of oppression: it is a self-perpetuating process, what may be called a chain of oppression. Patriarchy, to stress what Mitchell has stressed, is about "fathers, not men" (Psychoanalysis and Feminism 409, emphasis in original). Smith identifies

the psyche of her subject as part of a male-dominated culture in which victims within one form of oppression become, in turn, the victimizers of others. At one end of this chain are the landowners and employers, the law, and perhaps even God; at the other are women, children, Jews and black South Africans.

PAULINE SMITH AND WOMEN

The original context of Smith's fiction is at least partially described in a statement made by Virginia Woolf in 1929 that "women are beginning to explore their own sex, to write of women as women have never been written before" (Women and Writing 49), and by the attention having been or being paid the subjection of women by writers like Olive Schreiner and Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennett and H G Wells, and Woolf herself. Some of the early British reviewers picked up Smith's feminist themes, one reviewer noting that Smith's women "are often slaves of the farm; unpaid, unthanked day labourers, whose children are yoked with them by an autocratic father's will" (British Weekly, 14 January 1932, BC 236 C1.49).

Smith's attitude to any contemporary feminist debate that may have influenced her thinking as expressed in The Little Karoo and The Beadle is unfortunately not available to us, for whatever letters of hers that may have alluded to the topic have not

survived: the letters that are extant are all letters written after her novel and most of her short stories had been completed. On occasion, however, she alludes in her 1913-14 Journal to the changing times, and her later correspondence also reflects a stance that presumably does not differ from the earlier one.

Soon after The Beadle was published, Smith was to meet and make friends with Winifred Holtby, an outspoken feminist, and in 1929 met and became close to a woman whom she proudly described as the first Girton student (see letter to Millin, 15 May 1929, BC 236 D5.12), Emily Townshend, née Gibson, who had taken an active part in Women's Suffrage. In a letter to Holtby, Smith talks of her own contact with Miss Jenner in Oudtshoorn, headmistress of the Girls' School, and a "great worker" for Women's Suffrage (27 March 1935). That Smith had grown up wanting to be a writer, and that her sister, Dorothy, had attended London University to do a physics degree, suggests that they had both been affected by the climate of female emancipation, and were sympathetic to the feminist debate of the time; one of the friends they shared was May Mellamby (née Jarcedex) whose mother had been an active suffragette.¹

Smith may well have had much the same aloofness from the hurly-burly of feminist politics as had Woolf (they were, incidentally, born in the same year); what she does reveal very clearly in her 1913-14 journal

is distaste for the self-importance and preciousness of some of the upper-class suffragettes:

They did a deal of congratulating one another on the marvellous marvellous uplifting among women. The pride in the sex and I don't know what more, and the harping back in gentle dignity to pre-natal conditions, a sort of "not nice" subject to be approached only by a woman of her dignity and superiority. Oh dear me I did enjoy myself and was awful sorry to leave for no one noticed me in the least. (9 March 1914; emphasis in original)

Yet, from a conversation that she reports in which a new acquaintance asks her if she is a suffragette, it seems that she regards herself as at least a passive supporter:

I said I was not political at all. "Oh well, it is wicked, wicked for women to be suffragettes. I don't know how any thinking woman can be a suffragette. The Bible is so clearly against it. And the harm they do!!" P. "Oh, well, it's the wild unthinking ones who do the harm." Miss B. "But they're all unthinking and all wicked. No thinking woman can be a suffragette. The Bible says it's wrong." So I got off the subject. (19 August 1913; emphasis in original)

Scattered through Smith's Journal are comments that reveal a particular engagement with women. Much of her irritation with the "Dr S" she knew in George comes through her in her account of his British stance of assumed superiority; it also comes through in her recognition of his treatment of his wife "K": "She is at his beck and call all day long, for dispensing and electric work, etc. Has no time for her house or children comparatively" (22 October 1913). When Dr Snow notes, within the context of a discussion about proper

wages for labour and upper-class responsibilities, that he knows what work is - "I'm at it all day long" - Smith replies sharply, "Yes, and so is K" (22 October 1913). And in a conversation with Thys Taute in which he suggests that men cannot get white women to come as servants unless they marry them (25 April 1914) lies the germ of what will be a constant theme in her fiction: that wives are servants.

Smith's 1913-14 Journal reveals an interest in women, then, both in the comments made by others that she considers noteworthy and in her own observation. Interestingly, the anecdotes that she garnered from friends and acquaintances do not revolve around women quite as clearly as some of the finished stories do, so that one notices a process from Journal to fiction of latent meanings becoming manifest, as Smith selects and fashions according to her interest. One example is provided by "Anna's Marriage" and its source, an anecdote told Smith by Mimi Bergh (21 October 1913). "Anna's Marriage" is the story of Kitty Leroux (Catherina Jacomina le Roux in the Journal), who married John Herbert Rex; he mortgaged the farm that she inherited from her family and had to sell it, plus the farm stock and the household furniture that Kitty had brought into the marriage. Although this is clearly Kitty's story, for it opens with Mimi speaking about the advice she gave Kitty not to marry John Rex, and pivots on Kitty's death, there are obviously other

possibilities here for a writer: the relationship between Kitty's brothers, John Rex, and the Jewish buyer, for instance, since most of Mimi Bergh's account deals with the bitter financial negotiations, or even the submerged tale of greed and betrayal within the family - "There came a case about the furniture, and Stephan won it, but all the same he had not dealt fair by my other brothers" - and the narrator herself: "And I have not one thing that was Kitty's - And even my mother, she has only Kitty's dog." Although, as Cherry Clayton notes, the published story remains "too heavily plotted" ("The Style of Poverty" 160), Smith uses the image of a woman stripped of her possessions, and of all expression, to focus the narrative.

The tendency revealed here becomes clearer when we look at "The Schoolmaster", the anecdote for which is provided by Thys Taute's story about a German trader:

"And I'll tell you a queer thing P. There was a German up there who spent his life pushing a handcart across the desert, across Namaqualand and Kimberley. An old queer man he was and my father would not believe it when I told him, but it was true. It was a handcart like they used in stores - and he pushed it across the desert as a penance for putting out the eyes of his mules. He had a mulecart and did a sort of transport business with it, and one day the mules struck and in a rage he put out their eyes. And out of remorse for that he harnessed himself to a handcart and they said his breast was as hard as leather from the leather strap harnessing him to the cart.... And everywhere in the kraals they fed him. He was to them a sort of Evil Spirit, they fed him and treated him kindly because they were afraid of him and wanted him to go on to the next kraal or

village. (20 October 1913)

In the original, then, the male character simply blinded the mules because they "struck"; in Smith's version this story is entwined with the story of Engela (no source for which appears in the 1913-14 Journal), with the blinding of the mules becoming a bizarre part of the love story between her and Jan Boetje. The story becomes, above all, Engela's story as she struggles against that "weakness of the chest" (42) in order both to teach and to tell her tale.

Not all the sources for Smith's stories come through anecdote; some come to her via her own observation. And in these moments, women appear with a powerful presence. Both "The Miller" and "The Father" will contain two such female figures: for the first, the prototype is a beautiful woman "with a clear soft pale skin" (22 April 1914), "her face so full of charm that one forgot her wretchedness and poverty and thought of somebody rather fine and wonderful" (25 April 1914), and in the second, "a miserable looking poverty stricken woman", "with terribly toilworn hands, and skimpy nails, and washed out cotton dresses", who "felt so tired out always that she often fell asleep in her bath", and who was forbidden holidays and trips to town by her husband (January 1914). In the original accounts the beautiful young-looking woman is married to a man Smith diagnoses as consumptive, "who looks about 80, and is I think, just about 40 ... with dark mysterious eyes in his very

white-grey face" (25 April 1914), and the exhausted woman is married to a man "fairly good-looking, which she was not, and much younger looking ..., and not toilworn as she was" (January 1914). In the fictional versions both women become washed out, abject with the dominance exerted over them by their husbands; beauty and youthfulness belong only to the past, which is presented in the figure of Dientje in "The Father", a woman not yet married. Similarly, regarding the sketch, "Three Travellers: From a South African Diary", which appeared in The Cape, the original tale in her notes "Mill River, 1926" refers to an "old woman [who] ... had not dared to put a match to the fire ready laid in the fireplace" of the railway station waiting room; in the published version Smith inserts a figure of authority: the woman did not light the fire "for fear of the station-master, she said".

What emerges from this comparison is not simply that Smith is focussing on women, but that she is analysing a social situation in terms of the position of women, constructing around a particular figure an explanation for woman's wretchedness in the terms offered through her recognition of a patriarchal world. The concept of woman, or woman as sign, becomes crucial for her analysis of a patriarchal context.

There are any number of examples in Smith's work of the kind of interest in patriarchy that invite the

critic to hear tones of feminist protest. The power of men over women and, by extension, their children, is portrayed in The Beadle and in various stories in The Little Karoo. Henry Nind's attitude towards both Andrina and Lettice is spoken of in terms of possessiveness and power: "his power over her" (140); "he would handle her" (141); "can spare my little Andrina to no one else" (74). In "The Father" Smith repeatedly uses the words "bondage" and "serfdom" to refer to Piet Pienaar's family - his son is an "unpaid labourer" and his wife a "slave" (157, 159); Piet Pienaar's power is such that he hates his son's innate docility and takes pleasure in his wife's "broken spirit" (159). In The Beadle Smith uses the words "sharpened ... desire" (140) to describe the lust for power in Henry Nind, who appreciates Lettice because she continually reminds him of his domination over her by "that provocative suggestion of impudence which never actually becomes impudent" (141).

In one of the early meetings between Nind and Andrina the onset of his sexual desire is precipitated by her agitation:

Andrina turned with a single cry:
"Mijnheer!" She made no movement towards him, no other sound. But the note of fear which had raised the tone of her voice, the quick rise and fall of her little breasts under her plain, tight-fitting print bodice, her blush, the surprising hint of tears in her eyes, filled him with an exultation for which he had been quite unprepared. (31)

To some extent such moments bear a purpose different from the presentation of male sexual domination, and

a little later in her text, will become examples of the author's interest in emancipated female sexuality, though not emptied of the resonance of power:

Her cheeks were flushed - with her climb, perhaps, but the Englishman did not think so. Behind the quietness of her manner, beneath that repose ... was that same shy agitation of which he had first been aware when he greeted her through the lattice-work of the larder. And again his own heart beat the faster for it. (40)

Nevertheless, the continual references to Andrina as "child" (40, 50), to her blushes and tears (40, 42) and to the Englishman's "tone of command" (42) maintain the sense of an unequal power and a power enjoyed.

The implications of such pleasurable domination are made particularly clear in "The Miller", where the set of images used is at one point the same as that between Nind and Andrina. In "The Miller" the main character takes brutal delight in the terror he causes his wife and children, a delight which, once again, is presented by the author in terms that border on the sexual: "the wild and bitter exultation with which her tears and the quick rise and fall of her bosom filled him" (57). Such insights (though not, of course, unavailable to or unused by men) are returned to repeatedly in literature written by women, and by colonial women. In George Eliot's Felix Holt Mrs Transome says of Esther, "This girl has a fine spirit - plenty of fire and pride and wit. Men like such captives, as they like horses that champ the bit and paw the ground; they feel more triumph

in their mastery" (488). Nadine Gordimer's The Conservationist has Mehring record: "It is in opposition (the disputed territory of argument, the battle for self definition that goes on beneath the words) that attraction lies, with a woman like that. It's there ... that intimacy takes place" (95); and, the thoughts given more brutally now, though with an uneasy hesitancy: "The flirtatious sneer in her voice unexpectedly gave him an erection. (Even then, perhaps? ... the beginning of these - inappropriate - reactions now, being pecked on the cheek by some child he's known since she was in napkins)" (64). The "special pleasure" that Mehring has felt in "having a woman you've paid" (71) is also clearly defined in terms of power relations: like Smith, Gordimer puts power into sex and, by implication, sex into power.

The economic context given such displays of male power turns them into profound social statements. The miller's power is clearly expressed in economic terms: he refuses to plant his lands in an effort to hurt his family, whose relations to production are, of course, mediated through him. Economic bondage is even more clearly drawn in "Anna's Marriage": Anna marries Philip Coetzee in community of property and her family watches helplessly as "her house and her lands, her cattle and her ostriches, all, all that was hers must now be sold to pay Philip's debts" (92). In "The Sinner", too,

Toontje Dampers is threatened with destitution because it is only through her husband that she had any right to the land. When Niklaas Dampers runs off with the mirror-flashing Koba Nooi, who acts on behalf of the Hollander, a pretty tool in a world of male acquisitiveness, his wife decides to protect herself and her son by taking over, with him, the production of the tobacco. The only way that she can persuade the "master", Andries van Reenen, both to allow her to do so and to put out the story that he himself sent Niklaas Dampers to the Hollander is to remind him that he once seduced her and has some responsibility towards them as the father of her son. Her power works through blackmail, a fitting response to Van Reenen's exploitation of her: Toontje Dampers has done all the self-sacrificing she is prepared to do.

"The Sisters", Smith's first published adult story, which appeared in The New Statesman at a time of feminist debate, is a significant indication of her interest in women under patriarchy. The story tells us that old Jan Redlinghuis, to whom Marta's father is deeply in debt and to whom he has mortgaged the family's lands, takes the daughter instead of the money. Smith depicts the exchange as a shameful act: she brings it to full expression in Redlinghuis's public display of Marta as his possession, has it lead to Marta's gradual decline and death (illness is not used as a camouflage: Marta becomes simply "too weak to climb into the cart"

[125]) and has it judged finally as an act of pervasive evil in which everybody has been incriminated. As Redlinguis says to Sukey de Jager, "'Which of us now had the greatest sin - your father who sold me his daughter Marta, or I who bought her? Marta who let herself be sold, or you who offered yourself to save her?" (126).

It is tempting, then (as a feminist reader), to read "The Sisters" as a feminist statement about marriage as economic bondage, taking one's cue from such stories as "Anna's Marriage", "The Miller" and "The Father". However much the nature of the transaction between Bugert de Jager and Jan Redlinghuis is softened by the terms "ask" and "marry" (121, 122), the transaction is consistently maintained as an economic one: if Redlinguis does not have Marta he "'will take the lands of Zeekoegatt as his right, and ... will make [Sukey's] father bankrupt'" (123); he uses the term "sell" or its variations repeatedly and publicly (124), and he displays Marta in his tent-cart as his possession.

When Marta's father boasts how Marta "rides through the country in her new tent-cart", Sukey de Jager retorts: "What is now wonderful? It is to her grave that she rides ..., and presently you will see it.'" And she adds, "'It took you many years to kill my mother, but believe me it will not take as many months for old Jan Redlinghuis to kill my sister Marta'" (125).

However, when he notes that the water he got from Redlinguis's farm has turned to blood, the narrator censors her reply:

It was in my heart to say to him: "The blood is already so deep in the lands that nothing we can do will now wash it out." But I did not say this. I do not know how it was, but there came before me the still, sad face of my sister, Marta, and it was as if she herself answered for me.

"Do now as it seems right to you," I said to my father, "Who am I that I should judge you?" (127)

The feminist statement is made, then, neither firmly nor without equivocation. One is struck by this story, as by others in Smith's collection, in much the way that Showalter speaks of when rereading women writers:

The orthodox plot recedes, and another plot, hitherto submerged in the anonymity of the background, stands out in bold relief like a thumbprint. Yet the other plot, the other images are still there; sometimes they are still the only ones we can see. Sometimes the images are engaged in such complex vibration that we can barely bring one into focus before it collapses under the domination of the other. ("Review Essay" 435)

"The Sisters" is marked by just this kind of complex vibration. Beyond the tender and forgiving voice is another voice, ruthless, even if it is spoken in a lower key. The ruthless voice begins to dominate, but is in turn silenced by the tones of forgiveness.

The female literary tradition is full of such ambivalent moments. Various critics have spoken of the submerged messages of women's fiction: Patricia Meyer Spacks refers to "subterranean challenges" (317); Nancy K. Miller to "another text", "more or less muted" (47).

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar find (particularly in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women) a second or ironic voice: their apparent acquiescence masks the subtle revolutionary intent of their work. Very often this second voice is provided by the "double", the "madwoman in the attic", an image of the writer's suppressed rage that stands counter to the "angel in the house" figure publicised by Woolf ("The Death of the Moth" 236-238). Twentieth-century writers may even use the emergence of this second voice as an indication of character development.²

In "The Sisters" the enraged voice is provided, and silenced. The fact remains that, even if Sukey herself has not spoken these words, they have, in a more important ontological realm, been spoken: "The blood is already so deep in the lands that nothing we can do will now wash it out."

Smith's public self, as revealed in her letters and journals, has less access to the strategies for simultaneously "getting off the subject" and speaking out that are available to the authorial self in fiction. Yet her more public self did not invariably hide that deeper self. Speaking of an episode during his friendship with her, Arnold Bennett writes in his journal: "We drove over to Tertia's house ... after lunch. Pauline Smith was there. Very silent. But with more secret fire in her than any of them" (Journals, ed Flower 43). Bennett also speaks of her in his

Introduction to The Little Kargoo, as already quoted, in terms of a "strange, austere, tender, and ruthless talent" (11).

Significantly, critics of Smith have generally resisted such claims of surface and hidden meanings, outer control and inner ferment. An early reviewer, responding to Bennett, wrote: "Ruthless? Not for an instant. A brooding pity breathes from every page" (The Saturday Review of Literature, 25 April 1925, BC 236 C1.32). Earnest Pereira, attending more recently to the same term, has defined it simply as "austerity ... her uncompromising integrity as an artist" (52-53). Her stories, he says, "are vibrantly affirmative of life, of man's need both to give and to receive love, and of woman's infinite capacity for understanding and forgiveness" (52). Guy Butler reads Smith in a similar mode. Dwelling on the power of forgiveness in "The Miller", he gives to the final paragraph the kind of misreading that phallic criticism makes possible: the miller, he says, "dies dumbly fumbling a belated gesture of love towards his wife, in whose arms he is allowed to die" (x). The fact is that the miller dies a merciless death: the author, refusing him permission to express "his love and sorrow" in time, as Butler notes, makes him die out of his wife's arms, not within her embrace. One is reminded here of another comment made by an early reviewer of The Little Kargoo, who, claiming that "Miss

Smith's main affirmation of goodness lies in her portraits of women, humble, loving wives or daughters", delights in Marta's sacrifice in "The Sisters" as "not futile" (I.P.'s and Cassell's Weekly, 28 March 1925, BC 236 C1.28).

Labelling Marta's sacrifice simply as "not futile" comes from a perverse reading: even Marta's father recognises that "It is blood that I have led on my lands to water them" (127). Ruthlessness has often not been a quality favoured in women writers; readers have felt compelled to find a tempering tenderness, or have judged negatively in its absence. George Eliot's analysis of Bulstrode in Middlemarch is, for F.R. Leavis, "of the 'merciless' kind that only an intelligence lighted by compassion can attain" (86); Alan Paton has called Nadine Gordimer "cold and calculating" as a writer, for instance (Rev. of July's People). Certainly the desire to find forgiveness in the hearts of (female) writers, clearly prevalent in a context that knows itself to be characterized by abuses of power, finds its match in Smith's own concern with forgiveness: "There is bitterness & regret in the life of each one of us, & not one of us knows how it may at any moment possess the heart & the mind & drive one to action incomprehensible to others. I think it is my own small knowledge of this that lies behind all the very very little it has ever been in my power to write - that compels me to try to make clear how true it is that 'without pity &

forgiveness life itself is bitterness & sorrow' (letter to Swinnerton, 15 November [1949?], BC 236 D9.176).

Yet it is important to recognize both that "pity and forgiveness" do not provide her only voice, and that forgiveness is itself not innocent, as the writer has Vlokman recognize: "between him and Jacoba there lay, like an accusation, her forgiveness" (Beadle 33).

Michael Gardiner has noted of "The Schoolmaster" that there is "a quality of the writing which lies below the surface and which challenges the impressions of religious acceptance, submission to human and natural limitation, or satisfaction with what small comforts life can offer" ("A Weakness of the Chest" 152).

Although he adopts an uncritical stance towards the idea of "womanhood" taking its place "in the full ordering of things" (151), and tends to look for resolution - "though [violence and forgiveness] are seeming opposites, human experience reconciles them" (149) - his recognition of the "limiting and crushing" (151) quality of the grandmother's love has been an important step in the reception of Smith.

Two points require formulation here. Through Smith's stories runs a theme of repression that manifests itself both as an aspect of or explanation of the author's own ambivalence and as a topic confronted authorially in the text. In other words, the stories concern themselves with the social genesis and the

effects of such repression, and then also present themselves as the products of such repression. Moreover, if the concepts of female obedience and even self-sacrifice are presented as socially necessary in a patriarchal world, the stories also offer to the reader, again at the level of both ontological spheres, two conflicting female desires: to fulfil the obedient role and to punish a world (or a self) that makes such a demand. This conflict is quite congruent with what we have seen of Smith's life as it has been offered us in A.B., her letters and journals, and also, speaking more generally, with the life of a woman intelligent, deeply concerned with social and economic inequities, and yet submissive to patriarchy. Both these points are also illustrated in "The Father", the story that closes The Little Karoo and, with "Desolation", one of the last two stories that Smith finished for publication in her lifetime.

In "The Father" is made clear to us once again the (repressed) anger of the female against the male. First of all, Piet Pienaar is given a particularly undignified death, and certainly one more unmerciful than that allowed Jan Redlinghuis, the different treatment mirroring the different degrees of self-knowledge the characters have. Jan Redlinghuis is not, after all, "always [so] mad" (122) that he cannot read his actions and their implications in a patriarchal world, and he goes into the hills with his gun and kills himself. The

self-deceptive Piet Pienaar shoots himself in error: "jerked his elbow against the crumbling sand, lurched forward unsteadily, and fell to the astounding, shattering report of his gun" (188). Secondly, although Piet Pienaar dies under the "compassionate gaze" (139)³ of the woman whose voice had so terrified him (and which, we must recall, had caused him to fall), the author once again refuses him speech, and refuses to authorise unambiguously his absolution from "hatred ... bitterness and unjust suspicion" (188). Like the miller before him, the father is unable to confess and thus reach absolution.

Smith's withdrawal of speech from the father and the miller is ruthless indeed for an author who has presented with such pathos the loss of speech in other characters: in Juriaan and Deltje van Royen in "The Pain", and in Anna Coetzee in "Anna's Marriage", who has been stripped of all she possesses but for "a little black box [from which] though she turned and turned the handle there came no sound" (95). Yet in the case of both father and miller dumbness is a particularly fitting punishment: Piet Pienaar had not allowed his son to read and write, and forced his wife to become a woman of "dumb spiritlessness" (175) who could never "strike a note of her own" (158), and Andries Lombard's wife had become a "frightened hen" under his domination, a woman not allowed to express her own self, one who "ran always

in silence" (57). In both cases, too, the unspent words - gold in "The Father" and seeds in "The Miller" - choke these men: "In life his thoughts had been secret . . . , and so now they were on the threshold of death"; "speech was beyond him" ("The Father" 188-189); "If he could but reach her now, to speak with her of his sorrow, this pain in his chest . . . would surely go"; "He tried to explain this . . . , but he could explain nothing, and in a vain effort to gain relief he put his hand up to his throat and tore the eel-skin from his neck. . . . blood rushed from his mouth" ("The Miller" 63, 66). Like the gun that fires itself, power which is not benevolently bestowed turns against its owner.

From Smith's first adult story, then, to her final story, "The Father", no reader sympathetic to feminist issues can fail to hear the criticism of a world dominated by men obsessed with power: a personal form of power that manifests itself in the sense of ownership that Eugert de Jager and Piet Pienaar display over their wives and children, an economic form of power which generalises itself into colonial and imperial power, and a linguistic form of power, where words belong to fathers, whether they hoard them or steal them.

There is an additional point to be made. In "The Sisters" and "The Father", as in other stories, Smith explains the obsession with power in the two male characters by placing them in their own context of economic exploitation: both men have to struggle against

the power of other, richer men. The almost continual backdrop to Smith's tableau of characters is the world of agricultural capitalism, where those who have, accumulate, and those who have not, lose. Jan Redlinghuis in "The Sisters" has had his water-rights fixed by a law that is hostile to the needs of a farmer like Bugert de Jager, who is not permitted to draw a "fair share" of the water from the Ghamka river and whose series of law-suits petitioning for water rights leaves him poorer and poorer so that, in final ignominy, he has to mortgage some of the lands to the very man whose "ownership" of the Ghamka river has been the initial cause of litigation. In economic terms, Bugert de Jager has no more power, and he transforms into economic power a daughter whom, according to patriarchal law, he owns. That the daughter becomes coin is a moment of interest, then, not simply to the feminist but, more importantly, to the socialist feminist, for it is a moment of transaction not simply between men but between classes of men. The text makes quite clear that Bugert de Jager feels that he has no option but to render his daughter coin: "And from that day Jan Redlinghuis pressed him, pressed him, pressed him, till my father did not know which way to turn"; "my father's back was up against the wall ... he must sell the last of his lands to pay his bond" (121); "'And can I then let my father be driven like a poor white to Platkops dorp?'" (122).

THE CHAIN OF OPPRESSION

Smith's interest in the psychology of oppression accords with her tendencies towards naturalism in terms of which individuals, placed - at least in The Little Karoo - in a specific (if not finely drawn) socio-economic context, are buffeted by forces beyond their control. In "The Miller" and "The Father", as in "The Sisters", there is a force behind the men that explains the tyranny towards their families. Andries Lombard, diseased from the mill dust, conscious of being abandoned by his God, conscious too of his vulnerability and insecurity as bywoner, takes revenge on those dependent on him; Piet Pienaar is himself powerless in the presence of the richer, more canny Andries van Reenen, whose voice is strong enough to "cut harshly into the silence" (170); and his resentment towards his God for not granting him sons finds expression in the revenge he extracts from his wife.

One of the literary effects of this chain of oppression is that any reference to one example of oppression may be used to allude to another kind. Jan Redlinghuis's treatment of Marta de Jager becomes a metaphor for Bugert de Jager's treatment of his wife: "It took you many years to kill my mother [says Sukey], but believe me it will not take as many months for old Jan Redlinghuis to kill my sister Marta" (125). The apparently more vicious, because more blatant, male

attitude is now used to define the more "normal" attitude: they are the same in kind, in terms, that is, of their moral implications. In "The Miller" the allusive statement is made even more forcefully. Andries Lombard's treatment of his wife is revealed in its widest human implications by means of the "Jew-woman" as metaphor:

In no other human being had Andries ever seen such fear as one saw sometimes in the Jew-woman's eyes.... And now suddenly, as he sat in front of his mill on this Thanksgiving morning, it was not the Jew-woman's eyes that he saw before him, but his wife, Mintje's, terror-stricken through her tears.

In an agony that was half physical, half mental, the miller rose from his seat. God forgive him, he thought in horror, but if it was the terrible things that had happened to her in her own country that had turned the Jew-woman into a frightened animal, it was he, Andries, who had turned Mintje into a nervous hen.... Mintje had not been a hen when he married her. (62; ellipses in original)

The statement, though submerged, is a strong one: the miller's treatment of his wife (a treatment not at all unusual in the context of Smith's fictional world) is comparable to the anti-Semitism of Eastern Europe, evidenced (for Smith's contemporary readers) in the pogroms in Poland, Rumania and the Ukraine in the 1920s. "The Miller" stands for us, then, as a story "about" how to recognize (how to read) the metaphorical link between woman and Jew: this is what the miller, with blood pouring from his throat, learns but cannot speak. And the story stands for us, then, as a model: Smith's polemical or didactic methodology is thus revealed.

It is quite in keeping with Smith's oblique polemical mode that the "Jew-woman" in the Little Karoo (to look now at her representation in The Beadle) should, on the one hand, not be able to lose the fear of humanity that she acquired in Eastern Europe - Esther Shokolowsky's "only vital expression ... was one of terror" from which old age, an old age spent in the vicinity of Johanna Steenkamp's bitter righteousness, provided "no escape" (11) - and should remain "a stranger among Aangenaam people", "tragic and mysterious" (11), and that she should, on the other, be spoken of in terms that identify her race with the South African Dutch. The analogical link between Jew and woman identified in "The Miller" is now shifted in The Beadle - persecuted Jew now stands in analogical relation to persecuted Dutch (and persecuted Huguenot) - and the didacticism at the core of Smith's analogical composition is exposed.

First of all, the characterization of the Dutch as persecutor is necessarily established: Johanna appears to the "Jew-woman", who had "suffered much at the hands of Christians" (Beadle 13), as "great and awful ... bitter [and] righteous" (13), an oblique reference to the Calvinist world which Johanna inhabits or at least to the God of Vengeance that she worships. The text's second step is to establish an identification of Dutch with Jew. Against the "faith" of the Jews (11) is juxtaposed the intensity "of religious feeling" of the

Afrikaner, which, significantly enough, Smith sees as having arisen "through the memory of past sufferings and sacrifices" (27). Against the economic opportunities of Esther Shokolowsky's grandson, who had first come to the Little Karoo as a smous, "with a pack of patent medicines for men and beasts on his back" (11), who is then able to settle in the Aangenaam valley with his profits, and who now ("At the end of the previous month of July" [12]) has bought cheap some of the stock of a Platkops store-keeper gone bankrupt (12), is set the acquisitiveness of a Jan Beyers, whose eyes reflect a sewing machine and a sheep instead of the image of a beloved: "... in all his transactions the young man was swayed by his love of a bargain" (61). The reader is invited to generalise these particular characteristics to refer to the Afrikaner, in whose culture "marriage was, more often than not, a matter of convenience or an arrangement between parents on behalf of their children" (24). Moreover, Smith calls the Afrikaner "cunning" - Jan Beyers has "all the slow, cautious, childlike cunning of his race" (61) - and makes clear in her Journal the link she feels in this regard between Afrikaners and Jews: "The new generation of Boers despises the old, resents its religion, despises the English and resents their pose of superiority, despises the Jews, and learns all it can from them in sharp practice" (19 August 1913).

The implications for Smith's texts of these metaphorical references will become clearer later. It is necessary simply to add at this point that if the Afrikaner and Jews are compared so, by implication, are the Afrikaners and the indigenous people. No South African reader can read the reference to the cattle - "Jan Beyers would bargain for his wife as a man might bargain for cattle" (62) - without having lobola in mind. In other more definite ways Smith's texts make this comparison. The reference to the ways that these local people learn news is one of the colonial stereotypes used to describe the indigenous people: "from the spoors on the veld and the roadside, from the passing of carts and wagons, from the flight of birds, from the trembling of a bush, from the sudden cry of an animal in distress breaking the silence of the mountain-side ...[,] news borne from farm to farm as miraculously as seeds are borne by the wind and sown in a distant soil" (23).

This is not simply a refocalization of cultural stereotypes: Smith makes the comparison explicit. We learn that the "Dutchman" lived "almost as close to nature as the native himself" (23), and have access to an even more pointed comparison in the reference to land ownership. How strongly the Afrikaners feel toward the English colonizers is indicated by means of Tant Linda's remark about the cause of poverty among the rural Afrikaner: "there are many of our people as poor as the

Steenkamps to-day who were great in the days before the English took our land from us and may yet be great again" (114). Against this remark we juxtapose the expository passage early in the novel about the "Dutchman [feeling] himself to be, in the sight of the Lord, the rightful owner of a country which he, and not the Englishman had taken from the heathen" (28): Englishman stands to Dutch as Dutch stands to black South African. It is this ironic reverberation that informs the scenes in The Beadle in which blacks appear, of which more later. There is also ironic reverberation in the references to language: the Englishman's exploitation of Andrina through her linguistic ignorance is put in the context of nationalism with the reference to the Dutch having forbidden the French Huguenots "the use of their own tongue" (27); "the Dutch Governors robbed the French Huguenots of their language" (27).

A similar sort of metaphorical process, though more subtle, is discernible in the authorial references in The Beadle to Andrina's service as domestic, as woman and as Christian. By means of the author's use of the concept "service" the three roles that Andrina performs - towards the household, the Englishman and God - are linked in such a way that they take on meaning in terms of their relation to one another, with the effect that a comment made regarding one reverberates along the chain formed by all three. The links are formed in the

following way. Andrina comes to believe that "[i]t was for this - to love the Englishman and to serve him, with her body as she served others with her hands - that she had been created" (132). The concept of "domestic servant" includes, then, these two kinds of service. Smith's earlier reference to Andrina's choosing the Englishman's cakes and polishing the cup is an obvious allusion to the Sacrament that, for Andrina, has already so strongly involved a mingling of divine and physical love, a supplicant's service to God and a woman's service to a man. Our reading of this dual interconnectedness provides a commentary so subtle, so quietly made, that it is easily missed. To the authorial censure of Henry Nind, which calls into doubt the worthiness of Andrina's object of service, is added authorial censure of those whom Andrina serves with her hands - primarily Antoinette, Mevrouw van der Merwe's daughter, but also Mevrouw herself - thus laying bare the nature of such service and redirecting our moral response to it. Antoinette's reaction when she hears of Andrina's pregnancy is self-directed, in standard employer style: "... where would she, Antoinette, again find some one who could bake such good bread?" (188). Moreover, while Antoinette's attitude at first seems to be the obverse of her mother's, whose face Andrina has imagined to be the face of God, the reader is also alerted to the oblique ironies with which Mevrouw herself is presented.

As Gardiner has noted ("Critical Responses and the Fiction of Pauline Smith" 4) Mevrouw's "goodness" is to be read critically, in the way that one reads the term "good" in the following passage about the pastor:

Many, many months, the pastor explained to the Englishman, had Tan' Betje lain helpless on her bed, and now, in answer to prayer, her pain had been so much eased that it had been possible for her son Hans to bring her to Harmonie for the Sacrament on a swinging bed-frame in a borrowed wagon. Hans was a good son and in young Betje he had a good daughter as old Betje had a good grandchild. Poor they were, as so many Aangenaam people were, but rich in their affection for one another. Young Betje would make a good wife, and he, the pastor, hoped there was truth in the report that Jan Beyers wished to marry her. Jan Beyers was an upright and well-doing young man, and Betje, for her kindness to her grandmother, deserved a good husband. (73-74)

The germ of such irony appears in Smith's 1913-14 Journal, after an argument with a predikant. Although the predikant has bewildered Thys Taute with his stupidity, Taute now refers to him as "good":

"Lord P." he said "he is a good man that, but I can't talk to him like I talk to you. He would be horrified. Look now how it is. Some people we can never tell our inmost thoughts to, however old our friendship may be and others - well, - my wife is a good woman - too good you know. She can believe everything in the Bible just as she reads it - I now again - I can't. When my brother lay dying he said to me 'Thys - what now will become of me?' And I tell you P. I could say nothing to him but that if there were a God he would understand and make allowances. (25 April 1914)

The word "good" gathers irony in its repetition both in this passage and in the passage from The Beadle.

The orthodox interpretations of God, whether the

pastor's view of "him" as purely spiritual or Mijnheer van der Merwe's view of "him" as a God of Vengeance, are here defined as inadequate (part of Smith's purpose, via Andrina, has been to redefine God through a recognition of Christ's physicality, and to fuse, rather than keep separate, spiritual and physical love). One's reading of Andrina's role as that of a young woman obedient, dutiful and generous becomes coloured by the author's commentary: the role is seen in terms of exploitativeness rather than of noble self-sacrifice.

The various ironies set up by means of this chain of oppression now reverberate at different levels of the text. That Andrina is in some sense imprisoned by her concept of duty as domestic servant is suggested in the following passage partly by means of the repetition of the word "still" and partly by means of the lengthened final sentence:

From the church [Andrina] went straight back to the homestead to take up her duties again. She was still Magdalena's nurse. She still slept with the children at night. She was still at the service of every member of the increasing household. (56)

The rhythmic lull of the parallelisms - "She was still ..." - develops (as the s of "still" becomes the s of "service", with its vowel e lengthening into "every") into a sentence that sounds like a sigh, once again lengthened by means of the gradually increasing number of polysyllabic words. The first two sentences to use the word "still" bear a mild ironic note, as the

text chivvies Andrina out of her dreamy church-world into the realities of domestic duty. These two sentences also take on the status of free indirect style (using Franz Stanzel's terminology), as does the third, so that Andrina's consciousness appears to us as the origin of the tones of protest. Yet the protest is but a murmur of unease shared by author and character and, now, by reader; diffused by the quietening rhythms of Smith's prose. Andrina is back in her prison, not freed by the church to which she had flown, earlier in the novel, "like some strange, white-hooded bird" (57).

The ironic reverberations provide commentary not only on the general (and related) issues of patriarchy and Calvinism, but also on white South African oppression of blacks. Throughout the text there are reminders of the history of Harmonie: its furniture made "in the time of Stephan van der Merwe's great-grandparents" which puts one into the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century (the first Van der Merwe, we are told, had come to the Cape "as a Landrost [sic] in the service of the Dutch East India Company" [15]); padlocks are used on the canisters of tea, coffee, sugar, rice, rusks, cakes and spices on the pantry shelves" and on the "big yellow-wood chests of meal and dried fruits" (15), left there since "the old days of slavery" (15). And, most significantly, at a point where the Englishman's seduction of Andrina is well-advanced, she is presented in a way that reminds us to

see her beauty and also the beauty of the Harmonie homestead in their specifically South African context of enslavement:

Against this dark setting, achieved so many years ago for the van der Merwe family by the labour of slaves, there now shone the soft, shy, fair beauty of old Piet Steenkamp's granddaughter, Andrina du Toit. And never, thought the Englishman, had Andrina looked more beautiful than she did this morning as, flushed and eager, shy and sensitive, her eyes never daring to meet his own, she waited upon Mevrouw van der Merwe's guests. (73)

Two subtle points are made here. Harmonie had been "achieved" by slaves. And the "dark setting" of servitude becomes more than simply a foil to Andrina's "fair beauty"; it also informs the role she has as she waits on the guests - among them the Englishman - with lowered eyes. Like the slaves before her, Andrina is enslaved, and her enforced servitude is a reminder of the servitude upon which South African society has been constructed; which is but another way of suggesting that Harmonie was achieved by slaves. Smith has already told us that "For the heathen [the Afrikaner] had something of the bitter contempt of the writers of the Old Testament" (28). The repeated reference to the church-bell having once been the slave-bell (20, twice on 92) serves as another reminder of South African political-religious sentiment; the enthusiasm with which Jafta imitates the church-bell which had once been used, he suggests, to summon his father, a slave at Harmonie, resounds with irony:

This, he said, was how it would go when he rang it for Aalst Vlokman, the beadle, at the coming Sacrament. Andrina du Toit, with whose aunts the beadle lived, was one of those who was going for the first time to take Sacrament. (20)

If the South African church justifies slavery of "the heathen", it also (therefore) enslaves its members: "In the church-land old Jafta was ringing the bell which had once been the slave-bell, and men, women and children were moving slowly in little groups towards the church the people moving towards the door at the call of the old slave-bell" (92).

The reference to Jafta's tongue imitating the slave-bell, a reference of enormous significance to a writer whose works continually deal with expression and repression, recalls the other references in the text to "tongues" being stopped: the Englishman denying (in his way) the Afrikaans language by not learning to speak it; the Dutch robbing the French Huguenots of "their own tongue" (27).

Other critics have noted Smith's interest in black oppression, although briefly. Like Arthur Ravenscroft ("Pauline Smith" 56), Geoffrey Haresnape has argued that Smith's description of after-dinner prayers in The Beadle, however "temptingly bland and neutral" it seems, "comes to be charged with a force of implied meaning" ("Barriers of Race and Language" 194), Spaasie's prayer for obedience showing up a racist ideology. And Geoffrey Hutchings's use of the concept "destructive

potential" (60) regarding The Beadle implicitly invites one to see anti-black racial exploitation as part of the potential with which she is concerned. Smith's oblique references to the black race belong to that set of ironic reverberations along what I have called a chain of oppression; the black race is placed clearly, if quietly, as one of the links in this chain.

Earlier I suggested that the chain of oppression acted for Smith as a principle of composition: reference to one element comes to allude to another or others in the spectrum of oppressions within Smith's fictional world. The principle of composition becomes a principle of reception: a reader responsive to one kind of oppressive relation will make the link to oppression in another kind of relation. Smith's sensitivity to audience moderates in certain interesting respects her use of the chain of oppression. Analogy has a generative effect, and it may be in the interest of certain cultural groups to repress or suppress that generation. Smith's texts sometimes recognize and encourage the reader's responsiveness to analogical processes, and at other times withdraw from the sequence, as the following section will argue.

SMITH IN AN AFRIKANER WORLD

As has been the case with other South African writers in English, at least until the development of a local publishing industry, Smith's de facto readership was largely provided by Britain and, to a greater extent, at least during the twenties and thirties, by North America (see Royalty Statements BC 236 D11; D13), although there were sufficient reviews and mentions of her work in the local media to suggest the development of a reading public here. After the publication in The Adelphi of "The Pain" and "The Schoolmaster", Ethelreda Lewis wrote a review called "The Olive Schreiner Tradition: Pauline Smith and South Africa", which is apparently the earliest local mention of her work, and "S.D." in South African Pictorial (18 April 1925, BC 236 C1.30), wrote that "The Miller", published in The Adelphi in April 1924, "surprised me; here was something new, here was something African and, above all, good.... Then came The Little Karoo. It has been reviewed all over Africa now."

In general the literary projection of a geographically alien readership creates occasion for a variety of explanatory devices, the use of a glossary, the preference of British terminology over South African English, and the incorporation of lengthy textual explanations. However, in Smith's case, the evidence is that her projected audience was primarily a local one.

She often prefers South African English (so that cony, for instance, comes across as incongruous [Beadle 37]), uses a glossary to her work only in the case of Platkops Children and generally subordinates her explanations, when they occur: "The floors of the kitchen and bedroom she smeared regularly with a mixture of cow-dung and ashes called mist" (Little Karoo 2). That she went thus far with her explanations is perhaps due entirely to the advice given her by Arnold Bennett regarding publication in England; her initial practice as a writer was to take for granted "a complete knowledge on the part of the reader of the conditions of life in the place and time of which [she] wrote" (A.B. 58). In "The Sisters" she uses the word "stoep" without explanation or even italicization (Jonathan Cape italicizes it in the 1925 reprinting). The manuscript of "Ludovitje",⁴ one of the few surviving manuscripts of work published during Smith's lifetime, apparently uses a Dutch or Afrikaans term (not legible) for the "clay-stone" that appears in the published version, and again has "stoep" without italicization. The original typescript of "The Pain"⁵ uses the word "veldschoen" without signalling its Afrikaans origin (it becomes italicized in Cape's printing) and the word "stamped" (typed with quotation marks) for mealies (typed without), but "stamped" is revised in Smith's hand into "pounded", presumably for the British publication that Bennett had long been trying to arrange for her (see A.B. 57), and the term

"stoep" is now underlined by hand. The question mark that appears in the margin opposite this later revision, like the one opposite the manuscript revision of "kapie" to "sunbonnet", suggests the author's hesitancy regarding the linguistic demands of a British readership.⁶

Although Smith seems not to have considered publishing either The Little Karoo or The Beadle in South Africa, she spent a good deal of energy in trying to get her children's stories, Platkops Children, published by the educational publisher Maskew Miller in 1926, and, as I noted earlier, readily provided sketches and stories for local newspapers and magazines. While one of her aims was to counterbalance what she called in her 1913-14 Journal (15 November 1913) the "cocky and pleased" attitude of the British to what a British resident apparently known or related to Smith called "our folk of the veld" (letter from "South African Scot" to The British Weekly, 21 January 1942, BC 236 C1.50), this was probably motivated by a desire to correct ill-feeling as it appeared locally rather than abroad, for her 1913-14 Journal makes reference to the feeling of superiority held by the local British (see, for example, her entry on 19 August 1913). She reacted so positively in 1927 to local claims that her fiction was easing relations between (South African) Dutch and (South African) English (see letter to her mother, 14

February 1927, BC 236 D8.30) that we may identify here a literary intention, even if we find it articulated only after publication of her major fiction. (Most of her extant private writings post-date 1925). Writing at the end of 1948 she says that "there seems to have been a revival of interest (in South Africa) in my books - especially among young Afrikaanse [sic] writers - and in the present bitternesses of racial & political differences any link of sympathy & understanding between Dutch & English is of value" (letter to Jonathan Cape, 21 November 1928, BC 236 D9.138). She was pleased to have given the South African Dutch at least one voice that was sympathetic: "Here I am an Englishwoman who has written of the Dutch as I know and love them - & I hope some day that a Dutch writer - Afrikaans writer - will write of English settlers with something of the same feeling in his or her heart" (letter to Ethel Campbell, 12 December 1938; D1.54).

Within the projected South African audience (in tandem with the larger British book-buying public), Smith seems, then, especially concerned with Afrikaner responses. Stephen Clingman uses Jean-Paul Sartre's term "virtual public" to suggest that Nadine Gordimer's more recent texts are conscious of a black audience sitting in implicit judgment on the text ("Writing in a Fractured Society" 17). For Smith, Afrikaners constitute her "virtual public". The deliberate and extensive use of an Afrikaans flavour in her work is

a further indication of her sympathy, and serves to soften the set of judgements implied in The Beadle and The Little Karoo, and voiced in her Journal - "cunning" and "suspicious", for example (25 April 1914). As I have already suggested, her mother and sister expected Afrikaner doors to be closed against her because of her fiction, but Smith reveals a defiant pleasure that this was not so (see, for example, her letter to her mother, 10 November 1926, BC 236 D8.2). Indeed, to add to the appreciative notice of her work in Die Burger mentioned in the Introduction, her stories were translated for Die Huisgenoot (Cape Town), an honour only occasionally given foreign writers (Tolstoy among the few) and rarely to other South African English writers.⁷ The Beadle was translated into Afrikaans by a friend of Smith's, Sylma Smuts (who completed the work in 1938), but it did not see publication.

Smith's affinity with and loyalty towards her Afrikaner friends may well have provided an initial impulse as regards her sense of a public. For the source material for her fiction she was indebted to her Little Karoo acquaintances (her 1913-14 Journal contains the anecdotes that spark off almost all the short stories: see Driver Pauline Smith 54-62 for a reprinting of these), on whose hospitality she depended when she returned to her home region, and it was among such people, too, that Smith's father had made his work and

home, and had become known for his unBritish, but characteristically Scottish, pro-Afrikaner sentiments. Her Aunt Maud, by contrast, married to her paternal uncle, defines one of Smith's friends and main informants, the lively Mimi Bergh of the 1913-14 Journal, as "uncultured", having "no depth or sincerity or honour as A.M. being English understands it" (27 September 1913).

"The Miller" comes out of experience and discussion shared with Thys Taute, on whose farm Smith spent so many happy periods and towards whose feudal stance she was always gently corrective. While another observer of Thys Taute as farmer and overlord might have sensed his brutal exploitation of the miller, whose lung disease is nothing less than phtysis caused by the dust from the mill, Smith insists on seeing it as an altogether vaguer evil, withdrawing from the Tautes the responsibility for the miller's ruined health and maddened response: "He did not, in fact, believe that his master, a just and generous man who even now sent help up to the mill when work there was heavy, would drive Mintje and her children like beasts out in the veld when he died, but it gave him a strange, malicious pleasure to say it ..." (57). The same kind of silencing may be seen in The Beadle, where, as has already been noted, one must scrutinize the text before negative comments about the Van der Merwes, characters drawn from the Tautes, bring themselves forward. The presence of the Tautes/Van der

Merwes throughout this text should be seen as one of the factors generating its predominantly nostalgic tone as well as its pervasive ambivalence.

The story of "Ludovitje" was told the author during her 1913-14 trip back to the Little Karoo by Mimi Bergh (the woman to whom Smith felt protective in the face of her aunt's snobbery) and was added to by her husband, referred to as Bergh. This is a story whose apparently uncritical presentation of a rural Afrikaner family and their attitudes towards the black labourers and towards Christianity has embarrassed almost every South African English-speaking critic who remarks on it.⁹ As Kay McCormick has said, "The frame is too insubstantial to be effective in creating tension between inside and outside perspectives on this spiritual experience: it does not give enough of a foothold for the external viewer. It seems to me that this method has the paradoxical effect of allowing the readers who do not share Alida's spiritual life to be less sympathetic to it, less understanding of it than they would have been had the external perspective been more substantially given" (173). Yet what has been missed is the probability that Smith was aiming at readers who do share Alida's spiritual life, to use McCormick's terminology, rather than at those who do not. The author's lack of explicit distance would then be a rhetorical device; she needs to present sympathetically

(as if to validate) the various attitudes before she can fulfil her final purpose which is, finally, to correct them. In other words, her apparent validation of the Afrikaner attitudes has a polemical purpose. The author is, much more firmly than her critics have allowed, in control of the narrative: having established the frame, which signals that preliminary but unspecified distance, she lets the story, as it has come out of the mouth of her naive informant, speak for itself. It becomes for us a story about relations between Afrikaner and Zulu, told by a narrator whose sentimentality towards her son provides the initial grounds for our reception of her as unreliable. Her sentimentality, that is, her unreliability, acts as a foil to her presentation of the relationship between Afrikaner and Zulu: that Ludovic is an "idiot" who speaks the "uncommon" truth (to recall the etymology of the term "idiot") invites us to see the narrator, too, as a naive truth-teller.

In the original anecdote from which this story comes, Mimi Bergh and her husband give an extravagantly melodramatic sense of Ludovitje's regard for his own death:

... on the last of the 3 days he was ill Heyns or Raubenheimer came out to see him and said he was getting better. As he left the room Pieterkie turned to the white "help" who was with him and said, "He says that but he does not know what I know. Tonight I shall see my king." And he began singing his favourite hymn. That afternoon many people came to see him and his teacher asked him should she sing? And she sang to him and all the people in the room. The school children and all the farmers

from round about sang with her. And when she stopped Pieterkie cried out "Look, look a dove in the window has come for me". And we looked and saw nothing and presently he cries out again: "Another dove, another dove the Lord has sent for me. I come Lord Jesus. I come I come" and so he died. He did not tell me how he had cried out too, "Edwardus, wacht en bitje!" "Edward, wait a little" for this happened too, for he died the day the king was buried and P. was certain he'd get to heaven with him. (1913-14 Journal, 17 August 1913)

The initial P., quoted here, probably refers to Pieterkie rather than Pauline, although Smith periodically refers to herself as P. in the Journal, and Pieterkie is elsewhere spelled out. The letter is inserted into the ts. in Smith's hand, probably to distinguish the boy from the father, who is the subject of the previous sentence.

However, even if Smith is momentarily in a sentimental mood when she writes down and rereads the anecdote does not mean that she is in her published version too: the burden of sentimentality is now placed firmly on the shoulders of the narrator, Alida (drawn from Mimi). Smith has Alida cry out in the market-place that dangerously pious sentiment, "'May God forgive us that we have not all such weakness!'" (113), as well as insist that the Bible is preferable to schooling. In her Journal Smith has already distanced herself from such cultural norms, and she does not need to again: she simply uses quotation marks ("scare quotes") in her Journal account, "There was one man in particular whom Pieterkie had set his heart upon 'saving'." Ludovitje's

melodramatic nature, however, is subdued: in the text the term "King" refers to God, not Edward VII, and the Journal's reference to Pieterkie rushing round "like a mad thing, flinging up his cap and dancing and screaming in Dutch, "'It is a pearl in my crown! It is a pearl in my crown!'" is absent in the text, but for the relatively quietly spoken boast: "'Yes, so it was that my darling spoke with Maqwasi the Kaffir, and always he would say to me: 'Wait now! Maqwasi will yet be a pearl in my crown'" (115). While he remains an "idiot", that stereotype of naive truth-teller used also by Dostoevsky - Smith had been reading The Idiot in 1913 (1913-14 Journal, 10 October) - the distance between him and reader is effectively shortened. In the original anecdote the doctor "Heyns or Raubenheimer" who comes to visit Pieterkie is discredited by Bergh, for he "said he was getting better". In the published version this changes to "the young doctor ... thought at first that Ludovitje was better" (117), allowing the doctor not to lose his function as a different kind of truth-teller, the voice of reason. The opposition is quietly but firmly drawn: the story is about faith, a faith voiced in the emphatic proposition of the Credo Mountains, and reason, a dimension not present in the original (except in the detachment regarding the term "saving"), but added by the author in the text. More subtly, the voice of science or reason is added to the original anecdote at another point too; when Ludovitje cries: "'A dove! A

dove! See now, a dove in the window!' And we looked, but could see no dove" (117). For Alida, the unreliable narrator, the evidence of the senses is invalidated; it is not, finally, invalidated for the reader. However, the authorial distancing is extremely subtle. Reason, in the form of the young doctor, stands in the wings. The emotional involvement has a crucial structural function, for unless the reader is permitted to identify or sympathise with the Afrikaner religious perspective (as will be the natural inclination for the Afrikaner reader) the polemical direction of the story is missed.

This polemical direction is established through the use of two hermeneutic devices in service of a racial theme. One is the implicit connection between Afrikaners and "Kaffirs", for both are seen or see themselves as Children of Israel. The author shows how Maqwasi's conversion springs from his interest in Ludovic's tales about the King of Jacob, the wanderings of the Israelites and the River of Water of Life. To an Afrikaner reader, who already identifies with the Israelite myth - as Smith assumes here and shows elsewhere (for example, in The Beadle 28) - the point should have been a forceful one. The second device in service of a racial theme is the connection, also between Afrikaners and Zulus but now more explicit than the Israelite connection, which is drawn by means of the missionary theme. Following the example set by the

the missionizing Ludovic, Maqwasi "went again to his own people, spreading the Word of God among them" (119). Again to the Afrikaner, whose church was composed of "ideologues of a theory of segregation which cited Biblical testimony for the lowly place of the sons of Ham" (Ruth First and Ann Scott 28) and which alone among the missionary churches in South Africa was not preaching to blacks (Richard Lovett, History of the LMS, 1795-1895, qtd. in First and Scott 28), the point should have been forceful in its simplicity: the Zulus have as much right to the Israelite myth as have the Afrikaners; a Zulu can serve God as a missionary as well as can any Afrikaner missionary; to God Zulus and Afrikaners are equal. (Interestingly enough, Sol T. Plaatje had already written - but had not yet published - his Mhudi, which sees the Barolong as God's chosen people, a point probably made on behalf of the mission press to which Plaatje would submit his text.)

What is being created in "Ludovitje" is a Biblical world (cloying though it may be): a world in which are recreated the Biblical allusions of "[t]he mountains [skipping] like rams and the little hills like young sheep" (114), and of water springing from hard rock. Indeed, to be banal, Smith explains how it may be that mountains and hills seem to skip: the track was so rough "that as they drove the cart would toss and swing like a branch in a storm, and the little kopjes would dance before their eyes" (114). The text then establishes a

connection between "Kaffirs" and this world as it is presented in the 114th Psalm: "There was no road for them to take but a track only that the Kaffirs had made, ... as they drove ... little kopjes would dance before their eyes" (114). In addition, the dam in the Credo mountains, built by men bigger and stronger than the men who live "in our part of the colony", brings water from this hard rock, rock compared by Maqwasi to the impenetrable clay-stone in which he digs a grave for Ludovitje: "'Have I not dug for Master a dam in the mountains, and can I not now, with my tools, dig a grave for the child in the clay-stone?'" (118). The text insists, then, that one recognizes the connection between "Kaffirs" and the God of Jacob, "who turned the hard rock into a standing water and the flintstone into a springing well" (115).

One should not, however, be blind to the difficulties that this story presents to the modern reader, rightly dubious, first of all, about the stereotype of the "noble savage". Secondly, that the narrator does not explicitly correct her informant's sentimentalization of the idiot-child casts an uneasy glow over Maqwasi's acceptance of him that becomes the more uneasy in its proximity to the well-worn convention (employed in Daphne Rooke's A Grove of Fever Trees, for instance) that blacks give hospitality to those discarded by whites. Thirdly, there is a particularly

intrusive irony in the fact that Maqwasi digs the graves of his white masters; this serves to increase the sense that the author lacks the sensitivity provided by what is normally called historical vision: what is to the modern reader an irony is not to her. (One present-day critic who is not bothered by these ironies is British, the critic Walter Allen.⁷) Finally, the close connection between the conversion of the "Kaffirs" to Christianity and their conversion into a labour force provides an uneasy subtext that may or may not be quite consistent with the remote and ironic attitude taken in the text towards the naive faith of mother and child. The discussion is complex.

In Smith's Journal she records arguments between herself, on the one hand, and Thys and Fred Taute, on the other, about the "dignity" of labour: "The same old warfare - labour degrading and the working man to be kept in his place" (23 April 1914). Smith's line is that labour does not degrade: "the working man" is worth more than "the illegitimate descendents of a pretty worthless king and his many mistresses", and more, too, than "the new race [of devotees] to motorcars and actresses". Secondly, she argues (still speaking of England) that the peasantry have been "robbed" of their right "by the class above them", and that Thys's picture of the English peasant is idealized. As Thys says:

"Now, you put quite a new light on things that I'd always been told to think of as beautiful. The English labourer looking up to his squire

and his church, and bobbing when you pass, and all that sort of thing. Feeling grateful to his creator and thanking the Lord for his blessings, and now you say he's not grateful and hasn't any reason to be, and I've got to rearrange all my ideas on the subject." (23 April 1914)

In "Ludovitje", as in Smith's later journals and letters (see, for example, Sabie, 1926-17, and the letter to Swinnerton, 30 June 1934, BC 236 D9.22), she emphasises the "dignity" of the black labourers; she also places a full emphasis on physical labour and physical strength:

Piet ... got a gang of Kaffirs to build him a dam.... Far up in the mountains they built it, leading the water from there in furrows to our lands in the valley. Piet had often to go to the dam, to see the Kaffirs at their work.... There was no road for them to go but a track only that the Kaffirs had made....

The Kaffirs that worked for Piet were such big strong men.... (114)

That this is work performed for the white man is made quite clear. Whites are idle or weak in the story: Ludovitje is weak "from the day he was born, and weak he was all the days of his life ..." (113); he plants a garden while Maqwasi builds a dam; his weakness is courted by Alida; no one is strong enough "to dig through the clay-stone like Maqwasi the Kaffir" (119). Piet, the farmer, even tries to persuade Maqwasi and his gang to remain on the farm as a permanent labour force: their labour is sought after. Moreover, just as the child's innocence has been the agent of conversion for Maqwasi ("And Maqwasi, standing there with tears in his eyes, answered him: 'Master! Now I believe'" [116]), so is it the agent of conversion for Piet ("... and surely

for the sake of the child I will deal well with you'" (1181). In this way, the concept of the "dignity of labour" is placed within the world of the innocent and the primitive, which are linked, and free of irony; this world is the Old Testament world to which the local Afrikaners, both the original tellers and Smith's desired recipients of this tale, felt bound by fate and by sympathy.

Contradictorily, however, the world of "the innocent" and "the primitive" is subtly undermined, as is the Old Testament culture, the same kind of undermining that suddenly appears in "The Pain" in the phrase "leaping and praising the Lord" (23), and in The Beadle: "the literature of the world was limited to a single book" (27). Similarly, that the term "Master" refers to two simultaneous contexts, a context of piety and a context of employment - "'Master! Now I believe'" - the more startling since it is a child spoken to as "Master", recalls the two contexts referred to in the original anecdote via the word "King", which Smith has erased in the published story. Ludovitje's King is the King of Heaven and the King of England; the English King is one in a line, Smith has told us, of the "illegitimate descendants of a pretty worthless king and his many mistresses". The ironic reverberations become even stronger since we have in this story the worlds of missionary and school-teacher suddenly converging and

conflating:

When the house was now so full of people that many were out also on the stoep there came the teacher from the farm school and all the scholars with her.

The teacher asked him: 'Shall I sing to you, Ludovitje?'

And Ludovitje answered: 'Sing now the 114th psalm, and Maqwasi, that is the pearl of my crown, will sing it also.'

And she began to sing, and the scholars and Maqwasi with her, and all the people that were in the house and on the stoep.

And when they had sung 'Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob Who turned the hard rock into a standing water, and the flintstone into a springing well', Ludovitje, who lay with his head on my breast, cried out aloud: 'A dove! A dove! See now, a dove in the window!'

And we looked, but we could see no dove.

(117)

The ironies that the text is itself aware of (so to speak) are missed by the congregation here assembled: if the text has informed us that Maqwasi the Kaffir already exists in the world of the God of Jacob, recognizing the amazing strength of the God "'Who turned the hard rock into a standing water, and the flintstone into a springing well'" (117), because it is a strength that he himself has been granted, neither teacher nor scholars nor farmers nor missionary can hear it. These are people who function as agents in a civilizing process, as agents of culture or the Father's Law, who are naive regarding black South Africans, whom they continue to call "Kaffirs" even when they are Christians (here, perhaps, is the text's justification for the use of this term).¹⁰ Smith will later put this point in a

different form:

[The priest] says he feels he is working entirely in the dark with the native and has no idea what impression our form of religion makes upon him - The trouble is that the white man's own life so contradicts his teaching.... [the black's] patience impresses him so much as it impresses me - not with a sense of powerlessness but with a sense of unconscious power - a slow mental one - He spoke of their astonishing grasp of education in all the forms in which at present it reaches them.... His mind being a blank as to previous Western culture seems able to grasp & absorb ideas that the poor white cannot reach at all - almost as if a natural nobility of mind carried him through to an understanding of things that remain baffling to the ordinary Western mind.... But he admits - in fact insists - that in the "growing stage" Christianity "spoils the kafir". ("Sabie, 1926-27")

Without wishing to minimize the social consequences that have stemmed from the kind of patronization obvious in this passage, it seems reasonable to assert that, first of all, the contradiction in Smith's text is caused by a contradiction between the notion of "the dignity of labour" and of class struggle, a contradiction evident in her Journal, instead of simply between the recognition of class problems in Britain and a failure to recognize equivalent problems within black/white racial distinctions, as Tony Voss has (however usefully) suggested ("Die Fêrels van Pauline" 113-115). Secondly, to complicate this first point, it seems reasonable to assert that Smith allowed that dual recognition to impinge on her consciousness: it is a recognition uneasily there, let us say, and is sometimes manifest, sometimes repressed. In her Journal, still speaking of

Thys Taute and his feudal attitudes, Smith initially withdraws from the racial parallel:

His great difficulty is in thinking of the English labourer as a native to be kept in his place. None of them can conceive of a peasantry with rights equal to their own and yet robbed of those rights by the class above them. On the land question it is the same. He classed himself at once with the landlord and resents any attempt made on behalf of the class below him to own any portions of his veldt. He can't see that in England the land was owned originally by the people. Here it was not owned, that is farmed and possessed, till the colonists came. [T]hough even the colonists stole what grazing rights existed from the tribes who owned cattle. (23 April 1914)

By the end of the thought-process represented here, she has caught herself; her repressed political consciousness insists on a parallel between "the English labourer" and "the native": both are "kept in their place", both have been "robbed". In "Ludovitje" there is a similar insistence, albeit made awkwardly and with ambiguities and ambivalences.

One of the "themes" of South African fiction is precisely this kind of repression and its uneasy emergence. In Schreiner's From Man to Man Rebekah's whitewashing of the room in which one of her servants had lived (already referred to) is an act of repression of which neither she nor Schreiner become conscious: it reads as both a displacement of her physical disgust at that particular betrayal and as a denial of the contradiction involved in her having decided on the one hand to adopt the baby fathered by her husband upon this

woman and on the other to dismiss - as she presumably does - the mother herself, now doubly victimized. In a short story called "The Living and the Dead" (1956), reprinted in In Corner B, Mphahlele characterizes this kind of repression, where one is denying the knowledge that a person of another race is human, as a decision not "to think, to feel", a decision that comes out of a "muddle beneath the fog that rose thicker and thicker" (95).

By 1974 Gordimer was able to write a novel which fully explored the theme of repression that many of her stories had already touched on: in The Conservationist the black body that is buried and rises out of the land in flood functions as an image in Mehring's repressed consciousness, an Africa that Mehring will not admit into his world. In Gordimer's recent novella, "Something Out There" (1985), published in a collection by the same name, the repressed has surfaced; it is seen as standing on the edges of a white world, autonomous now rather than dependent on (white) recognition, its incursions now on a horizontal plane rather than the vertical plane by which the split between consciousness and unconsciousness is traditionally imagined. Pauline Smith, child of her times, stands at a juncture along the route suggested here, at a point where the white world in South Africa is beginning to realise the existence of a point of view other than the "white"

point of view, and that the English-Dutch South African conflict is not the only political conflict at work. In 1929 Winifred Holtby ended an essay on white writers in South Africa with the following paragraph:

Once when I was camping in the Transvaal with a group of particularly intelligent friends - a painter, a lecturer on English, a writer and some others, we sat round the fire discussing the future of South African literature. During a pause in our conversation, we heard low monotonous voices repeating "C A T - Cat, D O G - Dog." We turned and saw behind us, crouching as near to the fire as they dared approach, in order that its light might fall on their opened pages, our two Kafir servants teaching each other to read from a child's primer. Very few natives are yet literate. But the movement for their education has begun. Who knows what the future holds for writers of South Africa?
(75)

It is precisely this context which Smith is beginning to glimpse, and which her texts at different times recognize and at other times repress. Whatever her silences, the use in "Ludovitje" of the Israelite myth and the absence of explicit negative evaluation of (Dutch) evangelicism is congruent with her polemical methodology as I have defined it here: a methodology that involves setting up a series of kinds of oppression that will 'speak to' the reader via a domino-effect of allusion - the reader's identification with the victim of one kind of oppression (in this case via the Israelite myth) will lead to recognition of another kind of oppression, in which the reader is identified as oppressor rather than victim.

This polemical methodology bears obvious

affinities with the didacticism involved in the trickster tradition, in which (as Harold Scheub has discussed) Smith had shown interest, and also in the tradition of the Aesopian fable: the process of sympathetic identification with the victimized (in whom one recognizes one's potential or hypothetical self) may spur a sudden awareness of an identification with the victimizer, and, consequently, a moment of moral education. For example, Smith's references in The Beadle to British oppression of the Dutch are juxtaposed with references to Dutch oppression of indigenous South Africans, and her references in The Little Karoo to oppression by landowner or byowner are juxtaposed with references to male oppression of women. "The Miller", with its juxtaposed references to an oppressive God, an oppressive husband, and an oppressive Aryan race, stands as an illustration of one kind of reader response that Smith's fiction intends to elicit: the miller, suddenly recognizing one kind of oppression, tries to correct his own. (Smith neatly turns this imprisoning chain of oppression into a spiritually liberating one.) Were she to have treated the Israelite myth critically in "Ludovitje" or to have had a narrator who draws back from the Afrikaner's religious intensity (as revealed through the mother and son), her racial purpose would have been subverted in so far as the Afrikaner audience that is being addressed in this story would not have had

the necessary receptivity.

Smith's acknowledgement of the Afrikaner self-image as Israelite must be read, then, as a rhetorical device rather than as a statement of authorial belief, an acknowledgement that forms the base from which her psychology of a patriarchal Afrikanerdom, spoken in cautionary tones, can spring; there is no indication that she was in sympathy with this self-image (beyond recognizing that Afrikaners had been abused and misunderstood by the British) for she is aware of the implications of such righteousness, speaking of the suffering "at the hands of Christians" (Beadle 13) and the "contempt" felt by the "writers of the Old Testament" for "the heathen" (28). Of course there are, despite such judgements, strong feelings of affinity with the Afrikaner, feelings that have to do with her attachment to her father and a desire to imitate his allegiance, and also with a sense of identification that comes partly perhaps from her recognition of her own non-English (Scottish) and Calvinist origins. In a letter to Swinnerton, Smith refers to her ambivalence thus:

The narrowness of some of the lives lived in this valley is what Arnold would have called "fantastic" - yesterday we went up far into the mountains to a most beautiful little farm where they seemed never to have heard of any war since the Boer war, and where no papers from the outside world ever reach them - It was as if for those few hours we were living in a little self-contained world safe within a ring of mountains over which no news of disaster could ever travel! And on Sunday the

Dutch predikant came to take service as he does on this very large farm every two months & preached a sermon that should have been preached not less than 500 years ago! I was appalled! - Yet these are the people I understand best - so there must be something of them in myself!... (15 February 1936, BC 236 D9.29)

Here is the same combination of sympathy and disapproval that emerges in Smith's 1913-14 Journal. These two attitudes coexist in her fiction, written during the first third of the century. As the century wears on, Smith's ambivalence begins to lose the equilibrium through a growing feeling of unease that has largely to do with her loyalty to Afrikaners and their attitudes towards blacks.

BLACK/WHITE POLITICS

As I suggested in the previous section, the political changes in South Africa during the thirties and forties began to affect the (albeit at times shaky) equilibrium that Smith's political ambivalence had attained in her fiction of the twenties. The story of "Ludovitje" contains an obvious cue regarding Smith's political stance. This is her only piece of fiction directly concerned with characters other than white, and it deals with labourers from the Tali district (presumably people in desperate search for food after the mfecane and, above all, the cattle-killing of 1857). Is Smith dissembling when she talks of white men working the land: for "working" are we to read "supervising"?

To an extent Smith sidesteps the accusation (made most explicitly by Sheila Roberts) that she has overlooked the existence of black agricultural labourers, by setting her fiction in what Voss calls "the anonymous 1890s" ("Die Pêrels van Pauline 113), a period conveniently remote, at least more so in the Little Karoo than in much of the rest of the country, from manifest racial problems, though certainly not from class ones. As the Cape of Good Hope Labour Commission (1893) shows, ethnic divisions were relatively blurred, with sexual relations (marital and extra-marital) being very common between black and white in a certain economic class, and black and white employees often being paid and treated similarly badly by their employers. So closely were the poor of both race groups identified that a farmer from the Prince Alfred region in the Cape who was interviewed by the Commission stated that if poor whites were "destined to take the same work [as blacks], the same stage of education suffices" (Vol 2, 140), and, as Colin Bundy notes of the Commission's findings, "Several farmers wanted the Masters and Servants legislation, the Strop Act, and the Vagrancy Act applied more rigorously against poor whites" (11). Smith herself notes in her Journal that one very often cannot distinguish between white and coloured in this area (6 October 1913), although she also notes in her 1905 Diary that the Afrikaners attending the December 16

"Dingaan's Day" celebrations in Oudtshoorn could: "... 5000 Boers waiting to get to the reserved seats at 7! The coloured folk all turned out of the gallery to make room for Boers" (17 December 1913). But the distinction that Smith is interested in here surely has nothing to do with a distinction between poor white and the poor of other racial groups.

Smith's choice of spatial and temporal setting is quite congruent with her decision to focus on a particular class of people - the domestic servant, the economically dependent and landless bywoner, the farmer hiring land, the landowner without the access to water even to hope to make a success of his farm - a decision fully articulated in a sentence from A.B. about her "most deeply-felt interest [being] with the poor and the narrowing circumstances of their lives" and her "less than just [attitude] to the rich" (69). And this setting allows her to be less concerned with specifically racial questions than if she had been writing about the regions of the Transvaal or Natal that she began to visit after publication of The Beadle and that prompted her to write to Winifred Holtby: "I used to feel that if only I knew their language I would be at home with the natives even more by nature than I am with the Dutch" (5 December 1934).

A fictional interest in blacks was not, of course, common at this time; not, at least, with the degree of interest that it was Smith's nature to give her

fictional subjects. While it is clearly part of my argument that Smith does pay covert attention to black/white racial issues, it is worth taking this issue quite simply for the moment. White writers were not in the habit of telling the stories of blacks in the way that Smith told the stories of poor whites: intimately and sympathetically. During the 1920s Millin had published what she called her Alita stories (later collected in Two Bucks Without Hair), stories about her black domestic servant that focus primarily on the comic desires of Alita and her family to acquire clothing that, in "A Pair of Button Boots", would "stand for smartness, for affluence, for social position" (120), and consign to background, in "American-Cut Trousers", the 1913 Orange Free State campaign against pass laws for women in which Alita participated (131). Not surprisingly, however, these are stories that have as their true subject the narrator's attitude to Alita: there is running through them a kind of confession of her own part in the misunderstandings and betrayals, and a frequent sense that she is dealing with people better-behaved than she, as in "The New House" (154-155) and "The Black Dress" (142-144).

In 1931 Ethelreda Lewis, under the pseudonym R. Hernekin Baptiste, published Four Handsome Negresses, which tells the "truth" about four women from the coast of Guinea intended by the Portuguese to be put ashore

"at different points of the African coast as emissaries of trade and, presumably, of Christian missionary enterprise"; women "to be well tended [and] richly dressed" (7) but in Lewis's account kept like caged animals, starved and abused. Again, the standard white perspective is critically presented: "It was hard for them to understand that the part of the body held sacred by Nature to the feeding of the child, the maintenance of the tribe, is indecent, lewd, provocative of base desires in defenceless man. They were but barbarians" (127).

Finally, Sampie de Wet, also known to Smith (through the Smuts family)¹¹ though younger than Smith, Millin and Holtby, wrote a story called "The Bantu Artist" in which, although the third-person pronoun is maintained, so that the black character does not attain subjectivity, the use of free indirect style places him as central consciousness. Moreover, the story invalidates the white perspective that turns Samuel Mfaza from "being the Bantu painter, whose works would live for ever, who was showing the world that Art knows no colour bar" to a "black kaffir, one of the voteless, hopeless hordes segregated by the superior whites, [who] had transgressed their laws which he did not understand" (Nine Stories 76).

There are two conclusions to be drawn here. Smith counted among her friends people who interrogated current racial practices and stances, and her racial

silence is not likely to have issued from a failure to see the political and human problem before her. Her nature would have made it impossible for her to write stories about her relationship with black servants, as Millin did (when she comes to write about "Rose Ann", a British domestic worker (BC 236 B20), she uses the third-person, effacing the narrator, and giving voice to the voiceless). In addition, her sociological situation made it impossible to write of blacks with the kind of intimacy she felt towards whites, whose psyche had been made available to her through her understanding of Calvinism. Secondly, Smith is a child of her times. The use in her writing of the words "stock" and "race" suggest that she is familiar with the arguments of the time regarding eugenics, which appear in the works of Millin, Lewis and, before them, Schreiner. As J.M. Coetzee argues in his essay, "Blood, Flaw, Taint, Degeneration", the myth about the superiority of Western Europeans was "viable intellectual currency" from the mid-nineteenth into the twentieth century, a period Coetzee characterizes by means of various quotations, one from Herbert Spencer, a thinker favoured by Schreiner: "The old predatory instinct [has] subserved civilization ... by clearing the earth of inferior races of men" (qtd. in Coetzee 42). Scattered through Smith's fiction and non-fiction are reminders of the anthropological beliefs of the time, which had developed

into general social beliefs, that white races were superior to black races in terms of civilization, and that the primitive purity of the black races would act as a counter force to the effete and decadent aspects of civilization. There is evidence of political and moral uncertainty, however, within this basic position.

In her 1913-14 Journal Smith shows considerable interest in the economic status and the exploitative treatment of servants on the farms that she visited. Of the Dutch hierarchical attitudes she writes, "They have never forgiven the English the freeing of their slaves. The Jew stands for them not on an equality, like the English, and so to be feared and hated, but is somewhere vaguely between the lowest of poor Christian whites and those coloured races [i.e. including blacks] who ought still to be slaves" (1913-14 Journal, 25 April 1914). Although her judgements are not rigorous, tones of dissension often break through, either simply in the form of a sudden attentiveness to detail or in irony and wryness. "But even the missionaries stick to the line drawn between the two races, and missionaries' children are as a rule even firmer", she notes on one occasion (31 October 1913), and on another: "Mimi asked Jean hoarsely if it wasn't terrible, how the white Englishmen making the [railway] line lived with coloured women? Here had been the tent of an Englishman with a white wife and "up dar by" had been the hut where his black wife and her half-white children lived. I could not

make out if the white wife was with him or not but the black wife's children were mostly white" (11 October 1913). If Smith's use of reported speech, with the dramatic intrusion of direct speech, serves to identify speaker and author in a technical sense, keeping the authorial voice well behind the speaking voice, then the sudden appearance of the authorial I, assertively not partial to Mimi's hoarse judgement, reminds one how deceptive such technical identification may be: Mimi is here, as is her fictional counterpart in "Ludovitje", an unreliable speaker.

Undeniably, however, part of Smith's reservedness is a moral hesitancy rather than literary tact. Again in her 1913-14 Journal, she notes without further comment that one set of her acquaintances kept servants waiting up until midnight in order to get cocoa freshly made, rather than left in a jug; the servants had also to get up earlier than their employers the following morning to have coffee ready. She watches another providing for her servant the following meal: "For Adam a half loaf of bread, and some chunks of meat ... and a dish of tea, made in a dish, and then emptied into an old fruit tin!" (10 December 1913), only the exclamation mark signalling her unmistakable distress. She reports another's conversation about keeping from the four indentured "Bushmen" servants the knowledge of "how old they are [because] then they stay with us much

longer than they are bound for, not knowing they can go"; this employer, Alie, keeps "Dolphine", a twenty-two-year-old woman, in a short dress "with a false hem that she cannot let down, and with no tucks ... either" so that, in Alie's own words, "I can ... still slap her and pull her by the ear if I like to ..." (29 November 1913); Smith's initially blithe concordance with Alie - "and certainly they are happy and do work - becomes checked by doubt, for she adds ironically that "there is none of the servant-labour worry here. Both she and Gert, sitting still in their chairs, simply shout for one of those 4 creatures ...". She finally claims that Alie acts "regardless of their feelings"; indeed, she reveals a scarcely disguised dislike for Alie by the end of this section: when she and Marie, her travelling companion, find that there is no slop-pail in their bedroom, Marie "brazenly" flings the water out on to the stoep, in a bold enactment of Smith's own hidden, more tentative response.

This range of response is of course quite consonant with the attitudes towards race and class that defined British liberalism of the time. Smith's historical sense of South African rural life was modelled, as Voss notes in "Die Fêrels van Pauline", on the idea of English agrarian history promoted in the liberal or social democrat texts being published at the turn of the century, and specifically in J.L. and Barbara Hammond's The Village Labourer 1760-1832: A Study in the

Government of England before the Reform Bill. When Smith reads Francis Brett Young's They Seek a Country she says to Swinnerton that she "would rather have it all direct from the Voortrekker memoirs & the Hammonds' 'Village Labourer', etc." (13 February 1938); this suggests, of course, that the novel lacked the authenticity she desired but also that, for a theoretical framework, the Hammonds's text was what was available to her. Smith did not, presumably, know of Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa (London 1916).

In Voss's terms Smith lacks a "colonial parallel" to the Enclosure Acts that motivated much of the British liberal argument, turning to the problems of landlessness usually in a vague or mysterious way and without seeming to comprehend the historical processes (113-116). It is hard to disagree: Smith's attitude was essentially a Eurocentric one, which sees Africa as "barren" of "history" as well as of "beauty in art" (letter to Swinnerton, 26 December 1934, BC 236 D9.24). The Native Land Act of 1913, for instance, which ought to have moved her towards that colonial parallel, goes unmentioned, for Smith's conception of ownership was almost as conveniently limited as the times demanded: "Here [the land] was not owned, that is farmed and possessed, till the colonists came, though even the colonists stole what grazing rights existed from the tribes who owned cattle" (23 April 1914). There are the

normal doses of naivete and patronization: she talks in a letter to Swinnerton written from Natal (30 June 1934, BC 236 D9.22) of the "Kaffir" as, again, "so fine & dignified & full of laughter"; earlier, visiting the Transvaal, she recounts the missionary's viewpoint that blacks "can afford to bide their time, & in biding it will gather all the food they can for their minds" for the Revolution ... a slow mental one that is coming" ("Sabie, 1926-27", 20 December 1926 - 4 January 1927). Given her recognition of the inevitability of a revolution of another kind, caused by the Colonials not seeing that "they have exercised a false 'right' in keeping the working man in a 'place' selected by themselves for all these generations" (1913-14 Journal, 21 March 1914), one must note her failure to identify blacks clearly and decisively as members of this subjugated working class.

As the century progressed, Smith travelled further afield than the Little Karoo, meeting and becoming friends with such various people as Millin, Lewis, General Smuts and his wife, Killie and Ethel Campbell; her notebooks after the 1913-14 Journal begin to take more account of blacks and even to list vernacular terms. I have already noted how eagerly Smith agrees with the progressive Transvaal missionary in Sabie who spoke of the harm done the Zulu by Christianity; she is in accord, too, with a friend Pierre who argues that marriage is urged upon the new converts "only because of

the fees which the predikants & others get for marriages made legal"; people might remain "faithful man & wife all their married life" without a Christian ceremony ("Beaufort West 1927", BC 236 B36). Pulling away more and more from the colonizer's perspective, Smith seems readier and readier to enter another. In "Odds and Ends" (BC 236 B39) 1935 she makes a list of Xhosa words, and in Odds and Ends 1934 a list of what a "Bushman" servant receives each month. In the cluster of notes entitled "Beaufort West 1927" she has a section called "Notes for Short Stories" which include one story focussing on a black person - "The Curse" - and another told her by a black - "The Old Hottentot's Tale". Most revealing is Smith's account of her 1934 "Wagon Trip" (BC 236 B41): when Smith tries to get stories from Koos, the coloured driver, she laments her poor Afrikaans and wishes that her friend Kathleen Taute were able to relax with him and act, it seems, as translator, "so I could find out more about him", but Kathleen instead gives her a lecture "on the proper way in which to treat coloured servants": "... K. has very strongly the feeling of the Dutch that if coloured people are not kept strictly in their place life and work with them becomes impossible".

Shortly after publication of The Beadle, when Smith was travelling through the Little Karoo, she saw groups of people on the move, their belongings piled on to carts, wandering from farm to farm in search of work.

This was part of the Depression that followed the drought in the early twenties. One of the people with Smith at the time was her Dutch South African friend Marie Stegmann, who recalls that these were "coloured" people, and that it was here that Smith received the inspiration for her story "Desolation".¹² If this is true (for one thing, Marie Stegmann may have determinedly classified indigents as members of an "inferior" race), it is interesting that Smith transformed Alie and her grandson into "poor whites" rather than write about them as "coloured" or even black. The descriptions in "Desolation" of the poor whites as slow-moving, patient and enduring concur with the descriptions Smith had used just a few months earlier, in her notes "Sabie, 1926-27", of the blacks' patience and "natural nobility of mind", though there she adds that she had a sense of their "unconscious power" (20 December 1926 - 4 January 1927). Just over twenty years later Alan Paton would write Cry, the Beloved Country (1948), making the kind of metaphorical connection that Smith makes between the patient endurance of blacks and of oxen (a metaphor also drawn, if with different effect, in J.J.R. Jolobe's "The Making of a Servant"). But Smith made no such shift of focus that her travels might have suggested to her, and was able to add "Desolation" to the existing Little Karoo stories for the second edition published in 1930.

IDEALIZATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Soon after publishing "Desolation" and "The Father" in the second edition of The Little Karoo Smith's letters begin to confess, though infrequently, what seems to be a new uneasiness about Afrikaner ideology. To Winifred Holtby she writes: "So often out here the Dutch claim me as belonging to them - I am, they say, not English, but 'Africaner' & must stay with them because I understand them as few English do - But their attitude towards the native has always made me unhappy -" (5 December 1934). In 1935, in a letter to Millin, she refers to "[t]he side of me that feels intensely about the Jews and the natives" (24 June 1935, BC 236 D5.57). In the same letter she jokes about the arguments that Millin and her husband have about South African Indians, as she has elsewhere (15 April 1934, BC 236 D5.47), but in a letter to another friend is more serious, speaking of being "desperately concerned" (letter to A, 23 January 1947).

Political views had always been less important to Smith than personal preferences (a Forsterian attitude against which Nadine Gordimer would later react). For all the argumentativeness displayed in her talks with Thys Taute about the crofters in England, on local political matters she had become confused by her appreciation of the "kindness" of the Dutch: speaking of the poor whites's feeling that "the rich man is there only to take advantage of him", she

suggests: "There must be fault on both sides, for the rich Dutch are hard against the poor in many cases. Yet no people could be kinder" (25 April 1914). Her responses were initially formulated with regard to her choice not to think like the British colonials around her, for her preference for the down-to-earth, Afrikaans people was often justified in her Journal. Whereas Olive Schreiner's protective attitude towards the Dutch had so diminished after the Anglo-Boer War that, by the time of the Smuts-Botha coalition, she had said, "It is the Boers who are top dog now", and changed her allegiance (qtd. in First and Scott 252), Smith continued to base her judgements on personal friendships, being tugged between her admiration for Smuts on the one hand and respect for his critics on the other. In a letter to Millin she says disparagingly of Ethelreda Lewis that her "feeling about Smuts is tremendously influenced by the native question. Some of her remarks have surprised me very much" (14 September 1934), yet when she read Winifred Holtby's article about Smuts in Time and Tide later that year, she writes to Holtby as if she agreed with her and Lewis regarding Smuts on the "native question" (5 December 1934).

Smith had become friends with the Smuts family, occasionally visiting their farm in Irene; taking her sister there in 1937 she describes the weekend to Swinnerton as "a very Russian experience for my sister", who had never before met the General or his family (13

February 1938, BC 236 D9.37). Whether she discussed politics with them or whether she "lay low" as she had elsewhere must remain open to speculation; however, for a woman who liked to keep up with political events, as her newspaper reading reveals,¹³ any critical or antagonistic feeling towards Smuts would have had to be firmly repressed, crossed out in the way other judgements are in her Journal. Indeed, an incident concerning a religious community at Bulhoek presents such astonishing background to the text of "Ludovitje" that, given the analogical relation drawn between Afrikaner and "Kaffir" via the concept "Israelite", one's speculation leads further afield.

Enoch Mgijima was one of the prophets who flourished during the period after the 1913 Land Act; part of his duty, as he saw it, is reflected in the name "Israelites" given to his followers, who were largely bywoners now stripped of their land - in the manner of Alie in "Desolation". The "promised land" of these Israelites had to be defended from the South African police during what is now known as the Battle of Bulhoek, where, under the authority of General Smuts, they were mowed down en masse (Wilson and Thompson 82-83). Smith's knowledge of the incident is undocumented; but even if the specific event is not written into "Ludovitje", the general idea most certainly is: the Afrikaners are not the only ones who have desired land

in this country and called themselves "God's chosen" in that desire.

Not surprisingly, Smith felt the Nationalist Party victory in 1948 as a "great blow" (letter to Lewis, 2 July 1948). European events during the thirties had already forced upon her certain implications regarding South Africa: in a letter to Cecil Sibbett she says, "If a Nazi or Fascist form of Nationalism runs riot there the consequences will be ghastly" (8 December 1938), and writing to Ethel Campbell a few days later she warns, "Don't let the Voortrekker memorials become Nazi Dutch, or evil will come to the country out of them" (12 December 1938, D1.54). What is now at stake for Smith is her faith in her own judgement: she writes to Millin that "now ... that my mind is all the time distressed about happenings in Germany & elsewhere ... my lack of faith in myself has left me stranded, & encourages, perhaps, a too quick yielding to physical disabilities" (27 August 1935, BC 236 D5.59). Her response to these anxieties is the standard liberal one: she speaks in a letter to Swinnerton of a friendship that develops between her cousin and some Afrikaans people when they discovered that he was related to the author of The Little Karoo and The Beadle: "These are small things - but in the increasing bitterness out there such small things are a help -" (22 October 1950). This desire for rapprochement must be seen quite differently from her earlier sympathies with the Boer position. Moreover,

the Afrikaner nationalism that she once validated now seemed different to her, and this difference seems to have affected her self-image as a writer: "I wish I could have done more with my pen for Africa - I feel I have been to blame for not doing more", she writes to Millin at the start of the Second World War (11 September 1939, BC 236 D5.78).

Whatever changes of political consciousness began to develop in Smith after the publication of The Beadle and with the widening horizons of the world she inhabited, her writing turns away from realism towards idealization. Smith's development as a writer is to an extent characterized by this increasing tendency to idealize, to shift into a world where the connections with history become more and more vague. If, as I have already suggested, The Little Karoo is recognizably the world as it was perceived by the Carnegie Poor White Commission conducted in the 1920s (although there are not, in Smith's fiction, the extensive naturalistic emphases on disease, malnourishment and lack of sanitation that are offered by the Commission's findings), The Beadle presents an idyllic world, despite its underlying dissonance. In the period 1926-30, a particularly productive one for Smith, in which she wrote and published "The Horse Thieves", "The Cart", "Desolation", "The Father", "The Last Voyage" and "A Visit to the Diamond Diggings", the a-historical

tendency continues. "The Last Voyage", for instance, creates a contemporary world yet one shrunken into the affairs of a family given without social context. Although her unfinished novel, "Winter Sacrament", has a prologue foreshadowing the Anglo-Boer War, the setting is even further back in time than that of The Beadle (in one version it is at a time when Jafta is a small boy, voorloper to the ox-wagon drawn by Dias):

As yet, however, this war of man's making lay in the distant future, while the calamities visited by God upon all his people alike in the Platkops district, belonged to the recent past and the still precarious present. For it was to a winter in the late 1860s - that decade of strangely varying fortune for the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope - and to a keen clear bright morning in June, that time and its seasons had now brought Platkops men.

Although Smith had the grace to note that her history of the area given in the prologue is simply "the white man's story", there would clearly have been as little attention here as in The Little Karoo and The Beadle to black and coloured labourers. Smith's lines, "And how mysterious and yet how simple, when one paused to look back upon them were the ways of the Lord in his dealings with his people in their time of need", strike one now with the force of parody.

If Smith had found, with The Little Karoo and The Beadle, a way to avoid the simplistic and yet maintain her writerly belief in "simplicity", "Winter Sacrament" all too clearly misses it. It reads as nothing more than a poor imitation of her earlier work: one of the

main characters, Susannah, is orphaned, "the child of tragedy and woe" yet "a happy child - friendly with all around her, black and white alike, and on terms of surprising intimacy also with the stern Calvinistic God of her race". Another, Tante Lijsbet, "was a woman in her fifties whose care and concern for others was so spontaneous and enduring, so natural and unself-seeking that it was accepted as their right by all in the valley, herself among them". Living in the Aangenaam valley too is the bywoner Hans Doppelman, "a bitter obstinate grumbling old man whose mind could hold but one thought at a time and all else must give way to it" and who is driven from the farm when his master's son marries and takes Doppelman's home for him and his new bride. That Doppelman goes "in bitterness and haste" suggests that he is to blame; that he returns years later "in penitence [which] never once was ... spoken" and with that characteristic "pain in his chest" establishes it.

The story promises to deal with a love affair: during a journey along the Ghamka river Tante Lijsbet notices "a secret greeting", the "flutter of Antoinette's handkerchief ... and the double crack of Matthys' whip" and resolves to do what she can for the young people. Antoinette's burden is her servitude in a crowded household run by "a quick-tempered and demanding woman", Matthys's is some as yet undefined "evil out of

the past", to do, it seems, with his uncle Hendrik, "a bad one", and his mother Hanna de Neysen, a "tall dark silent and sorrowful woman" who had closed her heart against pain and also against happiness.

All trace of a world oppressed by economic deprivation and dependency is now gone. As well as this, there is a smoothening of tone, an even greater tonelessness, that muffles altogether the notes of ambivalence that has been seen to be so significant an aspect of Smith's prose. In "The Sisters" ambivalence appears in the form of two voices, each with a different ontological status, but both quite clearly heard; in The Beadle, published ten years later, the authorial voice is quieter and the ambivalence appears as a more precarious commingling, an uneasier balance, the idealizing voice taking gradual precedence over the protesting voice. In "Desolation", written after The Beadle, the political mystification has increased. As Voss stresses, Smith calls the poor white a wanderer "by nature" (Little Kargo 96), and she is ambiguous regarding the causes of poverty ("Die Pêrels of Pauline" 115). The same kind of mystification occurs in "A Visit to the Diamond Diggings", written at much the same time as "Desolation", where Smith describes the Lichtenburg ridge as "a giant antheap upon which white men and black men had been doomed to endless activity" (66), and mystifies the causes: "it was as if some power outside themselves compelled men to this labour" (66). Of

course, Smith may be making an allusion here to contemporary thought - as reflected in Marx and Freud, for example - about "some power outside themselves": what reads as mystificatory to us may have had a different impact in her time. She certainly takes care to note the squalor - "a maze of huts and tents", some "made of hessian stretched across wattle frames", others of "flattened out petrol tins" (65), yet ends the sketch with a picture of a man making his fortune (67). If there is a touch of wryness in her tone, that is all; the presentation is highly idealized. One has the impression of a mind that recognizes the political element in the human condition and at the same time tries to evade it. A quite different view of the same district at the same period is given by Sol T. Plaatje in his "Native Life at the Alluvial Diggings" (1927), who adds to the picture of "ceaseless activity of shovelling, sieving and sorting by a jumble of humanity" (64), stories about thousands of people housed under "sacks thrown over a few sticks" (65), expensive water, thieving and drunkenness.

A similar sort of political evasion occurs in "Desolation". In the sentence, "The poor white is poor also in physique, and of all their consumptive stock only Stephan's Koos remained" (29), it appears that Smith is, as Voss claims she is, quite "unconscious ... that the implications of her pun on 'poor' continue in

'stock'", children being the only capital for poor people ("Die Pêrels van Pauline" 115). Yet in "The Sisters", written over a decade earlier, we have seen that author and characters are fully aware that a daughter is the only capital for Bugert de Jager. What has happened to such awareness? Because of the evidence from "The Sisters" it is reasonable to suppose that Smith felt the deeper meanings that Voss uncovers, that they lie at the same level of her creative consciousness that had demanded, a little earlier in the story, the choice of the words "shiftless" and "thriftless" (89) for the class of poor white, rather than the words "idle" and "wasteful". This means that the author has introduced the implications of helplessness, lack of prosperity and an absence of resources while at the same time silencing these implications through the propriety of rhyme. Interestingly, in one of the suggested sources for this story there appears a degree of authorial impatience at the abject state into which oppression and dependency lead one (repeated in the published version):

In the waiting room there was an old woman, very tall, gaunt, poorly dressed, sunken eyes, with her husband, a tall thin old man with a stoop that was the result of laziness rather than of overwork - a small grandchild of about 4 ... The old woman had not thought of undoing the wraps to spread on their knees & had not dared to put a match to the fire ready laid in the fireplace - But Mrs T. had no scruples & promptly set a light to it -- ("Mill River, 1926")

They sat close together on a bench against the wall and gave us greeting as we entered. Already, the old woman told us, they had spent an hour in the waiting-room, and six more hours must pass before their train was due. It was late winter, and she was cold, and her man was cold, and so was her little "hartjie", yet it had not occurred to her to undo the black and yellow rug and spread it across their knees. Nor had she dared, for fear of the station-master, she said, to set a match to the fire laid in the fire-place. This, however, E----- who fears no station-master in the Union, promptly did. ("Three Travellers: From a South African Diary")

One of the criteria of current Marxist South African literary criticism is the degree to which writers stand politically in advance of their time, interrogating the accepted conventions and values rather than swallowing, obfuscating or avoiding discussion of them. Colin Bundy suggests that the gradual discovery here of the poor white problem became a useful part of the aims common to the New Liberalism and the Social Imperialism of the 1890s as they became transcribed into a colonial key. He cites J.X. Merriman, who, after visiting the Midlands, warned against the "degradation of the white population", for it was one of "the things upon which our existence as a race in this land depends" (13). And in turn the Afrikaner nationalist politicians began to take account of the "armblankes" in an effort to mobilise Afrikaner solidarity across class lines. J.M. Coetzee, discussing Smith's assertion of the Afrikaner-Israelite myth in her fiction, has noted that "the historical consequences of this myth ...

have been serious" ("Pauline Smith and the Afrikaans Language" 200). And in a 1963 review of a reprint of The Beadle, Nadine Gordimer wonders how it is "possible that patient submission to the will of God can become the licence of those who feel themselves God-ordained to dispose of the lives of others" ("For Andrina Destiny was Bitter" 101). Smith's sympathy for the Afrikaner people and her interest in poor whites to the virtual exclusion of blacks will in the end be recognized as politically irresponsible, whatever her political motivations. A little like Coetzee's Michael K in her striving to escape history, she cannot, however, escape the critic who calls out so insistently, "... hold up your right hand [or] your left!" (Life & Times of Michael K 229).

If Smith's desire to write about the past world of the Little Karoo is above all a nostalgic desire (the city-dweller's yearning for the countryside, the deracinée's yearning for home, the adult's yearning for childhood) it is also the desire of a woman trapped in the early to mid-twentieth century who is longing instead for the latter end of the nineteenth, the time when her father was able to show for the Cape Dutch a sympathy that did not have to be corrected by the knowledge of what was happening by the mid-twentieth century. While minds more alert and critical than Smith's began to tell a different truth about the

Afrikaner (to say nothing here of the English settler), she fell into a deeper and deeper silence.

Smith's involvement, along with Carrie Townshend, the daughter of her old friend Emily Townshend, in caring for Eastern European refugees, her feeling of shame at the "part we have played in Europe these last 12 months [1936]" (letter to Millin 31 December 1936, BC 236 D5.65), her feelings of foreboding about South African racism on the basis of her experience of Fascism - all these increased her sense of helplessness as a writer, and led her to repeat with despair the cry of an old Dutch friend made one war earlier, "How can I plant me my garden when all Europe is a battlefield?" (letter to Millin, 27 July 1937, BC 236 D5.67). The passing of time that had thrown Smith into an increasingly nostalgic vision had itself meant an end to nostalgia: the modern political world helped bring her to a point where she could no longer be the pen for her father.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1 I am indebted to Sheila Scholten for this information.

2 For instance, Christina Stead in For Love Alone:

"But what about the house?"

"I don't know. I'll do what I can, but not too much."

"Let the men do it." Kitty uttered this revolutionary idea sharply.

"They wouldn't."

"Then let them live in the dirt," said Kitty. These two remarks made in quite a different voice,

must have been the result of thinking things out and made Kitty sound quite sharp and hard. Teresa looked at the new woman with new eyes. (272)

3 Again I differ with Butler: "It is no accident that Pauline Smith chose to end the volume with this cautious yet unequivocal suggestion of the redeeming power of compassion" (x).

4 The manuscript is held in the South African Library, MSB 438. Smith sent it to her friend Cecil Sibbett, who had it deposited there; see her letter to him, 7 July 1936, MSB 438.

5 The typescript is held in the South African Library: MSB 438. "I had used my typewriter, not my pen, in the writing of it" (A.B. 59).

6 Ridley Beeton makes the assumption that the corrections are in Bennett's hand - "The typescript was amended, presumably by Arnold Bennett" (19) - but they are quite clearly in Smith's hand.

7 At this time there was a story by Ruth Alexander, and an essay on Olive Schreiner, for instance, but the magazine is, otherwise, resolutely Afrikaans. Smith's stories that appeared in Die Huisgenoot in Afrikaans were "The Pain" (2 November 1934); "The Schoolmaster" (28 December 1934); "The Miller" (25 January 1935); "Anna's Marriage" (21 June 1935); "Ludovitje" (28 June 1935); "The Pastor's Daughter" (5 July 1935); "Desolation" (17 April 1936). An Afrikaans translation of "The Sinner" appeared in The Cape Argus (Supplement)

in May 1936.

8 Ravenscroft calls "Ludovitje" "the least successful of her stories" and immediately quotes a passage from The Beadle that, for him, shows Smith in a better light ("Pauline Smith" 56). Plomer writes, presumably ironically, that the author "pours upon ["South Africa's most open sore"], like a healing oil, the magic unction of evangelical mysticism, so that the child and the servant are brought into communion and rapt away into the supra-mundane sphere for which their innocence and the reasonless fervour kindled by a few bizarre old phrases have fitted them" (Preface to Little Kargo 17). Clayton, noting Plomer's "adverse comment", says that "the story leaves a slightly nasty aftertaste", and feels that Smith shows more distance in her Journal ("The Style of Poverty" 161). Haresnape, however, takes the story as "heavy with grief and emptiness", revealing "the authoress's intuitions of the mystery of things" (Pauline Smith 41), and sees the text setting up a metaphoric relation between Maqwasi and Ludovitje - the man working a miracle on the clay-stone as the boy works a miracle on Maqwasi's "stony" heart (65).

9 Walter Allen, in his The Short Story in English, calls "Ludovitje" "a miracle of literary tact": "the expression of a simple literal, and unflawed faith recorded without patronage or sentimentality", and adds, "Plainly, the true subject of the story is the grandmother, the woman who narrates it. It is very

unlikely that it was an expression of Pauline Smith's own faith but rather the fruit of her self-abnegating art" (243-44).

10 The term was still in general usage, even by liberal humanists such as Winifred Holtby; see her "Writers of South Africa" 75.

11 I am indebted to A. Balkema for this information.

12 Marie Stegmann, Interview. In a letter from Stegmann to Haresnape (qtd. in Pauline Smith 21) the incident is again reported, although there is now no reference to colour. Another source for the story is given in Smith's notes, "Mill River, 1926", and written up into the sketch, "Three Travellers: From a South African Diary" for The Cape. Here the characters are poor white.

13 There is evidence that Smith was a regular and even avid newspaper reader throughout her life. For instance, she writes to Swinnerton on 30 June 1934 of The New Statesman, The Manchester Guardian and Time and Tide (BC 236 D9.22), and in a section entitled "Customs to Remember" in her "Italian Diary" (BC 236 B30) she notes with disapproval the ignorance of one of her friends regarding contemporary political events.

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