AUTHOR, IDEOLOGY AND PUBLISHER:
A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP.

Lovedale Missionary Press and Early Black Writing in South Africa - with Specific Reference to the Critical Writings of H.I.E. Dhlomo.

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ABSTRACT

The specific instances of R.H.W. Shepherd and H.I.E. Dhlomo are used in this thesis to investigate some of the many factors that influence the formation of a colonial literature, such as politics, social structures and personal ideals.

By isolating the Lovedale Mission Press as a "contact zone" - a place where the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized come into direct contact with each other - it is possible to trace how the interaction between these cultures shaped the writing of a particular African writer, H.I.E. Dhlomo.

This is done through an analysis of historical factors that shaped the policy of the Lovedale Mission Press in the twentieth century: the development of liberalism in South Africa, the role of the missionary in African education, the function of a liberal magazine such as The South African Outlook and the appointment of an ambitious missionary, R.H.W. Shepherd, to the position of Director of Publications. This necessarily included a study of Shepherd's vision of African literature.

On the other hand, this study takes cognisance of the factors that shaped Herbert Dhlomo's vision of literature: the development of African nationalism, the entrenchment of segregation as a politial doctrine, and most importantly, his struggle to have his creative writing published by the Lovedale Press.

It is shown how Shepherd's vision of what African literature should entail contrasted with Dhlomo's, and how, as a result, Dhlomo deliberately structured his critical writing as a response to Shepherd's Eurocentric approach to African literature.

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PREFACE

I would like to thank all those who have expressed an interest in this subject and have provided me with encouragement. Foremost, I am indebted to my supervisor, Professor Malvern van Wyk Smith, who initially nudged me in the direction of the Lovedale Mission Press. His thorough knowledge and understanding of South African literature and his ability to point to an appropriate reference have benefitted me tremendously.

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In the course of writing this thesis, I have tried to use words such as "Bantu", "Kaffir" and "Native" in their respective historical contexts. The political connotations of these words in no way reflect the opinions of the writer.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Julie, and my daughters, Andreya and Sinead, for providing (and sometimes not providing) me with time to spend on my work.

INTRODUCTION

Since the arrival of the first press at the Lovedale mission in 1823, the development of African literature and the development of the missionary enterprise were closely linked. Missionaries at Lovedale and elsewhere continued to shape the style of African writing well into the twentieth century. The Lovedale Press was a forerunner in this field, and aimed to promote literature in the vernacular. The educational policy of the Institution sought to increase African proficiency in the English language.

As more and more Africans started writing, both in English and in the vernacular, it became inevitable that they would clash with the missionary publishers at some stage in the future. This study is an attempt to analyze the effect of such a clash between colonizer and colonized on the content and style of a writer by investigating the broader social, political and private developments that shaped Herbert Dhlomo's critical writing.

This thesis developed from a far more ambitious ideal, viz. to investigate the relationship between author and ideology. Reading done for my Honours project on the interaction between propaganda and literature initially led to my interest in this subject. My reading focused on work produced in Africa. In most of the material I read, I was surprised by the scant attention paid to the role of the publisher in the production of literature. When publishing did come under discussion, it seemed that the author reverted to the role of "literary phantom".

Three avenues of exploration seemed open to research: I could focus on the relationship of author versus ideology in the vein of Macherey (1978) and others, or I could look at publishers versus ideology as did Laurenson and Swingewood (1972) and Robert Escarpit (1966, 1971), or I could look at the relationship of author versus publisher.

What had initially seemed obvious to me, did not seem to warrant the attention of many literary critics: that the common ground between author and ideology was the publisher, and that all three of these elements of literary production existed in a symbiotic

relationship to each other. My original study therefore proposed to be a general investigation of the interaction between author, ideology and publisher.

While reading African literary criticism, I stumbled across the work of Herbert Dhlomo. Here the choice of the word "stumbled" is significant, as Dhlomo's work had become engulfed in the larger scheme of post-colonial writing. That this had been allowed to happen worried me, for Dhlomo, it appeared, had anticipated many of the arguments that would dominate African literary discourse in the 1960s and 1970s: questions such as the creation of a national identity by means of a "national" literature; the language that could best represent the ambitions of the African peoples; and the role of the African artist in the political struggle. Dhlomo noted that African literature could not afford to ignore the struggle of oppressed peoples for political emancipation long before this notion became fashionable. At the same time, he argued that the artist should never lose sight of his artistic integrity for the sake of conveying a political doctrine. Written predominantly during the 1930s, his were bold and sophisticated arguments for his time.

The reason why Dhlomo's work was often avoided by literary historians is complex: stuck away in journals and newspapers, his argument was erratic and difficult to follow. Even when the main body of his work had been "discovered" by Tim Couzens and Nick Visser, and had been republished in English in Africa (Visser 1977), South African literary historians saw in it no more than an interesting phenomenon in the development of African literary criticism, and instead focused their attention on better-known figures such as Es'kia Mphahlele and Lewis Nkosi, who belonged to a later generation of writers. Dhlomo was not completely forgotten. Tim Couzens (1974, 11-24) rightfully attributed Dhlomo with having inspired Nkosi and the later generation of writers. Perhaps it was because much of Dhlomo's work was veiled in Victorian rhetoric and because many of his arguments were elliptical that his writing received no more than a cursory glance from scholars. What intrigued me about his critical writing was the fact that articles written at the same time, in different journals, blatantly contradicted each other, and so I started probing for the source of these contradictions.

Herbert Dhlomo only published two books in his lifetime: The Girl Who Killed to Save, published by the Lovedale Press in 1935, and The Valley of a Thousand Hills, published by Knox Publishers in 1941. Much of Dhlomo's theoretical writing appeared in the South African Outlook and in Bantu Studies, both of which were published by the Lovedale Press. During the latter part of his life, he worked as Assistant editor of Ilanga Lase Natal, a newspaper owned by B.G. Paver, a white liberal with strong ties to the Lovedale Institution and its director, the Rev. R.H.W. Shepherd.

Because of the obvious link with Lovedale, I turned my attention to the Lovedale Mission Press, and it soon became clear that my attention should be focused on a particular individual, R.H.W. Shepherd. Shepherd was director of the Press and of the Institution for most of the time that Dhlomo actively produced critical and creative material. He had succeeded in building an empire around himself, guarded his authority in the mission world jealously, and wrote voluminously on the subject of African development, literature and culture.

Unwittingly, I had discovered a "contact zone" - a term used by Mary Louise Pratt to designate

> social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination. (1992, 4)

Although, as Benita Parry points out (1987, 28-29), it is naive to conceive of the relationship between colonizer and colonized as being a bipolar opposition, Dhlomo nonetheless nicely fitted the role of the African or colonized, while Shepherd was a stereotype of the colonizer. The space joining them, the Lovedale Press, became the contact zone. Here disparate cultures met, clashed, and ultimately forged a new, colonial literature. Pratt, in her book, Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation (1992, Introduction), specifically states that it is in the interaction in the contact zone that the relationship between colonizer and colonized is best represented. It is in the way the

cultures borrow from each other and assimilate one another that the underlying tensions are revealed.

The task of analysing the contact zone may be divided into three phases: establishing separate visions of the contact zone (that of the colonizer and that of the colonized), creating the contact zone and finally, writing in the contact zone. In the first section, *Visions of the Contact Zone*, I investigate and identify the key issues at stake in the thesis and establish the political milieu in South Africa during the early part of the century, when most of the interaction discussed in my thesis took place. In this first section, I also introduce a theoretical framework within which my analysis can take place. The section also provides an overview of the development of the Black Press and of a prominent liberal publication, the South African Outlook. I found a study of the Black Press and of the South African Outlook necessary because Dhlomo was so deeply involved in African journalism and often published his work in the South African Outlook. The South African Outlook was also the official publication of the Lovedale Press and was edited by Shepherd. In itself, the South African Outlook would have made for an interesting study.

In the second section, *Creating the Contact Zone*, I take a closer look at Robert Shepherd, his development as a missionary and as a political figure, as well as his pronouncements on African literature and culture. The focus then shifts slightly from Shepherd to the Lovedale Mission Press. I attempt to isolate the aims and objectives of the Press and to see how they were put into practice by Shepherd.

The final section, *Writing in the Contact Zone*, takes a look at the body of critical work produced by Dhlomo. The first chapter in this section is a general overview of Dhlomo's theory of African literature. His views are contrasted with those of Shepherd to reveal the essential differences between African thought and colonial thought on the subject of African literature. The second chapter in the section, which is also the final chapter of the thesis, ties the fore-going discussions together in an analysis of selected critical texts

written by Dhlomo, and shows how his oeuvre can be perceived as a direct product of writing in the contact zone.

In many ways the Lovedale Mission Press is a necessary choice for study: most of the primary material, manuscripts, correspondence between authors, etc., is available in the Lovedale Archive in the Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. Material on Herbert Dhlomo is available either at the Killie Campbell Library in Pietermaritzburg or in the Dhlomo manuscript collection at the National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown.

What hampered research considerably was the fact that crucial material relating to Lovedale was destroyed in the two fires that gutted the Institution. In other instances, especially during the years of the depression and of the Second World War, no records were kept for lengthy periods. Information on the operation of the Lovedale Press therefore had to be sought through various other sources. Consequently, much time was spent reading through large portions of the Lovedale archive - a time-consuming but essential exercise which indicated that the editorial interference experienced by Sol Plaatje was not an isolated incident.

Likewise, despite Visser and Couzens' excellent studies on the work of Herbert Dhlomo, it was necessary to scan issues of Imvo Zabantsundu and Ilanga lase Natal in an attempt to trace Dhlomo's critical argument. A complete picture of Dhlomo's writing in English could only be obtained through the slow process of reading through newspapers, often on microfiche.

The biographical material on Shepherd was taken mainly from G.C. Oosthuizen's biography, Shepherd of Lovedale (1970), or from correspondence between Shepherd and other parties. Much of Oosthuizen's information was gleaned from records of the London Missionary Society in Glasgow, which I was unable to confirm due to a lack of funds. Copies or transcripts of personal interviews between the author and Shepherd were likewise unavailable. Many inferences concerning Shepherd's political development are

drawn from secondary sources, and as a result both Shepherd's and Oosthuizen's arguments might seem contradictory. By definition, Shepherd was unaware of these contradictions, so where possible I have referred to documentation to clarify the issue. Where documentation was unavailable, I have speculated. Some inconsistencies, however, remain.

Enough said about the development of my research. What follows forms part of the process of redressing South African literary history.

SECTION A:

VISIONS OF THE CONTACT ZONE

CHAPTER 1

DEFINING THE CONTACT ZONE

Recent academic studies have made illuminating discoveries about the nature and content of colonial discourse, and the first task at hand is to introduce and analyze some of the more helpful concepts from these theories before applying and adapting them to examples from the critical oeuvres of Herbert Dhlomo and Robert Shepherd respectively.

1.1. A Synopsis of Certain Theories of Colonial Discourse

In the introduction it was noted that Dhlomo anticipated many of the debates that were to dominate critical writing in Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. Much of modern critical thought about colonial texts is derived from the writings of the Algerian revolutionary, Frantz Fanon. The importance of Fanon's argument lies in the way it recognizes colonial "otherness", or Blackness, as a potentially revolutionary force. He also shows how easily the Black colonized can don a white mask of culture and privilege.

Fanon sees the relationship between colonizer and colonized as a binary opposition in which the only way the colonized can free himself from the bondage of colonisation is to repossess his lost culture. A colonized writer can repossess his culture in three evolutionary phases:

> In the first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power. His writings correspond point by point with those of his opposite numbers in the mother country . . . .
>
> In the second phase the native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is. This period of creative work approximately corresponds to that immersion which we have just described. [Whereby the colonized completely immerses himself in the colonizer's culture and denies the value of his own.] But since the native is not a part of his people, since he has only exterior relations with his people, he is content to recall their life only. Past happenings of the bygone days of his childhood will be brought

> up out of the depths of his memory; old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and of a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies.
>
> . . .
>
> Finally, in the third phase, which is called the fighting phase, the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people. Instead of according the people's lethargy an honoured place in his esteem, he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature. (Fanon 1967, 178-179)

Fanon argues that the colonial experience is divided into Manichean opposites: good versus evil, black versus white, salvation versus damnation, etc. According to Fanon, the native is seen to be void of ethics and is a negation of all values (Fanon 1967, 178). The colonized therefore has to overturn this division in order to constitute a new, post-colonial identity. This is done by overturning the aesthetic values of the colonizer and replacing them with the colonized's own aesthetic values. Later theorists have largely concentrated on ways in which this "borrowed aestheticism" can be overturned or assimilated into a post-colonial literature.[1] Fanon's binary opposition, though useful, cannot fully explain the complexities of colonial discourse, and so later theorists have been forced to re-evaluate this theory.

1.1.1. Abdul JanMohamed and the Manichean Aesthetic Behind African Literature

Abdul JanMohamed uses Fanon's concept of a Manichean opposition to develop his theory of African aesthetics in his book Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa (1983). He argues that colonial society is a mutually rejective society (1983, 4), but that both colonizer and colonized are drawn to each other as a result of an essentially ambivalent and symbiotic relationship that exists between them (1983, 4).

1 Dhlomo himself borrowed heavily from European aesthetics and applied or assimilated what he saw fit into a new African aesthetic. See Chapters 6 & 7.

Although he does not explain this relationship fully, he nonetheless recognises an important mutual interdependency between the opposing parties: it is only by maintaining the subjugated position of the native colonial that the European colonial settler (Eurocolonial) is able to define his own privileged position. At the same time, the native colonial stands in real awe of western technology, but is simultaneously repulsed by the political subjugation he is forced to endure (1983, 4). The native colonial's literature therefore vents the abhorrence of the political system, while at the same time expressing admiration for other aspects of the colonizer's culture, such as technological advancement. The result is that the entire colonial society is left in a state of flux, or, as JanMohammed describes it, "latent crisis" (1983, 3).

JanMohamed correctly identifies this situation of constant crisis as the most important formative influence in African literature, but he is unable to successfully transcend the limits of manichean opposition and define a new African aesthetic. The African writer, he claims, has two choices: assimilation or rejection. No matter which of these he chooses, the native colonial is still in a double bind: if he chooses to remain true to his own cultural past, he is trapped in a "calcified society" (1983, 5) whose development has been checked by the process of colonization. If he chooses assimilation to the western culture, he is cut off from his own culture and past, and finds it replaced by a study of the colonizer's past.

Effectively, therefore, the colonized is unable to create an oppositional voice from within his society.[2]

2 See also Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." "Race," Writing and Difference., ed. Henry Louis Gates (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 262-280.

For JanMohamed, the relationship between colonial and African literatures is such that the work of a given author can only be understood in terms of its opposite (1983, 10). In other words: before we can fully understand and analyze the writing of H.I.E. Dhlomo, we first have to discover and analyze his opposite. Dhlomo's social and political interaction with the Lovedale Mission Press allows us tentatively to place R.H.W. Shepherd as his opposite. While JanMohamed's approach to colonial literature is effective when studying the larger social relations at play in producing a text, and provides useful insights into the process of generating colonial texts, it cannot successfully explain the contradictions prevalent in Dhlomo's work. For example, JanMohamed would be able to offer reasons *why* Dhlomo was forced to assimilate western ideas into his writing, but be unable to explain *how* these ideas are manifested and reproduced in a text. It is precisely because of its inability to sustain an in-depth textual analysis that JanMohamed's theory of Manichean aesthetics fails in this instance. It does not take into account that in the meeting of disparate cultures, a new aesthetic comes about by using elements of the colonizer's discourse. This new aesthetic is mutually influenced by the participation of both the colonizer and the colonized. Despite noting the symbiosis prevalent in the social relations of colonial society, JanMohamed does not transfer this to a close textual study, and therefore cannot exceed the bounds he has placed on his own theory. JanMohamed's theory of Manichean aesthetics merely re-affirms the binary and oppositional nature of colonial writing (Parry 1987, 32), an opposition that the present study seeks to overthrow.

1.1.2. Homi Bhabha and the Ambivalence of the Colonial Subject

Unlike JanMohamed, who maintains Fanon's binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized, Homi Bhabha tries to escape this opposition by defining the complexity of the colonial relationship in two ways: firstly, he investigates what he calls the ambivalence of the colonial subject (Bhabha 1986, 163ff) and secondly he redefines the concept of a nation to allow for this ambivalence of the colonial subject.

In his initial argument Bhabha claims that the native colonial is dislodged, and writes from a varied position within the colonial milieu. The native colonial writer mimics the colonizer's discourse, but re-articulates it as a parody of colonial discourse. By (mis)appropriating the terms of the dominant ideology, the colonized is therefore able to intercede against, and resist, this mode of construction. The result is an oppositional voice from within (1986, 172).

Writing by the colonized subject is, therefore, characterized by recurrent instances of transgression performed by the native colonial from within the confines of his society, and aimed against colonial discourse. In this way, Bhabha claims, an opposition to the dominant ideology is established.[3] Bhabha argues that because the position of the native colonial is constantly changing in relation to that of the colonizer, it is impossible to refer to a strictly oppositional relationship between them (as do Fanon and JanMohamed). Since the relationship between colonizer and colonized cannot be seen as being directly oppositional, the writing of the colonized subject does more than merely assimilate the vision of the colonizer and produce a mirror image.

Bhabha's argument is augmented by his concept of the nation as defined in Nation and Narration (1990). Relying yet again on the ambivalence of his subject, he sees the coming into being of a nation as the result of cultural signification; that is, of social rather than of political life. Within these social boundaries he is then able to emphasise the instability of knowledge and reinforce the "Janus-faced" nature of the nation and narrative practices within the nation (1990, 3).

3 Spivak 262-280, on the other hand, feels that the colonial subject, and especially the female subject, cannot create an oppositional voice from within.

The ambivalence of the colonial subject, as Bhabha points out, allows for the appropriation of western ideas into colonial discourse and represents them to the reader as a parody of the original. Using Bhabha's concept of the variously positioned native colonial, we could make a case for some of Dhlomo's arguments and show how he uses his position to create an oppositional (and inherently revolutionary) voice. But since Dhlomo's conscious, studied assimilation and rejection of colonial values can hardly be described as parody, it becomes difficult to maintain Bhabha's theory in a practical analysis of Dhlomo's writing.

1.1.3. Mary Louise Pratt and the Contact Zone

One of the most helpful and lucid arguments about colonial discourse is that of Mary Louise Pratt as developed in her book Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation (1992). In investigating travel writing as a genre, she pays attention to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. One aspect that separates her work from that of the other theorists is that she pays attention not only to the position of the colonized, but also investigates the position of the colonizer, or "Eurocolonial" (Smith 1993, 17) . In the process of analyzing the colonial encounter, Pratt coins a number of useful phrases and concepts. Foremost, she refers to the "contact zone" in colonial fiction. This is a social space, such as Lovedale, where disparate cultures meet and clash and establish relationships with varying degrees of domination and subordination (1992, 4). The relationship established here is an ongoing process that involves racial inequality as well as coercion by various parties (1992, 6). It is within these areas of contact, interaction and immediate co-presence, that an understanding of the workings of colonial fiction can come about (1992, 7). Unlike JanMohamed, who, with his view of adversarial societies, tends to emphasise the separateness of colonial society, Pratt relies specifically on the interaction between them. Within this interactive environment, cultural assimilation does not necessarily muzzle the oppositional voice of the colonized writer. On the contrary, it becomes an essential part of creating the colonial voice (1992, 172-197).

Another term that she often uses is "autoethnography", or "autoethnographic expression" (1992, 7). She uses the term to refer to instances where the colonized writer uses terms and expressions that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms. This idea links closely with Bhabha's notion of colonized subjects (mis)appropriating terms and expressions of the colonizer. Autoethnographic texts are texts which the "other", the colonized, constructs as a response to, or as part of, a dialogue with European texts. By trying to appropriate the terms of western drama into African dramatic theory, Dhlomo would be relying on autoethnography. Autoethnography, by its very nature, involves appropriation and assimilation of the colonizer's discourse, and relies in part on a measure of co-operation with the colonizer.

Texts of autoethnographic expression are by nature heterogenous or, in Bhabha's terminology, "ambivalent", in that they are aimed at both a metropolitan (European) audience, as well as the literate sections of the writer's own community. Each of these social groups, therefore, interpret the text differently. Sol Plaatje's Mhudi (1930), which was written largely for a European audience, but widely read in his own country by Africans, is a classic example of such a text. What is important to note about these texts is that the authors often use them as points of entry into the literate culture of the dominant ideology (1992, 8-9).

If autoethnographic expression is a way in which the colonized subject can express himself, then how does the Eurocolonial writer go about expressing himself creatively? Pratt (1992, 172-197) proposes that this is done through "creole self-fashioning" - a term that explains why

> an *americanissimo* [a statement of patriotism to the American continent] transmitted westward from Europe suggest[s] neither irony nor predicament. (Pratt 1992, 173)

Likwewise, a Eurocolonial like Shepherd could see no contradiction in explaining African culture to Europe, nor in a statements suggesting how the African should go about presenting his own culture to the world. Through the notion of "creole self-fashioning", Pratt is able to explain this complex cultural logic by which the the colonial environment is re-defined through the eyes of the European colonial subject. Visions of both Europe and the Colonies are re-created to suit the political status quo of the Colony. European cultural and scientific endeavour is held up to the colonized as a model of excellence, while the Colony is presented to the rest of the world as a picture of idyll. It is a confused world in which the primary aim is to create

> an independent, decolonized . . . society and culture, while retaining European values and white supremacy. (Pratt 1992, 175)

As will be seen in the chapters dealing specifically with Shepherd and with Lovedale, the concept of "creole-self-fashioning" is useful when trying to understand some of the contradictions inherent in Shepherd's actions and in his arguments.

1.2. Conclusion

Pratt's concept of a contact zone, as well as the principles of creole self-fashioning and autoethnography, allows readily for transculturation, a term used by ethnographers to describe the process by which subjugated peoples select materials transmitted to them from the dominant peoples and adapt them to their own situation and for their own purposes (Pratt 1992, 6). Through transculturation, therefore, colonized people can control which aspects of the colonizing culture they wish to assimilate into their own. The converse is also true; the colonizer can borrow from, and use elements of, the colonized culture. Pratt's theory of colonial discourse is the only one of the above-mentioned theories of colonial discourse that readily allows for interaction between disparate cultures, and it is therefore most suited to the purpose of this thesis.

The aim of this chapter has been to place my work within a theoretical framework. At the core of my argument lies the fact that colonial discourse is not just the result of conflict, but also of co-operation between the West and Africa. It is about borrowing, assimilating and rejecting; about the inability of both colonizer and colonized to to see through their cultural prejudices. What matters is not whether rifts existed (and still exist) in the South African society, nor how such rifts were constructed (though I have tried to show this), but how, *together*, both colonizer and colonized contribute to the forging of a new literature.

CHAPTER 2

SURVEYING THE CONTACT ZONE

2.1. Introduction

It is only in the study of the social and critical debates of the period between the World Wars that we can discover the full extent of the hardships experienced by African writers in the early part of this century. Contact zones between disparate cultures should not be considered in isolation, but should be viewed within an historical, social and political context. This chapter notes some of the key issues that influenced the development of an African literary tradition, such as the introduction of the written word into African languages by the missionaries, the spread of missionary education in the nineteenth century, and Africans' resultant need for a written literary tradition. Furthermore, this chapter identifies the period between the two World Wars as the crucial period in African literature when the relationship between authors, mission publishers and prevailing government ideology became especially prominent. Herbert Dhlomo and Robert Shepherd are singled out as the most prominent literary figures of the time, and it is noted how, historically, the Lovedale Mission Press came to be the common ground between these two people.

The first examples of African creative writing appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time, politically oppressed sections of South African society started grouping themselves politically, and were beginning their struggle for emancipation.

These political groupings were small, and primarily served the interests of specific cultural communities.[1] It was only on the eve of the passing of the 1913 Land Act that these groups united in the South African Native National Congress in 1912 to voice their opposition. Negotiations with white politicians in South Africa met with limited success, and so the Congress leadership decided to call upon Britain to intercede directly in the affairs of the Colonial Government. After hearing an appeal from the Congress delegation (led by Sol Plaatje), the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, wrote to General Smuts to note his concern for the lot of Africans in South Africa. The letter refers to the "growing threat of 'Bolshevism' and 'Garveyism' to not only the British Commonwealth, but the whole existing structure of society" (qtd in Willan 1984, 245). In South Africa, the rural lifestyle was fast becoming a thing of the past and African writers and political leaders had to come to terms with the conflict that existed between the westernised present and the rural past. Lloyd George was obviously troubled by the political developments in this country.

Life in the early twentieth century was more complex than it had been in the past. R.R.R. Dhlomo's preface to his 1928 novella, An African Tragedy, shows a desire to address the problems of rapid urbanisation:

> I have been correspondent of Ilanga lase Natal for the past five years, under the nom-de-plume of "Rollie Reggie".
>
> As such, therefore, I have always tried to keep my ears and eyes open to mark any incident in life that may happen to affect the lives of people - especially the young - in their grim struggles for existence in this tumultuous city of Johannesburg. (Dhlomo, R. 1928, Introduction)

1 See Chapter 3, paragraph 3.3. on the development of African Nationalism.

As a journalist, Rolfes Dhlomo, brother of Herbert Dhlomo, had regular contact with the hardships of daily existence in the locations. He tried to use the influence of the mass media to drive the realities of urban slums, migrant labour and cultural dispossession home to his readers. It was inevitable that these themes would penetrate African literary discourse and arouse the chagrin of the colonizers who sought to maintain the status quo.[2]

As western education became more widespread among Africans, so too did the need for a written literary tradition of their own. There was a paucity of literature written by Africans, and it was not until after the turmoil of the 1920s that African literature began to find a sense of direction. Although the bulk of work was written in the vernacular, the number of English manuscripts gradually increased, since English provided writers with a wider audience, as well as with better financial returns. A healthy debate on literary and other matters related to the arts was conducted in African newspapers, journals, magazines and in public addresses. Because creative writing by Africans was published almost exclusively by missionaries, the only independent outlet for an authentic African voice was newspapers. Tim Couzens (1974, 11-24) shows the reliance of black authors on journalism for a stable income in order to pursue their creative writing during the 1930s and 1940s. Journalistic writing formed what Couzens refers to as "secondary resistance" to white supremacy. In newspapers, under the guise of conformity, writers could reach out to their fellow Africans in ways that were unattainable otherwise. Writers enjoyed a greater sense of anonymity in the newspapers, thus prompting them to write what would otherwise have remained unsaid. These "newspaper debates" formed the base on which the literature of the 1930s was built.

The decade of the Thirties saw crucial developments taking place in the field of African literature. It saw the publication at the Lovedale Mission Press of the first novel, the first novella and the first drama by African authors. During this period, too, the first African

2 See Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2. on the development of South African liberalism.

literary criticism appeared, the writers often being the same individuals who published their fiction at Lovedale - Sol Plaatje, Herbert Dhlomo, D.D.T. Jabavu and Benedict Vilakazi. The literary contribution made by all these people is significant, but among them the voices of Dhlomo and Vilakazi stand out. For these writers, writing was more than a hobby or a livelihood - it was part and parcel of the act of catapulting their people into the mainstream of twentieth-century development. They faced many hardships along the way: inferior education, the lack of a written literary tradition, a denial by the missionaries of the worth of their oral tradition, and political repression.

Political developments in the country were diverse, with both Afrikaner and African rhetoric becoming increasingly nationalistic. The development of nationalism caused a state of confusion in liberal circles. Liberals spent valuable time and energy regrouping and devising new political strategies to cope with the social developments around them. In this state of confusion, the views expressed by the likes of Dhlomo and Vilakazi did not always carry the official sanction of the people who had to publish their work.

2.2. Writers, Publishers and Politicians - The Relationship Strengthens

Throughout the country there was a growing sense of conflict that was not diminished in any way by the new trends within liberal ideology in South Africa. Following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, liberal politicians suffered one electoral setback after another. After a period of Milnerite reconstruction, South African liberals had to contend with the international vogue of communism. In a number of reactive moves, segregationist-minded liberals effectively stemmed the radicalization within their own ranks as well as in the ranks of the African National Congress. Conservative politicians capitalized on this tide of conservatism to entrench segregation. Liberal ideologues, led by Alfred Hoernlé, were forced, therefore, to redefine their policies within the confines set upon them by recently enacted segregationist laws.

In line with its policy of segregation, the Union government of the day was promoting the creation of tribal literatures. For the government, these tribal literatures, written principally in the vernacular, were aimed at reflecting the "true" nature of the Native. Tribal barriers were reinforced by segregationist laws governing the publication of books for and by African writers. Furthermore, the world depression of the 1930s fostered trade regulations limiting the use of Bantu yeomen by white publishers. The few Africans that were employed by white (mainly missionary) printers, were allowed to work only on vernacular publications. As the Nationalist factions in the government increased their power during the 1930s, repressive measures against mission publishers and African writers became entrenched. These segregationist measures conflicted with Africanist sentiments within ANC ranks. The Africanists advocated that any opposition to the segregationist Bills tabled in Parliament would implicitly contain an opposition to tribalism; hence the call by certain African writers (including H.I.E. Dhlomo) to turn away from the tribal past and to write in English.[3]

However, by 1948, further regulations prevented the missionary presses from printing any works by African authors that were not of a religious orientation or concerned specifically with Native affairs.[4] The regulations implied that it was no longer acceptable for Mission Presses to produce secular fiction or work that was not written in the vernacular. This seemed to conflict with the position which the Lovedale Press advertised at the time, which was that

3 See Chapter 2, paragraph 2.3. and Chapter 6, paragraph 6.2. regarding the choice of English as the African lingua franca.

4 It is impossible to pin down a single piece of legislation to this effect. Various Bills, such as the 1926 Native Bills, Labour Bills, as well as a multitude of Trade Union regulations contributed to the state of affairs. Of particular significance, though, were the Apprenticeship Act and the Industrial Conciliation Act. A glance at the Union of South Africa Board of Trade and Industries Report No. 353 on the Printing Industry will show the intricacies of legislation related to the Printing Industry during the period 1915-1953.

> African authors [should] have full freedom to use any medium they desire and that those who use English or Afrikaans be given all help and encouragement in their efforts to produce works of merit. (Shepherd 1945, 79)

The management, under the careful guardianship of R.H.W. Shepherd, declared that the government regulations did not seem a hardship, as it fell within the Press' policies at the time to promote works of a devotional nature and works in vernacular. In 1945, it was still an accepted fact that

> the mass of the vernacular literature published in the past has emanated, and still today emanates, from mission presses, and naturally such literature has sought to fulfil the aims of missionary societies. (Shepherd 1945, 15)

Although the above remark was made with reference to vernacular literature, it was also true when it came to the production of literature in English. Authors could of course submit English manuscripts to foreign publishers, but, as Sol Plaatje found out, British publishers were not interested in colonial writing; even less so when the writer was black. The British market simply did not cater for such deviations.

During the first half of the twentieth century, one of the biggest problems facing African writers was that their work was often ignored because of works on similar themes by white authors.[5] A case in point was Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country (1948). "The fact", writes Dhlomo,

> that these books are written by Europeans is significant. Historically, the same thing has happened in all colonial countries and in places where the Non-Europeans have come into close contact with the white races. In the past for instance, many of us have known and seen India through the eyes of British authors. . . . In fiction we came to regard Kipling, Foster and others as the Voice of India . . . . And it is one of the contradictions of the policy of domination and suppression that it is the members of the

5 See Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.4. and 5.5.

> dominating group who are expected to be the interpreters, spokesmen and the Voice of the oppressed groups. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1948a, 15)[6]

Not only were African authors often turned away by publishers in favour of white writers, but the vernacular literature that was produced was also strictly monitored by missionaries. D.D.T. Jabavu found that out of nine worthwhile books in SePedi, four of them were from the pens of Europeans and the remaining five by black authors who were "under the guidance of German and French missionaries" (Jabavu 1943, 5). Often such guidance, however well-intentioned, had a crippling effect on the production of literature by Africans.

What made the problem worse was that African authors were in no position to pick and choose their publishers. The publishers exploited this situation by manipulating authors into a position of either having to edit their manuscript according to the prescriptions of the publishing house, or not getting it published at all.[7] One indignant author, L.K. Siwiza, wrote

> While other people, Dr. Shepherd, are busy trying to get other channels of producing their books, we, who have no other means of getting our books printed, but solely depend on Lovedale Press for the production of our books, would not like to be tossed about.[8]

Since black writers could not turn to a Press they could call their own, they were forced to write material of a devotional nature, preferably in the vernacular.

6 Dhlomo's argument is supported by similar findings by Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, 1817." "Race," Writing, and Difference, ed. Henry Louis Gates (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 163-185. See also Homi Bhabha, Nation and Narration, (London: Routledge, 1990).

7 See Chapter 5, paragraph 5.5. for a discussion of relevant case studies.

8 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16416. File L.K. Siwiza. Letter from Siwiza to Shepherd dated 15 August, 1949.

As the missionary and political stranglehold on vernacular literature tightened, and the government influence on missionary policies increased after 1948, the amount of English literature produced by Africans increased. The problems facing African writers were enormous and the biggest problem, writes Herbert Dhlomo, was the author's

> . . . lack of assistance to get his works published. In this country the African artist who writes the truth fearlessly has little chance of having his works accepted for publication. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1949, 15)

Even if the tone of the literature written at the time was not always militant, the very act of writing in English in the face of growing government pressure to write in the vernacular constituted defiance.

2.3. Historical Background to Missionary Education and Publishing in the Nineteenth Century[9]

The spirit of defiance did not develop overnight, but had its roots in developments during the nineteenth century. Since the early days of colonization, the missionaries had shaped the history of this country. Much of the missionaries' influence lay in their recognition of the power of the printed word. In 1821, the Glasgow Missionary Society sent its first agents, the Rev. W.R. Thompson and Mr. John Bennie, to South Africa. They founded a new mission station some twelve miles south-east of the Tyumie River. The station was named Lovedale in honour of the Rev. John Love, first Chairman of the Glasgow Missionary Society. A school was opened soon after, and the first principal was William Govan. From the outset, Govan was determined to keep the Institution interdenominational and to keep it open to people of all races. A high standard of

9 The information in this section pertaining to the history of Lovedale Mission Press is taken from the following sources: R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa: The Story of a Century 1841-1941 (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1941), R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu: a Brief History and a Forecast (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1945), R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa 1824-1955 (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1971) and Dictionary of South African Biography (Cape Town: Tafelberg for the HSRC, 1968).

education, focused on teaching the classics, was his major concern. In 1867, the appointment of James Stewart, a medical doctor, to the staff of Lovedale led to a clash with Govan over the direction and scope of the education to be provided at the Institution.[10]

Stewart believed in a more practical approach to education which would assimilate the mass of the people. He placed a strong emphasis on vocational training for Africans. The classics (Latin and Greek) were to be offered only to a select few African theological students. Stewart's views found considerable favour with the Glasgow Missionary Society Council, and by 1870, Govan was under severe pressure to resign as principal of the Institution. By the end of that year, Stewart succeeded Govan as principal. Without delay, he embarked on an upgrading of vocational training. The academic and the industrial sides of the Institution, run separately under Govan, were combined so as to integrate the structure of the education. Africans were very unhappy with the new system of education, as they felt that the omission of the classics from their curriculum signified an inferior education. The developments in the educational policy at Lovedale had an influence on the Lovedale Press too, when, as a result of the clash between Stewart and Govan, the official newspaper, Indaba, was discontinued and a new publication, The Christian Express, was launched. The latter publication was soon divided into a vernacular and an English edition.[11]

The Press was one of the oldest sections of the Lovedale Institution. Even before he left Britain in 1821, John Bennie was planning to produce literature for the African people. He recorded that the Tract Society had provided him with a quantity of tracts in English

10 For a detailed investigation into the educational policy at Lovedale, see T.R.H. White, Lovedale 1930-1955: The Study of a Missionary Institution in its Social, Educational and Political Context. MA Diss., Rhodes University, 1987.

11 See chapter 3, paragraph 3.4. for further discussion.

and in Dutch, "but alas! there is not a morsel for my poor Caffres" (qtd in Shepherd 1945, 1). Bennie therefore decided to print his own tracts for the Xhosa, and so the idea of a fully-fledged printing press was born.

Bennie and Thompson initially joined forces with the Rev. John Brownlee at Chumie Mission Station, but later moved to Lovedale to found the Lovedale Mission Institution. Bennie was placed in charge of the newly-founded school and immediately set about learning the Xhosa language. Very soon, he found it necessary to produce more reading material for his students. In September 1823, the Rev. John Ross landed in Cape Town, carrying with him a small Ruthven printing press destined for Chumie. Ross arrived at Chumie on December 16, 1823 and on the 20th of that month the first copies of the Xhosa alphabet appeared in print. Bennie subsequently announced that "a new era had commenced in the history of the Bantu people" (Shepherd 1945, 3).

From the outset, the role of the Press had been clearly defined, and a future director of the Press, the Rev. R.H.W. Shepherd, wrote that

> it is another proof of the statesman-like views of the pioneer missionaries that so early they recognised the power of the printed word. John Ross, who conveyed the printing press from Britain in 1823, declared in a later day that there must be provided "good books for youth and age, for the Lord's Day and weekdays, for schools and libraries . . . The Church has still her own people, for whom to care. She should not forget that her commission extends to the world - whence others are to be called - the world of readers, who become men of action, for evil as much as for good". (Shepherd 1941, 400)

Bennie's words proved to be very prophetic, for, despite many hardships, the Press survived to become one of the most influential bodies in the history of African literature. Initially, the work from the Press was confined to readers and grammar books for the school. Besides producing school books, the missionaries also set about translating the Bible into Xhosa.

Although the Press remained at Chumie, where it was destroyed in the Frontier War of 1834-1835, the Lovedale Institution was moved to a new site in 1838. A new press was sent from England in 1839, but it was destroyed in the War of 1846-1847. Another press was not acquired until 1861 because of the political instability of the Frontier at the time and because of the financial strain caused by the loss of the previous two presses. Lovedale's official bilingual publication, Indaba (Jan. 1864) mentions the opening of the new printing department in 1861. At the same time, a book store was opened to promote the sale of various translations, including Tiyo Soga's translation of the first part of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

The Press was structured as a number of autonomous departments, administered separately, but nonetheless co-operating closely - especially the printing and book-binding sections. Robert Stocks was employed as the printer and initially he supervised the book-binding department as well, but this task was soon delegated to George Theal, a teacher/printer at Lovedale, in order to allow Stocks more time to do his own work. The book store was run by the principal of the Institution, William Govan.[12] When Govan resigned in 1870, Stewart ceased publication of the Indaba and started a new venture called the Kaffir Express, which he edited. He became the first principal to edit the official publication of the Institution - a potentially powerful position which he had no qualms using to dictate his views on African education. Tim White comments that Stewart

> saw himself as being divinely inspired to order the type of education that Africans should be given. His goal was a religious one: he believed that only by conversion and moral growth would the education of Africans succeed. Hence he stressed the moulding of the moral character in each individual. This was to become an integral part of the missionary philosophy of education. (White 1987, 4-5)

12 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16298. Numerous records of book sales. See also MS 8839 for sales records for the year 1867.

The Lovedale Press was at this stage still primarily concerned with the production of religious material in the vernacular, and with producing text books in Xhosa for the school. Stewart favoured African education entirely in the vernacular, with English introduced in the place of the classics in the higher classes. It was only with the arrival of James Henderson in 1906 that the Press started encouraging the production of secular literature.

In 1880, a colportage system was introduced at Lovedale to supplement the book store, but it soon ran into financial difficulties and had to be abandoned. The structure of the Press remained the same for almost fifty years, until the Rev. Shepherd instituted a number of important changes which will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. At the turn of the century then, the Press section of the Institution comprised four departments - printing, book-binding, the retail and wholesale book stores, and the Christian Express (soon to become the South African Outlook). Lovedale had become a recognized force in printing circles and served as home for many of the pivotal individuals in missionary circles. What was propagated at Lovedale became a yardstick by which other missions measured themselves.

When James Henderson became the third principal of Lovedale, he continued to develop Stewart's educational policy, but with one major difference: he believed that English should be taught at all levels of education as a foreign language, and that it should become the medium of instruction in the higher standards, once competence in the language had been reached. Under the directorship of Henderson, Lovedale gained the stability it lacked in the previous century. The real changes at Lovedale only occurred after the arrival of a new missionary, who set about revamping the entire infrastructure of the press: the Rev. R.H.W. Shepherd. Shepherd was quick to pick up any hitches that had occurred in the past, using them as examples to support his proposed changes.

2.4. Finding a Shepherd for African Literature

Robert Henry Wishart Shepherd was born in Scotland in 1888 into a humble working class family. He grew up in Dundee, and at the age of seventeen started working as an office clerk for the North British Railway. Every step he made up the social ladder was the result of hard work. He studied part-time and received an M.A. from Edinburgh in 1915. In 1919, as a fully-ordained minister, he set sail for South Africa. On arrival he was appointed to the charge of Main Mission Station in the Transkei. The nature of his upbringing left a brashness to his character that was to account for numerous conflicts in the future.

In 1924, while a missionary in the Transkei, Shepherd had been proposed for a senior clerkship of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, but he refused this post for two years. However, on the recommendation of the principal of Lovedale, Dr. Henderson, he accepted it in 1926, and from then on played an increasingly important role in mission affairs. From the outset of his career, Shepherd felt the need for (Christian) literature to be spread among the African people, and went about the task of writing and producing such a literature. He was appointed at Lovedale as chaplain and Director of Publications in June 1927, and immediately prepared himself for what Henderson had termed the "big things that are coming to you" (Oosthuizen 1970, 37).

Shepherd's appointment at Lovedale was to have a great influence on African writing because by 1928 Lovedale was the largest of all the mission publishing houses, with influences stretching half-way up the continent. By the time Shepherd took over as director of the Institution in 1941, he had developed such a power-base for himself that his pronouncements on African affairs were hardly ever disputed, and he became a self-styled missionary spokesman on African literature.

If Shepherd's voice was that of the missionaries, then the African voice undoubtedly belonged to Herbert Dhlomo. He was born in Edendale, Natal, in 1903 and was educated in the sheltered environment of Adams College, where he eventually graduated as a teacher. Dhlomo took to journalism at an early stage in his life (though not out of choice) and in this field he left his mark as the most important of the literary figures of the thirties and forties. Among his many achievements is the fact that he was one of the major contributors to Mweli Skota's African Yearly Register in 1931.

In 1937, he became the first African Librarian at the Carnegie Bantu Library in Johannesburg. After a series of disagreements with his employees, he left for Durban in 1941, where he was appointed as assistant editor of Ilanga Lase Natal in 1943, a position he retained until his death in 1956. Although never one of the leaders, he was always involved with behind-the-scenes organizing of political events, such as the formation of the ANC Youth League. His creative work was written mainly after 1936 and in it he sought to manifest his theories on African literature. He tried with limited success to have his work published through Lovedale, but his work was sadly misunderstood. Although Dhlomo sat on various missionary committees with Shepherd, he did not share Shepherd's views on African literature.

2.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, Lovedale's central position in the development of African literature was indicated by showing how, from the beginning, Lovedale had concerned itself with the task of publishing literature for the Bantu. As a result of the dedicated efforts by the likes of Stewart and Shepherd, Lovedale had become the leader in the field of missionary publishing.

The social issues that confronted both white and black in South Africa were identified and placed in the context of South African literary history. Herbert Dhlomo and Robert Shepherd were identified as key literary figures during the inter-war years. It was also shown that Lovedale, as the common element between Dhlomo and Shepherd, provides a perfect opportunity to discover the relationship between African authors and their publishers during the formative years of African writing in English. It remains, therefore, to show how the Lovedale Press functioned, as well as to provide an overview of Dhlomo's perception of African literature and to contrast it with Shepherd's views on the same issue.

CHAPTER 3

LIBERALISM, AFRICAN NATIONALISM AND THE PRESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the rise of African Nationalism and the development of South African liberalism will be discussed briefly in order to place the literary activities of Herbert Dhlomo and Robert Shepherd in their respective political contexts. It is impossible to grasp the extent of missionary influence on African writing without taking full cognisance of the political framework within which both writers and publishers operated. A discussion of liberalism and nationalism will necessitate a glance at the development of the South African Outlook, long regarded as the major liberal mouthpiece in the country. This chapter will also cover the development of the Black Press in South Africa up to the 1930s, when B.G. Paver, a liberal-minded white, bought two of the major black South African newspapers, Imvo Zabantsundu and Ilanga lase Natal. Lengthy debates in these two papers during the 1920s were crucial to the development of African literary criticism.

3.2. A Synopsis of the Development of South African Liberalism

South African liberalism was Victorian in conception, as much of its impetus during the twentieth century stemmed from the activities of nineteenth century liberals. Therefore, what was initially advocated was a system of multiracialism. In England, a gradual extension of the franchise to other race groups was regarded as the correct approach to racial politics. This philosophy filtered through to the Cape Colony where a non-racial franchise was established in the Cape in 1853. This colour-blind franchise was restricted only to the Cape Province, where the spirit of liberalism was the strongest. By the

mid-nineteenth century, an alliance had been formed between the Eastern Cape African peasantry and the British merchants. Marks and Trapido (1987, 2) note that, while both Afrikaner and African Nationalism were rooted in a distinctive social structure, a strong sense of cultural identity, and the development of a political consciousness in the rural areas, the principles of liberalism were dictated primarily by economic factors. A strong link between England and the security of London's economic power ensured that the fierce nationalism of Africans and Afrikaners alike remained an alien concept to English-speaking South Africans.

The early nineteenth century in Europe favoured liberal integrationist theories which proposed the ultimate assimilability of all people into the same political order. Thus, in a colonial context, White liberals thought in terms of class structures rather than race, and envisaged the incorporation of a minority of blacks into their ranks. While proposing a gradual assimilation, they could see nothing wrong with exploiting the black labour force for their own economic gain.

By the late nineteenth century, the liberal tradition at the Cape had fostered a clearly-defined group of Africans who identified themselves with British colonial values. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, the increasing demand for African labour on the mines, the Anglo-Boer War and the increasing racialisation of political discourse had put a strain on the relationship between the English and the African intelligentsia.[1] The development of labour compounds on the mines concentrated large numbers of Africans in the urban areas. The missionaries saw the compounds as a fertile area into which to extend the scope of missionary education.

1 African Nationalism will be discussed in greater detail in paragraph 3.3 below.

At the same time as the relationship between the above-mentioned parties deteriorated, various theories of Social Darwinism began to gain a foothold in liberal thinking. Social Darwinism was based on assumed biological differences that determined the natural capabilities of racial groups. The concept of survival of the fittest provided rationalisation for suppressing the "inferior" black people politically and socially. A crucial point in the development of segregationist thought was the introduction of the Glen Grey Act in 1894. [2] Much of the segregationist philosophy in the twentieth century relied on the white man's growing fear of being swamped by the increasing number of urban Africans, and drew on the social and political developments following the Glen Grey Act.

It was in this dichotomous framework of integrationism on the one hand and Social Darwinism on the other, that the missionaries found a comfortable home for their unique brand of liberal paternalism, a philosophy that would dominate missionary thought well into the twentieth century. They saw in the process of urbanisation an ideal opportunity to further their liberal values.

Following the Glen Grey Act and the period of Milnerite reconstruction, the twentieth century saw the steady development of a policy of segregation. Although the concept of segregation was borrowed from the United States of America, it was used in South Africa as a veil for labour control. With the pending formation of a Union in South Africa, the failure of the Cape liberals to extend the African franchise to other provinces left them in a state of despair. C.W. de Kiewiet, a well-known observer of liberal thought, comments that

> when the intellectual leaders of a country become demoralised and perplexed, or feel repudiated, they can become, despite themselves, even without knowing it themselves, converts to the heresies they have battled. (de Kiewiet 1964, 423)

2 For a thorough study of the Glen Grey act and its social and political implications, see Richard James Thompson, Cecil Rhodes, The Glen Grey Act, and the Labour Question in the Politics of the Cape Colony, MA Diss. Rhodes University, 1991.

As conservatives achieved one political victory after another, the paternalistic liberalism of the nineteenth century was forced onto the defensive and new strategies had to be developed. The demoralisation of the 1910s led to disintegration: the 1920s were spent boosting a shattered morale rather than formulating an active political strategy. Many liberal ideologues clung to the idealistic assumption that people could be convinced by rational argument (such as that put forth in the South African Outlook) to abandon their particularistic group interest in favour of a universal truth, morality or humanity. Thus the task of a liberal was gradually to merge the elements of good in opposing factions and to create a new common order in this way.

Alfred Hoernlé foresaw problems in the road ahead for liberals, since

> they assumed European models to be capable of export and transfer . . . even to European colonies in which Whites and Non-Whites met and clashed and fought for survival and supremacy. (qtd in Adam 1980, 55)

This assumption proved false, as Hoernlé suspected it would, but the rest of his liberal colleagues never admitted it.[3] By the time liberals woke up to the fact that their philosophy was doomed to political failure, most of their policies had already been incorporated into the mainstream of other political ideologies.

Consequently, as de Kiewiet (1964, 421-425) notes, liberals withdrew into a discourse which was to incorporate the logic of segregationism into the realm of liberal thinking. It is one of the ironies of South African history that by the late 1930s liberal segregationist ideas were also being espoused by Afrikaner nationalist intellectuals. Bound by their Victorian and rural past, however, liberals and missionaries alike found it difficult to adapt to the urbanisation and industrialisation of the African working class. Instead they tried

3 The liberal notion of "cultural transposition" was prevalent in the development of Bantu literature as well, where Shepherd and others insisted on judging African works of art by western standards, and rarely allowed African writers an opportunity to develop their own unique styles. On the other hand, colonized writers would borrow themes, styles and insights from the colonizers. See Chapters 5-7.

to co-opt the help of educated, liberal-minded Africans into promoting urban welfare. The African resistance campaigns flourished during the latter half of the 1930s, while the Native (Urban Areas) Act entrenched segregation as a political doctrine.

The 1920s also saw the rise of efforts such as the Helping Hand Club For Native Girls, aimed at protecting African women from the evils of urban life. The Helping Hand Club provided a perfect opportunity for missionaries to extend their influence into the world of the urban African. Other efforts at combatting the growing radicalisation of urban Africans included starting up a liberal-backed newspaper aimed at the African market (Umteteli wa Bantu) to "voice sound native opinion in the country" (Rich 1984, 15). Drawn by the higher salaries offered by Umteteli, the printing workers left Abantu Batho and other more radical papers, thus effectively crippling the power of the African radicals in shaping African thought.[4] Joint Committees were formed to discuss the needs of the African workers in an attempt to neutralise the power of the Idustrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU).

Another product of liberal action during this decade was the creation of the Bantu Men's Social Centres (BMSC). These Social Centres provided limited library facilities, venues for the performance of theatrical works and other related activities that were not generally available to Africans because of segregation. Like the Joint Councils, the BMSC were under the guardianship of more conservative liberals such as J.D. Reinhallt-Jones and R.H.W. Shepherd. They kept strict control over the material that was made available to Africans through the library and other facilities at the centre.[5] With the benefit of hindsight it is possible to see how, through the activities of these centres, conservative

4 The development of the African Press is discussed in more detail in paragraph 3.5 below.

5 R.H.W. Shepherd, Literature for the South African Bantu: a Comparative Study of Negro Achievement. (Pretoria: Carnegie Corporation Visitors' Grants Committee, 1936). On p.74, Shepherd sets out his ideas for an African library service. The library at the BMSC was one of Shepherd's numerous proposals that was implemented. Shepherd's conservative approach to politics and literature is discussed in Chapter 4.

missionaries were able to accommodate a doctrine of liberalism into the practice of political segregation by allowing the emphasis on social welfare among Africans to draw their attention away from more pressing political issues.

C.T. Loram and other liberal thinkers re-directed the focus of African education and political aspiration to the Bantu Reserves because, as Reinhallt-Jones put it:

> The direction which native policy should take is, therefore, dependent upon the view we take of the place the primitive races are destined, by reason of their inherent capacities, to have in modern civilisation. (Reinhallt-Jones 1926, 91)

Such Social Darwinism remained an integral part of liberal segregationist thinking, but rather than base their ideas on assimilation, the more conservative liberals relied on the anthropological notion of "culture" to justify their ideologies.[6] They advocated a policy of industrial training, such as was practised at Tuskegee in America and Lovedale in South Africa, and were vociferously supported by Shepherd and the London Missionary Society.[7]

The 1929 general election had a further demoralising effect on liberal progress in South Africa. Hertzog's Pact government won the election primarily because of the connection Smuts's South African Party was rumoured to have with the Non-Racial Franchise Association. As a result, it was advocated by J.D. Reinhallt-Jones, one of the leading liberals from the newly-formed South African Institute of Race Relations, that the Institute stay away from direct political involvement. The general trend, therefore, was towards an apolitical stance that would enable them to concentrate their efforts on African welfare, thus appeasing the liberal conscience in the wake of political failure.

6 S. Dubow, "Race, Civilisation and Culture: the Elaboration of Segregationist Discourse in the Inter-War Years" The politics of race, class and nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa, eds. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, (New York: Longman, 1987) 71-94.

7 This possibility is, of course, already advocated in John Buchan's 1910 novel, Prester John (London: Nelson, 1928).

Leading Cape liberals like James Rose-Innes were sceptical of the apolitical stance that was developing under the powerful influence of Reinhallt-Jones and C.T. Loram. The left-minded liberal attitudes of William and Margaret Ballinger had been isolated on the periphery of mainstream liberal thinking as proposed by the Institute of Race Relations. Nevertheless, William Ballinger's ties with international groups such as the Friends of Africa managed to act as a balance to a growing alliance between the missionaries and Reinhallt-Jones. Reinhallt-Jones' stance accurately reflects the prevailing attitude among the missionaries. He remarked on occasion that he was the only link between *all* the missionaries in South Africa. He was deeply involved in the organisation of both the 1936 and 1937 Bantu Authors' Conferences and other mission projects. Shepherd was very impressed by the work done at the Institute for Race Relations, and it is possible that Reinhallt-Jones played a considerable part in Shepherd's decision to pursue an apolitical stance himself.

As a result of the crises of the late 1920s and 1930s, it was no longer sufficient for the missionaries to appeal to a select few Africans for sympathy - the entire African population now had to be adapted to "life in a country governed by the White man" (Shepherd 1945, 58). Education and literacy formed the core of this trend, and in this regard nothing could be left to chance. At the time, Ballinger wrote to Dr. Xuma of the ANC that

> there can be little doubt that Jones imagines he has a right to corner Natives and all they do or intend to do. If he ever wakes up to the fact that many of the Natives in South Africa are very conscious that they are Africans, he will die of shock. (qtd in Rich 1984, 51)

With the efforts of missionaries like Shepherd, who, in principle, supported the idea that the basis of a future native policy lay in the Bantu's own culture, the early 1930s saw a new consensus arising in the more conservative liberal echelons.[8] With no more practical

8 The ideas espoused by this group of liberals are, essentially, no different to those put forward by G.P. Lestrade, later one of the key figures in developing the Nationalist Native Policy.

alternatives left, liberals were forced into co-operating with government segregation policy. In this period of reassessment and growing political collaboration, it was left largely to the efforts of Alfred Hoernlé to formulate a coherent policy of liberal thought. His policy envisaged total segregation as becoming the true manifestation of a liberal spirit. Those Christian liberals who did not agree with the notion of political acquiescence worked mainly on exploiting the loopholes in existing legislation in order to assist the existing class of black intelligentsia.

The policy of liberal segregationism, much like the Social Darwinism of the previous century, provided a useful underlying ambiguity for the missionaries, who could continue to use the notion of culture to dominate the "child races", whilst educating them for their role in a white supremacist country. The black intelligentsia could still either be assimilated into European society or, on the other hand, since the African as a race might remain a "child" forever, be governed by the white man till eternity. In the light of the flux in liberal circles, it was only a matter of time before Africans decided to determine their own future.

3.3. The Rise of African Nationalism[9]

The mounting tension between Cape liberals and the African peasantry towards the end of the nineteenth century led African leaders in search of more comfortable political surroundings. Various small groupings, such as Imbuba Yama Afrika and Gandhi's Natal Indian Congress, came into being after 1880 to give vent to the political spleen of disenfranchised groups. In 1902 the African People's Organisation was formed, and it

9 The information used in this section is assimilated mainly from the following sources: Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983), P. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: the African National Congress 1912-1952 (London: C.Hurst, 1970), Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, eds. The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa (London: Longman, 1987) and James Leatt, Theo Kneiffel and Klaus Nüremberger, eds. Contending Ideologies in South Africa (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1986).

became the forerunner of many political organisations. In 1912, because of the urgent need for a unified voice to oppose the Land Act measures of 1913, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was formed in Bloemfontein. The early leaders were occupied not so much with redressing the situation of the poor and rural Africans as they were with trying to distance themselves from their own rural past. The power-base of the SANNC initially lay in the small group of enfranchised Cape Africans who, as the new petty-bourgeoisie, were attempting to have the non-racial franchise extended to all the provinces of the Union. They were invariably mission-educated and middle-class, working well within the tenets of Cape liberalism.

The attitude of the SANNC was cautious and conservative, and its primary concern was to preserve the liberal-missionary outlook and to assure the gradual assimilation of a small African elite into colonial European society. This classist attitude still prevailed to some degree in the 1940s and only really disappeared with the advent of Drum magazine and the rise of another generation of writers. As was the case with white liberals, the elitist leadership of the SANNC had no real hope of ever gaining power in the light of the rapid development of Afrikaner Nationalism (du Toit 1980, 1-13).

Just as the increasing demand for labour on the mines had eroded the strength of the Cape liberals, so it curbed the influence of the Cape Africans on political developments in the first two decades of this century. The increasing urbanisation of the African population on the Witwatersrand and the international vogue of Socialism brought about a temporary radicalization of the SANNC (known after 1923 as the African National Congress). The shift to the left was only temporary, since further government legislation and the extra-parliamentary efforts of certain liberal groups managed to stem the early signs of radicalisation. In 1917, the Transvaal leadership of the SANNC took over control of the national executive and, within a year, the SANNC had become more active in organizing labour strikes on the Reef. In contrast to this action, the Cape Africans, led by Sol Plaatje and Pixley Seme, still advocated an attitude of passive resistance. The confrontational

attitude of the Transvaal membership of the SANNC (by then firmly under the influence of the ICU) became increasingly popular during the 1920s, ousting conservative leaders like Plaatje and Seme.

Seme was to make a comeback for a short while between 1930 and 1935, a period marked by internal strife that left the ANC virtually moribund and resulted in a sharp decline in its popular support. Plaatje, on the other hand, found it difficult to adapt to the new political consciousness among Africans. He had been a member of the 1914 SANNC delegation to London to appeal against the injustices of the 1913 Land Act. Like so many of the early African leaders, he viewed Britain as the great saviour of the African race.[10]

Failure to gather support from Britain left the African leadership demoralised and bitter, with a growing resentment against the increasingly severe racial policies of successive Union Governments. Britain had made it clear that, after the 1914 rebellion, its primary task was to restore white unity in South Africa. White socialists saw black resentment as an opportunity to capture a strong African following. Under the auspices of the ICU, they radicalised elements of the SANNC and drew a lot of support away from the activities of the conservative SANNC leadership. The SANNC leadership was in turmoil: after the failed resistance to the Land Act, they were now losing members to the ICU. The situation was further exacerbated by white liberal attempts to counter-balance the shift to the left. Liberals set up opposition newspapers and formed Joint Councils to encourage European and Native co-operation. Between the activities of the Joint Councils on the one hand and the novel appeal of the ICU on the other, the radical shift in the SANNC had provisionally been checked.

10 This view is supported by what Plaatje wrote in Mafeking Diary: a Black Man's View of a White Man's War (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1989). Despite becoming despondent about foreign aid to Africans, he still retained his high regard for English society until his death in 1932. For a comprehensive study of Plaatje's life, see Brian Willan, Sol Plaatje: a Biography (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1984).

After three years under the Hertzog Pact government, Africans were growing increasingly disillusioned by liberal politics. In 1927 Josiah Gumede was elected president of the African National Congress. He was strongly influenced by the American Negro philosophy of Garveyism - racial pride and black exclusiveness based on racial separatism.[11] In a way, his election reflected a despair similar to that experienced in white liberal circles, where Alfred Hoernlé and J.D. Reinhallt-Jones were attempting to reconcile racial segregation and the "liberal spirit". It was during Gumede's term of office that the phrase "Africa for the Africans" was coined.[12] On the surface, political developments seemed to favour the more radical elements within ANC ranks, but the reign of radicalism within the ANC was short-lived. When internal organizational problems led to the virtual collapse of the ICU in 1927, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) set up a League of Rights to fight for the abolition of Pass Laws, freedom of speech and African franchise. Gumede supported the League of Rights, but because of his increased involvement with its activities, he lost contact with the executive of the ANC. In 1930, in a reactive move, he was voted out of office and replaced by the right-wing hardliner, Pixley Seme.

It was with a sense of moral victory therefore that both African conservatives and white liberals entered the 1930s. With the overt support of the ANC, the decade augured well for the development of liberal co-operation with segregationist governments. As a result of the conservative victory within the ANC, independent African resistance was left virtually moribund during the first half of the decade. Both the ANC and the CPSA were

11 Robert A. Hill and Gregory A. Pirio, "'Africa for the Africans': the Garvey Movement in South Africa, 1920 -1940." The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa, eds. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Longman, 1987) 209-253.

12 In 1927, Gumede attended the Soviet-sponsored Conference of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels. The conference adopted a motion proposed by another South African, James La Guma, which endorsed

> the right to self determination through the complete overthrow of capitalism and imperialist domination . . . the principle of Africa for the Africans. (Cited in Lodge 1983, 8)

to reach an all-time low in their support during this period. It was not until after the passing of the Hertzog Bills in 1936, whereby Africans were removed from the common voters' roll, that there was another active sign of resistance from African quarters. After the 1935 conference held in Bloemfontein, a new organisation, the All-African Convention (AAC), was formed. The aim of the organisation was to unite African opposition to the government. There was a new sense of political unity among Africans, and it was marked by a similar trend in literary developments among African writers, many of whom were actively involved with politics.

In 1936 H.I.E. Dhlomo tried unsuccessfully to get his play, Cetshwayo, published at the Lovedale Press as part of the collection This is Africa[13]. The play reflected the stance of the All-African Convention, which aimed to transcend the confines of tribalism.[14] White liberals were greatly disturbed by the line of action decided upon at the All-African Convention, especially by the tone of an address by D.D.T. Jabavu, delivered at a launching conference for the organisation in December 1935:

> The structure of European political morality has suddenly tottered and collapsed from above our head down to its pristine level of the jungle that obtained two thousand years ago. (qtd in Couzens 1985, 141)

A new political morality had to be found, and it was this morality that was to dominate the English fiction written by African authors in the period. Again, as a result of concerted efforts by white liberals, the influence of the AAC began to collapse by the end of 1937, but a new feeling of revolt was increasingly to exert itself; a feeling that would not tolerate the way liberals had helped to consolidate segregation as a way of life in South Africa.

13 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16309(b).

14 Tim Couzens, The New African: A Study of the Life and Works of H.I.E. Dhlomo (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985) 140-143.

The outbreak of the Second World War disrupted most political activities in South Africa, and the general state of confusion brought about the election of Dr. A.B. Xuma as president of the ANC. He was a sound administrator and set about the task of pulling the ANC out of the quagmire it had descended into during the previous decade. In 1943 the ANC published a document, Africans' Claims, which called for full citizenship and freedom of expression. The temporary relaxation of the influx control in 1941/2 had led to a period of frantic urbanisation of Africans, who were facing starvation in the reserves. This in turn led to a greater breeding-ground for African politicians and there was a series of successful bus and labour boycotts. Xuma was not an effective speaker, and in 1944, after a series of disagreements between young ANC members and the ANC leadership, the Congress Youth League was formed. It called for a spirit of African Nationalism and was critical of the ANC old guard. The movement, under the leadership of the dynamic Anton Lembede, became increasingly influential, radical and nationalistic in its stance. The Youth League argued that the ANC had capitulated to government oppression and was therefore incapable of advancing the cause of African freedom any longer. Correctly, they identified the future base of mass support as being the mining environment of the Reef. Many African writers, including Herbert Dhlomo and Benedict Vilakazi, were a part of the driving force behind the activities of the Youth League, which was marked by the vibrancy and imagination of its response to social upheavals.

It was in this period of turmoil, re-assessment and temporary unity among Africans that Herbert Dhlomo first presented his theories on African literature to the public. It was an attempt to introduce the feeling of political nationalism into the production of literature by Africans. The Garveyist doctrines of the previous decade had raised among Africans a consciousness about their own past. Authors wanted to relate the heroic events in their past to the present-day situation. Theirs was not to be a literature filled with aesthetic musings, but one grounded in everyday experiences (Mutloatse 1980, 1).

3.4. A New Century; a New Outlook

While African writers were searching for a suitable outlet to voice new African opinion, the Reinhallt-Jones followers among the liberals could rely on The South African Outlook which, Shepherd wrote in 1945,

> has continued to this day and has always had considerable support from educated Africans, among whom it has been a powerful literary force. (1945, 12-13)

The South African Outlook, like liberalism, had its roots firmly in nineteenth century missionary history, and formed an important part of the history of Lovedale. As early as 1841, the missionaries at Chumie had produced a small magazine, Ikwesi (The Morning Star), but it ceased publication after a few issues due to the turbulent political situation on the frontier. In 1862, a second venture, Indaba, was started.

Although Indaba was a bilingual publication, it is interesting to note that Shepherd refers to it as a vernacular publication (Shepherd 1945, 11). The Rev. Bryce Ross was the editor of the magazine and it was, in Ross's own words, a unique publication

> designed specially for those speaking the Kafir language. But as it is of manifest importance, in order to their intellectual advancement, that the study of English should be encouraged and stimulated among them, it is intended that about a third of each Number shall be in that language. (qtd in Shepherd 1955a, 35)

While its ultimate aim was liberal assimilation, the editors of Indaba aimed the magazine specifically at a black audience. It was discontinued in 1870 when the principal, Dr. James Stewart, began a new venture called The Kaffir Express which, initially, was also bilingual. Stewart did not support the policy of assimilation promoted by Indaba, and settled for a more segregationist approach in The Kaffir Express by placing a greater emphasis on education in the vernacular.

The popularity of this new magazine grew rapidly, and in 1876 the Kaffir Express was divided into two separate publications, one in English, called The Christian Express and the other written in Xhosa, called Isigidimi Sama-Xosa (The Xosa Messenger). The only one of these to survive the turn of the century was the Christian Express. Isigidimi was the first fully vernacular newspaper - an important event in the history of any people. The magazine was regarded as a great educator and

> were the Isigidimi Sama-Xosa to become an established fact, it might be the means of educating, informing, carrying ideas, and stimulating the desire to be able to read. It was hoped by it to scatter ideas in "the moral wastes and desert places of heathen ignorance," and aid the general missionary work of South Africa. (Shepherd 1945, 12)

Isigidimi advocated a segregationist/Social Darwinist approach, and because of this, it decreased in popularity. The drop in popularity was even more marked when, in 1884, the editor, J. Tengo Jabavu, left to form the first independent African newspaper, Imvo Zabantsundu (The Voice of the People). Jabavu wanted more journalistic freedom to deal with political questions. Imvo, published bilingually, forced Isigidimi out of circulation by 1888.

What did emerge from the division of the Kaffir Express into two separate publications was a more clearly defined policy of publishing for distinct audiences, each eventually developing its own ideological stance. English was reserved primarily for the white colonists and the few educated blacks (thus still appeasing the assimilationists), while the vernacular was intended to remain as the *lingua franca* of the masses. With the creation of the Kaffir Express, Stewart was inadvertently assisting the creation of a black bourgeoisie that would soon claim its independence and demand its right to express itself in the language of its choice. He also paved the way for future segregationist discourse in the magazine.

The Christian Express approached the political developments of the time differently than did Isigidimi. It called the Glen Grey Act iniquitous because it

> admits the vicious principle of legislation by proclamation which is personal government and not by parliament, though it can be made to look like that. This may be and has often been used for pure tyranny. It also allows eviction from the land on wholly frivolous grounds, and so paralyses all improvement. [15]

Imvo on the other hand, considered the Glen Grey Act an impediment to African advancement. In contrast to Indaba, which was directed at the Black intellectuals, the debate in The Christian Express was aimed directly at whites. This policy of publishing separate papers for different race groups was to persist into the twentieth century, when it manifested itself in the policies of the Lovedale Press.[16]

In 1922, the Christian Express became known as the South African Outlook. It is questionable whether The South African Outlook was as great an opinion-former among Africans as Shepherd claimed it was (Shepherd 1945, 13). Available records of subscriptions paid from 1945-1950 reveal that there were no black subscribers to The South African Outlook.[17] Shepherd uses the word "educated" to depict the intended African audience of the South African Outlook, and in so doing he provides a clue to discovering the ideological stance of the magazine. Educated in this instance implied a mission education, including a thorough dose of European and Victorian classics. The African audience of the South African Outlook counted itself among the people Father Tempels was to describe in 1945 as *evolués* (Tempels 1969, 17), people who had lost their sense of being - they no longer belonged among the tribal people, nor were they accepted by the white people whose culture and traditions they had largely adopted. Frantz Fanon would refer to them as having black skins, white masks (Fanon 1986). They

15 The Glen Grey Bill - Disappointed Hopes." Editorial. The Christian Express, September 1894, p.129.

16 See Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.2. and 5.3. for an analysis of Press policy.

17 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16395. File: South African Outlook. Correspondence between the London Mission Society and the Livingstone Press.

were the elite to whom the missionaries referred when they discussed the task of producing literature for the Bantu, and to whom this task would eventually be delegated once

> . . . the European . . . makes himself dispensable. His [i.e. the European's] chief function is not to do a particular work, but to bring forward others from among the Bantu who can do it. (Shepherd 1945, 77)

The Christian Express, and later the South African Outlook, intended the black elite to produce a literature based on norms and values intrinsic to the colonizers - a literature the colonizers could regard as an extension of their own. Such a literature did not concern itself primarily with the culture and traditions of the black writers, except insofar as it contributed to an understanding of the "Native". English was regarded as the language of the elite, not of the masses.

After 1922 the focus of the South African Outlook moved away from purely Christian affairs to broader issues, specifically Native affairs. As editor, Shepherd saw the magazine in the following terms:

> The South African Outlook seeks to throw light on Native questions in the southern continent while also stating the bearing of events in other lands on South African problems. With no political bias but fearless in its comments on inter-racial affairs, it seeks to place before its readers, European and African, the latest facts concerning the inter-racial situation and to suggest measures for the advancement of all races in the land. To Africans it has rendered special service by the guidance given in its columns, by providing them with a medium of expression, and by giving them a share in its management with all this means by way of training in literary and public affairs. (Shepherd 1945, 13-14)

It is ironical that Shepherd should perceive any comment on the "Native question" as having no political bias, especially amidst the growing tension concerning racial policies in South Africa. The connotation attached to the word "guidance" places the discourse of the South African Outlook in line with segregationist feelings prevalent at the time, while at the same time not really departing from the discourse found in the Christian

Express during the previous century. Africans were still being referred to as "them" - a foreign presence, the Other. It was through this perception of the colonized that the South African Outlook reinforced the oppositional nature of colonial society.

The emphasis on the magazine's non-political stance aligned it with the Loram/Reinhallt-Jones faction of liberals. This ambiguous position was typical of the missionary stance of the period, but specifically so of Shepherd's editorial policy, which was to criticise, but never to antagonise. The South African Outlook articulated a uniquely missionary position that allowed it to treat Africans either as children deserving reward or rebuke, or as an elite nation on the brink of being assimilated into the European community. The duality is clearly reflected in the articles, which ranged from providing help to Bantu authors to criticising government labour policy. It was part and parcel of the liberal predicament at the time that neither the missionaries nor the liberal politicians saw any contradiction in treating Africans as equals at one moment and dismissing them as part of the "Native problem" at another. As long as Africans remained an amorphous/ambivalent body of people on the periphery of South African society (Bhabha 1986, 169), liberals could happily manipulate African needs and ideals to suit their own purpose. Dhlomo noted that it was one of the contradictions of colonial societies that members of the dominating group came to be regarded as spokesmen for the oppressed (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1948a, 15). As editor of the South African Outlook, Shepherd could don the robe of spokesman of the oppressed whenever the need arose. [18] From his privileged position at the centre of colonial society, Shepherd was therefore able to ascribe an importance to the Outlook's role as former of African opinion that did not reflect the reality of its position. Furthermore, he could do this without fear of repercussions from within liberal echelons.

18 See Chapter 4, paragraph 4.6. on Shepherd's views of African culture.

With the South African Outlook, as with many other missionary endeavours at the time, the central theme was liberal-minded guidance to the increasingly educated Africans. The names of regular contributors to the magazine are an inventory of conservative, segregationist-minded white liberals: Neil MacVicar, Alexander Kerr, Alfred Hoernlé, Edgar Brookes, Tom Atkinson, Robert Shepherd. It also includes the names of many of the more moderate and conservative African leaders like R.V. Selope Thema and Selby Msimang. By and large the contributors were all participants in the Joint Councils. Both Msimang and Thema fell into disfavour among the ANC ranks because of their increasing conservatism in the midst of a growing radicalisation within Congress ranks (Rich 1984, 24-26). Atkinson, Brookes, Hoernlé, Kerr and MacVicar were all resident in the Eastern Cape, and were probably among the people referred to by Shepherd when he says

> Lovedale and Fort Hare hold a body of men who are devoting their lives to the study of racial problems in South Africa, and it may be claimed that not a few of them have become specialists in certain aspects, such as Native health, education and economics. Every month this committee holds a round-table conference at which the policy of the magazine in regard to public questions is discussed. (Shepherd 1945, 13)

The policy decided upon in these meetings is clearly reflected in Monica Wilson's introductory essay to the period 1932-1970 in Outlook on a Century:

> Under the editorship of R.H.W. Shepherd (1931-1964), the Outlook did not allow itself to be dragged into discussing trusteeship, Apartheid, and other issues in abstraction but chose rather to expose the facts and to let the truth emerge in that way. (Wilson and Perrot 1973, 401)

This "truth" was certainly not apolitical, and accurately reflected the liberal quandary. Debates on political issues affecting South Africa appeared in every issue. The importance attached to discussing racial politics and to finding a solution to the "Native problem" marked the fact that, as far as politics was concerned, the fundamental variable in South Africa was race. The Outlook called for a liberal policy, and defined liberalism as implying

> faith in our fellows, belief in the general goodwill of men and in the even distribution of capacity. (Alexander Kerr 1932, 91)

This kind of liberalism did not necessarily imply that one was anti-segregationist, as Alfred Hoernlé was quick to point out to his critics. In fact, the terminology "even distribution of capacity" formed the basis of liberal segregationist thought, as was shown in paragraph 3.2. above.

As editor of the South African Outlook, Shepherd was the eternal diplomat. Displaying a common liberal flaw of the time, he was always cautious of outright confrontation with the government. Every criticism was carefully counter-balanced with praise. In his editorial of April 1934, he criticizes the government's legislation on pass laws. The very next sentence, however, pays tribute to the work done by the same government:

> A Reuter message describes the streets immediately surrounding the offices of the Native Affairs Department as being packed in a fashion as to disorganise traffic, by Natives seeking a renewal of their permits to remain in the area after seven days of fruitless searching for work.
>
> We wish to pay tribute to the present Minister of Native Affairs for the relief measures he has organised. In various parts of the country, witness is borne to his concern that the Native people under his care should not starve. (Shepherd 1934b, 66)

Shepherd was far too aware of where the increasingly important source of funding for his Institution lay than to criticise the government too openly. In 1962, after thirty years at the helm, Shepherd tendered his resignation as editor of the South African Outlook. In a short memorandum concerning his resignation, he writes:

> The magazine has never paid. For 30 years it was edited by Mr D.A. Hunter, who for many years had no salary . . . A specialist magazine such as the OUTLOOK, cannot be expected to pay, particularly under present conditions.
>
> . . .
>
> Financial difficulties in Lovedale dogged the footsteps of Dr. Stewart, Dr. Henderson, Dr. Wilkie and myself, but it was never suggested that the OUTLOOK (formerly THE CHRISTIAN EXPRESS) should be given up for financial reasons. The

> magazine was felt to be a contribution to the Christian cause in South Africa for which Lovedale should pay without hesitation.[19]
>
> Lovedale has never been so financially well-off as it is today, thanks to the rents received from the Bantu Education Department, and its having no losses in departments taken over by Bantu Education. Moreover, the Mission is due to the Press some £30,000 for money lent in the war years, to keep the Institution from being handed over to the Government as other Institutions were.[20]

He goes on to mention that the regular collaborators had dwindled to two people - Dr. Alexander Kerr and Dr. G.C. Oosthuizen, one of the key figures in the government take-over of the mission in 1954 and later Shepherd's biographer. Kerr himself was not intrinsically opposed to the take-over from a *political* point of view, although shortly before the official handing over, he did criticise the move from an *educational* point of view.[21] The trend seems to have been that under Shepherd's auspices the South African Outlook moved more towards collaboration with the government and, at times, it seems as if he almost went as far as using the magazine to woo the government into spending more money on missionary activities. This is evident from his overt support of the Government's take-over bid.

After Shepherd's resignation the South African Outlook became far more outspoken in its criticism of government policy, much to Shepherd's chagrin. In 1967, he received a letter from the Rev. P.B. Hawkridge enquiring about publishing a volume of verse. In

19 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 14728. It is worthwhile to note that, after Shepherd's resignation, the editorship was taken over by Francis Wilson, who gradually pulled the magazine out of financial difficulty. See also MS 14712(g) - Shepherd's letter dated 16 May 1967.

20 Cory Library, Grahamstown. PR 4210. "Notes on the South African Outlook" Dated [1962]

21 D.E. Burchell, " Alexander Kerr of the University College of Fort Hare. South African Liberalism and the domestication of an African intelligentsia." Acta Academica 23.2. (1991): 1-33.

the letter, Hawkridge lashes out at a recent article in the South African Outlook condemning the government's ban on Helen Joseph. In his reply, Shepherd takes up the challenge and makes the following remarks about the new direction taken by the Outlook:

> About the South African Outlook, here again I have no connection, but I know a good deal of what is going on, and I am aware that there is a lot of dissatisfaction with the present trend. For long years it was the policy of the Outlook to speak out in criticism when that was called for, but also to give credit where that seemed due. The fault found today is that it is all criticism, very adverse criticism too, and there is nothing on the other side . . . . I had a letter from one who has taken the magazine for many years, and she tells me how this month she has sent a "harsh" letter protesting the new tone of the magazine. Francis Wilson, son of Professor Monica, is editing the thing from Cape Town, so the old custom of the editorial committee meeting each month to lay down lines of policy and comment is no more. Francis seems to have gathered around him a band as radical as himself.
>
> . . .
>
> My own view is very much the same as yours. I did not like the Helen Joseph article, and the one on African education was terribly one-sided. Others have been just as bad. But this is between ourselves, as it would be in bad taste to criticise my successor publicly.[22]

The article on Bantu Education was a harsh criticism of government policy and, inter alia, the take-over of mission schools.

In conclusion, then, it becomes clear that the essentially conservative Shepherd manipulated the South African Outlook to suit his needs, as well as those of segregationist-minded liberals.[23] Africans did not perceive the South African Outlook as a major opinion-former, and relied far more on articles in the Black Press to shape their thought.

22 MS 14712(g). Letter dated 16 May 1967.

23 Shepherd's views are elaborated on in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.5. The Independent Black Press in South Africa[24]

The history of the Black Press in South Africa is closely linked to that of the missionaries, and this is reflected in much of the African journalism in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Again, it was Lovedale that set the trend in supplying newspapers and other serial publications to the African people. First Ikwesi, and later Indaba became the primary medium through which black journalists such as Tiyo Soga and John Knox Bokwe could reach their people (Shepherd 1945, 11). The division of the Kaffir Express into separate publications heralded the start of a new era in African journalistic endeavour. Isigidimi Sama Xosa became the first newspaper in Southern Africa to be edited by Africans (Switser 1979, 3).

Although Isigidimi was intended to stimulate debate on various issues among the African population, the topics of discussion centred mainly around matters of a religious nature. The little criticism that did appear was hardly ever directed at the missionaries. Its African readership was largely the educated elite that surrounded the mission and its outposts. As was shown in the discussion of African Nationalism, tension between the African elite and Cape liberals was high towards the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas in the past the African elite had been satisfied with the muted criticisms of the government in Isigidimi, the changing political order led to a demand among Africans to organise an independent response to white colonial rule. Under the editorship of J.T. Jabavu, Isigidimi shifted its emphasis from purely religious discussions to matters of a more general nature, even including political opinions on occasion. Jabavu's political

24 The information in this section has been assimilated from the following sources: Ursula Barnett, A Vision of Order. A Study of Black South African Literature in English (1914-1980) (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1983), Leonard Diniso Ngcongco, Imvo Zabantsundu and Cape Native Policy 1884-1902 Phd Diss. University of South Africa, 1974, R.H.W. Shepherd, Bantu Literature and Life (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1955), Les and Donna Switser, The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: a Descriptive Bibliographic Guide to African, Coloured and Indian Newspapers, Newsletters and Magazines 1836-1936 (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979), Lodge 1983, Marks and Trapido 1987, Willan 1984 and Shepherd 1941.

comment led to a clash with Lovedale's Principal, Dr. James Stewart, which culminated in the Jabavu's resignation. In 1884, after his resignation, Jabavu formed the first independent African newspaper, Imvo Zabantsundu (The Voice of the People.)

Imvo allowed Jabavu to vent his political frustrations and the paper was largely responsible for bringing political opinion to the African public of the Eastern Cape. The paper urged Africans to become involved in political life and to use the constitutional means available to them to advance their cause. Largely for financial reasons (two influential members of his board of directors were members of parliament at the time), but also because he felt bound to support the liberals who had helped him in difficult times, Jabavu supported the 1913 Land Act, despite almost universal criticism from other Africans. This move led to the downfall of his political reputation and sent support for his newspaper plummeting. Imvo continued to criticise other government legislation but, like many other African papers, fell into the trap of using liberal rhetoric to define racial ability. The paper never fully recovered from the setback of the Land Act issue, and by the middle of the 1920s it was in serious financial difficulty. To Imvo's credit, though, is the fact that it was one of the earliest newspapers to print poems by African authors.

In Natal, John Dube was responsible for the formation of another important black newspaper, Ilanga lase Natal, in 1903. Dube was a strong proponent of the ideas of Booker T. Washington, who believed in the achievement of African goals through honest labour. Washington's philosophy that physical labour was nothing Negroes should be ashamed of was used by many people in South Africa to justify a more practical emphasis in African education. In his paper, Dube preached an accommodationist message that reflected the prevailing ideas of James Kwegyir Aggrey, the West African who toured South Africa in 1921 (Marks and Trapido 1987, 222-230). Although Dube's political stance placed him closer to white liberal ideologues, Dube's vigorous journalistic style soon gave it an advantage over the struggling Imvo Zabantsundu. The tone of Ilanga eventually became far more militant, culminating in Herbert Dhlomo's efforts to get the paper to speak out in favour of the ANC Youth League.

As African political resistance became more organised in the twentieth century, so did the black press. In 1912, after the formation of the SANNC, Pixley Seme launched the Congress' official mouthpiece, Abantu Batho. The paper published many articles that supported the Garveyist tendency in the ANC. In January 1921, for example, the newspaper reproduced Garvey's "Proclamation to the Negroes of the World" in full. In 1927, when Josiah Gumede became president of the ANC, the paper lauded Garvey as "a dangerous man for all the great powers that are exploiting Africa" (Marks & Trapido 1987, 237). It was no wonder that the white community saw in the African Press a danger to the status quo.

Being independent from white editorial influence had its advantages, but it also carried many disadvantages, most of which were financial. By and large, black journalists did not have access to conventional news sources, although the formation of the Native Press Association in 1904 did create a means of information exchange. Black entrepreneurs often lacked many of the resources taken for granted by white journalists, such as newsprint, skilled labour, distribution agents and advertising. Most importantly, the buying power of the black readers was not high enough to warrant much interest from white advertisers.

White business, however, became interested in the Black Press after the mining strikes of 1919 and 1920. Their interest was political rather than financial, and in 1920 the Chamber of Mines launched Umteteli wa Bantu. In fact, the idea for such a newspaper was first advocated in 1919 by conservative African leaders in the Transvaal. It was essentially a liberal paper aimed at counteracting the increasing radicalisation of African newspapers such as Abantu Batho. It never criticised the mining industry, but it did support the retention of the Cape franchise. With the financial resources that other black papers lacked, Umteteli soon enjoyed the majority of the black readership. The political consequence was that it became highly influential and eroded the power of other African newspapers. The tone of the paper is clear from the following editorial extract:

> Rather more than four years ago Umteteli first appeared to educate white and black and point out their respective and their common duties. At that time much of the Native Press was bitterly anti-white in policy . . . the need for a mediator was felt by a number of far-seeing natives, men prominent among their people and gravely concerned with their people's welfare, and it was due to their representations that this paper was launched. We are charged to preach racial amity, to foster a spirit of give and take, to promote the will to co-operate, to emphasise the obligations of black and white to themselves and to each other, and generally to create an atmosphere in which peace and goodwill might thrive. [25]

Other African newspapers did not share this liberal spirit of co-operation, as can be seen from the preceding discussion, and it therefore becomes slightly ironical that African leaders such as Sol Plaatje, who refused to become one of the editors of Umteteli, used the columns of the paper extensively to speak to their African supporters.

The independence of African newspapers was severely challenged in 1928 when, due to financial strain, both Imvo Zabantsundu and Ilanga lase Natal were bought out by B.G.Paver, a liberal-minded white. A governing company, called Bantu Press, was formed. The Bantu Press launched its paper, Bantu World, in 1932. It was the first national newspaper intended for an African audience. The name of the paper was chosen to capture the attention of the Garveyists by reflecting on the title of Garvey's paper in the United States, The Negro World. The use of the "Bantu" in the title stood in sharp contrast to one of the ANC's local papers, The African World, which reflected the correlation with Marcus Garvey's paper more clearly. [26]

Paver was one of the delegates at the Bantu Authors' Conferences of 1936 and 1937 and he largely supported Shepherd, the influential director of the Lovedale Press, in his attempts to achieve a personal brand of African literature. He tried to retain black investment in his paper, and at least half the shareholders in the company were black. The need for more capital to fall back on during the depression took its toll, however, and

25 "Class hatred." Umteteli wa Bantu. Editorial, 30 August, 1924.

26 Marks and Trapido 1987. My observation is drawn from the discussion of the African World on p.41.

in 1934 Bantu Press was sold to the Argus Company. Under its new owners the Bantu Press and its main subsidiaries, Imvo and Ilanga lase Natal, were forced to conform to the larger corporate interests of the white owners. The "golden era" of the independent Black Press in South Africa had come to an end. The lively debate that had been the trademark of these papers during the 1920s gradually faded and was replaced by more conventional correspondence. It was left to the likes of Herbert Dhlomo to keep the tradition of literary criticism alive in the newspapers of the 1930s and 1940s.

While the liberal media, such as the South African Outlook, was advocating restraint and co-operation, the African media stressed development and change. African writers used the Press as an outlet for their artistic creations, and every issue of a black newspaper in the 1920s contained poems, short stories and articles of a literary nature. These contributions formed the basis on which an African literature was to be built for, as Tim Couzens notes, one of the main functions of the Black Press in South Africa has always been to create a reading public (Couzens 1974, 11-24).

SECTION B:

CREATING THE CONTACT ZONE

CHAPTER 4

SHEPHERD OF LOVEDALE: ANATOMY OF A MISSIONARY

4.1. Introduction

Having studied the political framework within which the Lovedale Press, and in particular Shepherd, worked, it is possible to trace Shepherd's political development more closely and to see how his ideas became reality at Lovedale. This chapter will deal with Shepherd's youth and his years at Lovedale and his subsequent rise within the ranks of the London Missionary Society. An analysis of Shepherd's career is incomplete if it does not take stock of his view of the political developments in South Africa and his response to government intervention in missionary affairs. Finally, this chapter takes a closer look at Shepherd's views on African culture and literature. In the following chapter, the attention will shift from Shepherd to the Lovedale Press, and an attempt will be made to establish the guidelines by which the Press operated.

4.2. Shepherd's Youth and His Early Years as a Missionary

Shepherd's family emphasised the importance of the church throughout his childhood and the conservative influence of the Calvinistic Church of Scotland would remain an integral part of Shepherd's character throughout his life. After his initial schooling, the young Robert continued his studies part-time, gaining first his university entrance and later his bachelor's degree from the University College of Dundee. After this, he studied divinity at the University of Edinburgh.

In 1919 he was finally ordained as a minister in the Church of Scotland and he and his wife were despatched as missionaries to South Africa. On arrival in South Africa, they were appointed to the charge of the Main Mission station at Qwebeqwebe in Tembuland, Transkei. It was here that Shepherd's particular interest in African culture was developed and that he started writing articles on African customs and way of life. He remained at Main for several years before being invited to join the Lovedale Mission as chaplain in 1926. A small part of his duties there would be to assist in the publications department.

The political and social changes of the previous decade had filtered through to Lovedale, and while some of the older missionaries at Lovedale still sought the solution to the "Native problem" in a gradual assimilation into western culture, many of them looked to Shepherd, already identified as a rising missionary star, to set the pace in the process of carrying the missionary enterprise into the field of urban development. True to his character, Shepherd immediately set about his work with vigour, and soon suggested that certain changes be made to the organisation of the Institution.

4.3. A Missionary Vision: the Rise to Power at Lovedale

In 1928, less than two years after Shepherd's arrival, Tom Atkinson, the printer and book-binder, suggested that the four departments of the Press be combined into one unit bearing the name "The Lovedale Press." Although Shepherd did not propose the motion himself, he did influence Atkinson's decision to do so. Oosthuizen, in his biography of Shepherd, says that

> When Shepherd took over his duties as director of publications, he found the various departments dealing with the production and distribution of literature - three in all - were all independent units working on their own, and indeed sometimes in competition with each other. For nearly two years he went on cautiously, not butting in to enforce his view or to give orders, but helping where his help was clearly acceptable. At the end of the two years, Mr. Tom Atkinson, the printing and book-binding manager, suggested that

> all should be combined as one bearing the name The Lovedale Press, with Dr. Henderson as chairman and Shepherd as director, and all assisted by a committee. (Oosthuizen 1970, 46)

This is not entirely true, as Shepherd only became the director of publications almost a year *after* the departments had been unified. Although, on the surface, this change did not affect the status quo at Lovedale, the impact of the move proved to be far-reaching. It provided Shepherd with his first foot-hold in his steady climb to the position of principal of the Institution. The unification of the Press departments created a power-structure that was separate from the Institution and was therefore not bound to the Mission's policies as strictly as it had been in the past. The director of the Press was now solely in charge of all matters pertaining to printing, publishing and distributing books at Lovedale. The South African Outlook did not, at this stage, fall under the Press Committee, but was controlled by an editorial committee under the editorship of the Principal.

The events surrounding Shepherd's appointment as Director of Publications provide an example of Shepherd's alarming ability to be invested with power, albeit unintentionally. Shepherd was very aware of his influence over people, as well as of his public image. In later years he would enter into his private journal:

> I must watch my influence on the Church, for it seems that anything I propose is almost certain ultimately to go through. (Oosthuizen 1970, 91)

It is true that Shepherd hardly ever met with opposition to any of his ideas from within missionary circles. In public he took great care to be polite and not to criticise people, but in private or in meetings he was often ruthless in his statements about others. By way of example, it is evident from correspondence with other authors that he disliked S.E.K. Mqhayi intensely, yet he was always careful to praise Mqhayi and his work in public.[1]

1 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 14712(g). The relevant letter to Rev. P.B. Hawkridge is quoted in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.4.

Shepherd's involvement with literary affairs at Lovedale came as the fulfilment of a dream. He had always wanted to write, but had been torn between being a missionary and being a writer (Oosthuizen 1970, 32). Now, at last, he was able to combine his two primary interests. During his period at Main Mission, Shepherd had started formulating his ideas on a literature for the South African Bantu. On arrival at Lovedale, he foresaw great difficulties in the implementation of his ideals regarding African literature. The initial obstacle was to create, at Lovedale, a publications committee which would have

> large powers for the welding together of the various departments connected with printing, publishing and sale of literature into one unit.[2]

The success of this bid has already been mentioned, and it is indicative of Shepherd's progressive attempts to unify all the structures at Lovedale, first by creating small committees and sub-committees with executive powers, and then getting himself placed in charge of each of these committees. In this way Shepherd was effectively able to by-pass senior management (or to relegate its importance to ratification of sub-committee decisions at an annual general meeting.) A Press Committee, chaired by the Principal of the Institution, was introduced in 1929. Shepherd was the Secretary.

In 1930 Dr. Henderson died and Shepherd was appointed Acting Principal of the Institution until 1932. He remained secretary of the Press Committee, but took over the position of chair as well. Shepherd's position of dual authority during these two years was dangerously dictatorial. In 1932 he returned to his normal duties as Director of Publications, but now remaining as chair of the Press Committee and adding to his list of positions that of editor of the South African Outlook. When Dr. Wilkie arrived as the new principal, Shepherd was given increased powers as Director of the Press. At the same time he became Secretary of the Lovedale Governing Council.

2 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16297. Meeting dated 9/4/1928.

From 1936 onwards the Press Committee was confined to an annual general meeting and all decisions, including the approval of manuscripts, passed into the hands of the Press Sub-Committee, which consisted of Shepherd and two White employees of the Press. Shepherd was therefore effectively in control of all aspects of literature at the Lovedale Press. As Lovedale was the biggest of all the mission presses, there can be no doubt that in the field of missionary printing Shepherd had consolidated a considerable power-base.

The decisions taken by the literary sub-committee will always remain a partial mystery, since some of the records have been lost in the two fires that gutted the Lovedale Press; other records simply do not exist. No minutes were kept for lengthy periods during the early 1930s. Consequently, it is very difficult to discover the rationale behind many of the decisions taken by the sub-committee or to trace the source of the many anomalies that occur in official Press policy.[3]

One fact that *is* revealed through the minutes of the Press Committee and the Press Sub-Committee meetings is that Shepherd wanted to unify all the small mission presses into a number of larger presses that would each be responsible for the publication of materials in a specific geographic or literary area. Shepherd's proposed press monopoly would have made an already unacceptable situation even worse for African writers. Lovedale, Morija and Marianhill were among the few presses that did publish more than just devotional works. Should the press monopoly have become a reality, Lovedale would have obtained a monopoly of the market for non-devotional literature written by black authors in the sub-continent. A survey by the International Committee for Christian Literature showed that the number of books produced annually at Lovedale exceeded the total number produced at all the other mission presses in Southern Africa.[4] This meant

3 See Chapter 5.

4 The results of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

that in terms of books production Lovedale already held the largest portion of the missionary market. A unification of mission presses would merely have strengthened Lovedale's hand in dictating the confines of African literature. Ultimately, this would have meant succumbing to Shepherd's ideal of a servile literature, piously ingrained with Victorian notions of art for art's sake. [5]

In 1942 Shepherd finally became the principal of the Lovedale Institution, while at the same time retaining all his previous positions of authority. Shepherd had planned his take-over carefully. In fact,

> a considerable part of the work of the principalship was to serve on many bodies within and outside the Institution. Indeed, at one stage Dr. Shepherd found himself a member of between fifty and sixty councils, boards, committees, etc. of the half of which he was chairman. (Oosthuizen 1970, 56)

The prevailing hierarchy at Lovedale can only be described as dictatorial, and Shepherd remained at the pinnacle of this structure until he severed his relations with Lovedale in 1963. With his appointment as Director of the Institution, Shepherd had exhausted all means available to him within Lovedale towards attaining his goal of press unification. He therefore turned his attention outward and tried to use the influence of the London Missionary Society to achieve his goal.

4.4. Shepherd's Rise in the Missionary Society

In 1924, while still a missionary at Main, Shepherd was offered the position of senior clerkship in the newly-formed Bantu Presbyterian Church, but declined it. Only after Dr. Henderson, then principal of the Lovedale Institution, had told him "not to decline the big things that are coming to you", did he finally accept the offer in 1926 (Oosthuizen

5 See paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8.

1970, 37). The following year he was requested by the General Mission Conference to prepare an article on the missionary attitude towards the black intelligentsia. The article appeared in the South African Outlook in 1928.[6]

By 1932, having been fortuitously propelled into an almost dictatorial position within Lovedale, Shepherd found himself in the midst of general mission affairs. In that year he was appointed the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the South African General Mission Conference, a position that brought him into contact with missionary endeavours throughout the sub-continent.

The Carnegie Corporation funded him on a tour through America in 1934, where his task was to investigate the work being done by the Negro Presses in producing literature for the "Negro People." As a consequence of this visit, he published a book, Literature for the South African Bantu: a Comparative Study of Negro Achievement (1936), which had considerable influence on the way in which he henceforth ran his press; and also on mission policy regarding African literature generally. Writing was second nature to Shepherd, who produced a phenomenal amount of books, articles, addresses, etc - most of which were concerned with the subject of African literature and thought.

In 1936 he was appointed Literary Secretary of the Christian Council, a position he held for ten years. The subsequent formation of a committee and sub-committee to investigate the state of Bantu literature was entirely Shepherd's brainchild. Influenced by Reinhallt-Jones and the apparent success of the Joint Committees, he proposed that a Conference be held for Bantu authors. It was at this conference that Shepherd's views on publishing became generally accepted as mission policy.

6 R.H.W. Shepherd, "The Missionary Attitude to the New Bantu Intelligentsia." South African Outlook 58.687 (1928): 151-153.

Shepherd remained Principal of the Lovedale Institution, Director of the Lovedale Press and editor of the South African Outlook when he accepted the appointments by the General Mission Conference and continued to impress his ideas on all those under his authority. His appointment to the presidency of the South African General Mission Conference increased his powers even further. First he had tailored the Lovedale Institution to suit his personal needs, now he had conquered the General Mission Conference. Out of humble and sincere beginnings at the Lovedale Press he had developed into a powerful figure. The highlight of Shepherd's career was his appointment in 1958 as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland throughout the world. During his term as Moderator (1958-1959), he was co-opted as a member of the Monckton Commission, a council charged with investigating the political future of the Central African colonies. In this matter, as in all others, Shepherd called for a clear "frontier between spiritual and political obedience" (Oosthuizen 1970, 80).

He agreed with the eventual findings of the Commission, viz., that a retention of the Federation of Central African States was the best way to solve the political problems in the region, and that a qualitative political franchise be given to Africans in these countries. He was strongly opposed to the concept of self-government as demanded by nationalist groups such as the Malawi Congress Party led by Dr. Hastings Banda (Oosthuizen 1970, 72-73).

4.5. Shepherd's Political Vision and His Attitude to Government Intervention in Missionary Matters

In this section it will be argued that Shepherd's political vision remained unchanged throughout his long career as a missionary. Although within the Calvinistic milieu of the Church of Scotland he may have been regarded as politically enlightened in 1926, Shepherd's views were conservative within the South African context. He consistently

sided himself with the conservative Loram/Reinhallt-Jones faction of liberals. By 1945, as a result of his static political mentality, Shepherd could no longer have been regarded as a liberal in any sense of the word.

Politically, Shepherd never belonged to any party, but circumstances forced him to make statements on political matters "because so often they involved moral and spiritual principles" (Oosthuizen 1970, 153). Shepherd's political vision is fraught with contradictions which I believe stem from the fact that, because of his detachment from political parties, he felt free to criticize or praise any political action. It was his sincere opinion that missionaries should work

> for the advancement of the African. He should have a larger share in his countries' policies. His educational opportunities should be increased. In economic life he should be given a fairer deal. Health services should be more at his disposal. In social life he should have widened opportunities. (Oosthuizen 1970, 80)

Although he was aware of and concerned about African political aspirations, Shepherd remained basically conservative in his thinking. Throughout his career he was opposed to radicalism of any nature, and frequently attacked those he found guilty of such behaviour.[7]

Shepherd genuinely admired certain aspects of African culture such as their loyalty to their superiors, but instead of paying homage to these characteristics he preferred to view them with an almost paternal aloofness.[8] The idea of a universal suffrage for Africans

7 Editorial. South African Outlook 68 (1934): 21-22. In the article he criticizes Oswald Pirow's reference to the relationship between black and white as a "life-and-death" struggle. Similarly, he attacks T.M. Kakaza, a Garveyite, by saying that the slogan, "Africa for the Africans" was merely a form of reverse racism.

8 This sense of aloofness and paternalism is revealed in R.H.W. Shepherd, Children of the Veld (London: James Clark, 1937), a collection of vignettes on African life. See paragraph 4.6. for further discussion.

remained unacceptable to him throughout his life, since (he believed) it was not in keeping with African tradition, which relied on the despotism of tribal leaders (Shepherd 1937a, 14-19). On the other hand he wrote that Africans

> are human beings with the natural urge to develop . . . . And the South African Government sees this desire for development and for education to be so reasonable that they step up expenditure on Native Education . . . . The urge [to develop] cannot be clamped down. You may guide it; you cannot quench it. You may direct it; you cannot thwart it. (Shepherd 1950, 84)

Shepherd used as his guiding principle the fact that "if you want to teach Jack arithmetic, you must know Jack as well as arithmetic" (Oosthuizen 1970, 85). It was therefore necessary for him to study and understand African culture, for if this study and understanding did not exist,

> if one has not penetrated into the depths of the personality as such, if one does not know on what basis their acts come about, it is not possible to understand the Bantu . . . . On the contrary, one runs the risk, while believing that one is "civilizing" the individual, of in fact corrupting him, working to increase the numbers of the deracinated and to become the architect of revolt. (Tempels 1969, 24)

Shepherd's treatment of the student uprisings at Lovedale in 1946 illustrates how he applied his understanding of African culture at the Institution. In August of that year between 100 and 200 male students at Lovedale had rioted over the quality of their education and the conditions under which they were forced to live. The police intervened, and 152 pupils were found guilty of public violence and fined accordingly in the Alice Magistrate's Court. Doctor Kerr of Fort Hare advised Shepherd not to treat the pupils harshly in the aftermath of events (Burchell 1991, 17).

As a result of the riots some of the departments at Lovedale had to be closed for repairs,

and when the Institution re-opened after nine weeks Shepherd debarred 80 of the students from re-entering the college.[9] His comment on the matter was simply that

> Africans appreciate firm dealing with wrong doing: partly also [we got rid of] elements that were unsatisfactory in character and willingly susceptible to agitation. (Oosthuizen 1970, 131-132)

Whatever he eventually did with African literature, Shepherd did not want to become an "architect of revolt." One of the biggest problems facing Lovedale was its financial position. By 1947 the financial pressure of running the Lovedale Hospital had become too much for the Institution to bear, and an agreement was reached with the Administrator of the Cape Province whereby the Province took over all the costs of running the hospital, while allowing the Institution to have three representatives on the staff. The missionaries would also be consulted in the appointment of senior staff. This agreement found favour with Shepherd who commented that

> these were considerable concessions which delighted not only myself as Chairman of the Board, but also Dr. W.C.G. Cooper, our Medical Superintendent . . . . (Oosthuizen 1970, 56)

Much of Shepherd's support for government action after 1940 stemmed from the severe financial constraints under which the missionaries worked.

Despite these constraints, education remained an important part of the colonial endeavour, and in this regard Shepherd felt that Bantu Education ought

> not to result in removing the African who possesses it from his own people either in sympathy or effort. And it ought to prepare him for the type of life into which he will pass. (qtd in Oosthuizen 1970, 133)

9 White 1987. The Lovedale riots are discussed at length on pp. 97-151.

An African's education, therefore, had to be based on literacy, but would also be "general and practical, which would help him to adapt himself to life in a country governed by the White man" (Shepherd 1945, 58). His views on African education did not differ substantially from what was envisaged by the government. [10]

Although in his writing Shepherd opposed the attempts by the Nationalist government to entrench "baasskap", his actions often speak of the opposite. The proposed homelands scheme met with his guarded approval and

> Whatever has influenced the Government of South Africa to take the steps it has done, - whether the pressure of world opinion or events in other African territories lying to the North - there can be no question that by its actions it has helped to alter somewhat the image of "apartheid" from "baasskap" to the more pleasing "self-development". (qtd in Oosthuizen 1970, 173)

The notion of self-development came close to Shepherd's own opinion that

> it is in fidelity to his own life's experience and his own modes of expression that [the Bantu] will enrich mankind . . . . (Shepherd 1945, 96)

and so he saw no reason to oppose it too vigorously. He believed that it was the government's duty to act in line with public opinion, not ahead of it. It was for this reason that he remained critical of Jan Hofmeyr's political stance in the 1948 election:

> We [i.e. Shepherd] believe that the political experience of men like General Smuts and Mr. Hofmeyr was leading them along a path of gradual but sure reform . . . ahead of prevailing public opinion. (1948a, 100-101)

10 Missionary education placed great importance on the role of vocational training for Africans. In 1948 the Chief Inspector for Native Education, F.J. de Villiers, head of the De Villiers Commission charged to investigate African education, tabled a document, Report of the Commission on Technical and Vocational Training, in Parliament. The report emphasised the need for expanding vocational training for Africans. Shepherd was appointed chair of the Associated Heads of Institutions' Findings Committee, which dealt with the report. The Findings Committee declared that the Mission Institutions were the only places where vocational training for Africans was offered. For further discussion, see White 1987, pp. 68-70.

Public opinion in this instance did not include African opinion because they had not reached "political maturity" yet.

Even when he did not agree with the government's actions, Shepherd criticized with constraint, believing that the positive aspects of any legislation deserved to be noted. In dealing with legislation affecting Africans it was necessary to ask whether criticism was "seeking their good, or chiefly emotional satisfaction?" (Oosthuizen 1970, 164). It was because he perceived it to be in the best interests of Africans that he supported the forced removal of people from Sophiatown and opposed the Defiance Campaign. In 1955 he called the ANC leadership "out of touch with the common people".[11] It is through statements such as these that it can be shown how far Shepherd had departed from the mainstream of liberal thought, which generally opposed the forced removal campaigns.

On more than one occasion Shepherd noted with approval the increase in government support for research into Native Affairs:

> The Union Government, with commendable far-sightedness, allocated for a number of years grants [for research into Bantu Affairs] to the Universities of the Witwatersrand and of Cape Town . . . It is highly desirable that through government and other support such helpful effort should be continued and extended. (Shepherd 1945, 45)

Shepherd himself made use of one of these grants to obtain his D.Litt, published in 1945 as Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu. The extract quoted above is taken from this book and appeared virtually verbatim in Literature for the South African Bantu, written ten years earlier.[12] Shepherd's biographer commends him for the fact that "the

11 R.H.W. Shepherd, " The Johannesburg Western Areas Removals. Critical position of the African National Congress." African World, May 1955: 7-8.

12 Shepherd 1936, 12.

Shepherd of 1925 . . . is still the Shepherd of the present" (Oosthuizen 1970, 153). Whether in the constantly changing South African environment this was a desirable characteristic for a missionary to have, is questionable.

It is in the light of Shepherd's policy of reserved criticism that his reaction to the proposed Bantu Education Act of 1953 must be examined. Shepherd felt that as far as Lovedale was concerned they "would not mourn if the Churches did less in the management of schools" (Shepherd 1943, 166). It came as no surprise, therefore, that Shepherd did not reject the findings of the Eiselen commission outright, as did many other missionaries.[13] It was a mark of Shepherd's political character that he "could never accept much of the official stand taken [by the Church] on apartheid in South Africa . . ." (Oosthuizen 1970, 155). The attitude of the Lovedale Governing Council to the Eiselen Commission's report was summed up in the South African Outlook of May 1954:

> The Council does not suggest that an Institution like Lovedale should seek to stand out and maintain itself as a Church School. It has long been the practice of Lovedale to work in close co-operation with government authorities, and we anticipate that this will be the policy in the future. (Shepherd 1954, 69)

Lovedale officially stated that its opposition to the Bantu Education Act was based principally on the grounds that the government did not want to give it any representation on the new governing council.[14] In later years Shepherd would look back at the move

13 Roman Catholic Schools and some Anglican Schools decided to continue as private schools rather than bow to government pressure.

14 This was one of the final reasons given. In fact, the Governing Council's reaction to the proposed legislation was far more complicated. There can be no doubt that Lovedale's Governing Council *was* aware of the hidden agenda, but it realised full well that any further cut in subsidy would render the school inoperable. After many meetings in which the Lovedale missionary policy towards African education was drastically re-assessed, it was decided to co-operate with the government in the hope that at least a semblance of the liberal spirit might remain as long as the mission's teachers were involved. The decision was in keeping with Lovedale's policy of not opposing the government openly.

with approval when he wrote that Lovedale had never been financially so well-off as it had been since the government takeover of the Institution. [15]

Shepherd felt that no education was worthwhile if it was not based solidly on Christian principles.[16] This, he felt, would ensure that no non-Christian or anti-Christian ideas would penetrate the Bantu mind. He firmly believed, and therefore advocated, that true education of the Bantu could only be achieved by introducing them to European literature, culture and arts. At the same time it was necessary that the African remain informed about his own culture. As the guardians and guides of the African people, (Shepherd 1945, 74 - 75) it was the duty of the European missionaries to interpret African culture and to teach the colonized how to accept their lot, how to glorify the cultural values of their own society, and to teach them their language, songs, and way of life. Within the conservative liberal circles of the time culture was a very fluid concept, geared to assist the functioning of segregationist rhetoric.[17] As Ngugi (1987, 11-13) points out, it was often the task of the missionaries to make the African aware of the "backwardness" of his culture, and to lure him into an acceptance of liberal Western ideals.

4.6. Shepherd's View of African Culture

Oosthuizen (1970, 85) correctly notes that although colonialism was dying politically, it was still very much alive ecclesiastically. Missionaries, filled with a sense of superiority, saw the investigation of African culture as a way in which

15 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 14712(g).

16 This was in line with the decisions taken at the Le Zoute, Belgium in September 1926. The conference which dealt with missionary education, also adopted a motion which supported greater involvement by governments in African education. See White 1987, 31-49.

17 See Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.

> they [the Africans] will recognize themselves in our words and will acquiesce, saying, "You understand us: you know us completely: you know" in the way we "know"." (Tempels 1969, 36)

In his viewing of African culture Shepherd was the archetypal missionary. Guided by a firm sense of mission, he tried to get to the heart of the people among whom he was working. He collected an endless number of vignettes of African life. Reproduced over a span of thirty years, they all abound with descriptions of the African as "primitive" and set a scene of idyll, except where Shepherd deliberately shatters the illusion to serve a purpose:

> Among the Bantu, milkmaids are unknown. The young men, throwing aside their blankets, milk in a state of nudity, and as the pail becomes full they take it outside and pour its contents into calabashes ranged in a row near the gate of the fold. "How idyllic!" says the passing stranger from another land as he stands in the sunshine and watches the scene. But closer acquaintance robs the picture of much of its charm. A village, set as it may be so picturesquely against the background of rock and kopje, is a spot . . . where life goes down to the animalistic. (Shepherd 1937a, 15-16)

This description of an African village is reproduced in R.H.W. Shepherd and B.G. Paver, African Contrasts (1947, 42-43). The passages are identical, except for one minor change: the word "idyllic" was changed to "romantic" in the 1947 article. Similar repetition also occurs in the two vignettes, "Umpande's Ox" (Shepherd 1937a, 23-27), and "Umnyama's Ox" (Shepherd 1926). It is significant that in the span of more than ten years, despite the political and social changes of the period, Shepherd did not see the need to change the tone of his articles, or that of his vignettes.

The advance of missionary society, Shepherd writes in Where Aloes Flame (1948b, 69-121), brought hope to the tribal African, who, he says, "have found many of their ancient ways to be woefully insufficient" (Shepherd 1937a, 170). Throughout his career, Shepherd would assume for himself the role of interpreting African culture. He firmly believed that in this process of self-fashioning, he was capturing the African spirit. That this is untrue, is noted by van Wyk Smith when he writes that

> . . . the more intensely or "sincerely" individual Eurocolonial writers may have believed that their accounts of Africa and the Orient captured the authenticity of place, the greater actually was their delusion, since they were simply that much less concious of their culturally conditioned prejudices. All ethnographic authority is thus necessarily predicated on a "false consciousness"' and its illuminations are essentially fortuitous and ironic. (Smith 1993, 17)

It is this "false-consciousness" that dominates Shepherd's writing and, ironically, which Dhlomo focusses on when he enters into a dialogue with Shepherd through his critical articles in the South African Outlook.

For Shepherd, who had struggled to gain an education and to escape the confines of poverty, it was impossible to understand how anyone could refuse an education that was given to him. Tribal life, with its apparent disregard for western education, disturbed him tremendously. Yet he found the African to be intelligent and of inquiring mind. "The African," he wrote,

> is compact of human qualities good and bad. Nothing is gained by etherialising his nature, and so treating it in sentimental fashion. (qtd in Oosthuizen 1970, 87).

Shepherd saw in his own writing neither sentimentality nor etherialisation of the African nature! He perceived the tribal African to be intensely loyal to his chief, and wholly supportive of the latter's despotic powers (Shepherd 1937a, 14-19). Consequently he felt that it was necessary to deal firmly with African transgressors at the mission. It was always important to remember that, in dealing with African grievances and their (often violent) reaction to decisions taken on their behalf

> we must not lose sight of the stage of development which they have reached.[18] They are at the adolescent period, a period which, as in the life of individuals, is difficult for any people. It is difficult and trying not only for themselves, but for those who are in any sense their guardians or their guides. (Shepherd 1945, 74-75)

18 The reaction referred to here is the proposed unification of orthography, European enthusiasm for works written in the vernacular as well as to literary standards prescribed by the missionary publishers.

The task of being the guardian of African culture weighed heavily on the shoulders of missionaries because

> we do not claim, of course that the Bantu are capable of formulating a philosophical treatise, complete with an adequate vocabulary. It is our job to proceed to such systematic development. It is we who will be able to tell them, in precise terms, what their innermost concept of being is. (Tempels 1969, 36)

Any intolerance by Africans for his sincere assistance was met with characteristic stubbornness on Shepherd's part. His treatment of the 1946 Lovedale Riot, and his approach to the development of African literature, testify to this.

Shepherd admired the inherent politeness of the African, and was most impressed by his oratorical ability, in which

> he is greatly aided by a language so highly developed and expressive as to stand out in striking contrast to the poverty of his achievement in almost every other direction. (Shepherd 1937a, 18)

From the outset of his career, Shepherd's undying ambition was to eternalize the Xhosa language in a literature that was written specifically for the Bantu, and preferably *by* the Bantu. Because this was such an important aspect of Shepherd's career, it is necessary that it be discussed in greater depth.

4.7. Shepherd and the Needs of African Literature

To Shepherd, the task of producing an African literature was an all-encompassing one:

> Its interest must embrace every aspect of a literary movement, including the state of the southern Bantu languages at the present time, their needs in literature, guidance to African authors, help to publishers, the stimulation of the love of reading, and other matters. Thus wide views are demanded. The co-operation of all interested is required. Guidance from any quarter should be welcomed. (Shepherd 1945, 28)

What then were the needs of African literature? One of the most urgent needs during the whole time that Shepherd was involved in producing African literature was the need for

> an all-African publishing house, asking no favours, seeking no patronage or props from others, and working on strictly competitive lines with modern methods and technique. (Shepherd 1955a, 173)

By 1955 African authors had started moving towards establishing an independent publishing house, but it was not until at least a decade later that this became a reality. With the advent of Drum magazine African writers had greater scope for getting their works published, but prior to that the mission publishers were virtually the only outlets a black writer could turn to.

Another need was the translation of selected English classics into the vernacular (Shepherd 1945, 41-45). The aim behind such translations was to create models which prospective Bantu writers could follow. Works written in English by Africans were welcomed by missionary publishers - especially those of Jabavu and Plaatje, who were held up as models of colonial achievement.[19] The writings of these authors were in demand for, as Shepherd's praise of these books argued, they led to a better understanding of the Native culture. Lovedale's emphasis on vernacular literature often met with criticism from black authors:

> Still more extraordinary is the fact that enthusiasm for the use and development of Bantu languages makes Europeans showing such enthusiasm objects of suspicion in a few African circles. Occasionally it is contended that the motives behind such enthusiasm are not disinterested, and that what is desired is to prevent Africans from attaining a mastery of the English medium and to limit the intellectual freedom of the Black man . . . . They hold that while it is true that Africans must write for Africans, English is the medium through which Africans should be reached, for it is impossible to produce a "national" literature through the use of a "tribal" language: only a tribal literature will result. Such

19 It is ironical that despite Lovedale's apparent support for writing in English, very few such manuscripts were accepted during Shepherd's term as Director of Publications. See Chapter 5, paragraph 5.4.

> advocates are not satisfied by the contentions that Africans should have the utmost freedom to use whichever language they desire . . . (Shepherd 1945, 73)

Such reaction by African authors needs to be placed in perspective: after the adoption of English as the *lingua franca* at the All-African Convention in 1936, more African authors had started using English as a medium of expression. The convention marked the beginning of a trend towards African nationalism that would peak with the formation of the ANC Youth League in 1944.

Also in 1936, the first Bantu Authors' conference was held in Bloemfontein. Shepherd was the convenor of the meeting, at which nine African authors were present. During a discussion one of the African delegates, Herbert Dhlomo, asked whether a proposed merit award for African writers would include manuscripts written in English. The chairman carefully side-stepped the issue, and continued the session without answering Dhlomo's question satisfactorily. In the light of Dhlomo's unanswered question it is interesting to note that shortly after the conference Dhlomo's play, Cetshwayo, was rejected by Lovedale Press.[20]

The 1936 conference is particularly important because of the emphasis placed on Shepherd's recently published book, Literature for the South African Bantu: A Comparative Study of Negro Achievement. Many of the ideas espoused in it were accepted as general mission policy at the conference.[21] The book was the result of an extensive fourteen-week tour of American Negro printing presses. At the conference it was emphasised that there was a need

20 The rejection of this manuscript formed the foundation of much of Dhlomo's critical work. See Chapters 6 and 7.

21 The timing of the publication of Literature for the South African Bantu is significant. It appeared in the first half of 1936 - after his appointment as Literary Secretary of the General Mission Conference, but preceding his brief to organise a conference on African literature.

> to discover the unfilled gaps or needs and to prepare a definite programme as to the order in which the needs of the various sections of the population should be met . . ., to urge missionary societies to make arrangements, financial and otherwise, so that conditions favourable for the best literary work may be ensured [and] to draw on the experience of other lands regarding the largest and most satisfactory introduction and use of literature. (Shepherd 1936, 13)

It was left to the individuals attending the conference to put their ideas into practice at their own institutions, thus giving Shepherd *carte blanche* at Lovedale.

Shepherd had looked to the American model for help and now attempted to adopt some of their more successful systems into the South African publishing industry:

> They [the Negroes] have developed a press to meet some of the needs of their own group, and now, under their own auspices and by their own effort, publish books . . . and other literature . . . . In every aspect of a literature movement - intellectual, industrial and commercial - they are further along the road than the Bantu, yet not so far in advance as to render valueless the lessons they can teach their African kinsmen . . . They are essentially African people, with the spiritual, mental and physical characteristics of Africans. (Shepherd 1936, 14-15)

For the time being therefore, Africans had to be led towards a position of self-help. The scope of the proposed task was to be "intellectual, industrial and commercial" according to Shepherd. With Shepherd's determined efforts to gain control of African publishing and writing, the future looked bleak for any would-be African entrepreneurs in this field.

African authors had no choice but to approach the missionaries if they wanted to publish their manuscripts. This was an important difference between the South African situation and the American (which Shepherd was so fond of using as an analogy), where the Black Press had already been developed under the auspices of various democratic movements. The American movements were generally not the products of colonial henchmen, as was the case in South Africa. Therefore applying principles that had reaped success in America to promoting literature in Africa produced limited success. In his comparative study of African and Negro literature (Shepherd 1936), Shepherd had been quick to notice that there were cases in Negro literature where

> Some authors indeed have departed from their best and most characteristic vein in order to ensure publication. They have suppressed their truest feeling in order to please the Whites on whom they rely for sales. It is contended that judging from certain publications by Negro authors the outsider would say, "These people are contented," but in this respect Negro literature is not reflecting the actual discontent and it will not do so until the group has its own influential means of publication. (Shepherd 1936, 46-47)

This passage partly reveals the "false consciousness" that dominated Shepherd's thinking. Divorced from the South African milieu he could see what happened if writers depended on a single outlet or market when publishing their works, yet back in South Africa he continued to advocate the unification of mission presses. He never recognized that what had occurred in America could be (and was) the case in South Africa. Pleas from African authors for greater freedom of expression were ignored, since the Bantu were still at an "adolescent period in their development" and needed the white man to direct their actions. Shepherd had readily assumed that methods that had worked in America would work in South Africa too - a type of cultural transposition commonly used by missionaries throughout the British Empire. One of the main tasks of colonization was to replace the colonized's culture with that of the colonizer. It was commonly believed that European models could be transposed *in toto* to any culture without adapting them to suit the needs of the people.[22] The result was a series of unsuccessful attempts at launching in South Africa projects that had succeeded elsewhere. Good examples of such projects were Shepherd's proposed training scheme for African librarians, and his attempts at providing Africans with assistance to get their manuscripts published.

Assistance was given to authors in a variety of ways, including the preparation and selection of manuscripts - a task Shepherd felt should not be left to the individual (Shepherd 1945, 50-53). The article, "Help for the Bantu Author" (1937b, 134-136), is a manifestation of this process of assisting African authors. A slightly altered version of

22 See Homi K. Bhabha 1990, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Decolonizing the Mind (London: James Currey, 1987), Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation (London: Routledge, 1992) and Placide Tempels, Bantu Philosophy (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1969).

the article appeared in Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu (1945) as part of a chapter entitled "Along What Lines Should Help be Given? (1945, 50-53)" The article claims to offer guidelines for style and technique, and can be divided into three sections: the preparation of manuscripts, training in literary appreciation and the "placing" of manuscripts. In the first section Shepherd, far from providing practical suggestions to aspiring authors, criticises African writers for not using a uniform size paper to write on and remarks on the lack of care taken in the presentation of manuscripts (1937b, 135). The 1945 version contains a further remark ridiculing some African authors for being "so untutored as to request that only twenty copies be produced" (1945, 53).

In the second section he claims that many authors "fail to grasp the importance of style" (1945, 53). Again, he does not provide any practical suggestions on how to improve style, but comments that what is needed are "teachers with a true love of literature and a feeling for style" (1945, 53). He also suggests that vacation courses be offered, but gives no indication of how such courses should be financed or by whom they should be organised.

In the final section Shepherd notes the importance of sending the manuscript to the correct publisher. He does not mention the fact that, excluding Lovedale and Morija, there were no presses that were willing to publish African fiction. African authors *could* not choose their publisher; they relied on the goodwill of the missionaries. Shepherd also mentions that the payment of royalties seemed to be the fairest system of reimbursement for African authors.

The changes made to the 1945 article are significant in that they reveal something of Shepherd's "cultural logic" (Pratt 1992, 173). In the 1937 version no references are made to style. By 1945 however, as a result of the fiasco created by the new orthography for African languages, the increasingly militant attitude of Africans in general and the fiercely independent writing styles of the likes of Herbert Dhlomo and S.E.K. Mqhayi, Shepherd felt the need to clamp down on the stylistic freedom of African writers. Quite correctly

he felt the status quo threatened, and consequently lashed out more strongly against the perceived cause of instability - the African writer. His attacks against African "ignorance" necessarily became more defined.

Instead of suggesting ways in which African authors could improve their writing ability, the article focused instead on those issues that made it difficult for the publisher to judge the manuscript. The question should, therefore, be asked whether this article was ever intended to assist African authors, or whether it was intended to reduce any inconvenience to the Lovedale Press. Another possibility, of course, was that Lovedale simply wished to leave their mark on an aspect of African society that was rapidly slipping from their grasp. Few African authors could afford the luxury of a typewriter or of reams of paper. Those authors who did write on odd-sized sheets of paper would be discouraged from submitting their manuscripts to Lovedale or any other Mission Press on the strength of Shepherd's article. Since there were no other publishers to go to, these authors would never have an opportunity to publish their work.

Shepherd felt that it was important that a culture of letters be instilled among the African people. A considerable amount of time, effort and money was spent stimulating a love of reading among Africans. It was largely for this reason that the colportage system was re-introduced at Lovedale in 1928. Shepherd also proposed a system of mobile libraries, for which purpose a School of Librarians would be opened at Lovedale, since the existing Bantu Library Service had as a weakness that

> inexperienced readers are so dependent on their own power of choice in the matter of suitable books . . . [This defect] will not be fully removed until there is a corps of fully-trained Bantu librarians, working at first under the supervision of qualified Europeans, and later on their own. Africans know best the background and conditions of the African people. If trained they would know the books suitable and available for them and could best commend such books to them. (Shepherd 1945, 64)

Such librarians, trained under Shepherd's careful guidance, would inevitably prescribe the books that Shepherd saw fit for African consumption. The project did not come to fruition and so the African reading public was at least given a relatively free choice as regards their private reading habits.

These, then, were the most urgent needs in African literature, as identified by Shepherd and the Christian Council. In future much attention would be paid to these aspects of literature. But what about existing work written by Africans and current trends in Bantu literature? How did Shepherd feel about these? Again, his two books on the subject, Literature for the South African Bantu (1945) and Bantu Literature and Life (1955a) provide some answers.

4.8. Shepherd's views on African Literature

Shepherd found only two extremes in African writing, noting with virtual distaste that the African novel was at first predisposed to too much moralising and later to the unhappy external circumstances of life in city locations (Shepherd 1945, 89). The ideas he intended fostering in African literature revolved around two issues: stemming the increasingly political nature of African discourse, and promoting a greater missionary bias by encouraging worship" literature.

Shepherd's thinking on art and literature were firmly situated in his childhood environment of Presbyterian spirituality and aestheticism. Shepherd was descended from the Rev. Alexander Moncrieff - one of the leaders of the Secession Church which broke away from the Established Church of Scotland in 1733 (Oosthuizen 1970, 1). As a child he attended Sunday School and the Band of Hope, where he was exposed to the missionary activities of the Presbyterian Church (Oosthuizen 1970, 7). Books that left a permanent impression on Robert Shepherd's mind were those that were given to him as Sunday

School prizes, and included John Halifax, Gentleman, stories by R.M. Ballantyne and books by Samuel Smiles, especially Self-Help and Character (Oosthuizen 1970, 11). Most of these books were filled with examples of men in lowly position who made good.

As a student of Divinity at New College in Edinburgh, Shepherd was most influenced by the Principal, Dr. Alexander Whyte. It was from Whyte that Shepherd developed a love for the writings of Bunyan, William Law and other puritans (Oosthuizen 1970, 27). When Shepherd came to South Africa as a missionary, and became involved in developing literature among the Bantu, it was from these conservative sources that he drew his inspiration.

Many of Shepherd's ideas on African literature were borrowed from American models. While touring through America on a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, Shepherd did a thorough study of the magazine literature available to Negro writers. After noting at length that most of the magazines and presses run by Negroes were paying increasing attention to inter-racial affairs in their publications (Shepherd 1936, 36-41), he writes that

> In general the Negro author, especially if his concern is the production of literature in its truest sense, seeks to publish through a White publisher. (Shepherd 1936, 42)

The implication is that politically inspired works did not constitute "literature in its truest sense". Among the concerned writers, Shepherd singles out W.E.B. Du Bois and Countee Cullen (both of whom were politically conservative) as models of Negro success in the field of writing. At the same time he criticises James Weldon Johnson for being exaggeratedly militant in his pronouncements on Negro writing (Shepherd 1936, 20-21).

Shepherd went on to mention that a magazine along the lines of the American magazine Opportunity, which had introduced the work of Countee Cullen, had to be launched in South Africa. Opportunity, Shepherd felt, had made a notable contribution to Negro literature. The success of Opportunity was based on the fact that, as the magazine's editor Elmer A. Carter said: "Our viewpoint and standard eliminate many, because they want

to slap-bang, agitate and protest" (Shepherd 1936, 25). Successful African writers, therefore, had to turn away from "propaganda" and do as Cullen and others had done to "get away from race problem poetry and to be simply poets" (Shepherd 1936, 21).

It was Shepherd's belief that the understanding of the African continent would not be complete until the African focused on nature as a theme for his work. To date, African art had focused on human affairs, but not on nature (Shepherd 1955a, 182-183). This notion was in accordance with Shepherd's findings on Negro literature, where Opportunity had encouraged Negro writers to

> go back to many aspects of Negro life which had been ignored through sensitiveness, such as folk-songs, folk poetry, Negro peasant life, and the crude but beautiful philosophy even of persons who had not had the benefit of education. The beauty of the Negro physique in its own right was also emphasised without reference to other standards. All of this aimed both at giving stimulus to Negro writers to express themselves and at increasing self-respect. (Shepherd 1936, 25)

Similarly, African writers had to turn to their tradition of folk tales (Shepherd 1945, 98) for re-affirmation of their self-respect, for it was here that they could leave their mark on the "simpler literatures" of the world (Shepherd 1945, 97).

In the light of the growing sense of political unity among Africans, Shepherd wrote that, to him, the most appealing aspect of American Negro literary achievement had been the fact that they had got away from using literature that was "purely utilitarian or propagandist" to a literature that was dominated by thoughts of art for art's sake. Of local writing he predicted that

> Bantu writers who have escaped from a purely utilitarian or propagandist view of literature and whose souls are dominated by ideas of art for art's sake will make known the soul of Africa. (Shepherd 1945, 89)

In the final pages of Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu Shepherd repeatedly called for the African's right to freedom of expression and asked authors to "plumb the depths of [their] own spirit" (Shepherd 1945, 96). Only then could a Bantu literature originate

that would be "revealing and an expression of the Bantu world" (Shepherd 1945, 96). By taking it upon himself to identify the essence of African literature, Shepherd falls prey to the irony that Dhlomo repeatedly pointed out, that "it is the members of the dominating group who are expected to be the interpreters, spokesmen and the Voice of the Oppressed groups" (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1948a, 15). Shepherd's desire to speak for the African formed part of a process which Mary Louise Pratt describes as

> transatlantic appropriation through which the elite liberal creoles first sought esthetic and ideological grounding as white Americans . . . . Politically and ideologically, the liberal creole project involved founding an independent, decolonized American society and culture, while retaining European values and white supremacy. (1992, 175)

Pratt goes on to note that after independence the American creoles became the conservative elite. Their support for American independence was based on self-preservation. Similarly, it could be argued that Shepherd's interest lay primarily in the preservation of the essentially conservative Presbyterian ethic through the missionary cause. Consequently, he deliberately advocated a literature that would retain the status quo.

It was particularly in the field of poetry that Shepherd felt Africans could excel. He used as examples works by Dhlomo, Vilakazi and Ntsikana. Other genres, he felt, were more problematic. In Literature for the South African Bantu he ascribed the lack of success attained by Negroes in the fields of drama and the novel to the fact that

> they are forms of art demanding a more objective view of their subject matter, and the Negro is still too self-conscious and too race-conscious. (Shepherd 1936, 20)

If as he had stated the Negroes were "further along the road" to developing their own literature than the African (Shepherd 1936, 14), and were still not able to cope with the intricacies of the drama and the novel, how would Africans cope with them? That is why, in consideration for his race, special standards had to be set to judge the African's work of art.

Although Shepherd felt that drama was not the ideal genre for African writers to explore, he had a predilection for African poetry and for dramas based on religious events:

> Our Bantu people have distinct histrionic gifts, and the Bible message might come to larger numbers if they themselves acted or saw others act some of the Bible stories. (Oosthuizen 1970, 149)

It is possible, as will become evident in Chapter 7, that Shepherd did not accept Herbert Dhlomo's plays firstly because of their political nature, and secondly because they did not convey the "Bible message". In Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu Shepherd bemoans the fact that religious expression in the form of original worship" literature was not forthcoming from African pens, for only then could "the heritage of the Universal Church . . . be enriched by a tribute from Africa" (Shepherd 1945, 99).

9. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Shepherd managed to become one of the most influential missionaries in twentieth century South Africa. He used his influence to shape African literature according to his own ideals of what literature should encompass. Shepherd's conception of art and literature was conservative and demanded a moral integrity that matched his own. Those African writers who opposed his ideas, as did Herbert Dhlomo, were ostracized from the missionary publishing community and did not get their work published at Lovedale. Although in his articles and in his books Shepherd constantly expressed the need to assist African authors, he himself only provided any practical guidelines to aspiring African authors in the article "Help for the Bantu Author" (1937b). Those articles that were intended to aid African writers ended up being exposés of what Shepherd perceived as African incompetence. By writing an article aimed at assisting aspiring African authors, Shepherd had appeased his missionary conscience. In future he could hold this article up to critics as an example of the sincerity of the missionary cause.

Shepherd formed his ideas on literature early in his career and stuck to his convictions. Oosthuizen praises Shepherd's constancy by saying that the views he held in 1922 were the views he held in 1966. If anything, this is indicative of Shepherd's inability to assimilate new ideas and to listen to differing opinions. His own ideas hardly ever changed. His published doctoral thesis, Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu, is largely a reproduction of the substance of his documentation of his American tour, published in 1936 as Literature for the South African Bantu: a Comparative Study of Negro Achievement. Decisions made at the 1936 Literature Conference were published in a booklet compiled by him and were also included in Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu (1945). His 1955 publication, Bantu Literature and Life, contains essays printed in the South African Outlook from 1933 onwards, as well as portions from his previously published books and articles on Bantu literature.

Politically, Shepherd could initially have been regarded as a liberal paternalist, but by 1948, we find that he could no longer have been regarded as a liberal. His tenure as Director of the Lovedale Institution was marked by its conservatism and its growing support of increasingly racist government measures. In principle, Shepherd did not oppose the government take-over of Mission Institutions, and therefore did not resist the government's bid to take over the Lovedale Institution in 1955.

In the space of 23 years as a missionary Shepherd's political vision, as well as his vision of African literature and culture hardly changed, despite the number of social upheavals that had occurred in the same period of time. In the next chapter it will be shown how he used his personal power to reject manuscripts submitted to the Press and how he ignored rules and regulations when doing so could have benefitted his personal position.

CHAPTER 5

THE LOVEDALE MISSION PRESS AT WORK

5.1. Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth century Lovedale had occupied itself strictly with religious and educational books for its own purposes. In the twentieth century, under the principalship of Dr. Henderson, the Press began to broaden its scope and publish literature of a more general nature. Under Shepherd's directorship the Lovedale Press blossomed into a publishing giant. This was largely because Shepherd felt that after the

> contact with Europeans he [the educated African] enjoyed during his period at College, . . . he must [now] depend on books for his deeper understanding of European life and culture. (Shepherd 1945, 66)

It was for this reason too that Shepherd placed such an emphasis on the translation of English classics into the vernacular. In this chapter the operation of the Lovedale Mission Press will be investigated. This will be done by looking at the aims and objectives of the Lovedale Press as well as at various factors, such as financial considerations, that governed the selection of manuscripts. Finally, the chapter will take a closer look at specific manuscripts that were turned down by the Press. By studying the circumstances surrounding the rejection of these manuscripts, the inconsistency in Lovedale's selection criteria will be revealed. Whereas the previous chapter concentrated on Shepherd's life, both as a politician and as a missionary, this chapter will focus on Shepherd's practical application of his theory in the administration of the Lovedale Press. The fact that rules could be broken, government regulations bypassed and the boundaries set by the Federation of Master Printers ignored at a whim, illustrates how Shepherd used the Press to create an African literature that served his conservative notions of art. Significantly,

a hardline attitude was taken in cases involving African or Afrikaans writers, whereas a more liberal approach prevailed when the manuscripts under consideration belonged to individuals such as D.J. Darlow, who were members of the Lovedale Governing Council.

5.2. The Aims and Objectives of the Lovedale Press

Shepherd defined his aims and objectives in Literature for the South African Bantu (1936), and after the 1936 Mission Conference applied these proposals to his management of the Lovedale Press. In 1945 he restated these goals in Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu. Through these and other writings by Shepherd, it becomes clear that Lovedale's primary aim during Shepherd's directorship remained the production of educational and Christian literature "for the Lord's Day and weekdays" (Shepherd 1945, 11). Having taught the Bantu to read, it was now of paramount importance to produce appropriate literature so that no "non-Christian" and "anti-religious elements" should supply the reading matter (Shepherd 1945, 26).

Shepherd was convinced that at Lovedale they should strive to publish "only the best":

> No Ms. is accepted, even though the author is prepared to meet the cost of publication, unless it is found after close scrutiny to have reached a certain standard of excellence. (Shepherd 1945, 19)

In this way Lovedale was able to ensure that every piece of written material that passed through the Press measured up to its moral standards. The selection and translation of manuscripts was regarded as an important matter

> that should [not] be left to individual judgement, but should be tackled by a body that can take a comprehensive and objective view. The consideration of the merits of MSS. should be undertaken by bodies of approved personnel. (Shepherd 1945, 52)

As it turned out, this "body of approved personnel" proved to be the Press Sub-Committee, which was controlled by Shepherd.

Shepherd saw it as Lovedale's duty to lend guidance and encouragement to African authors because, in dealing with literature,

> The man of another race may be infinitely better equipped in some respects; he may have made a study of Bantu Languages far more profound than Bantu scholars. (Shepherd 1945, 70)

He saw it as part of the policy of "guidance and encouragement" to make sure that only African works of "merit" were produced at the Lovedale Press. This aid included help with editing, the presentation and format of a manuscript for publishing, and other technical advice. Shepherd was unequivocal about the help he and his institution were offering:

> It is the writer's experience that advice on such matters [finance, editing, etc] is generally readily accepted by the African author. He may sometimes feel that all the emphasis on compliance in such matters is a whim of the European, but he is conscious that in this field the White man has behind him centuries of experience of established ways and that indifference or opposition to such customs and considerations may result in failure to have the work published. (Shepherd 1945, 55)

It cannot be said that Shepherd was equipped for the task of selecting Xhosa manuscripts, nor that his opinion was readily accepted by African authors.[1] His command of the Xhosa language was not sufficient to cope with manuscripts submitted in that language, and consequently all Xhosa manuscripts were sent to I. Oldjohn or D.D.T. Jabavu for reading, and their decisions were generally respected, although this did not happen in all instances. Often authors would comply with the suggestions made by the press, but many opted rather to protest against editorial interference.

1 Oosthuizen 1970, 36. See also Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16321. File S.E.K. Mqhayi - letter from Shepherd to Oldjohn dated 22 February 1940 and MS 16369(c). File T.B. Soga - letter dated 6 September 1935 from D.D.T. Jabavu to Shepherd.

Shepherd's article, "Help for the Bantu Author: Hints on Matters of Publication", appeared in the South African Outlook of June 1937. In 1945 he incorporated the article in Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu as part of the chapter entitled "Along What Lines Should Help Be Given?" Toward the end of the piece he writes that

> Bantu authors must be taught that in choosing a publisher the nature of the MS. must be considered. Some presses specialize in purely biblical literature or devotional books. Others will accept school books, plays, histories, novels and other general literature . . . . Publishers are waiting with open hands for a good book and for new talent and worthwhile manuscripts. (Shepherd 1945, 56)

African authors, we know, did not *have* any channels available to them for publishing other than missionary publishers.[2] Writers who wished to publish were therefore subjected to and restricted by Lovedale's vision of literature in order to get published.[3]

With the upsurge of African resistance after 1936, more and more African writers began to define for themselves the standards by which their literature should be judged. Increasingly the standard came to be what served the African cause best, not what the missionaries felt served colonialism best. It will be argued here that Lovedale created, through its own colonial conceptions of meritorious literature, a "false" genre, by often forcing authors to "correct" certain manuscripts in accordance with racial stereotypes

2 Peter Abrahams, Tell Freedom (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1982), 232. Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16416. Letter from Siwiza to Shepherd dated 15 August 1949. See also Shepherd's statement (1936, 4, 1945, 15) that:

> the mass of the vernacular literature published in the past emanated, and still today emanates, from mission presses . . .
>
> D.D.T. Jabavu in turn writes about publishing for Africans that
>
> For it is the advance of learning that determines the demand, while production depends on printing facilities and the existence of sympathetic publishers; for the press that publishes this literature is almost always some mission press with a missionary book store not visited much by the general public. (Jabavu 1921, 1)

3 Benjamin Leshoai, "The Impact of Christianity on 20th Century Balck South African Writing." Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies 1.(1978): 118 - 144) supports this viewpoint, as do many other later writings by African critics.

and the policies of the press. Instead of "making known the soul of Africa", as Shepherd had allegedly intended, the current literature produced at Lovedale was making known the souls of the missionaries in Africa. Many of the clashes between African authors and the Lovedale Press arose from Shepherd's false consciousness and his erroneous assumptions concerning the nature of African literature.

The importance of what was being done at Lovedale, Shepherd maintained, was that the intellectual freedom of the African was being preserved

> so that he may attain mastery of the English or Afrikaans medium and be at liberty to express himself in any language he desires. Fortunately, whatever the restrictions imposed on the political and economic freedom of the African population in the Union of South Africa, it has to be admitted that no restriction has been placed upon their intellectual freedom, and that African writers are at liberty to use whatever medium they prefer for literary expression. (Shepherd 1945, 79)

Shepherd's statement was not entirely true, as this chapter will attempt to prove. Despite the decision at the Bantu Authors' Conference in 1936 to promote literature in English as well, Lovedale hardly published any such manuscripts during the ensuing years. The Girl Who Killed to Save (1935) was the last literary manuscript written originally in English by an African author to be published at Lovedale during Shepherd's term as director of the Press. The fact of the matter is that, after the fiasco with the Federation of Master Printers (1933),[4] Lovedale consistently sought the line of least resistance. Publishing works written in English by African authors would not only be taken as tacit support of the stance taken by the All-African Convention (which Shepherd did not support) but would at the same time, raise the ire of the government - a source of revenue Shepherd felt Lovedale should not lose. In order to retain government funding, and at the same time not to jeopardise Lovedale's policy of ideological acquiescence, the publication of English manuscripts *had* to stop.

4 See paragraph 5.4.

5.3. Guiding Principles at Lovedale

There were two principles, said Shepherd, that guided the Lovedale Press. One was that "Bantu authors should be encouraged as much as possible," and the other was that

> it also seems reasonable that books which are to be used and paid for by the Bantu people of South Africa should, as far as possible, be printed and bound by Bantu workmen. (Shepherd 1945, 16)

This principle reinforced the government's policy of division of labour, since, as Jeff Peires remarks,

> Lovedale's dominant position with respect to printing in the Xhosa language was facilitated by the system of segregation in which it participated, however unwillingly. No person who was not a member of the Federation of Master Printers, in effect no African, was permitted by the Department of Labour to work as a printer or bookbinder. The Lovedale Press was granted exemptions enabling it to apprentice Africans in these trades on condition that it concerned itself exclusively with work of a "Native" or missionary character. (Peires 1979, 158)

Included in these exemptions was the fact that fictional works written by Africans were considered "Native" publications.[5] This allowed Lovedale to pay their workmen wages below that of white yeomen for works printed in the vernacular. It also meant a division in labour between Lovedale which published for "Natives", and the European Press which published for everyone else, thus complying to governmental regulations and entrenching segregation. This would not have posed a serious ideological problem, except that Lovedale did not only publish for Africans as was suggested by Shepherd in his defense of Lovedale's decision to abide by the government labour policy.[6] Shepherd's

5 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16 436. Letter dated 7 April, 1933. Writing to the Federation of Master Printers, the Lovedale correspondent (either Shepherd or Tom Atkinson, the head printer) writes that "we are still a press specializing in Missionary and Native publications, and works in Bantu Languages." Strictly speaking, therefore, a white author could submit any religious manuscript or one concerned with Native Affairs to Lovedale Press, but any fictional effort submitted by such an author would have to be refused by the Press.

6 See paragraph 5.4.

rationale was that Native labour prevented books for the Bantu from becoming prohibitively expensive. If Lovedale were to stick strictly to this code of conduct, it would be forced to compromise its policy of encouraging black writers to use the medium of their choice.

Lovedale did not want to rock any political boats and was very careful about what it published. A large portion of the Press profits came from printing books for the primary school market. This did not involve any ideological conflict since there was very little difference between Lovedale's objectives and those of the Cape Department of Native Education.[7] Avoiding ideological conflict was important in order to secure state funding for mission projects. The press' mission was two-fold: to shape African authors in the Lovedale mould and to counteract the growing politicisation of the discourse in African fiction. Internal censorship or enforcing self-censorship was essential to this ideal.

5.4. Financial Considerations Governing the Publication of Manuscripts

Although the Lovedale Press was not strictly governed by financial considerations, as were commercial publishers, the financial side of the Press still had to be managed with considerable care. The Lovedale Press relied mainly on outside "jobbing" for its profits, as it had to subsidise the Institution to the tune of £800 per annum, and also had to carry the loss incurred on the South African Outlook (approximately £100 per annum). In 1963, in his letter of resignation, Shepherd noted that financial problems had dogged the footsteps of the directors of the Lovedale Institution throughout the twentieth century. The problem was compounded by the fact that

> As is well-known, books by or for the Bantu are, generally speaking, slow in selling, and this militates against the acceptance of MSS. by publishers. (Shepherd 1945, 54)

7 See White 1987.

Yet he himself noticed that financial considerations were not the be-all and end-all of promoting literature:

> It is inevitable in the underdeveloped conditions of Bantu literature and the lack of the reading habit, that some books must be published although it is evident from the first that they will end in financial loss. (Shepherd 1945, 49)

Financial records reveal that throughout the 1930s, the greatest profits came from the printing unit, followed by the book-room.[8] Although publishing made the smallest contribution to the profits, the Press always maintained a comfortable credit balance, allowing it to publish risky manuscripts.

At the 1936 conference Dr. W.G. Bennie had suggested that a trust should be set up in order to finance works that were in need of being published. In response to this suggestion Shepherd noted that

> . . . the equivalent of such a fund is vested in every mission press of large dimensions. Such presses are not ruled by ordinary commercial considerations such as dividends, and so can devote their profits to further development and the publication of MSS. which may meet a need though they may bring little financial return or a very slow return. (Shepherd 1945, 55)

Shepherd claimed that at Lovedale the fund was used to publish deserving manuscripts by African writers.

Criticism of the methods used to acquire resources for publishing these "deserving manuscripts" and of the management of the resources was often scathing:

> Suppose I were to say that it was a scandal that the Xhosa hymn book should sell at 4/6 when it takes probably little more than a third of that to produce . . . or that it was a scandal that the

8 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16297. Press Committee and Press Sub-Committee meetings. See specifically the following dates: 19 March 1930, 26 March 1931, 3 March 1932, 5 June 1933, 9 Feb 1934. See also 22 Feb 1938 and 14 Feb 1940.

> "considerable resources" which Lovedale now has, have come from the pockets of the Bantu People.[9]

The channelling of these resources really is a cause for concern. Shepherd seemed to waver between two extremes: on the one hand, his financial management was shrewd; on the other, emotional and political considerations forced financial prudence into the background. He writes that

> a fair number of meritorious MSS also remain unpublished for financial reasons, despite the efforts of such as Lovedale Press, which in the past half-dozen years has published at its own risk and expense the works of some twelve Bantu authors and composers. (Shepherd 1936, 5-6)

It has already been noted that the Press' profits came largely from outside jobbing and also from printing educational books. At times the work that was accepted for printing fell beyond Lovedale's stated scope, as is evident from the clash with the Federation of Master Printers (FMP) in 1933. In that year Lovedale accepted the responsibility of printing the Annual Report of the South African Methodist Missionary Society - a task that was normally tendered to an East London printing firm. The job ran to approximately 1000 pages and constituted a handsome profit. The President of the FMP, M. Hennigan, objected on behalf of his organisation and that of the Typographical Union that acceptance of the job ran contrary to the provisions of the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 and the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934.[10] Wilkie, at the time the Director of the Institution, wrote to the Department of Labour requesting clarification on the issue. The Department advised Lovedale not to print the Report, but Lovedale nonetheless decided to go ahead with the job.[11] Hennigan subsequently met again with Wilkie and an agreement was reached whereby it was decided that in future Lovedale would not undertake any work -

9 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16342 (ii). File Tswana Readers. Letter from A. Sandilands to Shepherd, dated 29 Nov 1939.

10 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16436. Letter from Hennigan to T. Atkinson, dated 31 March 1933.

11 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16436. Letter from I. Lucas of the Department of Labour to Wilkie, 8 May, 1933.

even if this were educational or missionary - which a white firm had been producing. Lovedale also re-affirmed its commitment not to venture into competition with white publishers.[12]

It appears that Lovedale had scant regard for the agreement reached with the Federation, since subsequently even the strictest of rules were flexible enough to accommodate friends and members of staff. Despite the fact that Lovedale was technically not allowed to publish fiction written by Whites, and despite the stringent financial position, the Press saw fit in 1949 to carry the cost of publishing African Dawn, a first novel by P.L. Hunter.[13] Hunter was the nephew of D.A. Hunter, a member of the literary sub-committee and the person in charge of the new colportage scheme introduced in 1928. He was also the editor of the South African Outlook from 1901 to 1931, when Shepherd took over editorship of the magazine. More than ten years earlier, in 1936, Lovedale had also carried the cost of having Darlow's The Mendi published. Darlow was a member of the Lovedale Governing Council, and also did proof-reading for the Press. Contrary to Shepherd's claim, therefore, it was not only African authors that benefitted from the contingency fund that had been established to publish meritorious works.

In the early 1930s Shepherd published an edition of his own Under the Oaks, but refused to print Dhlomo's This is Africa because of the loss incurred on his first book, The Girl Who Killed to Save. The most comparable loss during this period was Shepherd's own collection of sermons, Under the Oaks.[14] If indeed some books had to be sold at a loss,

12 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16436. Meeting between Wilkie and Hennigan, 10-11 August 1933.

13 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16363. File: P.L. Hunter. Letter dated 17 Aug 1945.

14 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16363. File: P.L. Hunter. Hunter writes to Shepherd on 7 January 1950, saying that only 175 copies of African Dawn had been sold; MS 16398. File C.J.Uys. In the Era of Shepstone had only sold 371 copies in two years. The nett loss was £93.12.4; MS 16389. Shepherd's Under the Oaks sold fewer than 450 copies in seven years. Published in 1936, only 336 copies of Dhlomo's play had been sold by 1938. The size of the print-run in each of the above cases is unknown, so it is impossible to tell what percentage of the books were actually sold.

Dhlomo, in a letter to Shepherd, had given ample reason to justify the publication of his plays:

There was often a discrepancy between what Lovedale said and what Lovedale did. When considering individual cases of manuscripts submitted to the Lovedale Press it is important to bear in mind that:

> - Lovedale was bound by law to publish only works in vernacular or of a missionary nature;
>
> - Lovedale proposed freedom of choice to authors as regards the language and medium of expression;
>
> - Lovedale was in possession of a fund ostensibly aimed specifically at promoting African writing;
>
> - Lovedale's professed approach to ideological issues was to avoid direct confrontation with the government and to seek the positive in all legislation;
>
> - Lovedale was dedicated to a broader missionary ideal that fell within the tenets of South African liberalism;
>
> - Lovedale's dominance over African publishing was supreme. An author that could not get his work published at Lovedale, for whatever reason, stood little chance of having it accepted elsewhere.

5.5. Case Studies

As the head of the Press Sub-Committee, Shepherd was not opposed in any way to censoring manuscripts that came his way. He wrote to Silas Molema about his history of the Rolong:

> I would not like the Lovedale Press to give publicity to the judgement in chapter 5. This is Hitlerism with a vengeance! and there are similar passages - particularly with reference to the British - the writing of which may give emotional satisfaction but which seems not dispassionate enough for serious history.[15]

15 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16375. File S.M. Molema. Letter dated 10 January 1940.

There is no evidence to suggest that Oldjohn and Jabavu had objected to the contents of the book, so the rejection of this manuscript can be seen as the result of Shepherd's own opinion of the manuscript. Molema replied that he was grateful for the comments and that he would attend to the shortcomings of the manuscript, but he never resubmitted it.

A similar instance is reflected in the events surrounding the submission of S.E.K. Mqhayi's biography of the Xhosa leader Rubasana. The manuscript was given to I. Oldjohn to read.[16] Lovedale had provided Mqhayi with a quote of £81 for publication. He offered to pay £50 towards the cost of publication himself, yet the manuscript was turned down on the advice of Oldjohn, who maintained that Mqhayi had introduced "too much irrelevant matter" such as the causes of the Kaffir" Wars, and that he was "too partisan" in his discussion of political issues such as the differences between Rubasana and J.T. Jabavu (father of D.D.T. Jabavu). In April 1940 Shepherd wrote to Mqhayi[17] saying that

> As a missionary press, we cannot allow ourselves to become involved in political controversy making for division among the Bantu people. [18]

Shepherd's personal dislike of Mqhayi, as well as their political differences, seem to have been allowed to interfere in the selection of the manuscript. On the other hand, Lovedale was willing to publish numerous political works, ranging from C.J. Uys' In the Era of

16 The tension between the Mfengu and the Xhosa was a sensitive issue at Lovedale. Oldjohn was Mfengu and Mqhayi was Xhosa. This is a fact that would have influenced Oldjohn's reading of the manuscript considerably. For a more detailed account of the Xhosa/Mfengu rivalry, see Jeffrey Peires "The Lovedale Press: Literature for the Bantu Revisited." History in Africa 6 (1979): 155-175.

17 Shepherd did not like Mqhayi (as is evident from the tone of the official correspondence between them), and on occasion wrote to W.G. Bennie that, after reading the English translation of Mqhayi's autobiography, he "laid it down with a greater liking for the author." (Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16321. Letter from Shepherd to Bennie dated 9 May 1938.) Yet in his public announcements he was always careful to praise Mqhayi. See Shepherd 1955a.

18 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16321.

Shepstone (1933), which dealt with British expansion in South Africa, as well as R.T. Kawa's I-Bali Lama Mfengu (1929), a history of the Mfengu people from their point of view.[19] Other politically orientated works included R.E. Phillips' The Bantu in the City (1938) and Edgar Brookes' Colour Problems in South Africa (1934). Shepherd respected the political opinion of both these authors, and so it can be argued that, in his eyes, the books did not involve "political controversy". T.S. Preller's work, Lobengula: The Tragedy of a Matabele King (1963), was not so fortunate. Shepherd denied that he had refused to publish the book because of its anti-British sentiments, but added that Lovedale "would however, not publish any matter which we consider harmful to the missionary cause".[20] Lobengula was finally published in 1963 - after Shepherd had cut his ties with Lovedale, and after Preller had sought a different publisher. What is interesting about Preller's case, is the way in which it points to how Shepherd, a conservative English racist, nevertheless distanced himself from Afrikaner racism and Nationalism.

In neither of the above cases was Shepherd willing to allow the writers to enter the political fray because the sentiments expressed were not in line with a missionary perspective. Lovedale, it seems, was willing to accept any manuscript in an attempt to "ensure that every meritorious MS by an African author shall find a channel of publication" (Shepherd 1945, 54), as long as it did not oppose the missionaries' ideological stance. Shepherd's statement that artistic merit was the prime consideration in accepting a manuscript for publication should be regarded with suspicion - financial and ideological considerations played a major role. Above all, Shepherd had no intention of becoming an "architect of revolt" (Tempels 1969, 24). This is evident, inter alia, from his refusal to publish

19 The manuscript was funded privately. It took the comparatively well-educated and prosperous Mfengu seven years to raise the £10 for publication by means of communal subscription. The prospect of private publishing was therefore beyond the reach of most African writers.

20 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16398. Letter from Shepherd to Uys dated 1 December 1933.

Dhlomo's collection of plays, which displayed the author's growing political awareness. The official reason for this decision was based on economic viability and literary value, especially the quality of the rhyming poems.[21]

Dhlomo's suggestion in the covering letter for his manuscript was that it would be used to promote Bantu theatre productions. His previous play, The Girl who Killed to Save, had been performed at the BMSC in this way and more of his plays were to follow in years to come. The availability of these manuscripts in published form would have speeded up the process of staging them considerably. The future of the Bantu Dramatic and Operatic Society depended largely on the publication of Dhlomo's plays. Had Dhlomo known about the comments made about the BMSC by Dame Sybil Thorndyke, he could have used them as useful ammunition in his struggle with Shepherd.[22] Instead, he made his critical writing serve his cause of getting his plays published.

The Lovedale Press was wary of publishing the volume of plays for reasons other than the financial risk involved. The manuscript contained the text of Cetshwayo, written in 1936 as a manifestation of the ideals of the All-African Convention, and an artistic embodiment of Dhlomo's dramatic theory. This meant that from Shepherd's conservative perspective the manuscript was ideologically unsound. In another case involving a Dhlomo manuscript, Shepherd noted that the end of Dhlomo's An Experiment in Colour was unbelievable and too political ("propagandist").[23] If he was able to say it of a text that, at most, parodies the fiction of race, how much more vehement his reaction to the Africanist philosophy projected in Cetshwayo would have been. The poems in Cetshwayo were intended to serve the same function as *izimbongi*, and were never

21 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16309(b). Letter from Shepherd to Dhlomo, 19 May 1938. See Chapter 6 for further discussion.

22 See Chapter 6, paragraph 6.3.

23 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16309(b). Letter from Shepherd to Dhlomo dated 3 Jan 1939.

intended as westernized verse.[24] In stating that the quality of the rhyming poems was not up to standard, Shepherd had either completely misread their true nature, or had seen in them an ideal opportunity to turn the manuscript down for ideological reasons.

Possibly the earliest case of editorial intervention at Lovedale occurs with Sol Plaatje's novel, Mhudi. The novel is the first full-length novel by a Black South African to be published. Tim Couzens and Stephen Gray (1978, 198-215) discuss the differences between the typescript with Plaatje's holographed corrections, the original 1930 edition and the 1957 Lovedale Press edition in detail. It is, however, necessary that the events surrounding the publication of Mhudi, and the differences between the texts be highlighted once more for the sake of illustrating the possibility of editorial interference.

Plaatje, according to all evidence available, had completed his manuscript between 1917 and 1920.[25] Parts of the novel were written overseas while campaigning against the injustices of the 1913 Natives Land Act. The novel was written in English so that the author could appeal to both a European and an African audience. As the author's preface (1930 edition) states, the novel was intended to help preserve the folk tales and oral culture of the African peoples. Plaatje had already written the now classic Native Life in South Africa, which had been published by P.S.King and Son Ltd in London in 1916 and had also appeared in Tsala ea Batho at the same time (Couzens 1978, 7). Plaatje sent the manuscript of Mhudi to London, but it was returned to him. For the next decade the manuscript drifted between publishers, until it finally arrived at Lovedale in 1928. On 4 Dec 1929 Shepherd noted in the minutes of the Press Committee that Lovedale would accept Mr Plaatje's manuscript on condition that the missing chapter be completed by the

24 A careful reading of two articles by H.I.E. Dhlomo, "Drama and the African." South African Outlook 66 (1936): 232 - 235, and "Nature and Variety of Tribal Drama." Bantu Studies 13 (1939): 33-48 will show that Dhlomo saw *izibongo* as a crucial part of dramatic structure.

25 Letter from Plaatje to Silas Molema, dated 25 August 1920, in which Plaatje writes that he had been writing two books, one of which is Mhudi. The letter is quoted in Couzens and Gray. 1978, 201-202.

author.[26] The exact nature of this "final chapter" is unknown, as the only extant typescript (in possession of Cory Library) includes what is, in all editions, the final chapter. The final lines of the 1930 Lovedale edition differ significantly from the typescript (which forms the basis of the 1978 Heinemann edition). In the 1930 version, Ra-Thaga, Mhudi's husband says: "from henceforth . . . my ears shall be open to one call only besides the call of the Chief, namely the call of your voice - Mhudi". Plaatje's typescript reads: "I have had my revenge and ought to be satisfied; from henceforth I shall have no ears for the call of war or the chase; my ears shall be open to one call only - the call of your voice." The 1930 edition is in line with Shepherd's view that Africans above all remain loyal to their Chief. Many such editorial changes, possibly endorsed by Plaatje, are apparent in the text, but Gray and Couzens point out one significant editorial cut (or printer's devil) that lays the ideology of Plaatje's text and that of the Lovedale editions bare. A passage in the 1930 Lovedale edition reads:

> As the serried ranks [of Mzilikazi's army] marched out under their several indunas, they constituted a formidable mass of black humanity. Going through their initial exercises, thousands of limbs would straddle after a thousand different patterns; innumerable spears described circles in the air as if slaying as many visionary enemies . . . . (Plaatje 1930, 168)

In the 1957 edition, the passage starts with "As the serried ranks marched out under their black indunas, they constituted a formidable mass of black humanity". Here, after the government take-over of the Institution, the blackness of Mzilikazi's forces is emphasised. Both these versions differ from the typescript which reads: "As the various age-divisions marched out under their several indunas, they constituted a formidable mass of black humanity" (1978, 144). In other places, passages with anti-imperialist sentiments have been left out of the Lovedale edition. Considering what Shepherd wrote to Preller about Lovedale not publishing anything that would be harmful to the British cause, it may rightfully be asked whose decision it was to drop these passages. Although

26 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16297. Minutes of meeting dated 4 Dec 1929.

one cannot prove that the Lovedale Press deliberately interfered with the text of Mhudi, the discrepancies between the various editions certainly cast doubt on Lovedale's integrity.

5.6. Conclusion

In this section, *Creating the Contact Zone*, it was shown how the Lovedale Press, and in particular Shepherd, often disregarded rules and regulations concerning the publication of manuscripts when performing tactical manoeuvres. By carefully manipulating the publishing policy, Shepherd could present a liberal front in an attempt to gain the approval of the African people. On the other hand, Shepherd would protect Lovedale's financial interests by not antagonizing the government. It was shown that, contrary to Shepherd's statements in Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu, the Lovedale Press did not make any real effort to promote the artistic freedom of African writers. Political expediency and Shepherd's personal ambition were the overriding factors that determined which manuscripts eventually got published, and which ones didn't. It is in the light of Shepherd's ambivalent position regarding the selection of manuscripts that Herbert Dhlomo's critical writing should be considered in the following chapters.

SECTION C:

WRITING IN THE CONTACT ZONE

CHAPTER 6

HERBERT DHLOMO: IN SEARCH OF THE AFRICAN VOICE

> It is a time of transition, of migration of population, of expansion, of the rise of new horizons and new modes of thought and life. It is a time when an old indigenous culture clashes with a newer civilisation, when tradition faces powerful exotic influences. It is a time when men suddenly become conscious of the wealth of their threatened old culture, the glories of their forefathers, the richness of their tradition, the beauty of their art and song. It is a time when lamentations and groans, thrills and rejoicing, find expression in writing . . . . It is a time when men embrace the old and seize upon the new; when they combine the native and the alien, the traditional and the foreign, into something new and beautiful. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 41)

6.1. Introduction

While white missionaries were elaborating their opinions on African literature, African authors were not merely passively watching the proceedings. Ursula Barnett, in her study of black South African writing, says that

> Apart from H.I.E. Dhlomo's comments on drama and poetry . . . there was very little writing in South Africa about black literature in English before the late nineteen-fifties. (Barnett 1983, 253)

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of Herbert Dhlomo's literary theory, and where relevant to contrast his views on African literature with those of Shepherd, which were discussed in Chapter 4. Although Dhlomo's critical writing concentrated primarily on the vernacular, he applied his theory in his own creative work. In the next chapter it will be shown how Dhlomo consciously chose the subject matter, form and style of his essays to reflect what he was doing in his creative writing at the time. Furthermore it will be shown how Dhlomo's critical writing was used to "sell" his creative manuscripts to Lovedale Mission Press.

The audience for African opinion on African literature was very small in the 1930s, and so authors deliberately had to cultivate such an audience, as Herbert Dhlomo did in his

'Busy Bee' column in Ilanga lase Natal. It is during the mid-1930s, with the sense of unity expressed by Africans at the 1936 All African Convention in Bloemfontein, that African opinion on art and literature began to gain form and direction. For a variety of reasons, not least of which was that Eurocolonials expected them to do so, African literary critics concentrated largely on vernacular literature. Herbert Dhlomo's article "Drama and the African", one of the first extensive pieces formulating an African opinion on literature, appeared in the South African Outlook of 1936. In this chapter and the next, it will be argued that the fact that many of Dhlomo's articles appeared in liberal-owned newspapers is significant, because it reveals the writer's conscious choice to use the tools offered by the colonizer to create a voice of opposition.

When considering Dhlomo's opinion of art and literature it is useful to remember a comment made by B.W. Vilakazi, one of the most prominent African intellectuals. While discussing the multitude of influences on Zulu poetry, Vilakazi turns to religion:

> The religious system of the Zulus does not differ very much from the highest forms of religion found in the European civilisation. But owing to misinterpretations by some writers the real facts have been lost, and the informants in both political and social systems of the Zulus are very subjective, i.e. they give what the white anthropologist wants them to give and not what they know to be the truth. (Vilakazi 1937, 46)

The key word here is "misinterpretation". Much of what was written by Dhlomo was either not fully understood at the time, or else deliberately misinterpreted by white South Africans to entrench the status quo. In assessing his critical work, we therefore have to be alert to read between the lines to find the truth behind what was being written. The voice of dissent is often carefully shrouded in rhetoric that was intended not to offend the

essentially conservative Shepherd. The first aspect of Dhlomo's theory that is to be addressed is the choice of language, as it lies at the core of Dhlomo's argument.[1]

6.2. The Choice of English as a Medium of Artistic Expression

Books like Mweli Skota's The African Yearly Register (1931) show a desire among Africans to express their own history; a history with an authentic African voice. An important and insightful analysis of this book appears in the first chapter of The New African. A Study of the Life and Works of H.I.E. Dhlomo.[2] What is evident from Couzens' discussion of Skota's book is that, in the field of African biography, the bonds of tribalism became less important to the African and (especially among the educated urban population) there was a greater trend towards nationalism. This feeling of nationalism centred on the artistic progress of the African people.

The interpretation of words like "tribal", "tribalism", "national" and nationalism" lies at the core of Dhlomo's critical discourse. The political shift towards segregation and the government's emphasis on tribal studies created suspicion among Africans. After a century of attempted cultural assimilation, this new trend was seen by Africans for what it was - a key to political domination.

It has been shown in the previous chapters that white liberals and missionaries alike had made themselves comfortable in the segregationist rhetoric of the day. Africans were becoming increasingly disillusioned by the missionary attitude towards segregation.

1 Dhlomo's article, "Language and National Drama." The New Outlook March (1939): 8-10, on the language of African drama is analyzed in depth in the next chapter. It not only provides insight into African opinion on language, but also is an excellent example of the unique style that arose as a result of Dhlomo's participation in the contact zone at Lovedale Mission Press.

2 Couzens 1985, 1-39.

Writers like Herbert Dhlomo reacted sharply to the policy of segregation. In Cetshwayo Shepstone's assistant, Park, says:

> As time goes on, and more Natives become educated and civilized, the European will either be engulfed by the flood of educated Natives, or devise means to keep back the bulk of the Native population and curtail the rights of even the educated, cultured and exempted Native. You want Natives to develop along their own lines. Yet even now you are compelled to dictate the lines. (Cetshwayo. Visser & Couzens 1985, 144)

As with most Africans, Dhlomo saw the roots of segregation in the policies of Theophilus Shepstone. Dhlomo's growing resentment of missionaries and liberals, though openly expressed after 1936, had been formed earlier. The marginalia in his personal copy of J.R. Sullivan's The Native Policy of Sir Theophilus Shepstone (1928) contain some scathing remarks about missionaries and liberalism.[3]

It was in a milieu of growing opposition to racial policies, therefore, that English became the language of protest among Africans. Benjamin Leshoai says that the vernacular was reserved for "writing notes for use in the schools and therefore deal[s] with non-controversial themes" (Leshoai 1978, 127). Protest was not the only reason for writing in English: in an article entitled "Reflections on a Literary Competition" in Ilanga Lase Natal on 31 October 1953, Herbert Dhlomo writes:

> An African who writes successfully in English kills many birds with one stone. He proves that the African can rise to world standards. He gets an international reputation. He speaks to a wider audience. He receives better financial returns. There are no political, religious, and other restrictions. He is not encouraging tribalism. The argument is that he can show African genius just as well in writing in English.

One of the most important reasons given by Dhlomo in this passage is that writing in English does not encourage tribalism. The opposition to tribalism is an important point to make in the light of the Nationalist government's attempts at entrenching tribal barriers

3 Couzens 1985, 125-155.

as the apartheid way of life. Also, in the prevailing Social Darwinist rhetoric, tribalism referred to the state of a primitive culture - exactly the image the "New Africans" were hoping to transcend. For Dhlomo, a sense of national identity could only be created outside the potentially divisive boundaries of tribalism. In the passage, Dhlomo specifically refers to the political and religious restrictions placed on the writer who used vernacular as his medium of expression. He sees through the government's attempts at promoting vernacular literature.

Dhlomo was acutely aware of the double role played by Africans:

> Today a life of oppression, uncertainty, and various shades of fortune has made the African a still more accomplished actor. How often one hears that the African is happy and carefree because he smiles - ignorant of the fact that behind those smiles and calm expression lie a rebellious soul, a restless mind, a bleeding heart, stupendous ambitions, grim determination, a clear grasp of the facts and the situation, grim resolve, a will to live. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 234)

African people were experiencing the growing pains of a new political consciousness. Dhlomo himself looked forward to the new era faced by Africans and felt that despite the efforts to the contrary "the onward march of the Bantu cannot successfully be paralysed" (Dhlomo 1926, 13).

In his writing Dhlomo attempted to liberate his people "from superstition and the rule of Ignorance". Dhlomo criticised those Africans whom he referred to as "Neither-nor" Africans:

> In this category I include Africans in Mission Reserves, some urban location dwellers, and strangely enough, some of our best educated men.
>
> This type of African is not as sure of himself, proud of his racial identities and affiliations, his indigenous institutions and cultural heritage, as his tribal brother . . . . He has lost the spirit and habits of tribal communism and is individualistic, yet finds that individualism in a country where his racial group as a whole is discriminated against, does not pay, and that therefore as an individual he cannot go far. His destiny lies solely with his group. (Cited in Couzens 1985, 32-33)

He calls upon these Africans to look to the future and sever the tribal bonds, to become "New Africans". This new grouping proposed to transcend tribal barriers and served a subject for Dhlomo's fiction. In all of his writing Dhlomo's message is clear: use the past - its unity and resistance against oppression - but also use the advantages of western civilisation, all to the future advantage of the African people. He wanted to establish a new, united African culture. In 1930 he wrote:

> I desire to state emphatically that the tribalism which so many people desire to protect and prolong, must be broken down at all costs and hazards. It is one of the most formidable foes to Bantu progress. But we must do more than tear it down - we must have a definite programme to assist and protect the detribalised people. All this cheap talk about raising all Natives in the scale of civilisation, uniformly, and not allowing certain individuals to outrun their kraal brethren, is as preposterous as it is impossible. (Dhlomo 1930, 3)

With hindsight it could be argued that what Dhlomo was proposing was in itself impossible, and was no more than a cheap sell-out to white culture. In Dhlomo's writing, opposing the bonds of tribalism (which in the South African context reinforced segregation), was the powerful force of nationalism. To Dhlomo, "national" meant African unity, as proposed by the All-African Convention. The convention, among other things, had adopted English as its *lingua franca* because it was the only way to overcome tribal barriers. Consequently, the literary criticism of the 1930s and 1940s was aimed at attaining a national identity, a national theme for authors to pursue in their creative writing. As a political statement, the language through which a national identity was to be established, *had* to be English.

On the subject of attaining a national identity through literature, Homi Bhabha argues that a nation's identity, its coming into being" is the result of a system of cultural signification, as the representation of social *life* rather than the discipline of social *polity* . . ." (1990, 1). Language and writing are important aspects of this process of cultural signification, as it is through language and writing that meaning can be given to the term "nation". It is only once the meaning of a national identity has been fixed that the threshold of cultural difference can be crossed and a new culture be produced (Bhabha

1990, 3). In choosing English as a language of signification, Dhlomo felt he could escape the "social polity" and define the nation. By the choice of English as a medium of expression, Dhlomo created a voice of opposition, and showed that language could be a force for producing, creating and unifying the South African people as much as it was a divisive, fracturing force.

In the context of Herbert Dhlomo's literary theory, the act of writing in English should be seen not only as a statement of political opposition, but also as an attempt at promoting a "national" heritage. Dhlomo's writing, whether it is in English or in vernacular, or in English about the vernacular, should be seen as an expression of his desire to trace what was good in a literary tradition and to use it to complement the literature of the future.

6.3. Dhlomo's Career as Literary Promoter

Dhlomo worked unceasingly to publish his own work and to perform his plays, as well as those of other writers, in an attempt to create the national voice he called for in his critical works. He was deeply interested in the cultural advancement of his people and dedicated his life to this task. His many journalistic and private endeavours were aimed at cultivating a sense of national pride among Africans.

Dhlomo tried to prepare African writers for the road ahead by finding a balance between the past and the future. In many of his endeavours he was supported by Benedict Vilakazi. Together they were involved with the very beginning of modern African drama when they proposed the formation of an African Academy. This Academy was to promote all aspects of African civilisation and culture and, like the ANC Youth League, stood for

> a policy of assimilating the best elements in European and other civilisations and cultures on the firm basis of what is good and durable in the Africans' own culture and civilisation [and that] African works of art can and should reflect not only the present phase of the National liberatory struggle but also the world of

> beauty that lies beyond the conflicts and turmoil of struggle. (Karis and Carter 1973, 326. vol. 2)

The first step towards an African Academy, Dhlomo felt, lay in the formation of an African National Dramatic Movement, and towards this end the Bantu Dramatic and Operatic Society was formed in 1932.

The African drama section of the British Drama League came into being in the early 1930s. A representative of the League, Dame Sybil Thorndyke, visited the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg in 1932 or 1933. Her report on the newly formed Bantu Dramatic and Operatic Society was enthusiastic. "Here," she wrote in her report,

> is the first attempt of which we have heard of educated Africans beginning to build up a theatre of their own, which will encourage the writing of African plays. (Cited in Couzens 1985, 175)

Dhlomo was joint secretary with Dan Twala of the Society, and later became its vice-president. A number of plays were staged here, including performances of Lady Windermere's Fan and She Stoops to Conquer.[4] Dhlomo's own play The Girl who Killed to Save: Nongqause the Liberator, was staged at the BMSC by the Society in 1934, and met with favourable criticism.

In 1934 Dhlomo was appointed as the first Bantu Librarian by the African Library Services in the Transvaal. He remained in this position until he had a fallout with his employers concerning his separation from his wife. By 1938 Dhlomo had worked out a scheme to support the running of a Bantu National Dramatic Movement, and apparantly had considerable support for it.[5] The scheme had a short-lived life as the "African National Theatre" in the 1940s, but otherwise it never came off the ground. It is dubious whether the failure of the African Dramatic Movement was a direct result of Dhlomo's

4 In both instances, Dhlomo was a member of the cast. Photographs of the production are reproduced in Couzens, 1985, 159 ff.

5 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16309(b).

failure to get This is Africa published, but what is certain is that Dhlomo's failure had a considerable effect on the morale of those behind the scheme. The success of the Bantu National Theatre depended largely on Dhlomo's play-writing skills.[6] After the collapse of the African Dramatic Movement, Dhlomo started a play-reading and producing scheme for African schoolchildren, but the programme ended when Dhlomo left Johannesburg.

In many ways the formation of the All-African Convention in 1936 marked a radical change in African thought. It certainly was a turning point in Dhlomo's political consciousness. Ideas that had previously been reserved for private discussions and marginalia now became part of his public mission. White liberal interference in his private life eventually led to his vowing never to take up a public office again. He joined the staff of the independent (although white owned) newspaper Ilanga lase Natal, where he would eventually steer the newspaper on course to support the ANC Youth League.

In 1936 Dhlomo attended the Bantu Authors' Conference in Bloemfontein, where pertinent questions relating to vernacular literature were asked, and grievances against missionary monopoly of the publishing industry were raised. By this time he had already established himself as a regular contributor to a number of magazines and journals. It is significant that the bulk of Dhlomo's critical writing appeared after the All-African Convention and during his abortive attempt to have his dramas published at Lovedale.

It was through his critical writing on African literature that Dhlomo made his most valuable contribution to the development of African literature. English held a special fascination for H.I.E. Dhlomo, who even as a youngster expressed the desire to become a writer and to write in English. He supported the use of English as an African *lingua franca* not only by writing in that language himself, but also, as we have seen, by encouraging other African writers to do so.

6 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS 16309(b). Letter from Dhlomo to Shepherd dated April 1938.

6.4. Dhlomo's Views on African Literature and Culture.

Dhlomo started his journalistic career in the latter half of the 1920s, but his articles on African literature only began appearing in the early 1930s. In the Bantu World of 25 November 1933 he wrote that "the future history of the African depends largely on his achievements in art, literature, music and invention". The literary criticism written at this time does not stand out as being particularly critical of the government, as Mbulelo Mzamane (1991, 51 ff) correctly notes in his objection to Piniel Shava's history of black writing in South Africa.[7] In the writing of both African and White (whether liberal or conservative), it was often very difficult to discern between the government's segregationist attitude and the attitude of the "Garveyist" faction in the ANC. Black writing did, however, reflect the growing sense of group identity experienced by Africans throughout the continent.

In 1936, three years after The Girl Who Killed to Save was first performed, Dhlomo wrote:

> Art is understanding and expressing the feelings and experiences around you. An artist must come out of himself and enter into the general emotion, thought and opinion of the people. He must express not only himself, but the thought and feeling of the people .... If it is true that the Past should form the background of African art, equally true it is that African art must deal with things that are vital and near to the African today - the school, the church, the slums, the automobile, commerce, etc. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 234)

Already Dhlomo's literary vision had gone beyond the almost unconditional acceptance of missionary idealism in The Girl Who Killed to Save to a more political stance, focused on the situational experience of Africans. At this stage, however, Dhlomo was still in

7 Piniel Viriri Shava, A People's Voice: Black South African Writing in the Twentieth Century (London: Zed Books, 1989).

favour of a more aesthetic approach. He felt that it was in the field of drama that African art should come into its own:

> We must strive to build great, lasting literary drama, and not be carried away by the desire to produce plays that are mere thrillers, plays that act well and are good for immediate commercial purposes only. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 38)

On the next page he re-states his point:

> The African dramatist would be well advised to build a great literary drama first before attempting to write "acting" plays. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 39)

Although literary drama would conform more to a missionary approach to literature, one has to appreciate Dhlomo's reasoning as to why "literary" drama should take preference. Western drama, to the African, had been largely a literary experience. Dhlomo was correct in saying that

> Many who have not seen a Shakespearean masterpiece staged, can still enjoy its celestial music and understand its deep truths by means of reading only. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 38)

Dhlomo himself probably never had an opportunity to see such a production. The social constraints of his existence limited his artistic vision in this instance. By "literary" Dhlomo meant a play with depth, one that explores human behaviour and the human psyche, rather than a purely aesthetic musing. He realised the importance of a dramatic performance as part of the text - that is why he wanted to form the Bantu National Dramatic Movement. "Literary" was not meant in terms of what is termed in Afrikaans as "'n leesdrama" (such as Van Wyk Louw's Germanicus (1984)) - a play written primarily to be read. Rather, it refers to the complexity of the art form, its ability to present a message:

> And that is where tribal drama comes into the matter. It is a virgin field with boundless possibilities for experiment, for development in *kind*, for individual originality, for poetic exaltation. Detached from the heat and mud of the present - yet vital to, and able to comment upon the Present - this field can produce wonders and miracles of achievement. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 39)

From this point African drama could "show life as it is today". The artist's function was to recreate something new out of tribal drama:

> . . . the claims of African drama based on modern themes cannot be dismissed. The development of modern African drama cannot purely be from African roots. It must be grafted into western drama. It must borrow from, be insipred by and shoot from European dramatic art forms, be tainted by exotic influences. But the African dramatist should produce his plays as he feels. His work should be marked by his own soul and individuality - and that is originality . . . . Drama is the reconstruction, the reproduction, the recreation of the great experiences of a people, and helps them to live more abundantly. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 40)

Dhlomo had re-assessed the role of the missionary in African literature and had come to the inevitable conclusion that it should be left to Africans to determine the format of their own national literature. A dramatic tradition based on European models was not incompatible with African nationalism, even though it seems to be contradictory. The new African intelligentsia were not opposed to adopting western culture into their way of life as much as they were opposed to being involuntarily assimilated into a western culture at the expense of their own, or to having the confines of their own culture dictated to them. They were aware of the inevitability of western influences, but felt the need to be able to dictate the nature and extent of these influences themselves. By saying that African drama should "borrow from European dramatic forms", Dhlomo is not denying the importance of his own dramatic tradition, nor is he preventing the formation of a truly "national" literature. He is merely suggesting that African authors assimilate what *they* find pleasing about European dramatic forms into their own new tradition. In his article, "Nature and Variety of Tribal Drama", Dhlomo suggested that there *are* universal trends in all dramatic forms, and that these universals should be used to form a literature that was functional as well as literary.

Dhlomo's wavering between art for art's sake and a more revolutionary vision was reflective of a similar trend throughout African society. It is during the latter half of the 1930s that he expresses for the first time the feeling that

> We want African playwrights who will dramatize and expand a philosophy of our history. We want dramatic representations of African Oppression, Emancipation and Evolution. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 235)

He borrowed heavily from American Negro philosophers for his theory,[8] and qualified the previous quotation by the following statement:

> To do this, the African dramatist must be an artist before being a propagandist; a philosopher before a reformer; a psychologist before a patriot; be true to himself, and not be a mere prey to popular artistic fashions which are like the shores of Adonis. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 234-235)

Significantly, Barnett notes, he uses "before" and not "instead of" (Barnett 1983, 228). Still, his opinions were to change radically during the 1940s, and the value of his theoretical writings can only be fully appreciated if they are viewed in relation to the developments in his personal life.[9]

During the 1930s Dhlomo tried on more than one occasion to get his poetry and his plays published at the Lovedale Mission Press, but with limited success. His first play, The Girl Who Killed to Save, revealed a belief in the superiority of Christianity and in the importance of the missionary ideal. After the publication of The Girl Who Killed to Save, and the All-African Convention in Bloemfontein, Dhlomo's writing became more overtly political. Tim Couzens identifies the middle years of the 1930s as a crucial growth period in Dhlomo's political consciousness (Couzens 1985, 125-197). The writing of Cetshwayo was a creative manifestation of his political awakening. Dhlomo's failure to get the play published despite his concerted efforts to do so, eventually turned him against the missionary stance reflected in The Girl Who Killed to Save. When, in Dhlomo's

8 The use of the word "emancipation" to express African political aspirations is reminiscent of the writings of both Marcus Garvey and of W.E.B. du Bois. He remains firmly within the boundaries of South African social debate by referring to "evolution". Much of the liberal debate on racial issues used Darwinist theories to support their arguments.

9 For a detailed analysis of the relationship between Dhlomo's artistic growth and his personal life, see Couzens 1985.

opinion, his liberal employers interfered in his private life and tried to sort out his marital problems on his behalf, he vowed never to take up public office again, and became embittered against liberals as well.[10]

As his work became more militant, Dhlomo's anti-missionary and anti-liberal zeal grew. The 1940s saw Dhlomo at his most embittered and impassioned. Having said in the 1930s that the dramatist should be an artist before a propagandist, he now wrote about the "revolution", saying that

> neither can we, like the misguided bourgeois reformers, philanthropists and theorists wait for the so-called natural evolution of human society. We must begird ourselves like men and fight for the Dawn. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1943, 8)

The struggle for political emancipation and recognition must now necessarily pervade all African writing. His old notion of art for art's sake had undergone considerable change:

> Artistic objectivity and detachment do not mean that the artist must live unto himself only. Art for art's sake does not mean a cowardly and blind shirking of the burning questions of today, of the Mass struggle. It means the capacity to make virile honest art out of this bitterness and tragedy . . . . [I]t would be a misinterpretation and insult to our very Heroes and gods, our Soul and Soil, our times and selves, if in documenting and singing these things, we end in mid-air, as it were, and not use these very subjects to comment on our times and aspirations. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1943, 8)

The artist's duty was no longer primarily aesthetic, but political. Taking cognisance of African history implied a thorough investigation of current political issues. In 1946 Dhlomo reviewed Amal'Ezulu, a volume of poetry by Dr B.W. Vilakazi. Here, a year after the publication of Shepherd's Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu, Dhlomo clearly states the new vision that inspired black writers. Whereas the poet's previous work had

10 See the poem "Fired (Lines on an African Intellectual being sacked by White Liberals for his independent ideas.)", in Visser & Couzens 1985, 373 and the discussion of Dhlomo's play, The Expert, in Couzens 1986, 212-219.

> revealed the mind of a scholar obsessed with the idea of classicism, an artist worshipping devoutly in the shrine of art for art's sake, a poet so enamoured of the beauty and music and meaning of Nature that he was oblivious of the grim tragedy, the pathetic conditions and the call of his people. In other words, his writings revived the perennial problem of tradition and revolution, of the classical and Marxist interpretation of art. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1946, 15)

What is praised in this new work is the fact that the author had managed to escape the confines of missionary and liberal thinking and actively presented the struggle of his people in writing.

6.5. Dhlomo and Missionary/Liberal Attitudes

Dhlomo's attitude to missionaries and white liberals was not complimentary. While Shepherd continued in his paternalistic vein of "bringing out those among the African people who can perform the task" and about Europeans "making themselves dispensable", Dhlomo wrote in Ilanga Lase Natal (Dhlomo, H.I.E 1944, 11):

> Only Africans themselves given opportunities and means enjoyed by European experts can reveal the soul of the African to the world.

> Experts will write books on African languages and cultures, they will lecture on these and be recognised far and wide as the interpreters of what the African feels and desires, but the real African - the African whose soul yearns to translate the glorious past into the Present - the African who longs to reveal the cravings of his soul in creating - can only be discovered by himself.

This passage calls to mind Shepherd's plea that "Africans plumb the depths of their own spirit" (Shepherd 1945, 96). The emphasis is, however, different. While Shepherd was in search of the picturesque in Bantu culture, Dhlomo wanted

> . . . the modern African poets [to] give us, as far as it is possible, poetry that is distinctly and truly African. Like our music, it should not be a mere imitation, an adulterated copy, of European poetry. It must be original and African in content, form and spirit. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1948b, 57)

This to a large extent excluded European efforts to dictate the parameters of African art. Personal experience had left Dhlomo sceptical of missionary and liberal aid.[11]

It was partially because of these personal events that the increased influence of the CPSA on ANC activities left its mark on the future Youth Leaguer, making him more militant as he grew older:

> In the past the African has used the political weapon. But in a country where he has no direct representation in the councils of state and where there are discriminatory and muzzling laws against him, the political weapon has not been as effective as it might have been under a different set-up . . . [But] there is one weapon that the African has not organised and used effectively. And that is the weapon offered by the arts . . . . [In an] ideological struggle such as we have today, the work of an artist is of vital importance. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1949, 15)

The African had a definite contribution to make to a new South African society, especially in the arts. In 1946 Shepherd was contemplating whether there was a future for vernacular writing and whether the Bantu was at all capable of contributing artistically. Ten years earlier Dhlomo had foreseen, quite correctly, the role of the African dramatist:

> Modern drama is not merely emotional entertainment. It is a source of ideas, a cultural and educational centre, an agency for propaganda, a social institution, and it is literature. The African can contribute strong fast rhythm (and rhythm is more than physical), expressive of vigorous gesture and action, and a channel of seeing things from a different angle. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 234)

11 Dhlomo remained critical of white experts throughout his life. His play, The Expert, is a scathing attack on liberal attitudes. He held a great veneration for writers like Thomas Mofolo (Chaka)

> who belongs to the old school of African authors who's "art was unconscious" and who wrote as they felt, and were not worried by the demands and opinions of experts and literary committees (Cited in Couzens 1985, 199).

This echoes in Dhlomo's own words the statement made by Peter Abrahams (1982, 232) that the Dhlomos were dependent on literary committees to get their work published. See also Chapter 7.

In his plays Herbert Dhlomo tried to be both a social critic and an entertainer. An African artistic vision had become a political struggle. Future African writers would agree with the sentiments expressed in this passage.

Dhlomo had become a trend-setter in the African community and was one of the first contributors to Drum magazine in 1951. Later, in 1953, he criticized Drum for being too populist, thus confirming for Couzens that he never successfully managed to shake off his own elitism as regards literature and the liberation struggle, despite some of his more radical statements on literature and the masses.[12] These radical statements, Couzens claims, probably stem from the influence of associates more than from personal conviction. On the contrary, I believe that Dhlomo did have the conviction of his theories, but that force of circumstance and his dependence on liberal support prevented him from living according to his artistic vision, since "Attitude," he wrote in The Democrat, 17 November 1945,

> is not inbred, but depends on training and propaganda, on environment and position in life. In the final analysis, there are no racial attitudes, only class attitudes. (Cited in Couzens 1985, 35-36)

It is important to note Dhlomo's belief in his own theories, as he himself used "propaganda" in his creative writing. He also always remained mindful of what he had written about the African artist Pemba:

> He [Pemba] believes that in our tribal form of life lie subjects for great art. But he also believes that an artist should be well-versed in the political, social and economical problems of the contemporary African scene so that he can express the feelings, aspirations and will of the people. ("Busy Bee", 1944. Cited in Couzens 1985, 250-251)[13]

12 Couzens 1985, 197-346.

13 "Busy Bee" was one of Dhlomo's *nom de plumes* used in Ilanga Lase Natal. Also "X". By using *nom de plumes*, Dhlomo was able, in some instances, to set up arguments with himself by referring to what he had written under another pseudonym. I am indebted to Tim Couzens (1985, 256) for this observation, without which I would not have known about many articles in newspapers that were written by Dhlomo.

It was largely because he felt the need for Africans to discover their own heritage that Dhlomo disliked the idea of white liberals expounding their opinions on African history. In his criticism of Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country he writes about liberals in general:

> I am one of those who while admiring Dr. Brookes' well-known intellectual gifts, his works and achievements, and his honesty of purpose, often find myself in disagreement with his methods and approach to our social and political problems. What I do not know is whether or not he and I (and in this connection the "he" may justifiably be said to represent the liberal point of view, and the "I" a group of articulate, democracy-minded African patriots) have the same aims and ends in view. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1977, 73)

Here Dhlomo notes one of the major differences between African and liberal opinion: although the rhetoric might often be the same, the ultimate goal was different. African writers had, over the period of a decade, drifted away from a co-operational stance to a more nationalistic approach to literary issues. As a "democracy-minded African patriot", he questioned liberal commitment to African liberation, and was therefore necessarily concerned about the proliferation of white opinion on African culture.

Quite justifiably, Dhlomo felt the liberal views to be paternalistic, as it is impossible for the white man to know what the African feels or thinks. Moreover,

> the trouble is that their [whites'] opinions and conclusions and pictures of African life often come to be accepted as the right thing. In this way, great harm has been done to race attitudes and relations, to the African himself, and, above all, to truth, values and the human personality. (Dhlomo 1948a, 15)

The only way to combat this, Dhlomo argued, was to give the African artist an equal and free opportunity to express his own feelings. The entire perception of African culture had been twisted because of colonial attitudes. Largely, he laid the blame on the Africans themselves:

> The tendency is to look up to European [sic] in these matters. Even educated Africans still look upon certain European papers, individuals and groups as leaders and makers of standards in these matters. Men who hardly comment on articles, speeches, poems and books by their fellow Africans discuss heatedly, enthusiastically and "with learning" productions by Europeans

> even on African affairs and life. There would be no danger in this if it did not discourage and stifle African original and creative expression - and that means African culture, initiative and originality. (Dhlomo 1948a, 15)

It is clear from this passage that many Africans were still dominated by the notion of European cultural superiority. They used western modes of expression - often to the detriment of that which was truly African.[14] This situation could only be redressed by African writers who returned to their own history and tradition, because

> Tradition lives! It lives because it is evolutionary. It lives when men are free to add to or reject from it. Merely to go back to the Past is not tradition. It is death . . . . It is not tradition to neglect the contemporary scene . . . . The task of the African artist is to use and develop what is best in his folk art, reject what is not good enough, and graft into it, without taking away from its essence, what he finds suitable from other sources. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1948b, 58)

African culture could not afford to be a static concept. Traditions could only survive, and African opinion only come into its own right, if it evolved to suit the needs of a modern society. This shift in emphasis was important to African writers. It was part of a process of (re)birth and

> It is this process of birth and revelation that writers should record, and to do this they must be ready to unlearn what they know, cast aside old beliefs, and always be intellectually receptive and alert, because the process of unfolding never ends. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939a, 20)

In the above article, Dhlomo made a case for historical writing, but, he noted, "African writers can do little without funds and scholarships". Dhlomo advocated historical research, the "collection and reconstruction of Bantu dramatic Izibongo", whereas

14 Dhlomo himself is guilty of this. See Chapter 7 for a discussion on the use of the words "strophe" and "antistrophe".

Shepherd disregarded the oral tradition as a ground for a new African literature.[15] According to him, English classics in translation and Bible stories, that is to say, western models, were to be held up as the ideal for Africans to follow.

Contrary to Shepherd, who seemed to adhere strictly to his original, colonial views on literature and art throughout his life, Dhlomo was constantly re-assessing and developing his views on art and literature. This can be ascribed to the fact that as a journalist for a daily paper and with a column to prepare for each copy, Dhlomo had no choice but to continue developing and expanding his theories. While Dhlomo used his writing as a means of life, Shepherd thought about issues from the point of view of an outsider (which he believed gave him better insight into the issue) and wrote about them in the abstract.

Shepherd felt that drama was not the most lucrative field for African writers. After having drawn a parallel between Africans and American Negroes and deciding that they were "essentially brothers", he had written that Negroes did not excel in the field of drama and prose because it called for a greater objectivity (Shepherd 1936, 20). Dhlomo felt otherwise:

> An artist [specifically the dramatist] is one able to reveal and portray objective experience subjectively; one who can be touched and be moved by objective reality and experience as if it were subjective. The human mind is capable not only of remaining oblivious to subjective reality and experience, but of being wholly susceptible to objective experience. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 235)

15 Shepherd wrote of the izibongo:

> . . . more and more [are being] recorded in literary form, and the future is bound to add many of merit. And so there will be extended a contribution to the simpler literature of the world on the part of a primitive people which has no reason to be ashamed of its inspiration and craftsmanship in this regard. (Shepherd 1945, 97)

The praise-poems therefore remained "simple" literature. Jeff Opland's study of oral literature, Xhosa Oral Poetry. Aspects of a Black South African Tradition (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), shows that the izibongo is anything but a "simple" art-form. Shepherd had misread the true nature of the praise-poems, and had concluded that it was not worthy of being part of a sophisticated literary corpus.

Dhlomo and Shepherd shared at least two thoughts, and these were that "no individual and nation will reach their highest development without a thoughtful and reverent love for good literature" and that a nation's greatness should be measured against its literature (Shepherd 1936, 76). Shepherd and Dhlomo agreed that it was through literature that the African would advance. What that literature should encompass and how and by whom it should be written (and when), was where Shepherd and Dhlomo had their difference of opinion. While Shepherd looked to Europe for an answer, Dhlomo felt that if African art was to reflect the true image of Africa, then

> it must spring from indigenous, tribal culture; it must treat of our history, customs and our great tribal heroes . . . . We cannot build by forsaking our origin. We must go back to go forward; we should employ the process of literary necromancy . . . . Originality is not the quality of being ahead of times, but the capacity to discover a primitive, fundamental law that others in their march forward have missed. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 37)

It is in the poetic forms of ancient times, the *izibongelo* where "the old and the new meet and unite and flower forth into a birth miraculous" (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 37).

Shepherd aimed at transposing European models onto African history; Dhlomo wanted to incorporate European models into a basically unique African style, allowing the African artist the freedom to "produce his plays as he feels". Whereas Shepherd aimed at producing a literature specifically for the Bantu,[16] Dhlomo felt that

> African tribal drama was national. It treated matters that concerned the people as a whole. In the few cases where dramatic representations were personal, they were staged privately with no audience. But the public dramatic representations (festivals of harvest, rain, hunting and bringing back of the dead) were always of tribal significance. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 232)

16 Shepherd's emphasis lay on the tribal, or on the linguistic differentiation of various African groups. He saw the African people as a number of small groupings with specific needs, whereas Dhlomo and other African nationalists looked beyond the parts to the greater whole. African needs were not dictated by the tribe, but by the African suppression, which transcended tribal barriers.

"Tribal" is used here as an equivalent of "national". To Dhlomo, the function of the tribe had, in a modern society, been replaced by that of the nation.[17] Modern African dramatic performances, therefore, were aimed at a national audience and were no longer concerned with the tribal past.

The common ground between Dhlomo and Shepherd ended with their mutual desire to promote African literature. By 1928 even the more moderate African leaders were critical of liberal intervention in African politics, and Dhlomo was no less so. In his criticism of Shepstone's Native Policy, he writes that they (the Europeans):

> want a segregation which will protect Europeans against Bantu competition in the labour market and in the field of industry and commerce .... Thus it is difficult to understand what Mr. Sullivan means by "all that is desirable and good in Native civilization." Apparently he means that which is "desirable and good" from the point of view of the white man. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1928, 3)

The truth of Dhlomo's assessment is borne out by Lovedale's decision during the 1930s to adhere to the by-laws of the Federation of Master Printers.[18] Where and when it suited the management, Lovedale guarded its publishing territory tenaciously, but by the same token they transgressed the boundaries of their "uncommercial" publishing policy as they saw fit.

The essence of Dhlomo's dramatic theory is that tribal forms should be used as "starting points, as a background" from which the writers could transform them or dress them up in new clothes. Dhlomo was not searching for the quaintness in these artistic forms, but for their functionality, their ability to unite the African people:

> These homely tribal compositions are our spiritual home, a home from which we can venture forth, strong, proud, fully equipped, to new and distant fields of endeavour. It matters not whether some of us, like the lotus-eaters, return home no more, for in the very

17 Dhlomo 1930, 3.

18 See Chapter 5, paragraph 5.4.

> land of our adoption we shall remain the product, the flower, of our distant, tribal, spiritual home. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 22)

Dhlomo is saying that even if we incorporate other literary styles, it is in the *izibongelo* and other tribal dramatic forms that the true essence of African art lies, for his heritage was one thing that could not be taken away from the African.

Dhlomo's knowledge of English literature and his concern with the welfare of the African people would lead him to write that

> The African dramatist cannot delve into the past unless he has grasped the present. African art cannot grow and thrive by going back and digging up the bones of the past without dressing them with modern knowledge and craftsmanship. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 235)

Whereas Shepherd wanted African authors to look at the past and discover their heritage, Dhlomo insisted that they deal with the present first. Jolobe reaffirms Dhlomo's position by saying that "a writer can direct the thoughts and influence the actions of many of his readers with his pen" (Literature Commission 1959, 5). This is exactly what Dhlomo wanted black writers to do. The writer, he felt, must "exert influence unconsciously, . . . satisfy both the intellect and the conscience". Essentially, the African writer had to be a critic of society.

Dhlomo's calls for relating the past to the present and to address the issues of the day were a far cry from Shepherd's view that only the African who adhered to the notion of art for art's sake would make known the soul of Africa. In the final analysis, Dhlomo, like many other African writers, was torn between the old notion of art for art's sake and the vision of art as a potential weapon of the struggle. Dhlomo opted for a compromise: it had to be both.

6.6. Other Opinions of African Culture

Dhlomo's was not a solitary voice in calling for a re-assessment of African artistic values. He had a soulmate in Mark Radebe, a musician who was devoted to promoting African culture and music. Radebe formulated a conception of art that is reflected often in Dhlomo's critical writing:

> The purpose of art is not expression but communication, and this is especially true of literature and music. On the other hand, music to be truly national must be based on the idiom of the people. Those most valuable achievements in musical history have been essentially national in spirit. (Radebe 1932, 3)

Radebe spoke out fearlessly against the missionary influence on African art and the conscious suppression of African individuality:

> With the growing power of the missionaries, however, all forms of Bantu art came into disrepute; all that was beautiful, pleasurable or gay in life came under their ban. Folk music especially was abhorred. Folk dances were strictly prohibited and the folk-song was made a serious transgression. (Radebe 1932, 3)

What was needed, Radebe felt, was a return to the traditional values of a forgotten era, thus escaping the missionary influences. Dhlomo went further, stating that while a return to the past was necessary, a new idiom had to be found in the hardships of African daily life. Vilakazi agreed with Dhlomo, and he wrote that the "new songs" found in Zulu poetry "had gone to Johannesburg not to return . . . " (Vilakazi 1937, 61). These "new songs" abounded in the music-halls of Johannesburg and reflected the new life of the urban African. Modern African music, Vilakazi stated, had a different reference point and addressed the present needs in the townships (Vilakazi 1937, 60-62). This was clearly not what Shepherd was asking for in Literature for the Bantu, noting that the African novel was either predisposed to too much moralizing or to the "unhappy external circumstances in city locations" (Shepherd 1945, 89).

By and large African writers and critics were in agreement with Dhlomo, and called for literature to address national issues. Generally, the trend in African thought was

developing toward a position in which their literature would be coloured by the subjective experience of their past. The writers were, in Fanon's phraseology, moving into the "second phase" of National culture, during which the past is re-interpreted "in the light of a borrowed Aestheticism" (Fanon 1967, 179).

6.7. Conclusion

Within the limited space available to them, black authors tried to voice their resistance and to formulate their own opinions on the subject of literature for their people. Often they did in fact support the views of the missionaries, but this does not mean that, as Mzamane suggests, the voice of resistance first appeared *en force* with the arrival of Drum. Certainly the advent of Drum marked a watershed in the history and development of African writing and it was only with the arrival of Lewis Nkosi and Es'kia Mphahlele that a comprehensive critical practice was set up among African authors. Before that only the stalwart voices of Dhlomo, Vilakazi, Mqhayi, Radebe and Jabavu were heard. The creative work by these authors provided a base for future writers, as is evident from Lewis Nkosi's poem "H.I.E., H.I.E.", dedicated to Herbert Dhlomo.[19] Among these early voices, however, that of Dhlomo stands out as the most important.

African literary criticism during the middle decades of this century, despite being a very small body of writing, nonetheless revealed some very valuable information about the nature and origin of African writing. As in politics, Africans tended towards nationalism in their writing. Writing had become a political act and a conscious choice to Africans, while for the majority of missionaries literature was, and remained, a purely aesthetic experience.

19 For a comprehensive discussion on the continuity of early Black South African writing, see Tim Couzens, " The Continuity of black Literature in South Africa before 1950." English in Africa 1.2 (1974): 11-24.

Using the written word as a political weapon, as Dhlomo suggested, inevitably meant re-writing African history from a different perspective. This time it would portray the subjective experience of Africans, and not the ostensibly objective note-taking that the missionaries had concerned themselves with in the past. Sol Plaatje had started this process of re-writing, but even more than Dhlomo, he had been caught between Scylla and Charybdis by either remaining silent or using the limited option offered by the missionaries.

The African writers had at all costs to be both the critics and the educators of their society. In order to fulfil their mission, writers allowed themselves to be moulded by the missionaries. It will become clear in the following chapter that gradually a symbiotic relationship crystallised, whereby African writers got some measure of recognition for their work and at the same time missionaries dictated the rules to a degree. The result was a unique hybrid of African originality and missionary influence.

CHAPTER 7

WRITING IN THE CONTACT ZONE

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters I have tried to reveal the various ideologies at play during the first half of the century. Lovedale, it is clear, held a very tight control over what was published at its Press. Shepherd had fixed ideas on the scope and development of African literature, as did Herbert Dhlomo. At Lovedale a unique opportunity arose where their opposing ideas could meet, clash and mould a new discourse. The intention in this chapter is to pay more detailed attention to the way in which Herbert Dhlomo shaped his meaning in response to conflicting ideologies. This will be done with specific reference to two articles written by Herbert Dhlomo - one written in 1936 and the other written in 1939.

It will be argued that these articles are a definite attempt to enter into a dialogue with Shepherd about the nature of African drama, and that the content of these articles were dictated by social events at the time and also by the existing press policy at Lovedale. In this way I hope to show that the tension that existed between the ostensibly liberal publishers and the potentially radical Dhlomo gave rise to a unique voice in his writing that is characteristic of the ambivalent, decentred native voice, and is, as Homi Bhabha (1986, 169) points out, inherently revolutionary.

7.2. Writing the Contact Zone

Dhlomo's first play, The girl who killed to Save. Nonqause the Liberator, was published at Lovedale in 1935. Modern scholars have all commented on the fact that this particular

play is an example of "missionary" literature.[1] After the All-African Convention and the Bantu Authors' Conference (both held in June 1936) there is a definite change in Dhlomo's attitude to African tradition. In 1932, he wrote in Umteteli wa Bantu that:

> When questioned about their beliefs and convictions they [Africans] give reasons, not relating to the sources and authenticty of their beliefs, but why they ought to continue believing as they do. They contend that the universality and antiquity of a belief or custom proves its validity. Custom is sacrosanct. They quote ancient authorities as justification for what they do or say. It is like a man moving backwards with his face forward. The old is accepted with amazing credulity; the new with cold scepticism. This is the preserving power of custom which was formerly necessary to maintain the solidarity and integrity of the people.
>
> . . . .
>
> But I submit that, given time and suitable environment, the Bantu will change his outlook; and the outlook determines the way of thinking. Natives have both brain and ability; but a change in attitude is necessary to free them from the tyrrany of the traditional and the customary. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1932, 4)

In this passage, the traditional is seen as completely inadequate, something that needs to be transcended. By 1936, in "Drama and the African", this opinion was already changing when Dhlomo writes:

> The evolution of African opinion, sentiment and ideas will give birth to a great industry and a valuable source of careers as drama develops.
>
> We should interest people in African history and tradition. Drama is the reconstruction, recreation and reproduction of the great experiences of a people, and it helps them to live more abundantly. Drama and the cinema gradually are taking a leading part in the formation of character, ideas and ideals. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 233)

1 Visser 1977, 1-2, Couzens, 1985, Barnett, 1983, 227-253.

Whereas tribal customs had been scorned *in toto* before, Dhlomo now sees these same customs as something worthy of preservation, as the source of a future African drama. This shift is important not only because of the way in which it illustrates growth in Dhlomo's critical argument, but also because of the bearing it has on his creative writing.

To Dhlomo the very act of writing was a task of national importance. It was the only way in which he could reveal the truth as he saw it. Although he left his mark on African literature most strongly as a journalist and critic, Dhlomo wanted most of all to be remembered as a creative writer:

> My creative writing is the greatest thing I can give to my people, to Africa. I am determined to die writing and writing and writing. And no one . . . can stop, fight or destroy that. It is the soul, the heart, the spirit. It will endure and speak the truth even if I perish . . . . I have chosen the path to serve my people by means of literature, and nothing will deflect me from this course.[2]

What Dhlomo intended to do through his critical writing was to provide a framework within which his creative writing could be judged. This framework had to incorporate current social and political factors as much as it did artistic merit and history (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 234). The fact that much of the literature written in Africa came from the pens of Europeans troubled Dhlomo immensely. In 1948, he wrote:

> The fact that these books [Cry, the Beloved Country and Kaffirs are Active - works on Africans generally] are written by Europeans is significant. Historically, the same thing has happened in all colonial countries and in places where the Non-Europeans have come into close contact with the white races. In the past, for instance, many of us have known and seen India through the eyes of British authors, sympathetic or unsympathetic, well informed or misinformed, imperialistic or humanistic . . . . And it is one of the contradictions of the policy of domination and suppression that it is the members of the dominating group who are expected to be the interpreters, spokesmen and the Voice of the oppressed groups. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1948a, 15)

2 Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg. Letter to Charles Mpanza dated 16 October 1941.

This remarkable insight came decades before other African scholars would repeat, almost verbatim, the same claim. Dhlomo recognized this trend as part of the colonizing mission of re-inforcing the position of theAfrican writer on the periphery of colonial existence. As long as the native wrote in his own language, the political and social status quo within the colonial milieu would remain unchallenged. Within such a framework, people like Shepherd could rightfully demand from Africans a literature that was not politically orientated, but dedicated purely to the notion of *l'art pour l'art.*

By contrast Dhlomo saw the task of writing as a political one; one that was dedicated to revealing the voice of the oppressed. His intention was to bring the African experience back from the periphery into the mainstream of South African experience. At the Adams Mission College Dhlomo had been exposed to an education "more English than that of the English." Once he left the Adams Mission and embarked on a career as journalist and writer, he suddenly found that the language he had been taught to love above all, English, was denied him when it came to artistic expression. By 1939 he had unsuccessfully campaigned for greater support for African writing in English at both the Conferences on African Literature (in Florida, Transvaal, and in Bloemfontein), he had appealed to Africans to use English as their *lingua franca* by endorsing the decision of the All-African Convention in 1936 to promote English as a unifying force among the African peoples and he had tried, also unsuccessfully, to have more of his creative work published at Lovedale.

Two specific cases of creative work that failed to reach publication at Lovedale in 1936 come to mind: that of An Experiment in Colour, which Shepherd felt to be "unbelievable", and the drama Cetshwayo. When Dhlomo submitted the manuscript of Cetshwayo, Shepherd turned the manuscript down on the grounds that it was not of sufficient standard, although it had "much merit." [3]

3 Cory Library, Grahamstown. MS16309(b). Letter from Shepherd to Dhlomo dated 19 May 1936.

As a result of the rejection of this manuscript, Dhlomo conciously set out his ideas for African drama and submitted them to the South African Outlook in the form of an article. The article appeared in the October issue of the South African Outlook - after both the intail rejection of Cetshwayo and after the All-Afican Convention. Since ''Drama and the African'' was the only article that Dhlomo ever submitted to the South African Outlook, the article gains added importance in that it becomes a deliberate dialogue with Shepherd. For the purpose of this thesis then, the article emphasises two significant points: that Dhlomo structured his critical theory around social and political events and that he consciously expanded his theory as a response to Eurocolonial opinions.

As ''Drama and the African'' is closely linked with Dhlomo's attempted publication of Cetshwayo, a brief discussion of the play is necessary before the article can be analysed. Cetshwayo goes back to what Dhlomo perceived as the origins of segregationist policy in South Africa and proceeds to criticize segregationist policy and to advocate resistance to segregation. Dhlomo makes use of autoethnographic expression to point to the ambivalence of his position within colonial society and in so doing raises a voice of opposition to it. He revisits and rewrites the policy of segregation proposed by Shepstone as part of a broader campaign of resistance.

By 1936, when Cetshwayo was written, support for the ANC was dwindling, and a definite show of force was needed to revitalise African resistance. Dhlomo appropriates an act of history - Shepstone's proposed labour policies - for the sake of the African people and extracts from it the seeds of African resistance. He does this at a time when the political remotivation of Africans is most necessary. The play therefore is a revisionist look at the policies of Sir Theophilus Shepstone. It could be argued that the essentially conservative Shepherd, himself convinced that the black man should remain under the rule of the white man, did not agree with the sentiments of equality expressed in Cetshwayo, and consequently refused to publish the play, although very little concrete evidence for such a proposition can be found.

In writing "Drama amd the African", Dhlomo's obvious intention was that, by reading his theory of African drama, Shepherd would apply the standards called for in his article to the manuscript of Cetshwayo. If Dhlomo had published his article in The Transvaal Native Education Quarterly, of which he himself was editor, the possibility existed that Shepherd would miss the information it contained - information that Dhlomo regarded as crucial to his ambition as a writer.

Fully aware of the fact that he is entering into a dialogue with Shepherd, Dhlomo starts his essay with the statement:

> Action! Rhythm! Emotion! Gesture! Imitation! Desires! That is what drama was before it developed into an institution for propaganda, the propagation of ideas, or for commercialized entertainment. Action, rhythm and other histrionic qualities are not foreign to the African - neither is drama. Indeed, there is no race in the world which did not have some kind of tribal dramatic representation. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 232)

He deliberately uses the word "imitation" to prepare the reader for his claim that African drama should be grafted into western drama (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 233). Knowing full well that the true intent behind Cetshwayo was to promote the ideals of the All-African Convention, and that Shepherd would disagree with the politics of such a move, Dhlomo emphasises what drama was *before* it developed into an "institution for propaganda." Both the word "imitation" and the references to propaganda are intended to guide Shepherd's assessment of Dhlomo's creative writing. Dhlomo's implication is that Cetshwayo is an imitation of western drama, with elements of African tribal drama incorporated into it, and that it should *not* be read as "propaganda."

In Literature for the South African Bantu, which appeared early in 1936, Shepherd had claimed that the African was best suited to writing poetry, as drama and prose required an objectivity that was lacking in the make-up of the Bantu (1936, 20). Dhlomo knew that he had to change this point of view if there was to be any hope of his manuscript, a drama, seeing the light of publication. In Literature for the South African Bantu, and later in personal comments to his biographer, G.C. Oosthuisen (1974, 149), Shepherd

remarked that he was impressed by the inherent histrionic qualities of the Bantu. Dhlomo therefore notes that "histrionic qualities" are not foreign to the African, thus foregrounding that aspect of the African make-up that Shepherd found most appealing. At the same time, through these references to the histrionic qualities inherent in the African, Dhlomo is preparing his reader for his final paragraph, where re-iterates his call for the formation of an African Dramatic Movement. It should be remembered that Dhlomo used the pending formation of such a movement as motivation for the publication of his play.[4] Dhlomo now develops the theme of Africans being born actors by stating that dancing and song are integral parts of the tribal dramatic performance.

Shepherd had specifically referred to the quality of the rhyming poems as a reason for rejecting the manuscript.[5] Since Dhlomo suspected that it was not the quality of the poems in Cetshwayo that Shepherd objected to so much as the political undertones of the work, he feels compelled to explain how dancing and song operate within the African drama. What Shepherd failed to see in the structure of the play is therefore clearly set out in Dhlomo's article:

> Tribal drama was accompanied by dancing and song. The dances were rhythmic and expressive; the songs emotional and devotional. This was drama in its simple, not classical or literary form. The ceremonies did not aim at delineation, education or propaganda, but were magico-religious representations. On most occasions they were on a large communal scale, and sometimes on a small family of even individual scale. The representations were not entirely wordless. Inspired individuals and tribal bards would often burst out into poetic praises of ancestors, kings, leaders, tribes, places. These poetic praises were the basis of modern monologue. Although the ceremonies had a definite form, method of procedure and unity of general action, emotional individuals were free to add colour and detail by extemporaneous solo music and by reciting praises. In some cases the solo singer acted as strophe (i.e. leading voice) and the rest of the people as antistrophe (as echo). This musical tendency reduced to speech would have

4 MS 16309(b).

5 MS 16309(b).

> been the origin of dialogue. Since the poetic praises - *izibongo* - were not recorded it is not possible today to analyze this unique tribal poetry. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 232)

The dramatic poems of Cetshwayo were in fact *izibongelo*. As such, they warranted different standards of evaluation to those applied by Shepherd. The traditional form of the *izibongo* was freer, less bound by form and style than western poetry. The internal structure was less important than the complete, overall picture portrayed by the representation (Vilakazi 1937, 19-20). Had this point of view been taken, Shepherd's assessment of Cetshwayo might have changed considerably.

What Dhlomo attempted to do in the quoted paragraph was to repossess the signifying function of African literature by informing Shepherd that the *izibongo*, the words spoken by a tribal actor, formed an integral part of tribal dramatic performances. The only way (at the time) in which Dhlomo felt he could succeed in allowing African art to speak was through the culture and the language of the colonizer (Fanon 1986, 38). He realised that he was not dealing with an exact parallel in describing the development of African drama, but that he was merely assimilating European terminology into African discourse (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1936, 234).

While both repossession of the signifying function and assimilation of aspects of the colonizer's discourse are necessary to the creation of an independent African discourse, the danger always exists that by borrowing from the colonizer's discourse the writer may in fact be creating

> a reverse discourse, replicating and therefore re-installing . . . polarities devised by a dominant centre (colonizer) to exclude and act against the categorised (colonized). (Parry 1987, 28)

Dhlomo tried to appropriate terms used in western drama and to apply them to an African dramatic tradition, but without much success. While describing the tribal dramatic procedure he refers to the nature of the *izibongelo* which, he says, rely either on extemporaneous praises or on a series of replies between the praise-singer (*imbongi*) and the audience. Jeff Opland (1983, 7) describes this ritual of *ukutshayalela* as one by which

the people (in particular the women) introduce the *imbongi* through dancing and ululation. As the various *iimbongi* involved with the festivities set themselves apart from the group to bonga (the official term for the action of praise-singing) a rapport that could be referred to as "dialogue" is set up between the *imbongi* and his audience.

Dhlomo appropriates the terms "strophe" and "antistrophe" from Greek drama to describe this uniquely African experience. Literally, the "strophe" refers to those lines recited during a turn made in a ritual dance by the ancient Greek chorus (Abrams 1981, 124). The antistrophe literally refers to the middle section of the Greek choral ode (the rest being comprised of the strophe and the epode). In Dhlomo's article, the *imbongi* becomes the strophe, while the women who *tshayalela* become the antistrophe. This misappropriation of western terminology does not aptly describe what Dhlomo is trying to portray. He is unable to use the correct African terminology for his purposes, as this would result in falling foul of the international dimension he is trying to attribute to traditional dramatic representations. Furthermore, by using African terminology, Dhlomo believes he will isolate himself from his white liberal audience and re-inforce his position on the periphery of South African society. His intention is to associate African tradition and the time-honoured Greek dramatic tradition as closely as possible for the sake of convincing Shepherd of the validity of his dramatic attempts.

At the same time Dhlomo is attempting to vindicate the scant attention that had been paid to the traditional art-form of the *izibongo* in the past by building his argument around it. Shepherd had seen in the *izibongo* only limited scope for artistic development (1945, 97). By comparing African drama to ancient Greek drama, Dhlomo is not referring so much to the ancient rituals at play in both these dramatic traditions, as he is attempting to elevate the position of African drama in Shepherd's mind by placing the two traditions on par with one another. By doing this, Dhlomo kills two birds with one stone: he makes his reader aware of the inherent qualities of African drama, while at the same time

emphasising the subjugated position of African art by using western terminology. In this way, Dhlomo creates a muted voice of opposition to the dominant Eurocentric ideology.

Although Dhlomo ultimately did not succeed in getting Cetshwayo published, his article did set the tone for more acts of intervention against colonial authority. In later essays, Dhlomo kept referring to the role and function of the *izibongelo* in African drama and asking for a re-assessment of the *imbongi's* position in literature. Calling for a re-assessment of the tribal past was not an easy path to follow. Dhlomo moved hesitantly, as always fully aware of the power and influence of missionaries and their liberal associates. Writing in Bantu Studies, he says of the *imbongi* and *izibongelo*:

> We do not claim much for the tribal dramatic poet. We do not pretend that he dealt with matters of abstract thought and metaphysics. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939c, 46)

Yet in the Transvaal Native Education Quarterly of the same year he writes that

> the izibongelo could be used to express and reveal the deepest emotions, the profoundest thoughts, the greatest truths, the most delicate and beautiful poetic tapestry. They touch the very spring of African life and ought therefore, to appeal almost instinctively to the African race. Above all they reveal the common origin, the spiritual unity, the essential One-ness, the single destiny of all Bantu tribes. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 20)

The answer to this about turn can yet again be found in the ideological relations at play between the author and the publisher: it is a known fact that C.M. Doke, a lecturer in African studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, was editor of Bantu Studies. He and Shepherd often worked together on projects related to African literature, including the organisation of the 1936 Bantu Authors' Conference in Bloemfontein. In Literature for the South African Bantu Shepherd had referred to Doke and expressed his admiration for the latter's work (1945, 29), while Doke supported the unification of African languages proposed by Shepherd. Furthermore, Bantu Studies was published at the Lovedale Press which, of course, meant that Shepherd had to approve of the contents

before printing it. For the liberal editorial of Bantu Studies then, Dhlomo virtually denies the worth of an African art form and African history as a source of inspiration - just as he had done at the end of The Girl Who Killed to Save.

In the Transvaal Native Education Quarterly he could follow a stricter Africanist line. This is ironic, for in this, a government publication, it would probably have been interpreted as an affirmation of the worth of segregation. In the Transvaal Native Education Quarterly, however, he could successfully use what Bhabha refers to as his ambivalent position to turn apparent support for the government into an act of resistance. In fact he comes close to saying exactly that when he writes:

> The izibongelo will help the African writer to vacillate between two points, the Bantu and the European. It will give him something substantial upon which to build. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939d, 20)

By vacillating between these points the African writer can claim for himself a voice separate from that of his European master. Such, then, is the ambivalence of the African writer. Colonial mimicry in fact re-emphasises the power structure at play between the colonizer and his subject, thus alerting the reader to the voice of opposition underlying the text. In a journal controlled by liberals or missionaries this tactic would not have been as successful, since the ideological base upon which the technique was built did not exist. Contrary to intention therefore, the overt missionary/liberal support was acting as a muzzle instead of assisting the very people it was intended to help.

By applying Benita Parry's (1987, 27-29) argument that a "reverse discourse" replicates and therefore reinforces the polarities devised by the colonizer, one can hold that Dhlomo did not in fact succeed in creating an oppositional voice at all in The Transvaal Native Education Quarterly. According to Parry, no oppositional voice can come into being until the colonized is able to *refuse* the founding concepts of the problematic at hand, i.e. the dominant ideology. This is not true though, for instead of *refusing* these underlying

principles Dhlomo has opted rather to internalise them to his advantage. By writing one thing for Bantu Studies, and another for The Transvaal Native Educational Quarterly, Dhlomo is

> making known the devious techniques of obligation and persuasion with which the native colludes but simultaneously resists. (Parry 1987, 29)

By doing this, Dhlomo is able, through transculturation and autoethnographic expression, to use the ambivalent position of opposition ascribed to him to create a voice of opposition.

Writing within the context of contest and resistance, Dhlomo constantly had to reformulate and develop his views on art and literature. He remained bound to a missionary/liberal ethic by virtue of the fact that the paper he worked for was owned by B.G. Paver, a white liberal, and his attempts to have his creative work published through Lovedale. Dhlomo, therefore, had to create an ambivalent voice that was able to simultaneously support and oppose the ideological forces that shape his discourse. This is exactly what he attempts to do in "Language and National Drama" (1939b, 8-10), [6] when he discusses the effects of creating an artificial *lingua franca* for use as a literary language by Africans (as had been proposed by Shepherd at the Bantu Authors' Conference in Bloemfontein in 1936).[7]

Dhlomo opens his argument by drawing a comparison between the early development of English literature and the development of African literature, just as he had done with Greek drama in his 1936 article "Drama and the African". He tries to place Africans in the same category as the Britons who had united their various tribes and eventually formed a common language, so he argues that

6 The article is quoted in full as Appendix 2.

7 Previous attempts at orthographic unification had led Sol Plaatje to declare that it would turn the majority of African readers, including himself, into functional illiterates (Peires 1979, 160). The aim of unifying African languages was to cut down on the financial burden of having to print small print-runs. The result would have been a kind of African Esperanto.

> . . . we should evolve a universal Bantu literary language. Like the Greek poets of the sixth century we ought to "develop an international manner, writing a composite language made up of different dialects." (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 8)

By arguing that conditions in England were "parallel to those in this country", he places the two countries on an equal footing, and in so doing emphasises the present asymmetry of the relationship between them. Here, and elsewhere in his writing, Dhlomo infers that a truly great African literature can only come about once all Africans speak with a unified voice.

Concerning the debate surrounding the language to be used as an African *lingua franca*, Dhlomo identifies two main groups of people: those supporting unification of all African dialects (Group B), and those opposing such a unification (Group A). The members of Group A propose

> to try by a wise process of elimination, combination, compromise, modification and development to evolve a lingua franca acceptable to all. This method bristles with difficulties. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 8)

Dhlomo's insistence on the use of English as the African *lingua franca*, and his question concerning support for African authors writing in English at the 1936 Bantu Authors' Conference, places his sympathy solidly behind Group A. The use of English as the common medium of expression would, in Dhlomo's opinion, allow Africans to attain the international manner he referred to in the opening paragraph of the article. Throughout the article, however, Dhlomo vacillates between support of the opposing groups, and in so doing he manages to create a third, "hidden" voice, that of the author speaking his ambivalence.

Supporters of Group B included missionaries and liberals. At Lovedale, Shepherd vehemently argued for the unification of orthographies. Dhlomo, still hopeful of getting Cetshwayo published, realised that he could not afford to antagonise Shepherd by openly

opposing him in this language debate. By using the personal pronoun "we", he therefore ostensibly identifies with the group that strives to form a unified language (Group B) by writing that

> we should evolve a universal Bantu literary language. Like the Greek poets of the sixth century, we ought to "develop an international manner, writing a composite language made of different dialects". (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 8)

The advantages of such an attempted unification, Dhlomo writes, would be

> the blend of the genius of each racial group resulting in the greater genius of the nation. Second, there would be a richer field of tradition, folk-lore and ideas. Third, African literature would enjoy a wider circle of readers. Fourth, it would lead to the establishment of a national school of African Drama. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 8)

Among the reasons given, Dhlomo re-iterates his call for establishing a Bantu National Dramatic Movement. He had used the existence of such a movement as a motivation for the publication of This is Africa and had ended "Drama and the African" (1936) with the same suggestion. It is therefore not unlikely that Dhlomo is again trying to argue a case for his creative writing in this article. In the passage he emphasises those elements of African writing that Shepherd admires most - tradition and folk-lore. It is in these areas, Shepherd claimed, that African writing would find its true identity. This certainly was not what Dhlomo proposed for a future African literature. Dhlomo repeats the phrase "Union languages" twice in this paragraph. He makes it clear that the proposed unification is an artefact of colonialism, and not of the African's own creation. Despite the sense of identification he conveys through the use of the personal pronoun, Dhlomo is in fact stating his opposition to the project.

By contrast the method proposed by Group A is described as "wise," and contains crucial catch-words such as "compromise", "development" and the phrase "acceptable to all". Having stated Group B's position, Dhlomo now writes that

> there are many who have fears and misgivings, who oppose all movements that seek deliberately to evolve changes in Bantu languages. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 9)

He continues to put forward Group A's case, explaining how a policy such as that proposed by Group B would result in African literature coming under the control of an elite few. It is uncertain at this stage whether Dhlomo is excluding himself from this group of objectors or not. Seen in purely spatial terms, he allows group A approximately two-thirds of his argument, while group B, which he ostensibly supports, occupies the remaining third. He argues convincingly for group A that

> the languages of an oppressed and politically servile people cannot hope to be a really powerful literary vehicle, and will always be used to exploit and keep down the people. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 9)

This is in keeping with Dhlomo's personal vision that literature should reflect the experiences of the people and address "the burning questions of today, of the Mass struggle" (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1943, 8). He wanted to turn African drama into a powerful literary vehicle, as an example of his nation's worth (1939d, 20-24).

Dhlomo recognized the threat to African literature underlying the attempted linguistic unification, and felt he had to oppose it - without treading on any toes in the process. In a short sentence therefore, he points out that the European experts are "trying to do for South African Bantu Literature what has been done for English literature", and so vindicates his position. He uses personal pronouns in the objective ("them" and "they") to distance himself from the group of objectors (group A), and effectively therefore from his own voice. It is at this point that the creation of the "hidden voice" starts.

Group A, Dhlomo now says, contends that

> the development of English literature was a natural growth and an unconscious process - a thing, they contend, that seems impossible in the case of African languages and literature where White leaders and African scholars, themselves authors seeking purely to make reputations and push their own works and names forward, force things down on the helpless layman. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 9)

Despite obvious parallels with his own position as a writer, Dhlomo dismisses group A's arguments as "irrelevant and destructive" precisely because they are "bitter, disappointed writers". By specifically naming these objectors Dhlomo hopes to seek favour with Shepherd by distancing himself even further from Group A.

The voice attributed to Group A now begins to get confused with that of Dhlomo, writer of the article. Before turning on himself as an aspirant writer, Dhlomo writes that

> these critics sneer at the fact that experts and bantu scholars are themselves authors trying by all means to get their own work published, first and foremost. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 10)

The change from "them" to "these" is significant. There is a closer sense of identification with group A now, and this process of identification continues in the next paragraph when he says

> We have said enough to show that there is strong opposition to those who work for the development of African literature and languages. (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 10)

If Dhlomo's attack on missionaries in 1928, and his further assault on them in The Experts (written and conceived at approximately the time of writing this article) is kept in mind, it is almost certain that he is including himself in this collective "we." In a sudden turnabout the next sentence dismisses the argument Dhlomo had painstakingly developed.

In the next paragraph there is another significant shift in the use of personal pronouns. Dhlomo refutes the previous argument (that of Group A): "most of us will agree with E.J. Hussey", who makes a case for the advantages of using "a well-known African language in preference to a European tongue as the literary language of the masses of the people". Despite including himself by using the word "us", Dhlomo's sudden switch-over does not ring true. It runs in contradiction to his personal position, which was that English should be used as a common literary language.

The conclusion to Dhlomo's argument is deliberately vague. We know of his desire to see a Bantu National Dramatic Movement, of his personal commitment to write in English

and his desire to promote African writing. By using the pronoun "us" here, Dhlomo identifies with Group B, which intends to establish a Bantu National Dramatic Movement. This is a clever swop-over on Dhlomo's part, who hopes that by equating the Dramatic movement with the scheme for Union languages, he will gain Shepherd's support for his project.

7.3. Conclusion

In this chapter it was shown how Dhlomo uses his "third voice" to work backwards and by ostensibly attacking the voice of opposition, in fact identifies with it. Dhlomo cleverly vacillates between support for the missionary cause and bitter opposition to it. He chooses central themes with great care to reflect those aspects of African writing or society that the Eurocolonials found appealing and uses them to his advantage. It is through this unique approach to writing that Dhlomo cunningly re-establishes the true ideological link between Dhlomo and Shepherd and identifies the

> grouping of languages, uniform orthography, limitation of literary dialects, the development of the literature of a language understood and spoken in many places . . . (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 10)

as "communication between master and servant" (Dhlomo, H.I.E. 1939b, 10).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to illustrate the symbiotic relationship that existed between Herbert Dhlomo and the Lovedale Missionary Press. This has been done by placing Lovedale, as well as Dhlomo, in the broader context of South African socio-political developments. An analysis of Dhlomo's critical writing was facilitated by a study of current trends in the field of colonial discourse.

Lovedale formed a perfect contact zone for a literary encounter between the missionaries and African writers: it was, first and foremost, dedicated to an embodiment of missionary ideals. The moulding of character along missionary lines was central to the maintenance of the colonial order. Lovedale was also a publishing house, producing what Homi Bhabha refers to as "signs of wonder" - books for the colonized (1986, 163). As Bhabha shrewdly points out (1986, 165-166), the Bible in Hindustani remains essentially the colonizer's book, and does not become the possession of the colonized. Similarly, much of the material published at Lovedale did not belong to the colonized, and stands out as examples *par excellance* of colonial discourse.

Resistance to the prevailing political order has been a central theme in African writing, and especially so since the turn of the century. Evidence of a missionary influence on African writers has been provided by scholars such as Benjamin Leshoai (1978, 113-144). The ideology of resistance ingrained in early African books, such as Sol Plaatje's Mhudi, is likewise illustrated in the work of Tim Couzens and Stephen Gray. Both writers reveal the close link between current political developments of the time, and the contents of Plaatje's novel.[1] A connection can also be found between Plaatje's personal interests and those of the Lovedale Press. This study has attempted to illustrate how ideology and personal ambition shaped the nature of Herbert Dhlomo's literary criticism.

1 Tim Couzens, introduction, Mhudi, by Sol Plaatje (London: Heinemann, 1978) and Couzens and Gray 1978.

To emphasise the close relationship that existed between the Lovedale Press, Herbert Dhlomo and ideology, a close examination was undertaken firstly of the major political trends in South Africa. It was shown that the doctrine of political liberalism had been forced onto the defensive after the turn of the century, and had fallen into the quandary of having to redefine the function of liberal ideology within the boundaries of segregation. On the other hand, African political resistance flourished during the 1920s, but internal organisational problems and concerted efforts by white liberals to stem the tide of radicalism within African politics left African resistance floundering towards the end of the decade.

The beginning of the 1930s was marked by a high degree of co-operation between liberals and African intellectuals. By the middle of the decade, though, Africans had regrouped themselves at the All-African Convention, and were determined to present a united front to the world. It was during this period of comparative African unity that Herbert Dhlomo submitted his creative writing to the Lovedale Press - without much success. This newly-found political unity among Africans clashed with the ideological stance taken by the Lovedale Press, and in Chapter 4 it was shown how Mqhayi's manuscript on Rubasana, and Preller's work on Lobengula were both turned down for what could be considered to be ideological reasons. The inference was then made that Dhlomo's Cetshwayo met with a similar fate. In attempts to gain Lovedale's approval for his creative manuscripts, Dhlomo submitted a number of articles concerning the nature of African drama to liberal publications such as the South African Outlook and Bantu Studies. The Lovedale Press, by using The South African Outlook, was able to make a considerable impact on socio-political debates of the day. Since Shepherd was the editor of the magazine, Dhlomo not only introduced African Drama to the Outlook's predominantly white readership, but succeeded in bringing his own creative *modus operandi* under Shepherd's attention at the same time.

A study of Dhlomo's literary theory, together with an attempt to place it in the context of his personal ambition and his political vision, was undertaken to show how Dhlomo

adapted his style to the dual purpose of winning Lovedale's favour and of creating an African voice of opposition to missionary influence on colonial literature. It was by looking at the Lovedale Press and examining the aims and ideals set out by the missionaries that it became possible to illustrate why Dhlomo felt it necessary to back his creative writing up with a critical exposition of his narrative techniques.

Lovedale's powerful position in the field of missionary publishing was largely due to the efforts of the Director of the Press, Robert Shepherd. This study initially viewed Shepherd as a liberal paternalist, but went on to show that Shepherd could never have been regarded as a liberal in any sense. His conservative view of art stemmed from a strictly Calvinist tradition both in the Church of Scotland and in his personal background.

Shepherd's view that only art for art's sake could reveal the spirit of Africa was contrasted with Dhlomo's view that, although artistic considerations were important, the African writer should be actively engaged in the political struggle against white supremacy. The confrontation that resulted because of this fundamental difference served as a point of reference from which much of Dhlomo's critical writing stemmed. Dhlomo used his position as journalist to constantly re-assess his argument. Writing from within a framework of resistance, he was able to appropriate from the western literary tradition whatever suited his purpose. Similarly, he could just as easily reject the concepts of the colonizer. Dhlomo used the ambivalence of his position to come out in apparent support of Shepherd while in fact setting up a voice of opposition.

This study took note of the differences in opinion between Dhlomo and Shepherd, as well as the socio-political forces that shaped their respective arguments. The result was a re-assessment of Dhlomo's critical writing that indicated how Dhlomo used his failure to have his creative material published at Lovedale as a stimulus for developing a theory of African literature. Consequently the importance of Dhlomo's criticism lies not only in the fact that it was the first sustained body of literary theory by an African in South Africa, but also in the way in which an ideology of resistance is inscribed into it.

APPENDIX 1

This table is reproduced from Shepherd, R.H.W. Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu (1945, 25):

Language	Books on the Bible and the Christian Faith	School Books and Linguistics	General Literature	Total
SOTHO(Northern and Southern)	98	48	81	227
TSWANA	49	27	7	83
XHOSA	106	58	74	238
ZULU	82	49	22	153
VENDA	6	1	0	7
TONGA	11	10	1	22

APPENDIX 2

Reproduced from *The New Outlook* March (1939): 8-10.

LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL DRAMA

The opening chapters of the story of English literature are not unlike the story of African literature today. Before the year 1340 (about the time of Chaucer's birth) conditions in England were parallel to those in this country. England was occupied by several virile, belligerent races. There was no peace or state of order in the country which suffered invasion after invasion. However, after some time, comparative peace and order were restored. At this time we find England a camp of different racial elements: Britons, Normans, Danes and Anglo-Saxons. Each of these racial groups spoke its own language or dialect. There was neither racial nor linguistic unity. Although noble efforts were made to write books, no great literature was produced until all the different groups combined to form one great race, and the various dialects merged into one common language.

The existence of many different languages or dialects - Sotho, Thonga, Zulu, Venda and Xhosa - delays and even prevents the birth of great national African drama. Out of these language groups we should evolve a universal Bantu literary language. Like the Greek poets of the sixth century we ought to "develop an international manner, writing a composite language made up of different dialects". Of the methods suggested to bring this about, two will be mentioned here. The first is to try by a wise process of elimination, combination, compromise, modification and development to evolve a lingua franca acceptable to all. This method bristles with difficulties.

The second method seeks to develop what are called Union languages. It has been found, for example, that Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele form one cluster, the Nguni group. It is suggested, therefore, that instead of the present multiplicity of dialects, Union languages should be evolved. This would mean that a few Union languages - Nguni, Sotho, Venda, Thonga - would take the place of the many dialects extant today. This is possible but, here, too, are many obstacles and difficulties.

What would be the advantage of all this? First, there would be the blend of the genius of each racial group resulting in the greater genius of the nation. Second, there would be a richer field of tradition, folk-lore and ideas. Third, African literature would enjoy a wider circle of readers. Fourth, it would lead to the establishment of a national school of African Drama.

Yet there are many who have fears and misgivings, who oppose all movements that seek deliberately to evolve changes in Bantu languages. These people contend that the present tendency to form committees on African languages and literature, introduces institutionalism into African literature; that the writing and publishing of works by African authors will be controlled by a small, arbitrary, self-interested group - and woe betide those opposed to, and by, the leaders of these groups! - that this will reduce African literature to a matter of favour-currying and cringing - not one of pure merit and art. Second, they assert that whatever methods the experts and their supporters employ, the result will be an artificial language devoid of the native beauties and peculiarities of the existing Bantu languages; that the champions of these methods would succeed in destroying what they originally meant to preserve, adulterate what they want to keep pure, and lose the very individuality of language they at first seek to maintain.

Third they aver that there is bound to be linguistic and cultural miscegenation in South Africa and that in due season the problem of African languages will automatically solve itself. Others go much further and argue that the languages of an oppressed and politically servile people cannot hope to be a really powerful literary vehicle, and will always be used to exploit and keep down the people.

When it is pointed out to them that European linguistic experts and certain African scholars are trying to do for South African Bantu literature what has been done for English literature, they answer that the development of English literature and language was a natural growth and an unconscious process - a thing, they contend, that seems impossible in the case of African languages and literature where White leaders and Bantu scholars, themselves authors seeking purely to make reputations and push their own works and names forward, force down things on the helpless layman. They contend that much of the work for the preservation and the development of English literature and language - as in the case of the Afrikaners in our midst - came from within, from the people themselves, not from outsiders. They maintain that English literature - and they say this is true of Afrikaans and Afrikaans literature - grew and developed because the English author (and today the Afrikaner writer) was given the chance and even deliberate, patriotic help to write and publish. In Bantu circles, they hold, things are different. Instead of giving chances to the ordinary African author to publish, those in authority write dissertations and theses on an African literature that hardly exists! Some are annoyed by the rigid literary programmes that certain committees have drawn up for the development of African literature - as if creative art needs systematic planning years ahead; or as if you can tie down a Shakespeare, a Wordsworth, a Dickens or a Shaw, a Masefield, a Walpole, to a certain programme in order to fill gaps!

Most important of all, these critics sneer at the fact that experts and Bantu scholars are themselves authors anxious and trying by all means to get their own works published, first and foremost.

We have said enough to show that there is strong opposition to those who work for the development of African literature and languages. No doubt much of this criticism is irrelevant and destructive, and originates from bitter, disappointed writers, struggling aspirants and from tyros of mediocre ability.

Most of us will agree with E.J. Hussey who, writing on "The Language and Literature in Africa" in *Africa* of April, 1932, says, "On the whole, therefore, it is the opinion of the majority of those who are qualified be experience to judge [sic], that there is a preponderance of advantages in the use of a well-known African language in preference to a European tongue as the literary language of the masses of the people . . . The complete neglect of the African languages must have a far-reaching effect upon social evolution which by many would be regarded as disastrous . . . A vernacular literature . . . can influence a large portion of the population . . . because a vernacular literature follows the form of native speech".

Those of us interested in the formation of a Bantu National Dramatic Movement would therefore welcome the birth of a Bantu lingua franca, or, at least, the acceleration of the scheme for Union languages by European experts and the few African scholars who give them support, despite the strong opposition we have proved exists. Grouping of languages, uniform orthography, limitation of literary dialects, the development of the literature of a language understood and widely spoken in many places, "used as a common medium of communication with each other", used as a common medium of communication between master and servant land having possibilities as a powerful, flexible literary vehicle - these and other methods (many of which experts are already trying out) can be used to bring about the desired results. Indeed, a language such as that described already exists in this country, but modesty forbids my mentioning it.

These are matters of vital importance to students of African drama.

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