The TransAtlantic Connections of the New African Movement

by

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> But however marvelous this may be, the wonder of wonders to my mind is the progress which the American Negro has made during the fifty years of his emancipation from slavery. . . What is the message of this progress to us in Africa? . . What the American Negro has done and is doing we can also do in this sunny land of ours.
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> -R. V. Selope Thema, "Negro Progress in America" (1923).

> It may be startling to a non-South African to notice how much of our cultural life is American.
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> -Ezekiel Mphahlele, **The African Image** (1962).

The cultural practices and intellectual achievements of African Americans in the twentieth century have weighed as a challenge on other blacks in Africa and in the African diaspora. This historical challenge has either demanded, compelled and necessitated replication, emulation, wonderment and duplication on the part of diasporan Africans and the new Africans in Africa. Witness the enervating impact of Langston Hughes as a representative figure of the Harlem Renaissance on Leopold Sedar Senghor within the Negritude Movement in Senegal, on Ezekiel Mphahlele within the Sophiatown Renaissance in South Africa, on Nicolas Guillen within Negrismo in Cuba, on Jacquire Roumain within Indigenism in Haiti, and the list could be extended on indefinitely.

Perhaps no other country in the world has felt this burden much greater than South Africa: where a Charlie Parker, a Miles Davis, a Booker T. Washington, a W.E.B. Du Bois, a James Baldwin, a Richard Wright, a Duke Ellington, a Dinah Washington, a Sarah Vaughan, a Zora Neale Hurston, a Canada Lee, a Philly Joe Jones, the Mills Brothers, the Ink Spots seems to begat, respectively, a (Jerry) Kippie Moeketsi, a Hugh Masekela, a John Dube, a Solomon T. Plaatje, a Lewis Nkosi, a Peter Abrahams, an Ibrahim Abdullah (Dollar Brand), a Dorothy Masuka, a Miriam Makeba, a Bessie Head, a William Bloke Modisane, an Early Mabusa, the Manhattan Brothers, the African Ink Spots. To be sure, this juxtaspositioning could be extended further: Scott Joplin and Rueben T. Caluza, J.J. Johnson and Jonas Ngwangwa, Louis Armstong's Hot Five and Peter Rezant's The Merry Blackbirds, Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers and Solomon 'Zuluboy' Cele's Jazz Maniacs, Miles Davis first great Quintet and the Jazz Epistles (a quintet which included among its members, Hugh Masekela, Kippie Moeketsi, Abdulah Ibrahim): the issue here is not one of comparison but a question of emulation, inspiration and aspiration. This emulation was experienced as a historical necessity, the very necessity which

had impelled Walter Nhlapo to pose the challenging question: "What are we doing to find counterparts of such famous Negro Men as Booker T. Washington, Robert Moton, educationalists; Dr. Ernest Everritt, scientist; Jack Johnson, Larry Gains, boxers; J.C. Johnson, 'Fats' Waller, dance number composers; Mabel Brooks, artist; Layton and Johnstone, Mills Brothers, jazz singers; Duke Ellington, Lucky 'Blue' Milinder, band conductors; Marcus Garvey, orator; Paul Robeson, John Ross, actors; and Aubrey Pankey, a singer."[1] As Nhlapo well knew, one of the most important cultural and intellectual dramas in South Africa in the twentieth-century has been the strengthening of the transAtlantic transmission lines between the two countries which had been opened in the nineteenth-century. Harlem became, at least for the African urban elite, in matters of culture and intellectual production, the capital of South Africa from the moment of the advent of the Harlem Renaissance in the mid-1920s to the implosion of the Sophiatown Renaissance in the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre.[2]

United States and South Africa: two countries interlocked in a process of cultural reciprocity in different artistic and intellectual generic forms extending over a century. The late Audrey Lorde, in two stanzas of "Party Time", in her last book of poetry, **The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance: Poems 1987-1992**, directly draws parallels between the two historical experiences:

> Over grapejuice in South Provence
> the women from South Africa
> lower their voices discussing rents
> and who has not yet payed a protest
> punishable by death
> burning through the Mofolo night.

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[1] Walter Nhlapo, *Bantu World*, 22 June 1935.

[2] The thesis formulated by Nick Visser that Sophiatown Renaissance was a failure is very problematical indeed (see: "South Africa: The Renaissance that Failed", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, August 1976). Visser does not attribute its failure to the intellectual and cultural limitations of its exponents, but rather, to the political intervention by the apartheid state which terminated it before reaching its full cultural efflorescence. This viewpoint would seem to concur with Mphahlele's position of 1959 (see: **Down Second Avenue**, Faber and Faber, London, 1959, pp.187-200). In a magisterial essay, Michael Chapman proposes a series of fascinating arguments for a reconsideration of this thesis of supposed failure (see: "More than Telling a Story: *Drum* and its Significance in Black South African Writing" in **The 'Drum' Decade: Stories from the 1950s**, (ed.) Michael Chapman, University of Natal Press, 1989, pp.183-232). All these arguments about the Sophiatown Renaissance largely preoccupy themselves about literary production, never considering photography and jazz, which were part of this great cultural experience. Whether there is any historical justification in considering the 1950s as "The *Drum* decade", when in this decade there were brilliant political journals, such as *Liberation*, *Fighting Talk*, *Africa South*, possibly also the *New Age*, or whether it is a matter of culturalism attempting to imperialize politics or political practice, is a question I consider in a sequel to this essay: "South Africa in Africa: Searching for Political and Intellectual Directions".

Eleanor Bumpurs, grandmother,
shotgunned
against her kitchen wall
by rent marshals in the Bronx
moves among us humming
her breath is sweet acacia
in this stone yard at sunset
rhythms quicken
and I come next behind her
in our dance.[3]

This cultural and political representation of the suffering of Africans in the cultural imagination of African Americans finds a particular inflection in a literary sermon of Cornel West following upon his visit to South Africa in 1985. He writes or sermonizes: "The most striking feature of South Africa is the wealth and comfort of whites alongside the poverty and the squalor of blacks. The so-called coloureds, people of mixed race, are hardly well off; yet their middling position accentuates the black/white contrast. . . Black and white South Africans live in two completely different worlds. Unlike the situation in America's Old South, there is virtually no communication and interaction between black and white South Africans outside the boss-employee, master-servant contact. This means not only that there is little, if any, cross-cultural borrowing or overlapping of religious styles. More important, there is little interest in or knowledge of the black predicament among whites. The very possibility of serious and sustained black-white communication hardly exists. . . This courageous rebellion destasbilizes South Africa, but it alone cannot topple the South African government. In my judgement only two masjor strategies can bring about fundamental change in South Africa: mass strikes and international financial divestments and trade embargoes."[4] The engagement with South Africa on the part of African American intellectuals and artists in the decade of the 1980s, was not only confined to modern dance, poetry and social philosophy, but also involved other social and cultural practices, as in the instance of the great trumpeter Miles Davis, momentarily forsaking the trumpet to rap denunciations of apartheid.

The depth of Miles Davis's passion for South Africa is reflected in his recollection in the **Miles: The Autobiography** of the warm friendship he had with Hugh Masekela: "I think that's where [Village Gate nightclub in New

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[3] Audre Lorde, **The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance: Poems 1987-1992**, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1993, p.12.

[4] Cornel West, "On Visiting South Africa", **Prophetic Fragments**, Africa World Press, Trenton, 1988, p.109-110. In a later essay West reflected further on the meaning of South Africa to African Americans: "South Africa and Our Struggle", **Prophetic Reflections: Notes on Race and Power in America**, Common Courage Press, Monroe, 1993, pp.183-197.

York] I met Hugh Masekela, the very fine South African trumpet player. He had just come over to the States and was doing real good. He was a friend of Dizzy's, whom I think had helped sponsor him while he went to music school here. I remember one night riding uptown with him and him being somewhat in awe that he was in the same car with me. . . Hugh had his own approach to playing the trumpet even then, had his own sound. I thought that was good, although I didn't think he played black American music too well. Every time I saw him I told him to just keep on doing his own thing rather than trying to play what we were playing over here. After a while I think he started listening to me, because his playing got better."[5] One could invoke other instances of this representation and reflection: Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* album, the music of Gil Scott Heron, the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, the rapping of Chuck D, the singing of Abbey Lincoln, Harry Belafonte and others.

These representations have a long history predating the Harlem Renaissance era. In the early twentieth-century, the connexions were already present. As was invariably the case in many situations, Langston Hughes was in the forefront. In "Johannesburg Mines" (1928) Hughes is forthright in his political convictions and expression of solidarity with the people of South Africa:

In the Johannesburg mines
There are 240,000 natives working.

What kind of poem
Would you make out of that?

240,000 natives working
In the Johannesburg mines.[6]

In the opening paragraph of **The Negro in American Fiction**, commenting on the suffering of Jews and Irish in history, which he sees as similar to that of black people in many parts of the world, Sterling Brown observes: "The African, and especially the South African native, is now receiving substantially the same treatment as the American Negro."[7] This referencing

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[5] Miles Davis (with Quincy Troupe), **Miles: The Autobiography**, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1989, p.287-88.

[6] Langston Hughes, "Johannesburg Mines", **Good Morning Revolution: Uncollected Social Protest Writings by Langston Hughes**, (ed.) Faith Berry, Laurence Hill and Company, 1973, p.10 (Originally in: *The Crisis*, February 1928). Having suppressed most of his revolutionary poems for decades, partly due to McCarthyism, Langston Hughes permits this poem and others to be republished thirty years later in a South African literary and cultural review: *Africa South*, vol.1 no.3, April-June 1957.

[7] Sterling Brown, **The Negro in American Fiction: Negro Poetry and Drama**, Arno Press, New York, 1969 [1937], p.3. Du Bois in **Black Reconstruction** (1935) makes mention of the need for the African American working class in America to solidarize and support the struggle of the African working class in South Africa.

of black South Africans in the critical and creative imagination of African Americans seems to have been an unavoidable historical necessity.

In the late nineteenth-century two separate and unconnected visits by Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and Orpheus Myron McAdoo with his Virginia Jubilee Singers to South Africa leave a lasting impact or legacy. The arrival of Orpheus McAdoo in 1890 marks the beginnings of serious transplantation of African American musical culture on a large scale onto the cultural fabric or texture of South Africa. Based on his observations and experience from extensive world wide travels with his singers, in a letter to Hampton Institute's *Southern Workman*, McAdoo makes the startling comparison between South Africa and United States: "There is no country in the world where prejudice is so strong as here in [South] Africa. The native to-day is treated as badly as ever the slave was treated in Georgia. Here in [South] Africa the native laws are most unjust; such as any Christian people would be ashamed of."[8] Bishop Turner who arrived in Cape Town on April 1898 to forge a unity across the Atlantic between the emergent South African Ethiopian Movement (black independent churches formed by black priests who had broken away from white Christian hegemonic institutions) and the AME Church made a not dissimilar observation on noting the treatment of Africans in white churches.[9] When African Americans from Gwendolyn Brooks to Miles Davis looked at Africans in South Africa it was as though they were looking at themselves in a mirror. This image of near exact resemblance was not entirely a mirage. African American intellectual and moral culture had by mid-20th century penetrated deep into the civil fiber of South Africa.

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[8] Orpheus M. McAdoo, "A Letter From South Africa: Black Laws in the Orange Free State of Africa", *Southern Workman*, November 1890. Veit Erlmann in **African Stars** (University of Chicago Press, 1991) examines the cultural impact of the several visits of the Virginia Jubilee Singers in South Africa.

[9] J. Mutero Chirenje, **Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883-1916**, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1987, p.63. Chirenje writes: "They [Ethiopainists] invited qualified Afro-Americans to come to their aid as missionaries and they sent African students to black colleges in America. In the process, Africans and Afro-Americans exchanged views on the need for the latter group to come to South Africa. These exchanges contain some of the profound statements ever made on black solidarity and touched on two main lines of pan-American thought. . . The convergence of both schools of thought [Ethiopianism and the AME Church] established a link between southern Africa and the United States that has over the years survived the vagaries of politics." (p.164). John Tule, a recent convert, writing at nearly the same time time as Mangane Maake Mokone (founder of Ethiopianism in 1892), and anticipating R. V. Selope Thema, perhaps also Mgijima and Wellington, all of whom reacted differently to the entrance of modernity in South Africa, wrote from Cape Town in the late nineteenth-century to *Voice of Missions*, the organ of the A. M. E. Church a letter which said in part: "I am trying to draw your attention to the following facts: Our people at home in Transkie are in a bad state, needing two principal modes of life; first, Christianity and civilization, but in the first place we are sinking down every year through the bad treatment of white men with our kings or chiefs" (March 1896).

In the search for African intellectual origins in South Africa, Jordan K. Ngubane locates them in the historic figure of Walter Rubasana (1858-1936), founder and editor of the newspasper *Izwi la Bantu* (The Voice of the People [November 1897-April 1909]). Ngubane argues that in writing **History of South Africa from a Native Standpoint** in the early part of the twentieth century, Rubasana achieved two things: he established a process of self-definition that was to be followed by subsequent major African intellectuals; and simultaneously posited a thesis that in a race-conscious society no one group can correctly interpret the historical experience (the 'mind') of any other group.[10] Implicit in Ngubane's formulation is that the process of self definition among Africans has had to be oppositional, critical, autonomous, protest in nature, given the then dominant economic and political control of British imperial power and the hegemony of white settlers (English and Afrikaner) following the Union of South Africa formed in 1910. Following on the logic of this thesis, Silas Modiri Molema's book, **The Bantu: Past and Present: An Ethnographical and Historical Study of the Native Races of South Africa** (1920),[11] a remarkable attempt to negotiate the meaning of modernity within an African context, the advent of Ethiopianism (among its founders

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[10] Jordan K. Ngubane, "Forty Years of Black Writing", in **Umhlaba Wethu**, (ed.) Mothobi Mutloase, Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg, 1987, p.143-144. Ngubane was a formidable intellectual in his own right whose journalistic pieces scattered in various South African newspapers needs to be assembled together. One of his books **An African Explains Apartheid** (1963), echoes the title that of Walter Rubasana. Ngubane also wrote a philosophical 'novel' called **Umshaba** (1974) as well as a political and philosophical disquisition, **Conflict of Minds** (1979). Following in the tradition of earlier New African intellectuals such as A. C. Jordan, John Dube, R. R. R. Dhlomo, Thomas Mofolo, Benedikt Vilakazi and others, he also wrote a novel in an African language: **Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi** (1972); this variant of the tradition is different from that established by Solomon T. Plaatje in writing a novel in English, **Mhudi**. The outcome of Ngubane's politics of expediency and his virulent anti-Communism, which crushed when he returned from exile in the early 1980s to work with Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha Freedom Party, were already anticipated by Nelson Mandela in the 1950s: "Towards Democratic Unity", *Liberation* no.6, November 1953.

[11] A brief biographical sketch of S.M. Molema, most probably written by H.I.E. Dhlomo, calls **The Bantu** , a very important book' (see: **The African Yearly Register: Being an Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary {Who's Who} of Black Folks in Africa**, edited and compiled by T.D. Mweli Skota, R.L.Lesson and Company, Johannesburg, 1930, p.205). Note the echo of Du Bois's **The Souls of Black Folk** in the subtitle of the book; in its depiction of black folks from Dr. Wimont Blyden through Bishop Samuel Adjai Crowther to Dr. J.E.K. Aggrey, **The African Yearly Register** also reflects the Pan-Africanism of Du Bois's **The Negro**. It is not accidental that Dhlomo would immediately recognize the importance of Molema's book given that he was also himself an uncompromising modernizer. In his biography, **The New African: A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo** (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1985), Tim Couzens perceptively indicates the importance of **The African Yearly Register** in South African intellectual history. In an essay, "The South African Medical Doctor as a Political Intellectual", I attempt to indicate the importance of Dr. S. M. Molema, as well as those of Drs. Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo, G. M. 'Monty' Naicker, James Lowell Zwelinzima and Abdullah Abdurahman; it is an attempt to look at a large track of South African medical history through the ideas of the great Swiss medical historian, Henry Sigerist.

were Nehemiah Tile, Mangena Mokone, Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba) in the late nineteenth-century and the founding of the African National Congress in 1912 by Pixley ka Isaka Seme (1880-1951), would be part of this protest self-definition.[12] The second problematical thesis which advocates nativism and Africanism, is not so much a correct reading of Rubusana, as a carrying out to its logical conclusion the ideology of African nationalism theorized by Anton Lembede (1914-47) at the founding of the African National Congress Youth League in 1943, of which Jordan Ngubane himself, the young Nelson Mandela and the late Oliver Tambo were its members, among others. This last thesis of black nationalism lead subsequentlt to Jordan Ngubane's well-known virulent anti-Communism and opportunistic liberalism.[13]

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[12] Pixley ka Isaka Seme texts which lead him to found the African National Congress (until 1925 the South African Native National Congress) are historic documents: "Native Union", *Tsala ea Becoana* (The Friend of the Bechuana), October 28, 1911; "South African Native Congress: Notice", *Tsala ea Becoana*, December 23, 1911. The African National Congress was founded on January 8, 1912. In the former essay, Seme makes clear that this calling of the nation together was not so much a willed historical idea stemming from his individual genius as a collectively felt historical need. Some of the unwavering proponents of this call for national unity were traditional chiefs, very much aware that the entrance of modernity into South Africa, ushered in by industrialization propelled by the discovery of gold and diamonds, would irreversibly diminish their rural-based political power in favour of the new emergent cities. One of the earliest documents concerning the founding of the African National Congress was by F. Z. S. Peregrino, a fascinating Ghanian living in South Africa: "The S. A. Native Congress", *Tsala ea Becoana*, March 16, 1912. There is only one short profile essay on Peregrino which considers his editorialship of *South African Spectator* within his conservatism as a follower of Booker T. Washington: C. C. Saunders, "F. Z. S. Peregrino and The South African Spectator", *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, vol.32 no.3, March 1978: "Almost all the news in the Spectator concerned the activities of black people. Much was said about American blacks. . . His paper devoted so much attention to the South African activities of the American-based African Methodist Episcopal Church that he had to deny that he was a member of that church." A portrait of Peregrino's relationship to Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman would make a revealing study of pan-Africanist connexions among Cape Colony's political intellectuals in the early part of the twentieth-century. Andre Odendaal's **Black Protest Politics in South to 1912** , a study of Cape's African political intellectuals, affords one many serious lessons (Barnes and Noble, New York, 1984) on some of these issues. The newspaper, *Tsala ea Becoana* was founded and edited by Solomon T. Plaatje; its importance in this narrative essay will be evident in a moment.

[13] Jordan Ngubane as a distinguished journalist was the editor of the newspaper, *Inkundla ya Bantu* (Bantu Forum),which he turned into ideological forum of African National Congress Youth League. It is here that Anton M. Lembede published his essays which forged the ideological perspective of the Youth Leaguers: "National Unity Among African Tribes", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, October, Second Fortnight, 1945; "Policy of the Congress Youth League", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, May, Second Fortnight, 1946; "In Defence of Nationalism", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, February 27, 1947; "An African Academy of Art and Science", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, July 31, 1947. Lembede's ideology of African nationalism was not immune from attack from a supposedly left-wing perspective, a position uninformed by dialectical principles: "Notes and Comments" by 'Umweli', *Inkululekho* (a Communist Party organ), September 9, 1944; "Mr. Lembede Replies", *Inkululeko*, September 23, 1944. As President of the African National Congress Youth League and because of his sparkling personality, Lembede had a mesmerizing hold on A. P. Mda, Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Oliver Tambo, Jordan Ngubane, Congress Mbatha.

In contrast to Jordan Ngubane's historical perspective, Ezekiel Mphahlele in his search for African intellectual origins has undertaken a more nuanced and modulated panoramic view of a part of South African intellectual landscape. Using A. C. Jordan's **Towards an African Literature** as a point of orientation, Mphahlele traces the development of African literaray culture from Ntsikana through Thomas Mofolo and S. E. K. Mqhayi to the cultural movement of the Sophiatown Renaissance.[14] Seeking to give explanation for the quality of the literary productiveness among the Xhosa during the middle and late nineteenth-century, he posits by implication, the Lovedale

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Perhaps this influence is partly explained by the fact that Lembede was in the process of articling into an attorney with the old Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the founder of the African National Congress. Mary Benson correctly observes that although Lembede was brilliant, his enormous and deep influence far exceeded the originality of his writings: **The African Patriots: The Story of the African National Congress of South Africa**, Faber and Faber, London, 1963, p.102-112. This view is endorsed in a biographical sketch on Lembede, most probably written by Gail M. Gerhart: **From Protest to Challenge**, vol. 4, (eds.) Thomas Kris and Gwendolen M. Carter, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1977, p.55-57. Lembede's death at the age of 33 in August 1947 was a great shock to his young associates, as is evident in Ngubane's editorial which was in effect an obituary: "Lembede is dead, but the free Africa he always saw in his visions is a reality which will always live and those of us he has left behind can pay no better tribute to his memory than to resolve once more to carry on the fight in which he lost his life with renewed strength" (*Inkundla ya Bantu*, August 7, 1947). Perhaps today President Nelson is carrying on the vision of Lembede. In another context I attempt to establish the continuity between Lembede and Mandela today: "Pan- Africanismo, Intellectuales y el Congreso Nacional Africano" [Pan-Africanism, Intellectuals and the African National Congress], *Sucesos del Pacifico*, Bogota, 1996. In the 1950s the historical meaning and significance of the legacy of the Youth League and Lembede became contestatory between Nelso Mandela and Jordan Ngubane, resulting in the former, as a member of the Congress Alliance, launching a scathing attack on the latter's anti-Communism: Nelson Mandela, "Towards Democratic Unity", *Liberation*, no.6, November 1953. At this time Mandela was moving in the direction of the left-wing as is evident in one of his representative essay of the period: "A New Menace in Africa: American Imperialism", *Liberation*, no.30, March 1958. Since this text is juxtapositioning South Africa and United States, it is well to recall that while Nelson Mandela and his associates in the early 1940s in Johannesburg were initiating a political revolution, across the Atlantic in New York, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Kenny Clarke Bud Powell, Thelonius Monk, Oscar Pettiford were in the middle of the bebop revolution in jazz. Still further parallels could be drawn between the Defiance Campaign of 1952 in South Africa and the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott in Alabama, Mississippi.

[14] Es'kia Mphahlele, "Landmarks", in **Umhlaba Wethu**, op. cit., pp.1-15. If I refrain from making reference to Ezekiel Mphahlele's **The African Image**, it is because it will form part of a central exhibition in a consideration elsewhere of black South African intellectual discourse in the twentieth-century. Another different survey of African intellecual heritage was undertaken by Z. K. Mathews in *Imvo Zabantsundu* from June to November 1961. The range of figures it assesses is very impressive: John Tengo Jabavu, Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu, Solomon T. Plaatje, Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba, John L. Dube, John Knox Bokwe, R. V. Selope Thema, Meshach Pelem, Walter B. Rubusana, Thomas M. Mapikela, Charlotte Manye Maxeke, James Thaele, Isaiah Bud-Mbelle, Hamilton Masiza, Paul Xiniwe, S. E. Krune Mqhayi, Elijah Makiwane, Samuel Mapoch Makgatho, Charles Dube, William Samuel Mazwi, Alfred Mangena, Pixley ka Isaka Seme.

Institution as the foundation of the origins, since it enabled a cultural efflorescence among the Xhosa to emerge in the Cape. The Lovedale Mission, founded and controlled by the Church of Scotland in the 1820s, established a printing press, a school, printed and owned the newspaper *Isigidimi sama Xhosa* (The Xhosa Messenger, founded in 1870 with Elijah Makiwane as editor). It is here that the Lovedale Literary Society came into being. Perhaps much more fundamental, nearly all Xhosa intellectuals in the nineteenth century preoccupied with the written forms of expression had acquared their education at Lovedale. This location of African intellectual origins in an institutional form and practice by Ezekiel Mphahlele, rather than in a singular individual as is suggested by Jordan Ngubane, is more persuasive.

Finding the median point between the positions of Ezekiel Mphahlele and Jordan Ngubane, I would argue for the founding in 1879 of the Native Educational Association (NEA) by African intellectuals, of which the young Walter Rubasana was a member, rather than the Lovedale Mission, as the foundational location of African intellectual origins.[15] The other members of the NEA were Elijah Makiwane, Pambani Jeremiaj Mzimba, Walter Rubasana, John Tengo Jabavu, Peter Tyamzashe, Ben Sakura.[16] This was perhaps the first group of African intellectuals who constituted themselves as a distinct group articulating a new historical consciousness, separate from missionary and white intellectual hegemony, even though all of them were a product of missionary education at Lovedale.[17] The following objectives of

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[15] Tiyo Soga's biographer has attempted to argue for his case as the originator of intellectual culture in South Africa, even going so far as to argue that he was the inventor of Pan-Africanism, black consciousness, nativism, black nationalism, and Negritude: Donovan Williams, "Tiyo Soga: 1829-71", in **Black Leaders in Southern African History**, (ed.) Christopher Saunders, Heinemann, London, 1979, p.135-136. Williams had formulated this thesis earlier: **Umfundisi: A Biography of Tiyo Soga: 1829-1871**, Lovedale Press, 1978, especially pp.91-105. This thesis has more to do with the context of its formulation, the emergence of Black Consciousness Movement following the Soweto Uprising of 1976, rather than with the real actualities of the historical subject. Tiyo Soga still very much saw himself as the vessel of European missionary project in South Africa, rather than as a subject coming into historical consciousness as a member of an oppressed, colonized and dominated people. Tiyo Soga's first biographer was eminently aware of this: **John Aitken Chalmers, Tiyo Soga: A Page of Southern African Mission Work**, Edinburgh and London, 1877. Tiyo Soga was a historical figure of great importance, a figure of the uncertainty of transition into something beyond his historical moment; a moment which the younger intellectualls, nearly all whom were ordained ministers, around the Native Educational Association correctly assessed as the historical experience of modernity.

[16] Ben Sakura, "Native Educational Association", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, March 9, 1887.

[17] There can be no doubt that Lovedale Mission was an important institution as evident in John Tengo Jabavu's homage to it: " Lovedale in 1884", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, May 11, 1885. Appraising the academic report of Dr. Stewart, the Principal of the school, Jabavu praises the open admission policy based on meritocracy and distinction without regard to colour, while questioning the wisdom of barring Africans from studying Classics (Greek and Latin). Jabavu was arguing for the same educational status as European students who continued studying Classics at Cape University.

the NEA were enshrined in its Constitution: a serious concern with matters affecting the moral and general improvement of Africans; opposition, especially without a permit, to the unlimited production of liquor intended for African consumption; the advancement of African people through the publication and diffusion of African literatures.[18] In an Editorial of November 1884 in *Imvo Zabantsundu* (African Opinion), the editor John Tengo Jabavu, espouses pedagogical and political principles similar to those of the NEA: it defines its task as that of bringing uneducated Africans ("Red Kafirs") to the shores of modernity (Tengo calls it "civilization") which was in the process of being constructed by the African intelligentsia ("School Kafirs"); it states its mission as that of representing the view-point of the new African elite caught between the "barbarism" of tradition and the subjugation of the European civilizing mission; it celebrates Elijah Makiwane who was then President of the Native Educational Association as an exemplary modern African.[19] John Tengo Jabavu concludes the Editorial by arguing that one of the missions of *Imvo Zabantsundu* is is to court white liberal for support of the project of modernity by Africans. The Editorial was in effect an announcement that the weekly newspaper would become the ideological forum of the NEA. This policy of satisfying white liberal support led eventually John Tengo Jabavu to making disastrous political decisions. These untenable political choices resulted in Walter Rubasana and Allan Kirkland Soga establishing*Izwi la Bantu* (The Voice of the People) in 1897, in opposition to*Imvo Zabantsundu*.[20] Nevertheless, for approximately two decades *Imvo Zabantsundu* was the voice of the African elite as well as that of the Native Educational Association.[21]

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[18] *Imvo Zabantsundu*, January 21, 1887.

[19] John Tengo Jabavu, "The Launch", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, November 3, 1884.

[20] Perhaps it should be indicated that Walter Rubasana received an honorary doctorate for **History of South Africa from a Native Standpoint** from McKinley University, a black American institution. This seems to have been the first honorary doctorate received by an African. I have attempted to locate McKinley University in American historical academic records, but it is nowhere to be found. A quarter of a century earlier, Peter Walshe, the brilliant scholar of African nationalism in South Africa, had also attempted to locate it.

[21] Unfortunately it seems that Stanley Trapido began a trend in South African scholarship of absolute negativity in evaluating of John Tengo Jabavu: "African Divisional Politics in the Cape Colony, 1884 to 1910", *Journal of African History*, vol.9 no1, 1968, p.81, p.97. Following on this appraisal, there has been a chorus of affirmation from younger scholars. That Tengo later became very despicable and absolutely reactionary should not obscure the fact that at one time he espoused progressive views which were in harmony with most of the aspirations of the enlightened African intelligentsia in the Cape Colony. This is what tempered the political judgement of Solomon T. Plaatje even though he was forceful and forthright in stating his distate for John Tengo Jabavu's political opportunism and unprincipled positions: **Native Life in South Africa**, Ravan Press and Ohio University Press edition, 1991 [1916], pp.192-198. Plaatje states three points in the political tragedy of Jabavu: since about three members of the first Union of South Africa Cabinet held shares in *Imvo Zabantsundu* (the paper began as an independent broadsheet), Tengo began espousing opportunistic politics totally inimical to the interests of Africans; in the 1914 Provincial Council elections in the Thembuland constituency,

John Tengo Jabavu published in *Imvo Zabantsundu* several major speeches which were Presidential presentations by Elijah Makiwane to the NEA. In an Editorial introduction to the first Presidential address by Makiwane upon his election in July 1884, Jabavu makes the following observation on the Association: ". . . [it] is perhaps the first Society launched among and by the natives [Africans] themselves independently of the well known missionary and magisterial props that have been, and in many cases still are, so valuable to our people." Seeking to indicate and establish for the newspaper readership the authority of Makiwane, Jabavu writes that he is an educated man and a Christian, a 'representative man' which is a direct allusion to the concept of the 'race man', as well as indicating that in the immediate past he had been editor of *Isigidimi sama Xhosa*.[22] Makiwane's address is centrally concerned with the nature of education necessary in order for Africans to make sense of the accelerated changes then engulfing South Africa (specifically the British Cape Colony), changes willed and determined by forces beyond the control of Africans: he advocated an education that would enable Africans to participate fully in human progress, a participation which would be threatened and derailed by antiquarian forms of thought and habits very much evident in the tradition of "heathens". In other words, how were Africans to negotiate in favour of modernity the dialectic between modernity and tradition. Implicit in all this is the question of what accounts for the power of the Europeans or of Western civilization. The subtext of this presentation on education was an interrogation of the nature of European civilization, the question of modernity which predominated in the debates and presentations within the Native Educational Association. In fact, the real implicit question here was why had Africans been defeated by Europeans. This is a question which still resonates in our time in the magnificent epics of Mazisi Kunene whether be it **Emperor Shaka the Great** or **Anthem of the Decades**.

This question had preoccupied Elijah Makiwane earlier while he was editor of *Isigidimi sama Xhosa* in the 1870s, before the advent of the Native Educational Association. At this time Makiwane fully accepted Christianity as

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Tengo contested the seat then held by Dr. Walter Rubusana, splitting the African vote and thereby making it possible for the third candidate, a European, to win the election; and totally abysmal, Tengo supported the Natives Land Act of 1913 which set aside about 85% of the land in South Africa for whites only. Being a man of great intellectual honesty and moral integrity Solomon Plaatje made these criticisms while Jabavu was still alive; he died in 1921. It is really moving to read in Plaatje's book his many attempts to intercede with John Tengo Jabavu for a possible reconciliation between, which Jabavu invariably rejected, even though it was Jabavu's own unprincipled politics which cut a wedge between them. Plaatje could have added, had he so wished, that Jabavu refused to participate in the convocation of 1912 which founded the South African Native National Congress (in 1925 became the African National Congress). There is relatively recent balanced appraisal of Jabavu: L. D. Ngcongco, "John Tengo Jabavu: 1859-1921", in **Black Leaders in Southern African History**, op. cit., pp.142-155.

[22] John Tengo Jabavu, "Educated Natives", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, January 26, 1885.

the best means of negotiating passageway from tradition to modernity. In later years in the Presidential address to the Association, he argues, as will be evident in a moment, that perhaps Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, John Milton and others would be the best means of negotiating this passageway: Renaissance rationalistic culture instead of Western Christianity. In the twentieth-century Africans would elect African American culture for opening the passageways of modernity. Tiyo Soga in the 1860s, preceding the generation of intellectuals of the Native Educational Association, had chosen John Bunyan's **The Pilgrim's Progress**, as a text that made possible an entrance into the future of civilization.

In the Editorial of the first issue of *Isigidimi sama Xhosa* published in 1870, Elijah Makiwane states that his newspaper follows and continues a tradition which came into being with the publication of the first newspaper in Venice in 1563. Then as now newspapers are a living representation of the history of a people. The immediate major reason which necesseitates the publication of the newspaper he states as the separate "subjects" of "European battles and African diamonds." Clearly, Makiwane is alluding to the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1868, which coupled with the discovery of gold later in Johannesburg in 1886, was practically to change the face of South Africa in unforseen patterns, in the process creating social upheaval in African traditional societies. He aims to communicate and make interesting to the village the "ambitious thoughts" and "deplorable deeds" that are "shaking the other side of the world" (*Isigidimi sama Xhosa* hopes to establish the channels of communication between the modern and the traditional). In other words, within two years of the discovery of the diamonds, Elijah Makiwane was aware that a modern society was in the process of being made in South Africa. For Makiwane the launching of the newspaper is a serious indication of the intelligence of a people which has been produced by the results of missionary education. This latter statement makes clear why approximately a decade later the Native Educational Association was to be profoundly preoccupied with the of the 'Native Education'. Concluding the long editorial, he states that the newspaper will be addressed to the most intelligent portion of the African community: "The co-operation of all missionaries and all who are interested in the progress of the native people is most earnestly and respectfully solicited to assist in this revived effort to make knowledge prosper."[23] In other words, *Isigidimi sa Xhosa* will be at the center of production and fostering of knowledge through education. European Christianity was to be at the center of this enterprise. With the passage of time, the coming of industrialization and the creation of modernity in South Africa, this would result in the interrogation of the nature of Christianity, and consequently leading to a shift in focus from Europe to America.

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[23] Elijah Makiwane, "To Our Readers", *Isigidimi sama Xhosa*, vol.1no.1, October1, 1870. Many copies of the newspaper have been lost.

In 1876 *Isigidimi sama Xhosa* combines with *The Kaffir Express* to become *The Christian Express*. Elijah Makiwane assumes the editorial responsibility of *The Christian Express* , which he refers to as journal. In the first editorial of the combined newspaper Makiwane writes that the current concern is with the Christian Churches on the whole rather than with purely missionary efforts. Secondly, the newspaper clamors that the Europeans in the Cape Colony should become direct supporters of missions in South Africa, rather than depending on the founding Churches in Britain. Presumably the shift would be from proselytizing to evangelization. In the whole piece of approximately 700 words similar words resound in the text: missionary work, missionary efforts, missionary topics, spiritual prosperity, etc.[24] Consequently, The *Christian Express* belongs to the same religious discursive ambience as *Isigidimi sama Xhosa*. The secular concept that shines through in both of the newapapers is the idea of progress. This notion fascinated the emergent missionary educated African intelligentsia to such an extent that a two-page letter from a reader in the four pages of *The Kaffir Express* is published on the nature of African progress.[25] John Tengo Jabavu fifteen years later in *Imvo Zabantsundu* latches on to this idea of progress that in one of his early editorials he celebrates as characterizing the change of habits and customs on the part of Africans evident in their forsaking blankets for European clothes; but on the other hand he laments that this velocity of change brings with it the onset of alcoholism and drunkenness.[26]

By the time of the Presidential addresses, there is a marked desacrilization of discourse on the part Elijah Makiwane. In his inaugural presentation at the founding meeting of the NEA, he makes the following points: to the claim by the young African elite and intellectuals in the Native Educational Association that they are equal to the Europeans (whites), he makes a riposte that not only have Africans not as yet produced a Shakespeare or a Bacon or a John Milton, they are in fact 'an inferior race' - in other words, whereas Europe constitutes the very essence of 'civilization', Africa is very epitome of 'barbarism'; he praises the English nation as greater than the African nations; in response to the 'Young Turks' belief that Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu* was articulated in opposition to the political philosophy of *Isigidimi sama Xhosa* (a dig at Makiwane since he had been its editor), he points out that the former was a political newspaper whereas the latter could not have been since it had been started by European missionaries; he argues that education, which was then emerging as the fundamental project of the Association, should reflect

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[24] Elijah Makiwane, " The 'Christian Express'", *The Christian Express*, January 1, 1876.
[25] "To the Editor of the Kaffir Express: Umxosa", *The Kaffir Express*, February 4, 1871: "For in reality, the progress amongst the natives is far less than it should be." The issue of progress is raised in relation to the African languages, since the African elites prefer the English language over indigenous languages; and Greek and Roman history over indigenous history.
[26] John Tengo Jabavu, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, January 5, 1884.

the correct needs and wants of Africans; he indicates that it would be suicidal if African languages were to be despised, neglected and forsaken for the English language; making an acute observation, he notes that although England had produced Milton and Bacon, it does not follow that every English person is worthy of them, so consequently the idea that every English man is superior to every African is nonsense; shifting to his favourite theme, he states that the idea of progress should be instilled in young people; unabashedly, he praises the British Cape Colony government; and lastly, he lamentably states that too many young Africans leave institutions of education, particularly Lovedale, before they develop the pleasure of reading, that is before they are initiated into serious intellectual culture.[27]

In subsequent years Makiwane made two other presentations that set a high level of discourse within the Native Educational Association. In each of the addresses he seeks to understand and articulate the different reasons for the resistance to modernity by some segments of the African population.[28]

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[27] Elijah Makiwane, "Native Education", *Imvo Zabanstundu*, January 26, February 2 and 9, 1885. In his landmark study of the intersection of politics and intellectual culture among Africans in the Cape Colony, Andre Odendaal deducts from this address the very contestable notion that Makiwane believed "at this stage that Africans were inferior to Europeans": Andre Odendaal, **Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912**, op. cit., p.8. Rather, although Makiwane's analysis was frequently marred by his Manicheism (African vs European, civilization vs barbarism, Christianity vs heathenism, superiority vs inferiority, etc.), he was much more preoccupied with understanding the historical conditions of possibility that gave rise to such monumental culture achievements among the English, rather than with the question of European superiority. He openly stated that there were many Europeans who were inferior to Africans like himself (this is a matter of Manicheism rather than 'superioritism'). Makiwane was among the first Africans to be historically self-consciously aware of the phenomenon of progress, an idea that preoccupied T. D. Mweli Skota and H. I. E. Dhlomo fifty years later in **The African Yearly Register**: Tim Couzens, **The New African**, op, cit., pp.1-39.

[28] Elijah Makiwane was acutely aware of the tremendous effect of the radical changes that were transforming the cultural sensibility and historical consciousness of Africans who had been displaced from the countryside and situated in new emergent towns; though he could hardly have been expected directly to articulate it as the experience of modernity. In an essay, "Natives in Towns", he observes that two classes of Africans live in towns: one section consisting of non-Christians Africans whose sole purpose of temporary residence is to make money in order to pay government taxes; the other consists of African Christians who have permanently settled in the towns. He inveighs against the easy availability of alcohol, leading to wisespread alcoholism , which he sees as indicating the absence of the tight grip of the missionaries and churches. Makiwane concludes by calling for the creation of amusement oasis: *Imvo Zabantsundu*, July 19, 1888. J. G. A. Pocock defines modernity as the consciousness rather than the condition of being 'modern': "Modernity and Anti-Modernity in the Anglophone Political Tradition", in **Patterns of Modernity, Volume I: The West**, (ed.) S. N. Eisenstadt, New York University Press, New York, 1987, p.47-8. In this essay it is implied that it is the historical conditions (the infrastructure) which determined the consciousness (superstructure) of the subject in the narrative process of being situated or located in modernity: they can hardly be separated from each other. On the other hand Perry Anderson defines modernity as overdetermined by the field force of historical coordinates, and merely gestures to the issue of the consciousness of the subjects in the process: "Marshall Berman: Modernity and Revolution"

Makiwane undertook a trip to the countryside investigating why the Pondomisi people were refusing to accept progress and education under the auspices of the British Cape Colony government. In the address, reporting on his trip, he condemns witchcraft, polygamy, marriage customs, and other social and cultural practices by the Pondomisi which he feels hold back the movement of time and progress. What is even more perplexing to him is that they are in a state of rebellion against the colonial authorities. Believing that ignorance and superstition to be the source for the rebellion, Makiwane fails to grasp that to Pondomisi people progress and modernity are in actual fact experienced as domination, oppression and colonialism. He praises Christian missions, schools, the Colonial government, European families and the 'Colonial natives' as the agents and agencies that will overcome the forces of darkness among the 'heathens'. Makiwane believes unwaveringly that education is the panacea to this irrational resistance.[29] Against this 'retrogression', in the other presentation, he launches a blistering attack on the resistance stemming from malice by the Afrikaner Bond (ancestor of Frederik Willem de Klerk's National Party) which resists the extension of education to the African people whom it believes should be servants of white people. Praising the education of girls and the increasing number of farm schools, Makiwane concludes: "Such an increase must give great satisfaction to all. The question of the education of farmers' sons is closely connected with the progress of the natives. They are the men who are to make laws for us and the dose we have had in dealing with dull stupid uneducated men whose opaque understanding knows no difference of day and night is surely sufficient. Believing as I have ever done that the interests of the European portion are one with our own I do sincerely hope that such farms schools will increase in numbers and efficiency."[30] Elijah Makiwane lived long enough to witness the Treaty of Vereeniging of 1902 and the Union of South Africa in 1910 to be disabused of his views that the interests of Africans and Europeans are one in a social system in which Africans are subjugated by Europeans. Much more important for us is his observation that for the African intelligentsia in the Native Educational Association education and progress were inseparable from each other.

In response to Makiwane's proposition that European culture (education and pedagogics) and the Christian Church would usher Africans into modernity, Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba, a senior colleague of Makiwane in the Association, dissents by proposing that the historical experience of African

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(1984), **A Zone of Engagement**, Verso, London, 1992. Loren Kruger explores moder nity in South Africa in relation to drama: "Placing 'New Africans' in the 'Old' South Africa: Drama, Modernity, and Racial Identities in Johannesburg, circa 1935", *Modernism and Modernity*, vol.1no.2, April 1994.

[29] Elijah Makiwane, "Five Months in Pondomisiland", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, January 26, February 3, 10, 1886.

[30] Elijah Makiwane, "Native Educational Association", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, July 28, August 18, 1886.

Americans within American modernity holds much greater historical lessons for Africans in South Africa in the process of being forced marched into modernity by British imperial power. Beginning by agreeing with Makiwane that the idea of progress is the ruling principle of their historical moment, Mzimba proceeds to formulate positions and distinctions which in his estimation follow logically from this observation: that education is not only invaluable in and of itself as a process of quest for knowledge, but it is also a means facilitating the forging of unity among Africans; that since this education can only be attained through the English language, consequently this language should be learned by all Africans; that the English language opens the higher realms of literature and science, as well as it enlarges the mind, beyond superstition and prejudice-- in other words, Africans must participate in the newly entered historical experience of modernity through this language and the pedagogical system realized through its linguistic framework; that despite, or because of the importance of the English language, it does not follow that the indigenous languages should be cast aside; and lastly, that Africans should be deligent in business.[31] The real historic importance and innovativeness of Mzimba's 1886 presentation to the Lovedale Literary Society is in its reaching across the Atlantic for an African American historical text whose political lessons were deemed relevant and crucial to a South Africa in the process of entering its own modernity. By this gesture of 'appropriation' or hommage Mzimba begins a process which has been constant through out the course of South African cultural history in the twentieth-century: in 1904 Solomon T. Plaatje inspired by the essays W. E. B. Du Bois, in the 1920s R, V. Selope Thema naming his autobiographical sketch "Up from Barbarism" in homage to Booker T. Washington's **Up From Slavery**, in 1930s Peter Abrahams aspiring to the literary naturalism of Richard Wright, in 1950s the Sophiatown Renaissane emulating the achievement of the Harlem Renaissance, also in the 1950s Keppie Moeketsi aiming for the alto saxophone tone of Charlie Parker, in 1960s Keorapetse Kgositsile searching for literary poetics in the singing of Billie Holiday, and in the 1980s Njabulo Ndebele expanding further James Baldwin's criticism of protest literature.

Reading **History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1880** (1883), a book expressing a profound disappointment and sadness at the collapse of Reconstruction following the American Civil War, Mzimba argues that George Washington Williams's conclusion to the effect that African Americans should momentarily forsake active participation in the political process until such a time as they are well-prepared to do so, holds true for South Africa too, Africans should leave politics to the European settlers and colonizers and be concerned only with education until such time as they have fully acculturated themselves to the British imperial culture and to the

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[31] Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba, "Education Among the Natives", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, December 30, 1886.

English language. Mzimba writes: "The remarks made about the Negroes in America are very much applicable to the South African natives. Let the experience of Africans in America give warning in time to the Africans in Africa to let politics alone at present. Let us be content to be ruled by the colonist. Let us only have to do with politics in order to encourage those white men who desire to give us schools and books. Could we prevent the colonists from depriving the native of the franchise? No." The nature of the conclusion itself is not of fundamental importance, what is, is the opening of a dialogue between the two discursive systems of history, American and South African. The call for the politics of submission and defeatism is remarkable indeed from a Reverend who fifteen years later in 1898 was to be an uncompromising proponent of Ethiopianism, the Independent Black Church Movement. **History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1880** was to impart different kinds of lessons to Walter Rubasana and Solomon T. Plaatje as will be evident in a moment: epistemological rather than directly political ones.

Naturally, there was swift and unambigous response from the other members of the Native Educational Association to the political reading of an American historical text. The discussion that ensued was one of the first major debates among the African elites, an intellectual discussion conducted under the auspices of John Tengo Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu*.[32] Three weeks after the publication of Mzimba's address, which had been highly praised by white newspapers such as *Port Elizabeth Telegraph, Cape Argus, De Zuid Afrikaan*, John Tengo Jabavu in an Editorial argues against the transposition of historical lessons across differential historical and political experiences: the Africans in America have experienced slavery and live in a Republic, whereas the Africans in South Africa then where living in a Crown colony and had not in general been touched by modern slavery. Beside these

[32] A study of *Imvo Zabantsundu* in the 1920s, when it was under the editorialship of D. D. T. Jabavu, son of John Tengo Jabavu, indicates that it continued being a forum for serious intellectual discussion, as well as strengthening the South Africa and America connexion by reporting in an ambivalent fashion the activities of Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Du Bois in America, and more importantly, reported the activities of the Garveyites in the Cape Province (especially James Theale, leader of Cape Province's African National Congress, and the millennarianism of Mgijima and the Wellingtonites) : Les Switzer, "The Ambiguities of Protest in South Africa: Rural Politics and the Press during the 1920s", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol.23 no.1, 1990, p.106. By this time *Imvo Zabantsundu* was part of the aspirations of the petty-bourgeois New African, modelled on the New Negro of Alain Locke; the emergence of the New African in the 1920s was logical development from the progressive African elite of the 1880s. Wellingtonites were poor Africans, rural peasants captivated by the millennarian vision of Macus Garvey and African Americans storming to South Africa to liberate African people from white oppression: Robert Edgar, "Garveyism in Africa: Dr. Wellington and the American Movement in the Transkei", *Ufahamu: Journal of the African Activist Association*, vol.6 no.2, 1976, pp.31-57. The fascination with things American was not only confined to African elites in the urban centres , it penetrated deep into the poverty-stricken rural areas.

differences, South Africans had always been involved with the craft of politics pre-dating the colonial intrusion, in contrast, African Americans had recently been abruptly removed from their natural habitat in Africa. Displaying rhetorical flourish, Jabavu writes of Mzimba: "Hence we now see him, like DON QUIXOTE, tilting at windmills, applying, without examining the conditions of the two peoples, the case of the Negroes in America to Natives here. He forgets that the Africans in America have been slaves within the memory of the present generation, while the 'Africans in Africa' were found by Colonists is deeply rivetted by political problems that they could not afford time to attend to anything else."[33] Although in essentials agreeing with the position of John Tengo Jabavu, Elijah Makiwane sought to minimize the political damage that P. J. Mzimba may have caused by claiming that Mzimba had not really said what people and newspapers thought him to have said. The reason for this ambivalence perhaps is that apparently, as Makiwane himself states, **History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1880** was at the center of their discussions before and after Mzimba made his controversial presentation.

Makiwane also, like Jabavu, was startled that political institutions and newspapers that were usually very hostile to political African interests had reacted favourably and warmly to Mzimba's speech. On this matter, Makiwane believes that Mzimba will have to clarify himself or do more explaining; he regrets that Mzimba did not express himself carefully. Partly defending him, Makiwane argues that P. J. Mzimba was not really saying that Africans should not participate in politics, but rather, that the right time had not yet arrived to send an African to Parliament; after all, Makiwane continues, Mzimba had participated in the registration of many Africans. In Makiwane's estimation, the real issue posed by Mzimba presentation is what historical lessons the failure of Reconstruction in America had for Africans in South Africa. He concludes by stating that the view that Africans should not participate in politics is totally unacceptable, given that education is making Africans participate responsibly which would lead to self-improvement.[34] Makiwane then reverts back to an issue he had invariably raised in Presidential addresses, and is afraid may lost in the controversy, the paramount importance of language in facilitating an entrance into modernity.

The seriousness of the quality of intellectual exhanges within the Native Educational Association clearly makes it the candidate for the origins of modern African intellectual culture in South Africa. It would not be far too fetched to consider these ecclessiastically trained thinkers as constituting the first 'School' of intellectual movement among Africans. The institutional forms of support they constructed, principally the Association and *Imvo*

[33] John Tengo Jabavu, "Editorial", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, January 21, 1887.
[34] Elijah Makiwane, "The Natives and Politics", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, January 27, 1887.

Zabantsundu, enabled them to sustain their vision deep into the twentieth-century. Beside the outstanding individuals already mentioned in the membership of the Association, there were also prominent literary figures like William Wellington Qgoba and John Knox Bokwe. They were all progressives and modernizers.[35] All of them were African modernizers and apostles of nationalism.[36] They laid the foundation of what was to come. Among these was/is the remarkable receptivity of Africans to the cultural achievements of African Americans.

The disembarking in South Africa of Orpheus M. McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers in 1890 was the beginning of one of the earliest and arguably the most profound processes of cultural transmission between United States and South Africa. Their five-year stay, from July 1890 to January 1892 and from June 1895 to June 1898, was enthustiacally welcomed by many newspapers, including *Imvo Zabantsundu* and a large segment of the population. The effect of this sojourn resulted in the transplantation of Negro Spirituals, jubilee hymns and African American folk music into the culture of South Africa. These American musical idioms were adapted and transformed by African and "Coloured" artists into a South African urban musical tradition. The African urban elite and the emergent middle-class wholeheartedly embraced Negro Spirituals as representing their moral vision and spiritual hope, to such an extent that they became an "integral part of South African musical performance culture." Veit Erlmann observes: "In a diachronic perspective, numerous cross-references exist between McAdoo, Caluza, and early *isicathamiya*. Thus a continuous line links McAdoo's alma mater Hampton Institute and Caluza's studies there to the role of Negro spirituals in the ideology and social climate of middle-class blacks in the United States and South Africa."[37] From the moment of arrival of Orpheus McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers, John Tengo Jabavu seems to have had a deep foresight and intuition that the encounter would lead to profound cultural repercussions: "As Africans we are, of course, proud of the achievements of those of our race. Their visit will do their countrymen here

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[35] R. Hunt Davis, "School vs Blanket and Settler: Elijah Makiwane and the Leadership of the Cape School Community", *African Studies*, vol.78 no.310, January 1979, p.12.

[36] Les Switzer, "The African Christian Community and its Press in Victorian South Africa", *Cahiers d'etudes africaines*, vol.24, 1984, p.39, p.41.

[37] Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p.xix. In this paragraph I follow closely Erlmann's book, especially pages 21-53. Rueben T. Caluza (1895-1969) was one of the outstanding South African composers in the twentieth century; he is a subject of a whole chapter in Erlmann's book. Isicathamiya is a voice choral form, whose recent metamorphosis as a male vocal style has recently been popularized by Ladysmith Black Mambazo in their recent tours here in United States. Ladysmith Black Mambazo in the late twentieth-century has awakened a serious American interest in African musical forms in nearly the same way that the Virginia Jubilee Singers in the late nineteenth-century fascinated Africans about American Negro spirituals. The quotation below from Jabavu is cited by Erlmann.

no end of good. . . The visit of our friends, besides, will lead to the awakening in their countrymen here of an interest in the history of the civilization of the Negro race in America, and a knowledge of their history is sure to result beneficial to our people generally."[38] One of the people who 'heeded' this call to seriously study African American history was Solomon T. Plaatje, an undertaking that radically transformed the transAtlantic intellectual relations between United States and South Africa, as it will be evident in a moment.

Being a product of Hampton Institute and having been a classmate of Booker T. Washington, Orpheus McAdoo could hardly not have concerned himself with matters of education. It was a deep lesson of the importance of education that General Armstrong, the principal of Hampton Institute, had imparted to all his students. It is not surprising therefore that one of McAdoo's contributions to South Africa was in the realm of education, beside his incalculable contributions to the modernization and hybridization of South African modern music. McAdoo sponsored a scholarship to a young African, Titus Mbongwe, who unfortunately died in a train crash in Plymouth, England on November 12, 1890 on his way to the Hampton Institute. But this unfortunate event did not deter other young Africans who had been profoundly influenced by the view of the Native Educational Association that education is the essential instrument of entrance into the historical experience of modernity. One of those undeterred Africans was a remarkable young woman, Charlotte Manye, who strived by all means to get an education in America.[39] Pixley ka Isaka Seme, later founded of the African National Congress and had studied at Columbia University, belongs to this generation. John Dube also, first President of the African National Congress (until 1925 known as South African Native National Congress), founder not only of Ohlange Institute modelled on Washington's Tuskegee but also of the newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal*, was a member of this distinguished generation.[40] Dube studied at Oberlin College. Through the indirect

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[38] John Tengo Jabavu, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, October 16, 1890.

[39] There is a direct link between Charlotte Manye and the ideologues of the Native Educational Association, Elijah Makiwane and Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba, in that she began her education under Isaac Wauchope (see: Mweli Skota's **The African Yearly Register**, op. cit. 195). Wauchope was a close associate of the Association, in fact there is a picture of him of 1888 with Elijah Makiwane and John Tengo Jabavu, as members of the "Native Voters' Deputation" (see: Andre Odendaal's **Black Protest Politics in South Africa** to 1912, op. cit.). Charlotte Manye was one of the contributors (together with H. I. E. Dhlomo, Solomon Plaatje, A. W. G. Champion, S. E. K. Mqhayi) to **The African Yearly Register**, a book which represented a collective vision of this brilliant generation. There is a biographical sketch of her in the book, most likely written by her.

[40] Other outstanfing members of this generation studied in Britain. Just to name two: Alfred Mangena, first black lawyer in South Africa, founder and first Treasurer of the African National Congress, as well as founder of the weekly newspaper *Advocate* in Pretoria (see: **The African Yearly Register**, ibid., p.43); Richard Msimang, also trained as a lawyer in Britain, handled legal matters for the African National Congress after Mangena died in 1934; brother of the very brilliant journalist, H. Selby Msimang. This generation initiated, new projects, new

inspiration of Orpheus McAdoo, and as a member of the 'African Jubilee Singers' or the 'South African Choir', Charlotte Manye reached America via England.[41]

In America Charlotte Manye enrolled at Wilberforce University in 1895 under the sponsorship of trhe American Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. It is probably here that she met and possibly studied under W. E. B. Du Bois who was then teaching at Wilberforce. Du Bois was to say of her: "I have known Charlotte Manye Maxeke [having married a fellow South African at Wilberforce] since 1894, when I went to Wilberforce University as a teacher. She was one of the three or four students from South Africa, and was the only woman. She was especially the friend of Nina Gomer, the student who afterwards became my wife. We were interested in Charlotte Manye because of her clear mind, her fund of subtle humour and the straight-forward honesty of her character. . . she did her work with a slow, quiet determination that augured well for her future. Since then, and at long intervals, I have had the opportunity of following her work through the glimpses which I have had from far off South Africa. I regard Mrs Maxeke as a pioneer in one of the greatest of human causes, working in extraordinarily difficult circumstances to lead a people, in the face of prejudice, not only against her race but against her sex. To fight not simply the natural and inherent difficulties of education and social uplift, but to fight with little money and little outside aid was indeed a tremendous task. I think that what Mrs Maxeke has accomplished should encourage all men, especially those of African descent. And in addition to that, it should inspire the white residents of South Africa and of America to revise their hastily-made judgements concerning the possibilities of the Negro race."[42] This is justifiably high praise from Du Bois. Charlotte Manye Maxeke was also held in high estimation by African American

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organizations, new institutes, new newspapers, very much in synchrony with the historical logic of modernity and modernism.

[41] Veit Erlmann, **African Stars**, op. cit., p.47.

[42] Cited by Francis Meli, **A History of the ANC: South Africa Belongs To Us**, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1988, p.14. It may be from the moment of this encounter that W. E. B. Du Bois wished to visit South Africa. Robert Edgar reports that Du Bois in 1935 applied for the Carnegie travel grant to study race relations in South Africa, but was unsuccessful; but on applying again in 1939, Carnegie turned him down on the recommendation of a white South African born in Wales, J. D. Rheinallt Jones, first director of the Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg. Alain Locke in 1928 had been given a Carnegie grant to visit South Africa, but another South African liberal, Charles T. Loram, blocked the visit by writing a letter to the Carnegie Corporation. Both incidents mentioned in: **An African-American in South Africa: The Travel Notes of Ralph J. Bunche**, (ed.) Robert R. Edgar, Ohio University Press (Witwatersrand University Press), Athens, 1992, p.39. Both instances show the despicableness of white South African liberalism in its belief that it should determine the nature of the transAtlantic relations between Africans and African Americans.

women, for in an American book on black women all over the world, she was singled out for praise for her work among women prisoners.[43]

While still studying at Wilberforce University she played an unintentional fundamental role in bringing together the A. M. E. Church and the black independent Ethiopian Churches of South Africa. In 1895 Charlotte Manye Maxeke wrote to her sister, Kate Manye, in Johannesburg about the scholarship she had received from the A. M. E. Church. Reverend Mangena Maake Mokone, one of the leaders of Ethiopianism, happened to read the letter, and read for the first time about the existence of a black independent church in America. Reverend Mokone was particularly intrigued by its financial assistance to Charlotte Maxeke. Mokone subsequently wrote to Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, head of the A. M. E. Church inquiring about possible scholarships for other South African students to study in America, and the possibility of the Ethiopian Church joining forces together with the A. M. E. Church organization. Turner subsequently visited South Africa, the relations between the two churches blossomed, but not without some dramatic tensions.[44] He also made it possible for the Ethiopian Church to receive on a regular basis *Voice of Missions*, the newspaper of the A. M. E. Church. The visits of the African Americans Orpheus McAdoo and Henry Turner in the 1890s brought, respectively, the Negro Spirituals and the independent spirit of black Christianity, to South Africa. In other words, both visits were consequential in developing and deepening transAtlantic relations between United States and South Africa.

Upon returning to South Africa in September 1901 with her husband, Charlotte Manye Maxeke became one of the uncompromising African modernizers and an apostle of modernity. Whereas Elijah Makiwane and Pambani Mzimba saw the question of modernity as informing the relations between traditional African societies and Western societies, how to Christianize and modernize African societies to proximate the level of development and 'civilization' of Western European societies (specifically England), for Maxeke this issue hinged first and foremost on other matter, how to use the forces and spirit of modernity to disolve and disintegrate the partriarchal order within traditional African societies which was/is oppressive to women. In contrast to the project of the Native Educational Association which was to shift and push African societies into a linear time sequence of modernity, Mrs. Maxeke attempted to pull South Africa across geometric time and space in order to transform and overturn the relations between men and women. This new project was not driven by the politics of exclusivism, but rather by the politics of inclusivism which explains why she

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[43] G. A. Gollock, **Daughters of Africa**, Negro Universities Press, New York, 1969 [1932], pp.137-140.

[44] J. Mutero Chirenje, **Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa**, op cit., p.52-53. The book captures very well the fascinating narrative of these dramatic tensions.

was in the forefront of the ANC as President of its Women's League. In the essay, "The Progress of Native Womanhood in South Africa", Charlotte Maxeke articulates a different conception of progress than the one that prevailed a few decades earlier within the ambience of the Native Educational Association. For her progress would be the elimination of *lobola* (dowry) which invariably makes a woman a property of her father or her husband; she identifies dowry with the hindrance of progress. On the other hand she argues that one laudable thing about dowry was its importance in maintaining morality within African societies. Another institution she finds incompatible with the experience of modernity is polygamy. She wholeheartedly identifies with Christian Church in its struggle against this outdated institution; in effect, she argues that modernity, the idea of progress, as well as education, are the results of the Christianizing of Africa. Her belief in Christianity solidified her relations with A. M. E. Church to her death in 1939. Concluding her essay, she writes: "In the modern times a new type of Native womanhood hampered and different in many respects from their mothers especially in virtues and piety unquestionably being the product of the present European civilization in the sub-continent has consequently arisen."[45] Like her predecessors in the Association, though in a different

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[45] Charlotte Manye Maxeke, "The Progress of Native Womanhood in South Africa", in **Christianity and the Natives of South Africa**, (ed.) J. Dexter Taylor, The Lovedale Institution Press, 1929, pp.177-182. Maxeke was one of the outstanding "African patriots" who participated fully in the protest politics of the African National Congress. There is a vivid political portrait of her in Mary Benson's book: **The African Patriots**, op. cit., pp.47-51. It was because of her indomitable political spirit that Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu wrote: "One of the great figures of Bantu progressive life and one of the best known figures in public life in South Africa" (cited in **Daughters of Africa**, op. cit., p.140). Like Maxeke (1874-1939), the great Sotho novelist, Thomas Mofolo (1976-1948) postulated the construction of modernity in Southern Africa, particularly in Lesotho, as inseparable from the process of Christianization of the New Africans. Mofolo's biographer, Daniel P. Kunene, concludes the book by examining the impact of Christianity and westernization on the literary works of the author **Chaka**, an impact that gives rise to syncretism: "Syncretism may be viwed as a toning down of differences and strenthening of similarities, so that two sets of values that at first appeared to be mutually incompatible are fused together precisely through emphasising their similarities. . . In terms od cultural values, the one compenent may be considered as a sign of progress while the other represents backwardness. . . We have seen that on the conscious level Mofolo indicts certain aspects of the new with same vehemence with which he condemns certain aspects of the old. He advocates caution in rejecting the old, and equal caution in adopting the new" (see: **Thomas Mofolo and the Emergence of Written Sesotho Prose**, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1989, p.232-33 [my italics]). The struggle between progress and backwardness, and the conflict between the new and the old were coordinates through which modernity played itself in South Africa, as anywhere else in the world. In attempting to hold an equipoise between the old and the new, Thomas Mofolo was similar in many ways to R. R. R. Dhlomo, which was quite distinct and different from the majority of New African intellectuals from Walter Rubasana and Pixley ka Isaka Seme through H. I. E. Dhlomo and Anton Lembede to Lewis Nkosi and Nathaniel Nakasa, who aligned themselves with the new against the old. An opinion expressed by a common Sophiatowner to Anthony Sampson (then editor of *Drum* magazine in the early 1950s), at the twilight of the New African Movement, captures fully the uncompromising alignment of most of the New African intellectuals with modernity: "'Ag, why do you dish out that stuff,

inflection, she believed that education would bring about progress by creating a new type of African womanhood.

It was because of the prevalence of this ideology of education as an entry-way into modernity in the late nineteenth-century and the early twentieth-century South Africa, that Booker T. Washington's through his book, **Up From Slavery**, had such a great impact. Washington begins to feature prominently in South African intellectual discourse by being mentioned in *Izwi la Bantu* (The Voice of the People), where in the issue of November 1901 it is written: " There are many things in the life of this man both interesting and applicable to the natives of South Africa. Particularly is his attitude on the subject of manual labour to be commended to the serious consideration of our people. Mr Washington lays great stress on work, and his latest utterances on this subject to the American Negroes can be fitly applied to our position in this country."[46] Probably this enthusiasm for, and high estimation of, Washington, reflected a consensus view of the newspaper's relatively young writers, contributors and editors, Walter Rubasana, Allan Kirkland Soga, Samuel E. K. Mqhayi, George W. Tyamzashe, all of whom were subsequently to make significant contributions to South African cultural history. The extraordinary effect the book had lay in its concretely indicating that African Americans had from slavery willed themselves into history and into the modern era through education as manual labour and industrial enterprise. Washington sets forth a series propositions concerning the nature of education relevant to black people just emerging from slavery: that education is more than just book learning, in its truest realization it is the application of knowledge to life; that education attained through self help builds the moral character as well as a sense of earnestness in students; that it must reflect the moral and religious life of a people in a process of advancement. In short, the foundation of education should be industry and property and not politics; as a life long process, it should not free one from the hardships of the world.[47] Such an ideology which aligned education with Christianity, cleanliness, self help and progress, appealed to an emerging African intelligentsia perceiving

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man?' said a man with golliwog hair in a floppy American suit, at the Bantu Men's Social Centre. 'Tribal music! Tribal history! Chiefs! We don't care about chiefs! Give us jazz and film stars, man! We want Duke, Satchmo, hot dames! Yes, brother, anythinh American. You can cut out this junk about kraals anf folk-tales and Basutos in blankets - forget it! You just trying to keep us backward, that's what! Tell us what's happening right here, on the Reef [Johannesburg]!" (see: Anthony Sampson, **Drum: A Venture into the New Africa**, Collins, London, 1956, p.20).

[46] Anonymous (probably by Walter Rubusana or Allan K. Soga), "Booker Washington", *Izwi la Bantu*, November 12, 1901. The dissemination of Washington's educational ideology was not only confined to the African elite, but also eveloped the purview of the lower classes, for the newspaper translated into its Xhosa columns a political and social profile of Booker T. Washington which had originally appeared in a black American newspaper, *Midland News*.

[47] Booker T. Wahington, **Up From Slavery: An Autobiography**, Gramercy Books, New York, 1993 [1901].

itself to be struggling against the heathenism and backwardness of tradition. The conservatism of Booker T. Washington as exemplified in his speech to the Atlanta Exposition in 1895 was also what appealed to this new political and cultural formation.

Among the South Africans on whom Booker T. Washington had the most prounced effect were John Dube and A. X. Xuma, both of whom had studied in the United States and both of whom were to become president of the African National Congress.[48] On Washington's legacy in John Dube much as been written. Dube pronounced Washington as his 'patron saint' and 'guiding star' on the occasion of his election (in absentia) to be the first presidency of the ANC. And although Dube fully subscribed to the philosophy of Washington of industrial education, self help, tacit acceptance of the segregation of the races, black capitalism, black power, forging of accomodationist politics, racial pride, modelling of the Ohlange Institute on the Tuskegee Institute, the nature of the legacy from the American to the African is complicated by the fact that the influence of the teacher on the pupil was in the sphere of educational work rather than on political activities as such.[49] The influence of Booker T. Washington on certain segments the African elite was so pervasive and the achievements of the Tuskegee Institute were so impressive that D. D. T. Jabavu (son of John Tengo Jabavu), upon completing his studies in Britain in 1913 went to Alabama to study the results of Washington's experiments. Jabavu's report was the only extensive appraisal of the experiments in the early part of the twentieth century to see

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[48] Also the founder of the African National Congress in 1912, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, was deeply interested in the educational ideas of Booker T. Washington which culminated in his visit to the Tuskegee Institute in 1906. Before his graduation from Columbia University in 1906, Pixley said: "My ambition has been to study the broad features of American life. I have tried to learn those things that will benefit my people and enable me to help them as I should. I enjoy hard work, and I have always desired to be in the center of things." (see: Craig Charney, "Pixley Seme '06: Father of the African National Congress", *Columbia College Today*, Spring/Summer 1987, p.15).

[49] Manning Marable, "A Black South in South Africa", *Negro History Bulletin*, 37, June-July 1974; "Booker T, Washington and African Nationalism", *Phylon*, vol.xxxv no.1, December 1974; "John L. Dube and the Politicis of Segregated Education in South Africa", in **Independence Without Freedom: The Political Economy of Colonial Education in South Africa**, (eds.) Agrippah T. Magumba and Mougo Nyaggah, ABC Clio, Santa Barbara, 1980; Shula Marks, "The Ambiguities of Dependence: John L. Dube of Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol.1 no.2, April 1975; "John Dube and the Ambiguities of Nationalism", **The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal**, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1986; R. Hunt Davis, "John L. Dube: A South African Exponent of Booker T. Washington", *Journal of African Studies*, vol.2 no.4, Winter 1975/76. Although all these essays complement and enrich each other, there are some substantive differences in the interpretation of the relationship between Washington and Dube: with Shula Marks positing an integration in Dube between the educational philosophy and political activism espoused by Washington, and Davis dissenting. What all of them indicate is the depth and the wide zone of the influence of Booker T. Washington in South Africa: extending from John Tengo Jabavu through Allan Kirkland Soga to Solomon T. Plaatje.

their possible applicability to South Africa. Acknowledging the object of the Tuskegee Institute as prividing young black women and men with the moral, literary and industrial education to change and improve the industrrial condition of their communities, Tengo argues that this project is very much applicable to South Africa given the similarities between the two countries. Tengo reinforces his appraisal with a carefully considered analysis of all Washington's writings, both published and unpublished.[50] Xuma inspired and encouraged by John Dube also studied at Tuskegee Institute, graduating from a two-year course in 1916. He went on to obtain a medical degree from Northwestern University in 1925.[51] In many ways, Xuma epitomized the educational philosophy of Booker T. Washington in that he performed manual labour while largely self-financing himself through American universities.

Although initially Booker T. Washington was looked upon favourably by African newspapers, those that concerned themselves seriously with politics, began to question his political legacy and commitments. This reconsideration seems to have been driven by the dispute between Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, whose writings were seen by the younger members of the African intelligentsia as setting a different set of propositions and agendas than those of the 'Wizard of Tuskegee'. Consequently the very *Izwi la Bantu*, which

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[50] D. D. T. Jabavu, "Booker T. Washington's Methods applied to South Africa", **The Black Problem: Papers and Addresses on Various Native Problems**, The Book Department, Lovedale, 1920. The first principal of Fort Hare College, the first University for Africans in South Africa which opened in 1916, Alexander Kerr, writes that the College changed its admittance policy for the first intake of students in 1916 in accordance with the principal enunciated by Booker T. Washington at the Atlanta Exposition Address of 1895 (in **Up From Slavery**) stating 'Cast down your bucket where you are', in that African students could not admitted on the criteria the same as that of white students in white universities. He states that African students were familiar with the Atlanta Address. Speaking of D. D. T. Jabavu who was the first African university professor, whom others have characterized as 'the Father of African Education', Kerr further writes that Professor Jabavu was singularly impressed by the Tuskegee Institute experiment (see: Alexander Kerr, **Fort Hare, 1915-48: The Evolution of An African College**, C. Hurst and Co., London, 1968, p.16, p.45). One of the first graduates of the College was Professor Jabavu's student, Z. K. Mathews, who graduated in 1924. Nearly forty years after graduating from the College, he wrote a searing and endearing portrait of the Jabavu family: Z. K. Mathews, "The Jabavu Family", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, June 10, 17, 1961. Z. K. Mathews was a good friend of the African American, Max Yergan, who spent fifteen years in South Africa opening and administrating chapters of the Young Men's Christian Association; their relationship became turbulent when Yergan upon his return to the United States became virulently anti-Communist and supporter of apartheid (see: David H. Anthony III, "Max Yergan in South Africa: From Evangelical Pan-Africanist to Revolutionary Socialist", *African Studies Review*, vol.34 no.2, September 1991; "Max Yergan and South Africa: A Transatlanric Interaction", in **Imagining Home: Class, Culture and Nationalism in the African Diaspora**, (eds.) Sidney Lemelle and Robin D. G. Kelley, Verso, London, 1994).

[51] Richard D. Ralston, "American Episodes in the Making of an African Leader: A Case Study of Alfred B. Xuma (1893-1962)", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol.4 no.1, 1973.

seven years earlier had written in laudatory terms of Washington, printed a savage and scathing attack of him because of his holding shares in an unsavory company: "We said recently that we believed Mr Washington to be the most dangerous man in America to-day, contriving as he has done through the impulse of a consuming ambition to place himself behind almost everything that the Negro is doing in politics or religion, which indeed might be forgiven him did he measure up to the standard of a broad minded, liberal, well intentioned man, embued with a higher motive than to figure as the Moses of the Negro Race. We know what the type has done for us in South Africa, the barbarian masquerading as the man of culture, a traitor at heart, ready to sell the race with Judas like treachery, and to thrive by the mess of pottage picked up from crafty white men on the ignorance and helplessness of their countrymen."[52] The virulence of the attack was necessitated by the deep-rootedness of the influence and the deep feeling of betrayal.

The circle of intellectuals around *Izwi la Bantu* were not the only thinkers of their generation attuned to transAtlantic cultural and political happenings. F. Z. S. Peregrino, owner and editor of the weekly*The South African Spectator*, was also attuned, but in a different way. Having had a different intellectual formation and lived experience from the *Izwi la Bantu* group, the very fact that he had been born in Ghana, educated in England, moved to United States and spent about ten years around the Boston-Rochester-New York area, Peregrino's transAtlantic view is more international.[53] It is the English-Boer War of 1899-1902 that brings him to South Africa from United States at the approximate age of fifty. The reason for coming into the country was to devote himself to struggle and progress on behalf of Africans and Coloureds. In an Editorial commemorating the first anniversary of the newspaper, Peregrino states that his mission is to fight for equal treatment for all the people of South Africa and to garner support among the best elements of the African intelligentsia.[54] This identification with the aims of the African intelligentsia (from *Imvo Zabantsundu* to *Izwi la Bantu*) is based on a similar ideological perspective that Christianity, civilization and progress are inseparable from each other.[55] The kind of Christianity that Peregrino

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[52] Anonymous, "The Negro Philistines", *Izwi la Bantu*, February 4, 1908. A month later it was suggested that socialism may perhaps be the alternative instrument for changing the historical conditions of existence of African Americans: Anonymous, "Bryan and the Negro", *Izwi la Bantu*, March 24, 1908.

[53] Paradoxically this international outlook was accompanied by his growing conservatism the longer he lived in South Africa. Andre Odendaal's book, **Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912**, indicates the forms of this growing conservatism.

[54] F. Z. S. Peregrino, "Our Anniversary", *The South African Spectator*, December 7, 1901.

[55] "A Man with a Mission: Mr. F. Z. S. Peregrino, Editor of *The South African Spectator*", *The South African Spectator*, October 5, 1901. The article is a reprint of the original which had appeared in *Izwi la Bantu*.

supports is that of the independent African churches, Ethiopianism.[56] His support for Ethiopianism is evident in the laudatory biographical sketch of Mangane Maake Mokone, the actual founder of this protest movement; it is also clear in an enthusiastic article reporting the judicial vindication of Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba in his financial quarrel with the Free Church of Scotland.[57] Mzimba had moved from his earlier position that Africans should dispense with politics, to being a leading ideologue of Ethiopianism. Simultaneous with his support for the African religious protest movement, Peregrino strove to endorse and encourage a *modus vivendi* between the Ethiopian Church in South Africa and the African American Episcopal Church (A. M. E.) in United States. As a consequence of this ideological stance, when Bishop L. J. Coppin of the A. M. E. Church arrived in South Africa in February 1901 to consolidate the relations between the two churches, *The South African Spectator* gave extensive coverage to his movements, preachings and lectures. The newspaper printed a large synopsis of Coppin's lecture, "From Bondage to Freedom", which it endorses as a report on the progress of African Americans.[58] *The South African Spectator* also printed a

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[56] F. Z. S. Peregrino, "What is Ethiopianism", *The South African Spectator*, September 6, 1902.

[57] "The Father of the Church: A Popular Native Minister", *The South African Spectator*, September 7, 1901 (almost certainly written by Peregrino); "Mr Mzimba Vindicated", *The South African Spectator*, October 11, 1902.

[58] L. J. Coppin, "From Bondage to Freedom: Synopsis", *The South African Spectator*, June 1, 1901. Praising the lecture in another context, Peregrino writes: "The Spectator trusts that the lecture will serve as an inspiration to the Colored people hereabouts. That which is possible to the American Negro is equally possible here. We trust that the Bishop may be induced to repeat this lecture some time shortly" (see: "A Splendid Lecture", *The South African Spectator*, May 18, 1901 [my emphasis]). For extensive analysis of Coppin's visit to South Africa: see, J. Mutero Chirenje, **Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883-1916**, op. cit. There is a biographical portrait of Coppin most likely by Peregrino: "Right Rev. Levi Jenkins Coppin, D.D.: A Prince of the Church", *The South African Spectator*, February 23, 1901. This visit by Coppin had a tremendous impact on a certain segments of New African intellectuals, beyond his ecclesiastical colleagues, as can be judged from the fact that Solomon T. Plaatje uses an excerpt from one of his sermons as an epigraph in **Native Life in South Africa**. So the extensive coverage of the visit in *The South African Spectator* has proven to have been prescient on the part of Peregrino. As the first American resident Bishop of the A. M. E. Church in South Africa, L. J. Coppin travelled extensively throughout the country. From his observations he wrote a book: **Observations of Persons and Things in South Africa 1900-1904** (Philadelphia, 1905). Besides its importance in tracing the relations between the A. M. E. Churche(es) in South Africa and United States, in documenting the founding of Ethiopianism, in indicating the historic importance of M. M. Mokone and of Charlotte Manye Maxeke, the book is most invaluable in graphically portraying the moment of encounter between modernity and tradition, the making of the New African, even if the perspective is over-determined by the need to proselytize on behalf of Christianity, a theological ideology questionably equated with modernity and civilization. Another connection between **Native Life in South Africa** and **Observations** is that they both capture South Africa in a state of upheaval, respectively changes, unleashed by the political forces of the Native Land Act of 1913, and the historical forces of modernity; they both forged the intellectual climate and the conditions of possibility in which New Africanism, particularly as understood and interpreted by R. V. Selope Thema,

lecture given in Cape Town by a junior member of A. M. E. Church, as well as a report on the church itself.[59]

Peregrino's vision of the transAtlantic relations was more astute and more engaging than that of the intellectuals around *Izwi la Bantu*, in that he attempted to construct institutional forms through which the political philosophy of Pan-Africanism could be diffused into the body politic of black South Africa.[60] He was a founding member of the South African branch of the Pan-African Society and its leading advocate by seeking to establish its national representatives as well as those that could be established in other parts of Africa.[61] There were six objectives and aims of the Pan-African Society: to secure political and civil rights for black people in Africa and in the African diaspora; to encourage enterprises concerned with education, industry and commerce; to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed and dispossessed people in all corners of the world; to organize bureaus to collect and disseminate information; to foster goodwill between races; and to raise funds to implement and bring into reality these objectives.[62] There can be no doubt that H. Sylvester Williams, the father of Pan-Africanism, was instrumental in the founding of the Society in South Africa during his approximately eight-month stay in the country. In fact, Sylvester Williams was at center of an imbriglio in which *Izwi la Bantu* wanted to know his position on the question of British imperialism in the person of Cecil Rhodes.[63] Peregrino unfortunately waffled an incoherent response in an attempt take a apolitical neutral position on the question of British

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took root. In other words, the ideology New Africanism was a direct response to South African modernity.

[59] A. Henry Attaway, "A Lecture", *The South African Spectator*, November 23, 1901; "The A. M. E. Church and Loyalty", *The South African Spectator*, August 24, 1901. Peregrino's passion for African Americans was without boundaries. In another context, he writes: "It is generally admitted, and the observant traveller very readily acknowledges--that whatever other faults he may possess--that for polite manners, for polish, and for correctness of demeanor and general conduct on the streets, no one excels the American Negro", *The South African Spectator*, October 11, 1902. Because of his having lived in America for a decade before coming to South Africa, Peregrino was much concerned with the actual lived experience of African Americans than was the case with South African-born writers and intellectuals, who mostly encountered the African American experience through texts. He continually denounced the lynching of African Americans, as in a particularly remarkable article: "Lynch Law in America", The South African Spectator, February 23, 1901. The article lists of the name of individuals lynched over a two-year period.

[60] Andre Odendaal posits the *Izwi la Bantu* as much central in establishing Pan-Africanist connections than *The South African Spectator*: **Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912**, op. cit., pp.86-91.

[61] F. Z. S. Peregrino, "The Pan-African Society", *The South African Spectator*, February 9, 1901.

[62] F. Z. S. Peregrino, "The Pan-African Society", *The South African Spectator*, February 23, 1901.

[63] "The Izwi and the Pan-African Society", *The South African Spectator*, May 18, 1901.

imperialism in the English-Boer War of 1899-1902.[64] By this time Sylvester Williams was in Jamaica organizing around the political principles of Pan-Africanism and disseminating information about the condition of Africans on the continent.[65] Complimentary to his political activity with Sylvester Williams, Peregrino brought the name of Edward Blyden to the attention of his readers by focusing on his pedagogical and Islamic activities in West Africa, rather than more decisively, by critically examining Blyden's writings.[66] Peregrino's longest piece in*The South African Spectator,* in the copies that have survived, published in ten installments, is an attempt to make known the historical meaning of the Haitian Revolution, albeit along the colour lines, to South Africans.[67]

While the imbriglio between *The South African Spectator* and *Izwi la Bantu* continued as to the nature of politics between imperialism and Pan-Africanism, Solomon T. Plaatje fundamentally alters the intellectual quality of the transAtlantic relations by radically introducing a different reading of W. E. B. Du Bois into South African discourse. This introduction demarcates the period of the *Imvo Zabantsundu* debate between Elijah Makiwane and Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba in which the African American experience was appropriated as an undifferentiated historical process, from the one he intiates, in which this process has to be understood intellectually in order for it to produce knowledge, which in turn makes possible distinctions and venues of serious political intervention. It would be too tempting to argue that this essay of 1904, "Negro Question", in effect Plaatje displaces Washington with Du Bois in the imagination of Africans concerning the historical lessons that the African American historical experience could possibly impart. But the fact of the matter is that a full decade after this essay was written, at the demise of Washington, Plaatje was still writing affectionately of him with the utmost respect: "With a heavy heart I have just read of the passing away of Dr. Booker Washington, the greatest black man of our time . . . "[68]

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[64] F. Z. S. Peregrino, "Mr Rhodes", ibid.

[65] "Secretary Williams in Jamaica, W. I.", ibid.

[66] "Islamism on the West Coast of Africa: Dr. Blyden A Director-General of Islamic Education", *The South African Spectator,* December 7, 1901. A decade later Edward Blyden writes an enigmatic letter to Solomon T. Plaatje's *Tsala ea Becoana,* intervening in ongoing debate, in which he states ironically and ambivalently that in the context of South Africa the slogan "Africa for the Africans" is problematical, that Africans have developed a dependency on Europeans, hence Africans should develop an educational system which would sever the dependency nature of these relations: April 1, 1911. A year later a laudatory obituary of Blyden appeared: "A Great Negro Savant: Death of Dr. Edward Wilmont Blyden", *Tsala ea Becoana,* March 9, 1912.

[67] F. Z. S. Peregrino, "Black, Mulatto, Quadron, Octoroon", *The South African Spectator,* February 9, 23, March 23, April 6, May 4, June 1, 15, July 27, August 3, 1901. C. C. Saunders indicates that a relatively large number of copies of the newspaper never survived.

[68] [8] Cited in R. Hunt Davis, op. cit., p. 501.

Although Plaatje does not indicate or mention the intellectual precursors of his essay, there is no doubt that they are located in African American intellectual culture: George W. Williams's **History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1880** and W. E. B. Du Bois's "The Conservation of the Races" (1897). In contradistiction to the generation of Mzimba and Makiwane relation to William's book, which was superficially political, Plaatje draws two historiographical principles from it which form the subtext of his essay: that the history of black people all over the world is characterized by an indissoluble unity, and that the origins of such a history is in antiquity, namely in Egyptian civilization. That is, for Williams the writing of the history of African Americans in America, can not but begin as a transAtlantic act of identification whose origins are located in antiquity. This is a principle that Bu Bois more or less follows in **The Negro** (1914). **History of the Negro Race in America** also posits the African Kingdoms as another source of African American origins. This political stance of tracing African American origins in Africa could not but resonate with all the missionary educated African intellectuals in the late nineteenth-century, from Nigeria to South Africa, who were forced to live European modernity in Africa within the parameters of Christianity (Plaatje, among others, begins to construct the particular forms of African modernity).[69] Furthermore, the book has many short essays in the Appendix about ancient cities, 'The Unity of Mankind', 'The Curse of Canaan', 'Negro Civilization', 'Negro Type', 'The Negroes', 'The Relation of Physical Character to Climate', 'Cities of Africa', 'Cities of Ethiopia', 'African Languages' which must have bedazzled Plaatje, awakening his historical consciousness to the fact that the quality of life in the

[69] Elsewhere I attempt to clarify this distinction, between African modernity and the living of European modernity in Africa: "The Cultural Modernity of H. I. E. Dhlomo". Neil Lazarus has attempted, in a fascinating essay, one of the most ambitious theorization of South African modernity and modernism in the last decade or so (see: "Modernism and Modernity: T. W. Adorno and Contemporary White South Literature", *Cultural Critique*, no.5, Winter 1986-87, pp.131-155). Several observations: Firstly, what is missing from Lazarus's Adornian conceptualization is that modernity is an actual historical contruction by contestatory social forces within a particular cultural and political field, within which writers, intellectuals and artists intervene to shape its forms as well as mediating its cultural projections; in other words, Lazarus's 'South African modernity' is too Germanic, consequently deracinated of its Africanness. Secondly, it is very questionable and debatable that Beckett's **Waiting for Godot** could really be posited as a metaphor for South African political modernity at the moment of the interregnum, that is until the breakthoughs of 1994; I would posit Cesar Vallejo's revolutionary poem "Masses" as a metaphor for the New African making of modernity, despite the fact that a majority of them were politically reactionary. Thirdly, Lazarus formulates the forced entrance of modernity into South African through the impositions of capitalism as though it were merely a transpositionary process, rather than also as an appropriative act; Lazarus makes this entrance seem as though it were an antiseptic movement of ideas, rather than what it was in actuality, the blood-stained business of economic dimination. Lastly, Lazarus makes modernism an inevitable follow-up to modernity, without seriously considering that there may have been a modernity in Africa which did not necessarily give gestation to modernism, hence the intractable problems the continent is facing today.

African cities as one of the cardinal constructs of African modernity. What perhaps also Plaatje found riveting is that George Washington Williams makes direct historical references to Africans in South Africa.

In "The Conservation of Races" Du Bois searches for the 'real meaning of Race', arguing that world history is not constituted by history of groups, or history of individuals, or history of nations, but rather by the history of races. Indicating the universal prevalence of the race idea, race ideal and race spirit, he postulates that the central thought of history is: what is race? He sees great individuals in history as the epitomization of the expression of races. The paradox for Du Bois of this prevalence of the race idea is contradicted by the fact that likeness(es) between races are greater than unlikeness(es). Physical differences are not deeper than psychical and spiritual differences. Du Bois is investigating the philosophy of race underpinning American racism. Touching on ideas that were to become more prominent in his later work, he writes that in all probability the Egyptian civilization was black in origin; Du Bois then writes these compelling words: "For the development of Negro genius, of Negro literature and art, of Negro spirit, only Negroes bound and welded together, Negroes inspired by one vast ideal, can work out in its fullness the great message we have for humanity. . . What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American? If I strive as a Negro, am I not perpuating the very cleft that threatens and separates Black and White America?"[70] This is a dilemma any black person thrust into the throes of modernity faces. The real object the essay was the plea for the construction of institutions and organizations, 'the Negro Academy', that would thrust forward the movement of African Americans (Africans in South Africa were later to seek the establishing of an African Academy as a representation of their arrival within African modernity: this preoccupied the ANC Youth Leaguers around *Inkundla ya Bantu* newspaper). For a South African reading this essay at the time of Solomon T. Plaatje one of its fascinating aspects is the deep knowledge of South African African ethnic distinctions it exhibits: the Zulu, the Bushman [San], and Hottentot [Khoi Khoi]. This referencing to South Africa is most probably a reflection of the discussion between Du Bois and Charlotte Manye, who was then his student and best friend of his wife to be at Wilberforce University.[71] To Plaatje, moving constantly between

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[70] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of the Races", **Writings** by W. E. B. Du Bois, (ed.) Nathan Huggins, The Library of America, New York, 1986, p.820-821.

[71] There is a fascinating portrait of Charlotte Manye Maxeke by Z. K. Mathews, written twenty years after her death in 1939: *Imvo Zabantsundu*, September 9, 1961: "The entry of women into politics generally introduces an element of realism and practicality into a field in which there is always a danger of sentiment and emotion being regarded as a substitute for action. It is therefore a serious mistake for any society to ignore the contribution which women can make to its development." In a poem written most probably immediately after her death, S. E. K. Mqhayi paises her for having had the fortitude to go to America and gain the kind of knowledge that would prove so invaluable in changing and transforming the consciousness of

Mafeking and Kimberley, this linkage between South Africa and United States most probably carried a psychically tinged emotional identification.

Plaatje's "Negro Question" attempts to forge a synthesis between the historiographical poetics of Williams and the philosophy of race of Du Bois. Its opening sentence, "Among important topics of today there is nothing more important as this one", is a deliberate echo of Du Bois famous sentence in **The Souls of Black Folks**: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line. . . ".[72] The echoes between their literary and philosophical projects re not confined to only these texts. Plaatje's **Native Life in South Africa** is modelled on Du Bois book: the epigraphs at the heading of each of the chapters; the very fact that in both books there is an epigraph from Schiller, although they are different, and it is in original German in both instances; the very fact that the epigraphs are mostly in poetic or musical form; and the fact that there is quotation in Solomon T. Plaatje's book taken directly from Du Bois's book. The philosophical strains of both books indicate other affinities: beyond those of oppression, struggle, determination, fortitude, hope and resiliency. The point of departure of Plaatje's essay was to deflect criticism from a white writer who had attacked the political and ecclesiastical alliance between the Ethiopian Church of South Africa and the American Methodist Episcopal Church. In other words, the writer sought to question the wisdom of black unity across the Atlantic. Plaatje responds by indicating that during the period of commerce between Egypt and the Roman Empire, the Romans in Latin referred to Africans as Neger Vix. Plaatje writes that Vix means man and Neger means 'black, sable, dark dusky (often with the idea of beauty or lustre associated). . . ' Consequently "Negro" means black or a dark man of Africa. He further notes: "From the originality of the term there is nothing like an American Negro. From a geographical standpoint, Negro refers to the black inhabitants of the continent of Africa and no other. Negro's home is Africa, Negro's soil is Africa." Plaatje is arguing that however long blacks may be living in the African diaspora, their fundamental home is Africa, or at the least, they still retain their Africaness. Here he is echoing the Pan-Africanism of H. Sylvester Williams, who four years earlier in 1900 had established its first institutional form in South Africa. Plaatje refers to the history of Africa, the history of the West and ecclesiastical history to show the 'self-evident' nature of the affinities and unities of black people. He makes clear through allusion that he is not advocating a back to Africa movement. Employing hermeneutics, he

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African people from tradition to modernity (see: "Umfikazi U-Charlotte Manyhi Maxeke", **I-nzuzo**, The University of the Witwatersrand Press, Johannesburg, 1942, pp.35-36). A recent impressive book, read after the writing of this essay, gives a fuller and deeper portrait of Charlotte Manye Maxeke that we possess: James T. Campbell, **Songs of Zion: The African Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa**, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[72] Solomon Plaatje, "Negro Question", *Koranta ea Becoana* (Bechuana Gazette), Loetse (September) 7, 1904; W.E. B. Du Bois, **The Souls of Black Folk**, Introduction by Henry Louis Gates, Bantam Book, 1989 (1903), p.10.

compares the history of Africans in the diaspora and the tragic situation of the Jews also in the diaspora. Plaatje denounces American slavery which held African Americans in subjugation. This move to make reference to antiquity to show the lineages of black affinities across the African world by Plaatje is a result of the influence of George Washington Williams; the inquiry into the etymology of the word is an attempt to elaborate on the philosophy of race as had been theorized by W. E. B. Du Bois. Moving towards a conclusion, Plaatje laments the incompleteness or failure of American Reconstruction, and registers his admiration for the pedagogical project of Booker T. Washington. At its time the "Negro Question" was the most radical intervention into the possible historical meaning of the lived experience of African Americans to Africans in Africa, particularly in South Africa. Whereas Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba was satisfied with a political reading or interpretation insufficiently informed by history, Plaatje initiates a conceptual thinking into the examination of the historical dimensions of transAtlanticism. With this essay Plaatje launches a process which reaches its crescendo in the 1970s when Ezekiel Mphahlele writes a series of major essays on African American literary and political culture in Chinua Achebe's literary review *Okike*.

Besides being innovative in the newly established tradition of using the African American experience to negotiate modernity or establish the uniqueness of the elementary forms of African modernity, Plaatje initiates a process of interrogating the spatial context of the emerging African modernity. He initiates an essay of the city in 1911 that finds its point of culmination in Lewis Nkosi's extraordinary 1965 essay of the Exile Period[73] on Paris. Perhaps taking the cue from Williams's appraisal of African cities, especially Carthage, founded by the Tyrian princess Dido in 846 BC, as the concentration of wealth, power, culture and imperial aspirations, Plaatje looks at modern African cities as demarcating the historical space between modernity and tradition. In "King Williamstown", Plaatje writes of the town as a "picturesque" hub founded in 1835 as a commercial center for the distribution of goods and services to the neighboring trading stations.[74] The town was also the center of military activities which enabled Europeans to defeat Africans. One of King Williamstown's distinguishing cultural and intellectual feature was the founding of *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the cultural and social review that launched the discourse about modernity among the African intelligentsia. The establishing of this African intellectual forum reinforces Georg Simmel's observation that in towns, particularly in

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[73] Some preliminary reflections on the Exile Experience at the moment of its closure: Ntongela Masilela, "The Return of Mazisi Kunene to South Africa: The End of an Intellectual Chapter in Our Literary History", *Ufahamu: Journal of the African Activist Association*, vol.21 no.3, Fall 1993, pp.7-15; Lewis Nkosi, "Ironies of Exile: Post-colonial homelessness and the anticlimax of return", *Times Literary Supplement*, April 1, 1994, p.5.

[74] Sol. T. Plaatje, "King Williamstown", *Tsala ea Becoana* (The Friend of the Bechuana), October 14, 1911.

metropolis, psychological conditions are created making possible the intellectualistic character of mental life, as opposed to the countryside were largely feelings and emotional relationships predominate.[75] What adds to the picturesqueness of King Williamstown, according to Plaatje, is the presence of two languages and races which vie with each other: Xhosa and English, Africans and Europeans. The presence of a small German community clamoring for the official recognition of their language adds a tinge of exoticism to the town. Having started his career as a court interpreter, Plaatje is fascinated by the judicial interconnections situated in the town. The center piece of the essay is the argument that the experience of modernity contradicts the will to impose segregation which was beginning to happen on a massive scale: "You will not need to be told of the impracticality of segregation if you will but come here and see for yourself the flood of black peasantry from the surrounding locations pouring into the streets; see the natives walking up and down the thoroughfares staring at the shop windows, meeting and gossiping with friends, bartering with white men, and purchasing provisions: and you will be satisfied that, shouls segregation ever become an accomplished fact, fully four-fiths of the merchants would leave King Williamstown by way of the Bankruptcy Court." Plaatje feared that the logic of historical development would be arrested by the irrational beliefs of white men.

Plaatje serious interest in the spatial context of towns as well as the impact of segregation on the metamorphosis of African modernity was evident the following year when he examined the dynamic between Maseru, the capital, and the countryside of Basutoland. The essay also indicates a trend that was to be more evident in his later writings, the adjustments and accomodations that the Chiefs of many South African ethnic nations had to make in order to enter the historical experience of modernity.[76] It was the first trip abroad in 1914 to London, as part of the ANC official delegation to ask the British government to nullify the Native Land Act of 1913 which designated 87% South Africa as belonging to whites who constituted not more than 15% of the total population, that Plaatje observed the deep historical intimacy and interconnection between the city and modernity. In one of his most beautiful essays, recounting the trip by ship from Cape Town to Plymouth, Plaatje relates the majestic pleasure and beauty of London. He marvels at the high technological world encountered in Britain, the speed of trains and the massiveness of communication systems; visits to Westminister Abbey and St. Pauls Cathedral, Buckingham Hotel. At the same time he speaks of urban blight and housing problem. He does not neglect speaking also of the

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[75] Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", in **Metropolis: Center and Symbol of Our Times**, (ed.) Philip Kasinitz, New York University Press, New york, 1995, p.31.

[76] Sol. Plaatje, "Basutoland: Characteristics of the Country: Reminiscences of a Recent Visit", *Tsala ea Batho* (The Friend of the People), May 11, 1912. See the many contributions on Chiefs by Solomon T. Plaatje in T. D. Mweli Skota's **The African Yearly Register**.

fascination of many automobiles compacted together on the streets, the financial centers of the Bank of England and the Royal Exchange. He concludes this brilliant essay, which is part travelogue and part cultural analysis, on the imperial and metropolitan nature of London: "The population of this city is 7,000,000 in round figures. There are said to be over 8,000 public houses and 3,000 tea rooms; the number of City and Metropolitan Police is nearly 20,000; within a radius of 12 miles of Charing Cross there are nearly 100 railway stations; London's inhabitants consume yearly 2,000,000 bags of wheat; 150,000 tons of fish; 850,000 oxen, 5,000,000 sheep, calves, and pigs; and 9,000,000 head of poultry and game. London is said to contain more Roman Catholics than Rome; more Jews than Palestine; more Irishmen than Belfast; more Scotch than Aberdeen; more Welsh than Cardiff. London has 59 members of Parliament. That's London in a nut-shell."[77] This portrayal of London gives evidence to Lewis Mumford's observation that the city is the concentration of the power and culture of the community.[78]

A decade after Plaatje's essay on London, in an essay of 1923, "The 'White Hills' of the Rand", R. V. Selope Thema, in the vein of George Washington Williams's **History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1880** and W. E. B. Du Bois's **The Negro**, compares the building of Johannesburg, the civilization of modernity, to the architectural construction in the civilization of antiquity in Egypt: "Like the slaves in ancient Egypt, who under the direction of Egyptian brains, built the great pyramids, these sons of Africa are building something which is pyramidic in its nature. That is to say, something which will go down into history and last through the ages."[79] Thema sees the project of modernity being forged in Johannesburg as representing the best exemplification of the combined efforts of Europeans and Africans. It is a project that expresses the progress of time. Given this joint effort in constructing something monumental, Selope Thema is at a loss at understanding why Europeans would feel superior to Africans, expressing that supposed superiority through degradation, contempt, oppression and denigration of their African compatriots. Staging the essay in form of a dialogue that ensued on a train from Christiana to Johannesburg between himself (representing modernity) and a rural passenger (representing tradition) going to the Rand for the first time, he undertakes a brilliant meditation on the wonders of the technologies of modernity, on the history of progress (in relation to culture and politics), on the technological achievements that make modernity achievable. These reflections are among the best to come from a remarkable mind.

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77 Sol. T. Plaatje, "Native Delegation to England", *Tsala ea Batho*, July 11, 18, 25, 1914.
78 Lewis Mumford, "The Culture of Cities", in **Metropolis,** op. cit., p.21.
79 R. V. Selope Thema, "The 'White Hills' of the Rand", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 24, December 8, 1923.

Three later in 1926, in another essay, Selope Thema theorizes the city as a historical site in which modernity is constructed through the struggle between civilization and barbarism. Writing on the occasion of the fortieth birthday of Johannesburg, he traces the emergence of the city as a direct consequence of the discovery of gold in the Rand area in 1886. He remarks of the political, economic, and social transformation South Africa experienced as a consequence of the founding of this mineral resource: Africans were not only dispossessed of their land around the Rand area, those in the countyside were uprooted and proletarianized to working in the gold mines; coercive measures were instituted like the Pass Laws which made certain that designated labour would constantly flow rationally to the mines; the massive immigration of whites from Europe to work in the mines and the emerging industry made certain that South Africa would not be a classic colony, but a peculiar one; a process of 'detribalization' among Africans occurred which was simultaneous with the instilling of the new work ethic of modernity; the permanent transformation of the life experience of Africans; in playing a fundamental role in the commercial and industrial development of Johannesburg, Africans were playing a crucial role in the transplantation of Western civilization into Southern Africa. As a self-conscious member of the 'New Native' or the New African intelligentsia, whose defined historical project was to utilize what was perceived as the enlightenment of Western civilization against the barbarism of heathenism and backwardness, Selope Thema saw the mission of Johannesburg as bringing the African people into the fold of Western civilization. Comparing Johannesburg unfavourably to the city of Bloemfontein, because of the absence of modern amenities for Africans in the former (swimming pools, recreation halls, evening schools, etc.), he writes: "Bloemfontein has built a Y. M. C. A. and a public school in the location because it realises that barbarism and civilization cannot grow together without disastrous results. . . There is only one way of escape and salvation and that is the recognition of the fact that civilization cannot flourish in the midst of an overwhelming barbarism."[80] Seeing Africa as "a continent of dead civilizations", Selope Thema saw a city like Johannesburg as constructing a new civilization of modernity. Comparing Johannesburg and Cairo, he saw each of them as pulling the barbarism of their respective regions, the South and the North, into their civilizing centers. This reference to Africa, which is scattered in the many essays and articles of the New Africans congregated around *Umteteli wa Bantu*, clearly indicates that they were not only concerned with appropriating the historical lessons of African American modernity, but they also cast their intellectual vision on the African continent: continental pan-African connections. These intra-continental connections are reflected in a text representing the New African collective vision, **The African Yearly Register**, therein the late Dr. J. E. K. Aggrey of Gold Coast (Ghana), Edward Wilmont Blyden of Sierra Leone and Liberia (originally from St. Thomas Island) and Bishop Samuel Adjai

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[80] R. V. Selope Thema, "Johannesburg's Birthday", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 25, 1926.

Crowther of West Africa, are biographically sketched as part of a New Africanism.

In another essay on a different city four years later, Selope Thema praises Bloemfontein seeing it as a model for other South African cities because of the exemplary availability of educational and social facilities for Africans. He praises the city for allowing the participation of Africans in city politics, especially those that impinge directly on 'Black Bloemfontein'. He laments that in 1909, as the country was moving to the Union of South Africa of 1910, Bloemfontein, centrally located in the country, had not been chosen as the capital of the nation. Although laudatory of the city in many ways, he is critical of it because of segregation and the refusal to grant trading rights to Africans. But the real reason for celebrating the city is that it enables him to rehearse his fundamental theme: "Bloemfontein has discovered what other cities of the Union have failed to understand,---the fact that civilization and barbarism cannot grow and flourish together. It has, therefore, promoted and encouraged civilizing agencies."[81] Because of its self-consciousness about its civilizing mission, Selope Thema is assured and happy that Bloemfontein is the country's judicial center: the city as the center of the struggle between civilization and barbarism. H. I. E. Dhlomo was much more reticent about the city when he wrote his essay sixteen years later on.

H. I. E. Dhlomo connects to the intellectual tradition consolidated by Plaatje, the historical meaning of the cultural efflorescence of the city in modernity, in a slightly different way from R. V. Selope Thema. Dhlomo, a great South Africa modernist, very much saw himself as a student and disciple of Solomon Plaatje. Writing an appreciation immediately following the death of Plaatje, whom he characterizes as a great leader, possessing a quick witted critical mind with a sharp intellect, combined with a real artistic imagination, he fondly remembers one of their encounters: "I shall ever remember my last talk and ramble with him. For several hours we discoursed as we walked from one place to another, fulfilling his sundry engagements---so well known was he, so higly esteemed, so dearly beloved. He spoke of his many literary plans. . . Whatever subject he touched upon---leadership, literature, travel, amusement---was treated with a brilliancy, humour, ability and finish that at once surprised and captivated, inspired and humbled me. Of his many achievements and understandings I leave it to the better and more experienced pens to tell."[82] Could any one been more aware of the historical significance of Solomon T. Plaatje than Herbert Isaac Ezra Dhlomo! Following in the footsteps of his master, Dhlomo's first written piece or that has survived celebrates the cultural achievements of African Americans, which he notes as progress, despite the horror and adversity of American slavery, which he represents as hardship: hence the entitlement of the short

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[81] R. V. Selope Thema, "Bloemfontein", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 17, 1930.

[82] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "An Appreciation", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 25, 1932.

piece, "Hardship and Progress".[83] This preoccupation with the question of progress in his first intellectual engagement of the historical meaning of South Africaness, situates Dhlomo in a central position in the intellectual tradition historically opened by the debate between Elijah Makiwane and Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba.[84] The aim of Dhlomo was to pose the historical lessons that African American modernity could possibly hold for African modernity in South Africa. He observes that despite the cruelty, the hardship, and the oppression of slavery, the African Americans, through hard work, determination and self-will, had been successful and triumphant against all their enormous adversities. Given the Native Land Act of 1913, racism and segregation in South Africa, he asks whether the Africans in the country are

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[83] Herbert I. Dhlomo, "Hardship and Progress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, October 18, 1924. Given the thorough and scrupolous nature of Tim Couzens's scholarship in **The New African**, he thinks it possible that there were earlier writings of Dhlomo in *Umteteli wa Bantu* or in *Ilanga lase Natal* than this essay. I tend to doubt it. The first two years of the *Umteteli wa Bantu* seem to have perished. The first item on or by Dhlomo, is the inclusion of his name in the examination results of 1922, announcing that he had passed the Native Teachers' Third Grade Certificate Examination in Second Class at Adams College: *Umteteli wa Bantu*, February 10, 1922. It is possible that Dhlomo contributed to *Ilanga lase Natal* (The Sun of Natal) while still studying at Adams College, but then nearly the first two decades of this newspaper seem not to have survived. The real tragedy is that *Abantu-Batho* (The People) founded in 1912 by Pixley ka Izaka Seme, founder of the ANC in the same year, seems not to have survived at all. Becoming the official organ of the ANC in 1928, the newspaper collapsed three years later in 1931: see,Les Switzer and Donna Switzer, **The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho**, G. K. Hall and Company, Boston, 1979, p.25-26.

[84] Elsewhere, in "The Cultural Modernity of H. I. E. Dhlomo", I attempt to engage the virulent anti-Communist nature of this hegemonic and central intellectual tradition; it was/is profoundly Christian and politically conservative. See for instance the representative essay of Dhlomo: "Socialism", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, January 19, 1929: "I cannot conceive of the time or state in which all men will be equal in all things. Such is not my view of ideakl Socialism. Indeed if wealth and property could be distributed equally amongst all living people today, in a few decades hence we would find that some people would have been reduced to poverty, and others would have accumulated wealth, according to their attitude for business." The context of the denounciation was the fear that Communist ideology had penetrated into the Industrial and Commercial Workers'Union, even though its leaders Clements Kadalie and A. W. G. Champion were anti- Communist. Dhlomo moves on to condemn the French and the Russian Revolutions. The ev ents of 1989 seem to have proven Dhlomo correct! I could have adduced similar views in the writings of R. V. Selope Thema ("Bolshevism and the Africans", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, January 6, 1923; "The Bantu and Bolshevism", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, August 9, 1924), H. Selby Msimang ("Communism for Natives", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, January 8, 1927), Jordan Ngubane, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Mazisi Kunene (in the last two it is camaflouged given their Exile Experience; Lewis Nkosi belongs here) and others. These are major intellectuals, and not intellectual lightweights like A. X. Xuma and John Dube, who were important political figures. Principally Albert Nzula, and others, tried to bring socialism into this intellectual tradition, but to no avail. The political blockages of the Mandela era (from 1994) are partly explained by the hegemony of this intellectual tradition, despite the forced tilt to the Left of the ANC in the Exile Period. The question that would need to be examined elsewhere is the extent to which the appropriation of African American modernist experience, or more properly the nature of its appropriation, insulated this intellectual tradition from the desire of socialism and communism.

not experiencing similar conditions that were encountered by African Americans during slavery. Despite the efforts of white South Africans to instil inferiority complex in and subjugate Africans, Dhlomo believes that Africans too through determination and fortitude can overcome their adversarials. He writes: "Remember it is not the number of gifts one possesses but how one uses them that counts. Use what you have." The central point Dhlomo is putting forth is that through knowledge, hardship can be overcomed and progress attained. Education and knowledge should play a fundamental role in giving direction and substance to African modernity. The essay is an impressive debut for a young man of twenty-one. It portends some of the extraordinary things that were to come.

The essay on the town of Alice pays homage to knowledge, education, and intellectual culture. He celebrates the amazing achievement of the small town of Alice in the Cape Province that made possible the Xhosa renascence and modernity in the late nineteenth-century;[85] a renascence that encompassed Elijah Makiwane's *Isigidimi sama Xosa* (published at Lovedale) John Tengo Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu* (published at King Williamstown) and Walter Rubasana and Allan Kirkland Soga's *Izwi la Bantu* (published in East London). The ostensible reason for writing the was occasioned by the Conference on the Race Problem which Dhlomo attended organized by Max

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[85] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "An Impression", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, July 12, 1930. This renascence would not have been possible without the extraordinary role of white missionaries in establishing the Lovedale Press in 1861, twenty years after the founding of the Lovedale Institute in 1841. Although the Press was only seen as "one of the most powerful of evangelistic agencies", it made possible the renewal of Xhosa culture and its shift to modernity. Richard H. W. Shepherd tabulates some of the very important publications: Tiyo Soga's Xhosa translation of John Bunyan's **Pigrim's Progress**; the Xhosa translation of the Bible; numerous Xhosa grammar texts and dictionaries; the first historical work of George M. Theal, a distinguished South African history of the late nineteenth-century; Elijah Makiwane's *Isigidimi sama Xosa*; a monthly journal, *The South African Outlook* and the *Bantu Studies* edited at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg; Xhosa literature by various emerging writers, particularly of outstanding poet and composer like, respectively, William Gqoba and John Knox Bokwe (see: **Lovedale South Africa: The Story of a Century, 1841-1941**, The Lovedale Press, 1941, p.399-410). Its list of African writers in the early part of the twentieth-century was equally impressive: writers: Solomon Plaatje, A. C. Jordan, H. I. E. Dhlomo, R. R. R. Dhlomo, Samuel E. R. Mqhayi, J. J. R. Jolobe: composers: Ruben T. Caluza, Enoch Sontonga, B. Tyamzashe, Simon Mphahlele and others. Clearly, the construction of identities, affiliations and positions within African modernity could not have been only a black affair. The recognition of the relevance of African American modernity for African modernity was not only confined to a circle of elite African intellectuals. Shepherd reports that the Director of Lovedale Press, who was white South African, received a Carnegie Corporation Visitors' Grant which enabled him to visit in America publication sites owned by black Americans. One result of the visit was the publication by the Director of a booklet, *Literature for the South African Bantu: A Comparative Study of Negro Achievement*, which Shepherd summarizes in the following manner: "He contended that in every aspect of a literature movement---intellectual, industrial and commercial---the Negroes were further along the road of progress than the Bantu, and yet not so far in advance as to render valueless the lessons they could teach to their African kinsmen. . . " (p.406, my emphasis).

Yergan, the African American secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in South Africa. The Conference brought together Africans and Europeans. Among the Africans who were in attendance were: Charlotte Manya Maxeke, Z. K. Mathews, R. V. Selope Thema, Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu, John Gumede (President-General of the ANC), and Dr. Alfred Bitini Xuma, future President-General of the ANC. Dhlomo characterizes Alice as the highest center of African education in South Africa because within its parameters are located two prestigious educational institutions, the Lovedale Institute and Fort Hare College. He compares the gloomy, mature, dignified, melancholy atmosphere of the former, to the challenging, majestic, bold and open nature of the latter. Despite their markedly different appearance, they both struggle against ignorance, prejudice and hatred. The second contrast that Dhlomo makes is between the town, which is open to the future and progress, and the surrounding countryside, that is backward and locked into the past: "It is indeed a ghastly contrast of ignorance and education; modernity and heathenism; advancement and retrogression." The town itself, consisting of pavementless streets and old-fashioned houses, which is located in the undulating hills and valleys with bushy shrubs, is seen as the triumph of Christianity. Dhlomo exults at the industriousness, concentration and determination of the students.

If Dhlomo associates the town of Alice with pedagogics and the intellectual culture of modernity, the essay on the city of Bloemfontein celebrates the politics of progress and democracy, since the ANC was founded in this city and its annual conferences occur there.[86] Here Dhlomo postulates the city as a social system, which is animated, and has its own singular personality, particular history and unique traditions. The city is more than the people, buildings and streets that constitute it, they must be pervaded with liveliness and livingness in order for the city to possess its distinct soul. It is also a place concerned with rank and status. Dhlomo sees Bloemfontein as connected to the central lines of South African history, intersecting with The Great Trek of 1836, Boer reactionary nationalism and conservatism, and with 1912, the struggle for African liberation, and a vision of progress toward the future. The Africans are struggling to make it a city of liberty, justice and unity. Dhlomo concludes the essay with a poem also called "Bloemfontein":

Bloemfontein
Fort of ours,
What Bantu struggles have your
eyes not seen!

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[86] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Bloemfontein", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, First Fortnight, October 1946. This essay seems to have been influenced by an essay examining the role of cities in making possible African American modernity: Charles S. Johnson, "The New Frontage on American Life", (ed.) Alain Locke, **The New Negro**, introduction by Arnold Rampersad, Atheneum, New York, 1992 [1925].

For years here hosts of people
gathered for

For midst thy bounds the Race
has prayed and bled.
And fought to gain Vision that
is fled.
The Garden of Gethsemane thy
name
Will be in the history of the Race

Thou art the heart, the centre,
Capital,
Of Bantu hopes, fears, throes
and strife. Here all
Our grants past and present stood
and fought;
And many great campaigns here
planned and wrought.

What fundamentally defines Bloemfontein is the political struggles which Africans have waged as a price of entrance into modernity.

Dhlomo had originally planned to write epic poems about each of the major South African cities, especially those that have featured prominently in history. But he settled to writing only one poetic essay "On Durban", where he spent the last fifteen years of his life. Interconnecting the cultural landscape of the city with South African political history, Dhlomo views his beloved Durban as providing solutions to some of the country's political problems: "We begin to wonder if what we see and do everyday in this City may not yield results greater than we suspected. We begin to note that of all the leading South African cities, Durbam perhaps is the only one where one bring the country to the city and the city to the country. . . It is in Durban where not only the Europeans---Indian, but the African---Indian problem will be solved."[87] Dhlomo had a deeper sense than Plaatje that cities being the outcomes of historical drama, are eminently able to privide political solutions to that drama of modernity. Coming a generation after Plaatje, Dhlomo probed deeper into the question of modernity: how advertising affects the Africans' perception of modernity; the new economics of this era;[88] whether

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[87] "X" [H. I. E Dhlomo], "On Durban", *Ilanga lase Natal*, February 22, 1947. In another essay on the city seven years later Dhlomo compares in passing how Durban is different from Johannesburg in relation to the past: "Randites [Africans living in Johannesburg] strive and are proud to shed their Past and be wholly westernised. Sophistication is their hall-mark of progress. Durbanites treasure and are proud of the Past, consider it unique and rich, and would build on and graft to it": "In Praise of Durban", *Ilanga lase Natal*, December 18, 1954.

[88] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Advertisements", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 8, 1930.

the African Talented Ten, echoing W. E. B. Du Bois, could usher in modernity in the midst of poverty, oppression, despair and economic depression;[89] and the way the city transformed the role of womanhood in modernity in contrast to their untenable position within traditional structures.[90]

The generation that came after H. I. E. Dhlomo, the Sophiatown Renaissance, not only continued with the project of Plaatje of investigating the role of South African cities in ushering in modernity, when they were forced into exile following the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, they in effect compared European and American cities, on the one hand, to the South African cities, on the other hand, in relation to the historical experience of the new. Interestingly enough, one of the Sophiatown Renaissance members to do that was the young Lewis Nkosi, a disciple of Dhlomo, who penned the following, as the master lay sick in bed in the last year of his life:

H. I. E., H. I. E.,
Speak to us again;
Whisper thoughts yet to
empower us
To live the Dream, to live
the Vision
Of a free Africa over again.[91]

Lewis Nkosi wanted Dhlomo to empower the cultural vision of the Sophiatown Renaissance writers, who were to be the culminating point as the

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[89] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Africa's Call", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 16, 1929; "Economics", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 6, 1930.

[90] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Thoughts on **The African Yearly Register**", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, October 17, 24, 31, 1931. Since the reviewed book was in many ways a summation of the African modernist vision in South Africa (in the sense of modernity not necessarily modernism), it perhaps appropriate here to indicate the historical causes of this new historical experience. The discovery of gold in Kimberley in 1868 and gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 led to the 'mineral revolution' which brought about a series of economic and social transformations: "The successive moves of the South African economy from the dominance of merchant capital to mineral exploitation, secondary industrialisation and monopolisation, although regionally varied and uneven, have profoundly affected not only the experience of daily life but also the ways in which men and women have understood their world and their highly differentiated place in it" (see: Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, "The politicis of race, class and nationalism", (eds.) Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, **The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa**, Longman, New York, 1987, p.2. A new historical text articulates the mineral revolution much more comprehensively and centrally in South African history: (Nigel Worden, **The Making of Modern South: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid**, Blackwell, London, Second Edition, [1994] 1995).

[91] Lewis Nkosi, "To Herbert Dhlomo", *Ilanga lase Natal*, October 22, 1955. In another poem, Nkosi prays that there should be more Dhlomos: "Poetry: To Grace", *Ilanga lase Natal*, August 6, 1955.

last generation of the New African intelligentsia conscious of the historical representation of modernity in South Africa.[92]

In an essay on New York City, Lewis Nkosi marvels at the bigness of the city which epitomizes the hugeness of United States itself: big houses, broad driveways, endlessly long river bridges. One characteristic that awed him was the restless movement of Americans, always in a hurry to get somewhere. Nkosi attributes this to the cheap availability of the automobile to everyone who may desire it. The tempo of time in Johannesburg is much slower. The "chaotic" nature of New York was very exasperating to him. He found the Greenwich Village more appealing because it is largely populated by artists, writers and intellectuals. Concerning Harlem, Nkosi expresses a hidden sense of ambivalence and incomprehension. The compelling image of New York he leaves one with is of James Baldwin sitting on the floor of a South African exile apartment in Harlem speaking and ferociously gesticulating, with him listening intently; of Loften Mitchell, an African American playwright, reading Peter Abraham's **Tell Freedom** in anger and sadness. The overall impression of New York is of a collection of individuals pursuing their singular individualism.[93] To the youngest member of the Sophiatown Renaissance, Nat Nakasa, Harlem had seemed like an exact mirror image of Sophiatown, when he first encountered it in the poetry of Langston Hughes and in the essays of James Baldwin. But on encountering Harlem in actuality, Nakasa sees the full cultural, social and political profile which bears only a slight or superficial resemblance to Sophiatown. In the eye of his imagination he associates Harlem with Malcolm X, who was assassinated a few months before his own suicide in the same city and in the same year. Nakasa's portrayal of Harlem is warm and empathetic, while the one of Nkosi is cold and indifferently detached. The radiance Nakasa encountered in Harlem was in many ways an extension of the radiance he had savoured in Sophiatown.[94] Both cities were expressions of black modernity in the twentieth-century.

In contrast to both black cities, Lewis Nkosi considers Paris, in many ways the center of exile culture and modernity in our century. Nkosi recounts how he

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[92] H. I. E. Dhlomo contributed a poem, "Lindiwe Laughs: A Play on Words" to the third issue of *Drum* (June 1951), a cultural and literary review that was to be the voice of the collective expression of the Sophiatown Renaissance. The inaugural issue of the review (March 1951) reprinted Countee Cullen's "Heritage" poem, which was editorially introduced as expressing the complex and beweldering thoughts of African Americans in the twentieth-century caught in the maelstorm of modernity (p.5). The American Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, of which Cullen was a member, had a profound influence on the South African Sophiatown Renaissance of the 1950s.

[93] Lewis Nkosi, "Encounter with New York", *The New African*, April 1962; "Harlem and the Village", *The New African*, May 1962.

[94] Nat Nakasa, "Johannesburg, Johannesburg" and "Mr Nakasa Goes to Harlem", **The World of Nat Nakasa**, (ed.) Essop Patel, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1985.

encountereed Paris as a schoolboy in Durban through the writings of Balzac, Dumas, Flaubert and Hugo's **Les Miserables**. Consequently, until he arrived in city for the first time in 1963, the Paris of his imagination was the city of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century. Interestingly and fascinatingly, to discover the Paris of the twentieth-century, Nkosi utilizes European-American literary modernism, specifically Ernest Hemingway's **The Sun Also Rises**, William Faulkner's **Soldier's Pay**, F. Scott Fitzgerald's **The Crack Up** and Henry James's **The Notebooks**, to navigate the cultural contents situated within its spatial boundaries. By 1965, with the assistance of his Afrikaaner compatriot, Breyten Breytenbach, he had fully explored Parisian modernity. At a party in Paris, he encountered the African American painter, Beauford Delaney. Reflecting on Delaney bedazzlement by Mazisi Kunene's dancing of a Zulu war dance, Nkosi writes this penetrative observation: "Now drawn to the madcap frolic of that Zulu dance Beauford Delaney looked both sombre and fervid, sad and ecstatic, already beginning to ask himself what Africa meant to him, which is to say, he had already started on that long journey into the dark night of the Negro psyche where every question leads to the nightmare of slave ships. But if there is anything that Paris teaches it is that exile is the modwern condition; and yet for the Negro and the African this is also the century of reunion here in the warm intimate hour of midnight, with the city slumbering in the darkness, exile spoke to exile, the South African to the doubly exiled American Negro, and out there at the cafe tables one knew there were others just as exiled. . ."[95] Even in a European exile, an African American and an African from South Africa could not escape their historical destiny of searching for and finding each other.

Solomon T. Plaatje's finding and importation of W. E. B. Du Bois into South Africa had not only intellectual consequence among Africans, in the sense of the emergence of the essay of the city, but also among the so-called Coloured intellectuals, writers and politicians, who invented the essay of intellectual history. The gestation of this formation occurred on the pages of *A. P. O.*, the newspaper organ of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman's party, African Peoples' Organisation ([formerly African Political Organization], A. P. O.).[96] Between 1910 and 1912, the *A. P. O.* situated itself at the center of the transmission process of the cultural politics of African American modernity. The

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[95] Lewis Nkosi, "Doing Paris with Breyten", *The New African*, December 1965.

[96] Plaatje held Dr Abdurahman in high esteem as is evident by the transcription of the 1913 Speech at the tenth annual conference of the African Peoples' Organisation in **Native Life in South Africa**, pp.152-171. There are important studies of the incomparable Abdullah Abdurahman and the African Poeples' Organisation: Richard van der Ross, **The Founding of the African Peoples Organization in Cape Town in 1903 and the Role of Dr. Abdurahman**, California Institute of Technology, 1975; Ian Goldin, "The reconstitution of Coloured identity in the Western Cape", **The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa**, (eds.) Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido,Longman, London, 1987, pp.156-181; Gavin Lewis, **Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics**, St. Martin's Press, 1987.

newspaper began its engagement with subject by editorially endorsing the views of a white South Africa who had visited the American South, and had argued that despite the fact that there was no analogy between 'the American Negro problem' and 'the South African Native question', because the African Americans speak English and are born into a 'white civilization', do not live in reserves, and are not 'governed by native customs or native tribal law', while Africans and Coloureds are 'into something little better than barbarism', two conclusions can be arrived at: because of the attainments of African Americans, the writer noted that the black race is capable of equalling the achievements of Europeans given a proper education and the right historical circumstances; the contact between the white race and the black race has led to segregation practiced by the former. Discrimination in South Africa, the newspaper noted, is a product of the fear of miscegenation which leads to the denial to Africans of the means that would make them equal to the Europeans.[97]

The publication in *A. P. O.* of the intellectual achievements and social attainments of African Americans was governed by the wish to show white South Africans what African people are capable of attaining under democratic conditions, when their social and civil rights are not severely curtailed. In other words, the appropriation of African American modernity by Africans was driven by political struggles inside South Africa not a diseased cultural craving as many white South African newspaper intimated or supposed.[98] *A. P. O.* was the first to undertake a very fundamental intellectual process, which hitherto had not been there, of extensive serialization of the writings of major African American political and intellectual figures, mainly W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington: Du Bois's "The Souls of White Folk", "Marrying of Black Folk", Booker T. Washington's "The Negro and the 'Solid'South", "On Race Problems", "Durham, North Carolina: A City of Negro Enterprise", "Statement to the International Congress on the Negro."[99] This widespread dissemination of African American modernity through reprints reached a high point with the 'New Natives' of the 1920s like H. I. E. Dhlomo, H. Selby Msimang, Mark S. Radebe, Jr ('Musicus'), Archie M'belle ('Enquirer'),R. V. Selope Thema (also as 'A Wayfarer'), the Old Guard like Allan Kirk Soga ('Resurgam') and Solomon T. Plaatje, all of whom worked together in *Umteteli wa Bantu* (The Mouthpiece of the People). The achievement of *Umteteli wa Bantu* was very extraordinary, not only did it construct the intellectual foundations of modern African culture, it also established the critical spirit and intellectual fiber that enabled the ANC

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[97] "American and African: Two Outstanding Conclusions", *A. P. O.*, February 12, 1910.

[98] There were recurrent bitter accusations by white Cabinet Ministers as well as white South African newspapers in the early part of the century that New Africans were suffering from an incurable 'Negrophilia'.

[99] W. E. B. Du Bois, October 8, 1910; Christmas Number, 1910: Booker T. Washington, February 12, March 12, 1910; November 5, 1910; June 3, 17, 1911; June 1, 1912: all in *A. P. O.* .

to survive the political trauma of being thrown between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Exile period.[100] In turn the newspaper founded and established the pattern of publishing intellectual and cultural portraits of outstanding African American figures, which *Drum* magazine in the 1950s was to focus on jazz figures like Art Tatum, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and other major exponents.

Although very much in sympathy with the intellectual and political position of Du Bois, nevertheless *A. P. O.* attempted to maintain a neutral equipoise between Washington and Du Bois. One intellectual who came out of this conjuncture was Harold Cressy who unfortunately died extremely young at the age of 26 in 1916. In all probability he would have become a formidable intellectual had he lived longer, for at the moment of his graduation as "our first Coloured B. A." in 1911 from Cape University (later University of Cape Town) Solomon Plaatje wrote a laudatory biographical sketch of him.[101] In the same issue of the newspaper Plaatje published a short essay by Cressy.[102] The first essay by Harold Cressy to appear in *A. P. O.* written at 21 years of age, which unfortunately only a fragment is legible, is concerned with giving a historical explanation to the differences in the consciousness of the self between African Americans on the one hand, and Africans and Coloureds, on the other: whereas in African Americans there is race pride and national feeling which leads to the study of the self, among South Africans he notices its absence. This he explains as the absence of interest in the welfare of the race.[103] with such a formulation and explanationCressy falls in the classic intellectual tradition of the time of explaining a negative absence in South Africa through its positive presence in America; America as an 'ideal model' for a pattern of historical development or intellectual engagement. Even

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[100] This is a sample of texts which were central in the construction of the moral fiber of ANC in its early history: Solomon Plaatje, "Native Congress", *Tsala ea Batho*, June 8, 1912; "Along the Colour Line: A Lecture", *Tsala ea Batho*, January 3, 10, 1914: R. V. Selope Thema, "The African National Congress: Its Achievements and Failures", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 14, 21, November 2, 1929; "The African National Congress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 14, 1931; "The Responsibility of Bantu Leadership", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, April 16, 1927; "The Responsibility of Bantu Leadership", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, January 21, 1928: H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Chief A. J. Luthuli: Pen Portrait of Today", Ilanga lase Natal, September 6, 1952; "To H. Selby Msimang: Weekly Letter", *Ilanga lase Natal*, April 29, 1950: H. Selby Msimang, "A Message to the Native National Congress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 24, 1924; "Big African Congress Controversy: Mr H. Selby Msimang Replies To Dr. Seme", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 18, 1933.

[101] Solomon T. Plaatje, "First Coloured B. A.", *Tsala ea Becoana*, August 19, 1911. Plaatje mentions that even though he had passed exams with distinction, Rhodes University College in Grahamstown and Victoria College in Stellenbosch refused to accept him because of his race. It was only through Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman's influence that Cape University accepted him.

[102] H. B. Cressy, "Sweating of our Coloured Teachers: Some Home Truths", *Tsala ea Becoana*, August 19, 1911.

[103] H. Cressy, "Lecture: On the Rise of the American Negro as a Landowner", *A. P. O.*, March 25, 1911.

though there were now and then muted resistance to such idealization, the desire for African American modernity was too strong that such opposition could ever be systematic or intellectually grounded. Cressy's observations were a prelude to the spectacular performance of the New Africans or 'New Natives' as some of them saw themselves.

By the 1910s there was a serious awareness by African Americans of the intellectual and political receptivity to their historical experience of modernity by Africans in South Africa. One evidence of this awareness is the exchange of letters between Allan Kirkland Soga, John Dube, Solomon Plaatje, Walter Rubusana, among others, on the hand, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, on the other hand. Booker T. Washington writes to Solomon Plaatje as editor of *Tsala ea Becoana* requesting him to publish his announcement about the upcoming International Conference on the Negro that was to be held at the Tuskegee Institute.[104] Washington states that the aim of the Conference as being about the effectiveness of education in uplifting black people, specifically about how to explore the pedagogical methods applied at Tuskegee and Hampton Institute could be of usefulness to the different historical conditions in Africa. All the important African newspapers associated with the perspectives of the New African intelligentsia carried positive evaluations of the Conference: Abdullah Abdurahman's *A. P. O.* through Solomon T. Plaatje's *Tsala ea Becoana* to *Izwe La Kiti* (Our Nation).[105] The coverage in the *Izwe La Kiti* is detailed and extensive.

W. E. B. Du Bois's conference on Universal Races Congress, which took place a year before Washington's, also involved the participation of South Africa, although it was not as extensively covered in African newspapers as that of his rival. Only Solomon T. Plaatje's *Tsala ea Becoana* seems to have made the most serious attempt publishing reports about the Congress.[106] This

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[104] Booker T. Washington, "To the Editor of *Tsala*", *Tsala ea Becoana*, July 15, 1911. The newspaper itself had earlier published an anouncement about the Conference from a Special Correspondent: 'The Bee', "International Conference on Afica", *Tsala ea Becoana*, February 11, 1911.

[105] Dr. Washington, "International Congress on the Negro: A Statement", *A. P. O.*, June 1, 1912. *A. P. O.* published an excerpt from Edward Wilmont Blyden's statement at the Conference in praise of Booker T. Washington, which could be taken to reflect also its position: "In the first place, I may say, I am ver proud that a member of the Negro race has risen to such a position as to be able to summon to his home the whole world to discuss with him the Negro question." Solomon Plaatje published a report in two successive weeks: 'Special Correspondent', "The International Conference on the Black Man", *Tsala ea Becoana*, June 1, 8, 1912. A Natal newspaper gave ample space to the proceedings: M. S. Evans, "Conference on the Negro", *Izwe La Kiti*, October 30, November 6, 13, 1912. Interestingly, the newspaper states that a presentation on Ethiopianism and the role of African American missionaries in South Africa was not presented because Booker T. Washington feared that it would offend South African European missionaries present at the Conference.

[106] "Universal Races Congress", *Tsala ea Becoana*, April 29, 1911; "Universal Races Congress", *Tsala ea Becoana*, May 20, 1911. Among the important presenters were Edward Wilmont Blyden

communication across the Atlantic probably reflects the growing relationship between Du Bois and Plaatje, and an indication of the similarity of their views about the situation and circumstance of the black world. At the this time, Plaatje was arguably the most consistently engaged South African intellectual with African and world affairs. Plaatje met with Du Bois at both the 1919 and 1921 Pan-African Conferences.[107]

The influence of Du Bois was not confined only to the generation of Solomon T. Plaatje and Allan Kirkland Soga, to whom **The Souls of Black Folk** had been a book of the moment, but it extended to the brash young intellectuals of the New African Movement around *Umteteli wa Bantu*, to whom Du Bois's **The Negro** (1915) was a book of their particular moment of the 1920s. **The Negro** had attempted to construct a collective vision through which the lived experiences of black people in Africa and in the diaspora could be interpreted and theorized within the moment of modernity. A very ambitious undertaking indeed! The writings of Du Bois exemplified to H. I. E. Dhlomo, H. Selby Msimang and R. V. Selope Thema what was so fascinating and exhilarating to them about African American modernity: theoretical and cultural inventiveness, perserverance, constant push of progress toward newer boundaries and territories, and constant challenge of the given. It is worthwhile quoting the observations of Selope Thema, perhaps the most theoretically daring and perceptive member of the New African Movement, about the situatedness of African Americans in America: "The South African Native is most interested in that part of American history which deals with the Negro. . . To the South African black man the American Negro is a kind of older brother to whom rightly or wrongly he looks for guidance and inspiration in the good things of modern civilization. . . 'These American Negroes are wonderful people, are they not?' asked a friend of mine as we left the Bantu Men's Social Centre last Friday evening. . . The wonderful progress of the Negroes was made and is being made in spite of all the difficulties which the accident of colour has created for them."[108] Although the article was a homage to Booker T. Washington for having struggled to create the Tuskegee Institute (thus concretizing his principle that black people should not let grievances overshadow opportunities) and to Dr. George Washington Carver for his scientific breakthroughs, the person who really exemplified the

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and John Tengo Jabavu, respectively "The African Program" and "The South African Native". It seems doubtful that Jabavu actually attended the Congress.

[107] A. P. Walshe, "Black American Thought and African Political Attitudes in South Africa", op. cit., p.70. Brian Willan mentions that Marcus Garvey and Solomon Plaatje addressed meetings and panels together: **Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist, 1876-1932**, University of California Press, 1984.

[108] By a Wayfarer [R. V. Selope Thema], "The Wizards of Tuskegee", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, October 15, 1927.

newness, the challenge, and the fearlessness of African Americans, or the New Negro, was W. E. B. Du Bois.[109]

This is evidently clear when it is recollected that many members of the New African Movement frequently quoted the following words from Du Bois as though it were their maxim, which in effect became their philosophical credo: "Across the colour line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smilimg men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong--limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn or condescension." [110] The preferance for this quotation was a clear sign that the appropriation of African American modernity by the New African Movement was not necessarily in replacement of their having to engage European modernity, especially for H. I. E. Dhlomo and Selope Thema, particularly the former given that he was creating dramatic and poetic works at the time of high European modernism. Whereas forty years earlier with Elijah Makiwane and Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba, the question of appropriating of African American modernity in matters related to political issues seemed to be uncomplicated, but given however that with H. I. E. Dhlomo and Selope Thema this appropriation was imbricated in the cultural politics of literary matters, the process of appropriation became much ambiguous and more complicated.

In a series of brilliant and dramatic articles, R. V. Selope Thema defined the epistemic field of the New African Movement: "The Message of the Charleston" and "Negro Progress in America" (1923); "The Purpose of Oppression", "Regeneration of Africa", and "The New South Africa" (1924); "Along the Colour Line" (1925); "Along the Colour Line" (1926); "The Death of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey", "Is Separate Nationality Possible?", "The Wizards of Tuskegee", and "The New Africa" (1927); "The Value of Evening Schools", "Along the Colour Line", "The Danger of the Policy of Differentiation", and "The New African" (1928); "Do We Make Use Of Our Opportunities", "The Friendship of Books" (1929).[111] Just before Selope

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[109] The New African Movement was very much aware of Du Bois's critique of Booker T Washington in **The Souls of Black Folk**.

[110] Cited in "By A Wayfarer" [R. V. Selope Thema], "The New African", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, July 21, 1928. Inspired by W. E. B. Du Bois, Selope Thema, Allan Kirkland Soga, and Solomon T. Plaatje wrote columns and/or articles under the by-line, Along the Colour Line; the first two authors in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, and the other in *Tsala ea Becoana*.

[111] All of these articles were written under his real name, R. V. Selope Thema or under "By A Wayfarer", and all of them appeared in *Umteteli wa Bantu*: "The Message of the Charleston", December 13, 1923; "Negro Progress in America", December 20, 1923; "The Purpose of Oppression", January 12, 1924; "Regeneration of Africa", July 5, 1924; "The New South Africa", August 16, 1924; "Along the Colour Line", February 7, 1925; "Along the Colour Line", August 21, 1926; "The Death of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey", September 17, 1927; "Is Separate Nationality Possible?", May 21, 1927; "The Wizards of Tuskegee", October 15, 1927; "The New

Africa", October 29, 1927; "The Value of Evening Schools", April 7, 1928; "Along the Colour Line", June 23, 1928; "The Danger of the Policy of Differentiation", June 30, 1928; "The New African", July 21, 1928; "Do We Make Use Of Our Opportunities", June 8, 1929; "The Friendship of Books", July 27, 1929. The historic importance of R. V. Selope Thema was apparent to later generations who in one form or another estimated his intellectual and political legacy: Jordan K. Ngubane, mentioned earlier in relation to African National Congress Youth League; Henry Nxumalo, the principle member of the Sophiatown Renaissance; Z. K. Mathews, the first graduate of Fort Hare in 1923, arguably the most renowned African professor in South Africa in the mid-century period, and a sharp antagonist of Max Yergan, when the latter later became a virulent anti-Communist and supporter of apartheid; and Mathew Nkoana, later the chief theoretician within the ideological front of the Pan-Africanist Congress during the Exile Period---most of his combative essays appeared in the exile-based South African journal, *The New African*. (Lewis Nkosi was its literary editor in the 1960s in London). Evaluating his best writings, Jordan K. Ngubane praises Selope Thema (1886-1955) in very superlative terms: "There is no doubt that Mr. Thema possesses one of the finest and most brilliant intellects in our political life today. . . To me, Mr. Thema is one of the greatest sons we, the African people, have produced. . . He has been consistent in fighting for the attainment by his people of what he believes is their rightful destiny and in this more than in anything else, lies his greatness" (see: "Three Famous African Journalists I Knew: John Langalibalele Dube, Ngazana Luthuli, Richard Victor Selope Thema", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, Second Fortnight in June/First Forthight in July/Second Fortnight in July, 1946). Despite this praise, Ngubane considers the twenty-years spent by Selope Thema as editor of *Bantu World*, after leaving *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1931 as a contributing editor, a national tragedy because he ceased to write any thing of major importance. This is a judgment difficult not to concur with, if one is familiar with Selope Thama's extensive brilliant articles of the 1920s in *Umteteli wa Bantu* as a member of the New African Movement. Selope Thema's lived life experience was a classic representation of the struggles, efforts, achievements, tribulations, determinations of the New African. It was not in jest, or mere allusion to the Wizard of Tuskegee, that he wrote in an autobiographical statement, however the problematical in its nature, which begun thus: "The story of my life may be summed up in the phrase, 'up from barbarism' (see: R. V. Selope Thema and J. D. Rheinallt Jones, "Our Changing Life and Thought: In South Africa", **Thinking With Africa**, (ed.) Milton Stauffer, Missionary Education Movement, New York, 1927 [emphasis in the original]). Note the allusion to **Up From Slavery**. Born in the same year as the discovery of gold in the Rand area (Johannesburg), Selope Thema's life was profoundly shaped by the maelstrom of South African modernity. Henry Nxumalo writes of him as a great journalist, emphasizing his role in the founding of the African National Congress in 1912 (see: "Masterpiece in Bronze: The Most Controversial Man in Black Politics", *Drum*, May 1953). Later Selope Thema broke away from the African National Congress, on the question of African Nationalism/Communism, to form a National Front. He subsequently joined the European Moral Re-Armament. Both Jordan Ngubane and Henry Nxumalo served their apprenticeship in journalism under the guidance of Selope Thema in the *Bantu World*, respectively in the 1930s and the 1940s. Writing an obituary, Mathew Nkoana quotes a passage from a speech made by Selope Thema in Switzerland, a year before his death: "The destiny of Africa is to save a crumbling civilisation. Africa, God-led, can become the cradle of new men and new nations" (see: "The Man Who Fought For Better Race Relations", *Golden City Post*, September 18, 1955). To Thema, the project of the New African Movement, which in many ways was an extension of the principles of the Enlightenment, was not an enterprise peculiar and singular to the South Africa of the 1920s, but was seen as the ever-lasting project of Africa itself. Z. K. Mathews emphasizes Selope Thema's wide and extensive experience in public affairs and his deep preoccupation with African nationalism in the context of reconciliation with whites (see: "Mr. R. V. Selope Thema", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, August 12, 1961). There can be no doubt that R. V.

Thema articulated the theoretical field force of the New African, there appeared in *Umteteli wa Bantu* an Editorial which sketched the political and philosophical boundaries of the Movement by arguing that neither Bolshevism (i. e., Marxism/Communism) nor Garveyism (i. e., "Africa for the Africans" movement or black nationalism) could be helpful in finding solutions to the 'Native Problem' in South Africa. Attacking the ideas of Trotsky and Lenin, denouncing the supposed destructiveness of Bolshevik methods, it lamented that a few Africans and a greater number among Coloureds had shown serious interest in Bolshevism. It inveighed against the incompatability between Bolveshism and the ethical principles of Christianity. Concerning Garveyism, it noted that both the Pan- Negro Congresses of 1919 and 1921 had castigated the movement of Marcus Garvey for its mistaken and false ideals. The Editorial concluded its fulmination by expressing its deep concerns about the presence of African Americans in Cape Town since it believed they were the conduits of the entrance of Garveyism into South Africa.[112] Perhaps this hostility towards Garveyism explains the reprinting on its pages of two scathing assessments of Marcus Garvey by W. E. B. Du Bois and Franklin Frazier.[113] It is noteworthy that African American intellectual and political battles had to play themselves out in the intellectual forums of the New African.

Selope Thema was one of the remarkable minds produced by South Africa in the twentieth-century.

[112] Editorial, "Bogeys", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, February 24, 1923. Jordan K. Ngubane in his essay, "Three Famous African Journalists I Knew", mentions that the newspaper was founded in 1920 by the Transvaal Chamber of Mines in order to combat Communism among Africans. This explains the anti-Communist tirades that recurrently appeared on its pages in the form of poems or articles; a sample of these: "Negro Bolshevism", July 7, 1923 (a denounciation of the fraternal relations between A. Philip Randolph's *Messenger* and Sidney Bunting's *The International*); "The Man from Moscow", November 3, 1923 (a denounciation again of Ivor Jones together with the atheism of Bolshevism, particularly its 'revile of God and mockery of Christian faith'); "There Are No Black Bolsheviks", May 9, 1931. Concerning the last, one is suppose to believe that the New African Movement did not know of, for instance, Albert Nzula, the first serious African Leninist. All the members of the Movement adhered to this ideological position enounciated in *Umteteli wa Bantu*. We have already seen the pronouncements of H. I. E. Dhlomo on socialism. There is no reason to believe that R. V. Selope Thema dissented from Dhlomo's views concerning Communism. What is profoundly disheartening about Dhlomo, Selope Thema, as first rate intellectuals, also true of H. Selby Msimang, is that they never seriously bothered to engage Marxism as an intellectual system and as one of the highest expressions of modernity. Their uncritical adherence to Christianity inhibited this serious engagement. Part of the enthusiasm of Jordan Ngubane for Selope Thema, beside his fierce belief in African nationalism, was his uncompromising anti-Communist stance.

[113] W.E. B. Du Bois, "Back to Africa", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 26, June 2, 9, 1923; E. Franklin Frazier, "The Garvey Movement", December 18, 1926. Marcus Garvey, "My Own Life Story", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, April 19, 26, 1924. A week before Garvey's piece was reprinted, there appeared an Editorial on him: "Cons and Pros of Marcus Garvey", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, April 12, 1924. All of these exchanges were part of the imprinting of the historical lessons of African American modernity on the intellectual psyche of Africans in South Africa.

In the first important article, "The Message of the Charleston", in which he sought to map the cultural space and the intellectual configuration of New Africanism, Selope Thema theorizes the proximity and similarity between United States and Africa indicated by the fact that the African American musical and dance form, the Charleston, which had become very popular in many parts of the world, was in fact an African derived form. He argues that the dance form, which in an African way involves the actitivity of the whole body, enabled Africans in America to survive slavery. Articulating one of the central themes that runs through practically all of his writings, that civilization must overcome barbarism, he saw the Charleston as mediating the dialectical relationship between these two historical processes. He argues that although the dance form originates from 'barbarism' (i.e., backwardness) in Africa, and since the black man is more spiritually endowed than the white man is and more in harmony with nature, it is nevertheless therefore a contribution to Western civilization. The point he makes here is that the very popularity of a black dance form among whites argues against segregation, racism and white superiority: the historical untenability and implausability of the colour line. Selope Thema marvels at the cultural practices of African Americans in transforming an African derived dance form and making it popular all over the world.

This marvelling leads him in "Negro Progress in America" to meditate on an issue, which preoccupied all the New Africans, that of the historical lessons which African American modernity can impart to African modernity: what can the New African learn from the historical experience of the New Negro. Arguably Selope Thema reflected on this much more consistently and much persistently than any other member of the New African Movement. Here he remarks that the development of United States into a powerful country, her cities, skyscrapers and strong economy, is one of the wonders of modernity. The cosmopolitan nature of the population has made the creation of wealth possible, and the commonality of language between blacks and whites has given them common ground for the unity of purpose and action. The real wonder of wonders for Selope Thema, constituting his second central theme, was the progress made by African Americans since the emancipation, which had occurred just barely fifty years earlier. He enumerates the items which indicate this progress and advancement: ownership of land, several Universities, colleges and newspapers. What in his estimation made this progress possible in such a short time was the formation of black organizations, schools, churches and social services. Consequently for him the real reasons for progress were religion, education and good living. Moving to the third central theme of his writings, Selope Thema argues that because they did not turn against God, found faith in religion and God, and believed in God's great power, African Americans not only survived slavery, but were able to forge a will that enabled them to progress. Here he compares African Americans to the Israelites of old. One of the other reasons he itimizes as having made the progress of African Americans possible was the

philanthropy and liberality of white people. Concluding this piece, which reflects the ideological perspective he was to hold for the next thirty years of his life, he writes: "What is the message of this progress to us in Africa [not only South Africa]? This is the question which I wish every reader to ponder as he peruses this article. The message is; What the American Negro has done and is doing we can also do in this sunny land of ours. In spite of the difficulties placed in our way we can forge our way through until our struggle shall win [with] many white men [and women] to our assistance." The remarkableness of this piece does not reside only in these acute observations, some of which are problematical especially concerning religion, but also in Selope Thema's international vision in comparing modernization experienced by African Americans with that of the Japanese nation. He states that although Japanese modernity has very impressively forged forward much further than African American modernity, it is not spectacularly dazzling as the former, precisely because Americans of African descent had to begin from zero ground of slavery whereas the Japanese were constructing from the level of tradition.[114] By alluding to Japanese modernity, Selope Thema was in effect showing that historical lessons of development, especially in the context of world modernity, went beyond racial ontologies and identification(s).

In the following article, "The Purpose of Oppression", which takes African Americans as an instance of the principle that the purpose of oppression is to make one search for greater achievements, R. V. Selope Thema sought to instil in the thinking of South African Talented Tenth the African American spirit of progress and quest for civilization. That obstacles and persecutions can be overcomed, that oppression and difficulties can be turned around to promote progress and accelerate its movement, that the world's greatest people went through the crucible of suppression and oppression, despite this they were builder's of civilization, Selope Thema believed these were the historical lessons that the persecution of Jews in modern times and antiquity held for Africans and the Africans in the diaspora. Despite persecutions, humiliations, and difficulties, Jews more than any other people in the world, had made great contributions to human progress in the fields of science, philosophy, music and philanthropy. Likewise, to Selope Thema, African

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[114] Given that South Africa was then a conquered country under British imperial domination, despite the Union of South Africa of 1910, for Selope Thema in this particular instance modernization was synonymous with Westernization. Karatani Kojin has argued for the historical distinction, if not complete separability, between these two historical process(es) in the instance of Japan: **Origins of Modern Japanese Literature**, trans. Brett de Bary, foreword Fredric Jameson, Duke University Press, Durham, 1993, p.2; "One Spirit, Two Nineteenth Centuries", **Postmodernism and Japan**, (eds.) Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, Duke University Press, Durham, 1989; "The Discursive Space of Modern Japan", special issue of *Boundary 2* ("Japan in the World"), vol.18 no.3, Fall 1991, (eds.) Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian; "1970=Showa 47", *Polygraph* 2/3 1989 (Versions of the Present: Modernism/Postmodernism).

Americans had emerged triumphantly from slavery to make singular contributions to human civilization. Paying homage to Booker T. Washington, he argues that he led African Americans to progress and salvation. This quest for progress led to moral, intellectual and economic development of African Americans. Like Jews, African Americans did not develop hatred of the oppressors, but rather, showed qualities of kindness and humanism, characteristics of African origin. Selope Thema concludes by voicing the familiar refrain that Africans in South Africa should follow the lead of African Americans in the direction of progress and civilization.

As though taking the cue from this short essay by R. V. Selope Thema in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, a month later, on February 22, 1924, *Ilanga lase Natal*, also representing and reflecting the emerging New African perspectives (as R. R. R. Dhlomo's dramatic intervention will make clear in a moment), intervened on the question of modernity and progress in South Africa. The Editorial remarked that the quest for progress should be guided by historical forces given impulse from within (i.e. original undertakings) rather than from without (i.e., imitative strivings).[115] It adviced that rather than being imitative of Indians or Europeans, Africans should approach the question of modernity methodically: exercising thrift and adopting good habits of industry. This approach, it believed, would connect the African to her soul and would consequently be a part of herself. It argued that progress and development should be built on strong foundations of character and industry. Progress itself cannot be measured by observing Africans utilizing or possessing appendages invented by Europeans; Africans themselves should invent, create, discover, or bring forth the necessary processes or instruments that would make modernity possible. Taking a direct aim at Garveyism, it stated that those Africans who prayed or believed Marcus Garvey and African Americans would come and liberate them from oppression are deluding themselves. Reflecting a realistic attitude, as though distancing itself from Selope Thema's enthusiasm for African Americans, the *Ilanga lase Natal* Editorial argued that the great progress and achievement of African Americans had been realized in historical conditions distinctively different from those then prevailing in South Africa: the traditions and histories of African Americans were different from those governing the lived experience of Africans in South Africa. Progress is real when accompanied by inward development. Again as though directing a riposte at Selope Thema, it brashly concluded that the slogan to organize in order to intervene in modernity was insufficient, one must organize effectively.

Continuing to theorize and articulate his historical construct of the New African, in "Regeneration of Africa", an essay which directly alludes to Pixley ka Isaka Seme's (founder of the African National Congress) classic essay of the same name written at Columbia University in 1906 two decades earlier, R. V.

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115 "From Within or Without?", *Ilanga lase Natal*, February 22, 1924.

Selope Thema celebrates the actual embodiment of the New African in the actual person of Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey of Gold Coast (Ghana), who was then on a visit to South Africa in 1924. Dr. Aggrey and Dr. Jesse Jones constituted the Phelps Stokes Education Commission examining African education in various African countries.[116] Having attended a lecture given by Dr. Aggrey, Selope Thema reported on the contents of his address: that he expressed appreciation of the missionaries in Africa, and thanked the Europeans for uplifting and civilizing Africans; that he appealed for understanding between the races; that he implored the Europeans to give Africans a chance to prove themselves; that he praised the Dutch Reformed Church; that he declared that Africa was extending her hand to God; that he appealed to Africans to be patient and love Europeans; and in conclusion that he had declared that Europeans were in Africa not in order to exploit Africans but rather to uplift them. Not withstanding these banal observations and unoriginal thoughts, what was so extraordinary about the encounter between

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[116] Pixley ka Isaka Seme's essay is a great manifesto calling for the renewal of Africa through acquisition of knowledge, requesting re-connection of the past and and the present through a serious study of ancient African civilizations, as well as establishing a political practice in the present: "The giant is awakening! From the four corners of the earth Africa's sons [and daughters], who have been proven through fire and sword, are marching to the future's golden door bearing the records of deeds of valor done. . . By this term, regeneration, I wish to be understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence. The basic factor, which assures their regeneration, resides in the awakened race-consciousness. . . The regeneration of Africa means that a new and unique civilization is soon to be added to the world. The African is not a proletarian in the world of science and art" (see: "The Regeneration of Africa", *Royal African Society*, vol.5, 1905-6, my emphasis). This is plausibly the founding text of the New African Movement, a text which inspired the intellectual production of Solomon T. Plaatje's **Native Life in South Africa** and Silas Modiri Molema's **The Bantu: Past and Present**, among others. Although Pixley ka Isaka Seme does not specifically articulate the trope or metaphor of the "New African" in his essay, his call for an awakened race-consciousness was influenced by the first movement of the great debates on the "New Negro" between 1895 and 1904 which were largely taking place in Harlem while Pixley was at Columbia University; the second movement of the "New Negro" between 1920 to 1930 which is partially actualized in Alain Locke's text of 1925, **The New Negro**, is what perhaps inspired R. V. Selope Thema. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. argues in a magisterial essay for the presence of the two moments in the construction of the concept of the New Negro (see: "The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black", *Representations*, 24, Fall 1988). Similar to what Gates has indicated to have been the historical project of the New Negro, Seme called for the reconstruction and (re)presentation of African heritages through the process of renewal. The direct connection between these two early architects of New Africanism, can be retrospectively extrapolated from Selope Thema's homage to Pixley ka Isaka Seme as the founder of the African National Congress: "How Congress Began: The Life of the Late Dr. Pixley Seme", *Drum*, July 1953: "That Pixley ka I. Seme was a man of action and a patriot no sane man can deny. But his weakness, and that perhaps is the weakness of every brilliant man, was that he believed in his own mind only, and therefore could not listen to the advice of other men." By calling attention to Dr. James Aggrey's presentation "Regeneration of Africa", Selope Thema is not living up to his intellectual responsibilities. 'Aggrey of Africa' was a person governed by a profound sense of ethics, but he had no sense of the new politics of engagement required by the experience of modernity.

James Aggrey and South Africa is that he left a very deep impression on Solomon T. Plaatje, Selope Thema, John Dube and H. I. E. Dhlomo, from *Ilanga lase Natal* to *Umteteli wa Bantu*: this is the true enigma of James Aggrey's sojourn in South Africa.[117] One explanation would be that Dr. James Aggrey was seen as a true New African who was a product and synthesis of the best in the New African and the New Negro.

The Anglo-Boer War of 1902 (the 'South African War') in R. V. Selope Thema's estimation partly created the historical conditions in which "The New South Africa" emerged. This was the new world of the 'wireless miracles' which left behind the world of the Voortrekkers. Clearly alluding to the historical experience of modernity, which was rapidly transforming the country, he hopes that the New History of the New South Africa with new colleges and training institutions would be the order of the day replacing the Old History of South Africa which consisted mainly of bloodshed, dispossession and oppression. The New History would be centered around Christianity and Western Civilization. Selope Thema saw Fort Hare, then the only black University in South Africa, regenerating African societies and cultures by carrying forth the battlecry of learning replacing that of bloodshed; leading the way in the field of culture and education. To him, education, Christianization and evangelization among the African people would ensure against future wars. Fort Hare would be the center of human upliftment and civilization. The spirit of a New South Africa was growing. Expressing his gratitude for the European 'enlightenment' of Africans, he warns that Africans would be commiting suicide if the new opportunities of education were not put into positive advantage. This essay also alludes to Pixley ka Isaka Seme's on the regeneration of Africans; Selope Thema held Pixley in high estimation as is evident in his essay on the founding of the African National Congress.[118] This article on "The New South Africa" (an idea not first invented in the 1990s) exemplifies the paradoxical nature of Selope Thema's brilliant writings: profound historical insightfulness is marred by fatalism and defeatism. This could not be further from the intention and project of Pixley's optimism.

In "Along the Colour Line" Selope Thema laments that while Africans in America are making civic strides and wealth, and in the process contributing

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[117] This is directly evident from the obituaries of Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey which appeared in 1927, three years after his vist: Solomon T. Plaatje calls him a great son of Africa, a great scholar and compares him to Edward Wilmont Blyden (see: "The Death of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 17, 1927); R. V. Selope Thema remembers him as a representation of a New African par excellence, who had humane qualities, and interpreted Europe to Africa and Africa to Europe (see: The Death of James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 17, 1927); *Ilanga lase Natal* eulogizes him as a great African, who can be compared to Hannibal, and whose passing was mourned on three continents (see: "Great Africans", June 22, 1928).

[118] R. V. Selope Thema, "How Congress Began", *Drum*, July 1953.

to culture and civilization, in South Africa they are prevented by whites through oppression and domination from making such a contribution. He believed that the African intelligentsia were poised to create a splendid civilization in Africa. After all, he argued seriously, Africans were made in the image of God. In an Editorial *Ilanga lase Natal* argued that since African Americans were a very religious people, who took education seriously, and had a great instinct for music, it was with Negro Spirituals that they made the greatest contribution to civilization and culture.[119] A few months later the newspaper reflected on the distinctive qualities of the New African which might enable her to make a similar contribution to world culture and civilization as the New Negro was in the process of doing.[120] Speaking of the emergence of a 'New Woman' and a 'New Native' who were challenging the inequality, oppression and the difference between the European and the Africa, by means of education, thrift and work, the newspaper lamented that the Europeans were condemning this New African in preferance for the 'Old Native' they could easily dominate and oppress. This New African, it enthused, was made by the town life experience since she had been coerced to work in them. This new lived experience enabled her to become urbanised and overcome backwardness. The 'New Woman' was being made by the industries and the labour centers of the country which were making her a detribalized new person. Dismissing the hostility of whites, *Ilanga lase Natal* argued that the New African was lessening the difference between her and the European, thereby making it less likely that there would be severe misunderstandings between them. The newspaper implied that by entering deeper into modernity, and acquiring all the necessary skills combined with the acquisition of knowledge, the New Woman would in time achieve the great cultural works and practices attained by New Negroes. With this new articulation, *Ilanga lase Natal* was shifting from its previous position which had emphasized the inherent incompatability in the historical positionings of African Americans and Africans in South Africa.

Also looking askance at the hostility and anxiety of white South Africans to the emergence of the New African, in "Is Seperate Nationality Possible?" Selope Thema sought to reassure his white compatriots by indicating that it was in the interests of white civilization that the urbanized and detribilized African stopped living in the old ways of life. After all, he added, the black man had been forced into the life of the white man by the historical forces which had been unleashed by the exploitative and dominative intrusion of the Europeans into Africa history. Christianity and education had accelerated the process of induction. The induction had broadened and widened the outlook of the New African beyond the 'tribal' parameters: in other words, by being thrown into the whirlwind of Western civilization, the African had ceased developing along the lines defined by the historical logic of her

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119 "Negroes and Native Africans", *Ilanga lase Natal*, June 18, 1926.
120 "The New Native", *Ilanga lase Natal*, August 6, 1926.

dominated societies. The nature of African progress was no danger to European civilization. In a later essay, "The New Africa", he re-assured white South Africans that Africa was changing, leaving behind paganism, darkness and the jungle, that was giving way to civilization and settlement. The new telegraphic communication systems were being built across Africa in order to overcome the formidable enemy of darkness always lurking in the middle of the continent. Presenting himself as a student and ideologue of Heart of Darkness, Selope Thema argued further that since Africans were converting into the religion of Christ and were hostile to Ethiopianism, there was no basis for white hostility and fear.[121] The young Africans were against the old order of things, especially tribalism, and were working for the realization of African unity.

In "The Value of Evening Schools" R. V. Selope Thema shows why the New African subscribed to the Nietzschean slogan: "Knowledge is power". For the New African the power of white people is in their knowledge of things, a power that controls the land and sea, as well as speed all over the world. Much more relevantly to her, knowledge emancipates one from superstitious beliefs, and makes it possible to set one's mind on the great things God has made. Selope Thema argues that through the power of knowledge one can only take a rightful place among civilized beings. The power of knowledge can be acquired through education. Reverting to his central theme, he states that the ignorant keep back the clock of progress, and where ignorance reigns supreme, progress is impossible. Alluding to Du Bois concept of the 'veil' (also in **The Souls of Black Folks**), he writes that the veil of ignorance must be lifted. All of these propositions are in preparation for his thesis that since African Americans achieved progress through the agency of the Evening School, the principal example being Booker T. Washington educating himself through the Evening School, likewise Africans should wholeheartedly embrace this form of education. Just as African Americans recognized after Emancipation that knowledge is the key to the door of freedom, so the New African should take the power of knowledge seriously. Selope Thema ends his observation with a long quotation from **Up From Slavery**.

In "Along the Colour Line" (1928), Selope Thema observes that achievements of Roland Hayes, Florence Mills and Dr. George Washington Carver are classic illustrations that knowledge is power.

"The Danger of the Policy of Differentiation" evinces the influence and inspiration of W. E. B. Du Bois's **The Negro**, in its argument that Western

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[121] Some of the writings of R. V. Selope Thema are characterized by what W. E. B. Du Bois called 'double-consciosness' (in **The Souls of Black Folks**), here of a different order in that it was brought into being by the need to address a dominant and hegemonic white public sphere, with whose many Manicheaen ideological affiliations he identified, and that of the small African intelligentsia which was attempting to rethink anew their historical situatedness.

civilization is not exclusively the product of European endeavour alone, since it has benefited from the accumulated African and Asian genius: Europe improved on the foundation laid down by Africa and Asia. Selope Thema was adamant in his belief that Western civilization is a cumulative achievement of mankind, 'the gathering achievement of the human race'. This is the reason why it was unproblematic for him to accept the hegemony of Christianity and Western civilization, since not only were they historical processes of modernization, the African genius had been central in their construction. This intellectual presentation was in fact a political argument against Hertzogian segregationist policy which argued that white South Africans were the representation of Western civilization while Africans were a product of barbarism. The barbarism that Selope Thema sought to escape was different from the barbarism that President Hertzog attributed to Africans, for the former his conception of barbarism was a historical construct that would be eliminated by historical progression and modernity, for the latter it was an invariant constancy of 'black' nature beyond the possibility of redemption.

Against this racist ideology which was prevalent among the majority of white South Africans, Selope Thema in "The New African" was anxious to put forth the philosophical and the historical project of the New African in the process of being re-made and re-moulded by historical forces of modernity. In South Africa, he proposes, Africans are the most backward and most oppressed people; it is this backwardness that leads to their being exploited. In a similar circumstance to that of the Jews, they seek to overcome their position of servitude in order to play a role in the re-emergence of African civilization. Knowledge is the fundamental quest of the New African. Nothing can prevent her, either racism nor segregation, from appropriating the intellectual and spiritual heritage of humanity. The inquisitiveness of the New African leads her to the past histories of nations in the forefront of modernity in order to understand how and why they are where they are: studying figures like Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Darwin, Shakespeare opens a way to an understanding of present history. Because of this quest for knowledge, the New African is emerging from oppression with vitality and vigour.

With "The Friendship of Books", R. V. Selope Thema concludes his reflections on the historical situation and moment of the New African by re-emphasizing the importance of knowledge as an instrument for attaining political power.

Other African intellectuals participated in the disquisition on the phenomenon of the New African: Solomon T. Plaatje, Josiah Mapumulo, H. M. Maimane, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, H. I. E. Dhlomo, Walter Nhlapo, Anton M. Lembede, R. R. R. Dhlomo, and Albert Luthuli. In his intervention Plaatje expressed his admiration for a series articles in *Umteteli wa Bantu* by

"Resurgam" (at the time he was not aware that it was the pen name of Allan Kirkland Soga) on the 'Cult of Race Leadership', and lamented the fact that he had not been aware of the newspaper in its first three years of existence since it was founded while he was abroad in America.[122] In contrast to R. V. Selope Thema who was principally concerned with philosophizing and theorizing on the historical emergence and situatedness of the New African, Plaatje sought to understand the political practices of the New African. He felt that whereas the common people, read the Old African(s), were willing to make sacrifices for the collective good, and were predisposed to follow the leadership of their chieftancy, the detrabilized African (the 'New Native'), had no recognized national leaders, and in her political imagination associated an effective leader with wealth and material possessions. In other words, New Africanism called for a new political practice and a new form of political representation. In several articles Plaatje implied that the reason for refusing the position of President-General of the African National Congress (ANC) when it was several times offered to him was the fact that the New African wanted a political leadership of independent economic standing (i.e., lawyers and doctors): they gave cognisance only to a materially well to do leader. Instead of celebrating the potential possibilities of the New African as Selope Thema had done, Plaatje expressed serious reservations. Two pieces written in 1929 Plaatje conveyed his absolute negativism to this new historical formation. In "The New Native and the New Year" he accused the New African of a disbelief in tradition and custom, of being gullible to new things which have no real depth; going further, he not only accused the New African of being the exemplification of the spirit of lawlessness and egoism, the "New Native' was incapable of distinguishing between good and bad, besides possessing a blurry mentality.[123] Elongating his list of indictments

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[122] Sol. T. Plaatje, "The Leadership Cult: From Another Angle", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, March 14, 1925; see also the letter of April 25, 1925 from Plaatje to *Umteteli wa Bantu*. This statement would seem to contradict Les Switzer and Donna Switzer's observation that in its first three months of its existence (May to August 1920), Plaatje and John Dube's names appeared on the masthead of *Umteteli wa Bantu* as joint editors (see: **The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho**, op. cit., p.110). Allan Kirkland Soga who was 58 years old when the newspaper was founded, was pulled from retirement into one of its principal contributors, by the provocative and insightful articles written by R. V. Selope Thema (see: A. K. S.--Resurgam, "The Cult of Race Leadership", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, April 14, 1923).

[123] Sol. T. Plaatje, "The New Native and the New Year", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, January 12, 1929. Custom and tradition had a deep fascination for Plaatje as can be seen from his various contributions on African chiefs in T. D. Mweli Skota's **The African Yearly Register**. Also Silas Modiri Molema was later in his life to be also fascinated by chieftancies: after writing his brilliant debut at age 29, **The Bantu---Past and Present**, and on health (**Life and Health**, 1924), he wrote on **Chief Moroka** (1951) and **Montshiwa: 1815-1896** (1966). Beside this affiliative relationship between them, Z. K. Mathews reported in "Our Heritage" series that Dr. Molema was preparing a biography of Solomon T. Plaatje (see: "Solomon T. Plaatje: 1877-1932", *Imvo Zabantsundu*, June 24, July 1, 1961). A riviewer of **Life and Health** writes: "If the Natives are to progress they must have such knowledge as is given in this little book so that they may know how to conduct themselves in the midst of the glare of civilization with its many pitfalls to

against the New African, in "'The Good New Times' and the 'New Native'", Plaatje pressed on castigating his/her wanton indifference and lethargy which reflected a lack of serious political commitment. Moving from political castigation to 'personal attack', he accused the New African of alcoholism.[124] The basic criticism of Plaatje was that the 'New Native' lacked political education and political awareness. What irritated Solomon T. Plaatje was that the New African was oblivious of the profound political dangers represented by the Hertzog government to the collective existence of Africans. It was Hertzog's government in the 1920s, especially through the Hertzog Bills of 1936, which began instituting apartheid, even it was only in 1948 that it was officially recognized as such.

Writing in a column entitled "Gleanings from the 'New Africa'" in *Ilanga lase Natal*, Josiah Mapumulo sought to indicate how the scientific methods and knowledge utilized by African Americans in agriculture could also be of benefit to Africans. Arguing that the African is essentially a person of the soil, to whom such an undertaking is a real calling, he argued that there should be more training schools as well as new agricultural practices for African agriculturists. He argued that the teaching of new scientific methods in food production should be accompanied by the deepening of the awareness of the doctrines of Christianity.[125] In his understanding and conceptualization, the making New African was to forged by combination of Christian ideology and scientific rationality, however problematical this juxtapositioning may have appeared to others. It may perhaps have been Mapumulo's wish to construct an ideology for the making of the New African that led him to write a series essays in the newspaper in the 1920s and early 1930s which were philosophical meditations on the history of the Christian Church. But much more relevantly, his preoccupations were an indication that the making of the New African need not be only the privilege of towns, the concentrated spatial zones of modernity, but also in the country-side the African could be re-made despite the regressive pull or resistance of tradition and custom. As

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the unwary" (see: *Ilanga lase Natal*, July 25, 1924). It would not be too rash to place Dr. Molema at the center of the New African Movement.

[124] Sol. T. Plaatje, "'The Good New Times' and the 'New Native'", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 9, 1929.

[125] Josiah Mapumulo, "Agriculture", *Ilanga lase Natal*, September 2, 1927. In a letter to the newspaper marveling at the work of Dr. Carver at the Tuskegee Insitute, Mapumulo quoted a statement by Louis Pasteur as exemplifying the wonderment and humbleness of the African American scientist: "The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the work of the Creator. I pray while I am engaged in my work in the laboratory" ("A black Scientists", *Ilanga lase Natal*, September 7, 1928). An Editorial, praising Booker T. Washington, Mary McLeod Bethune, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Countee Cullen, Dr. Carver, Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson and others, attributed their achievements to their Christian ethics (see: "Obligation to Natives", *Ilanga lase Natal*, July 13, 1928). Another Editorial reflecting on the relations between blacks and whites in America and in South Africa, assigned their constant improvement to the following factors: Christian teaching, purposeful education and philanthropic labours (see: "Negro Life in the U. S.", *Ilanga lase Natal*, October 8, 1926).

though in unison, but with a differently accentuated inflection, H. M. Maimane concurred with Selope Thema that the New African gives a new interpretation of the Bible which is not dogmatic: "In the first of his articles on The Problem of African Evangelisation, Mr. R. V. Selope Thema tells us that 'a new type of African has come into being' which has a new thought and attitude towards the Bible--new attitudes of questioning and examining some of the passages and characters in the Bible."[126] Maimane saw this position of Selope Thema as similar to his put forth in the book, **Bantu and Christianity**. He saw this interrogation as a good thing as it would lead to a greater spiritualization of the New African.

For Pixley ka Isaka Seme the tasks of the New African were the revitalization and re-invigoration of the then crisis-ridden African National Congress so that it could be central in the construction of the foundations of the New African Nation.[127] Besetted by the ineffectual leadership of its founder, Seme himself, the organization was veering and teetering towards disintegration and self-destruction. Exhorting the nation to make the ANC truly an official representation of all Africans, he proposed six principles to be amended to the organization's Constitution: more representation of women with more responsibilities given to them; appeal to all African Churches to join the organisation; the finances of the organization would be placed under the guidance of Chiefs; the organization to strengthen its support among the masses; delegates will form a Lower House of the organization, and the Chiefs the Upper House; and one of the paramount Chiefs would be elected to be the Head of the Upper House. These amendments Pixley hoped, would make the organization take a look of permanence, a clear definition of its tasks and aims, as well as a deep entrance into the aspirations, wishes and hope of the masses. He appealed to all segments of the organization to work collectively and consultatively in constructing a New African Nation.

The ability of the African National Congress to construct a mechanism of historical correctives within its body politic over decades of tribulations, hardships and missteps was partly made possible by the constructive/withering appraisal that periodically appeared from the New African intellectuals: one of the most famous was by R. V. Selope Thema. In "The African National Congress: Its Achievements and Failures, I, II, III", he maps the "tragic and fascinating history" of the organization, indicating the failure of African leadership and the problematical nature of its organizational structure at two levels. Beginning by saluting the founding of the organization in 1912 as a historic achievement in and of itself, he argues that by the late 1920s the one fundamental problem debilitating the ANC was

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[126] H. M. Maimane, "The New African and the Bible", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 17, 1930. The article by R. V. Selope Thema appeared in two installments on March 29, April 5, 1930.
[127] Pixley ka Isaka Seme, "The African National Congress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 26, December 10, 1932; "The Nation's Call", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, December 31, 1932.

the undefined relationship between the national body and the four provincial (state) Congress which in theory were answerable to the leadership at the national level; the other critical problem was that the national constitution clashed with the constitutions of the provincial bodies.[128] With these criticisms R. V. Selope Thema was initiating a serious intellectual discussion of the political principles underlying the policy and vision and political practice of the organization; a political vision enshrined in the Constitution of the ANC by eminent New African lawyers such as Alfred Mangena, R. W. Msimang, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, since they were the principal intellectual authors of the document. In a further essay two years later, he lamented the failure of both the African National Congress and Clement Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa to protect the people from the ravages of white oppression and domination: he criticises the authoritarian leadership of Dr. Seme which eschews teamwork; he characterizes the leadership of Seme as distinguished by three absences--- absence of unity in political leadership, absence of a concrete policy, and the absence of a serious programme of political action.[129] Selope Thema's close intellectual colleague in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, H. Selby Msimang, a few years later voiced similar criticism, but much more blatantly: "Dr. Seme believes that the Congress exists in himself as President-General and that the rest must follow as he directs." In effect, he was calling for the ousting of Dr. Seme as leader of the ANC, which came to pass thereafter.[130] Selby Msimang suggested alternative policies and programmes of action which could re-invigorate the ANC, which was then in a deep state of crisis and lethargy.

H. I. E. Dhlomo, who periodically launched sharp criticisms of the African National Congress, had a deeper conceptualization of the historical responsibilities of the emergent New African.[131] Dhlomo's reflections were

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[128] R. V. Selope Thema, "The African National Congress: Its Achievements and Failures I, II, III", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 14, 21, November 2, 1929; "The African National Congress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 14, 1931. That R. V. Selope Thema was twenty years later to be an uncompromising enemy of the ANC, aligning himself with dubious organizations, some of which were CIA anti-Communist fronts, does not in any obviate the legitimacy of his criticism at this time. For years, or more correctly for decades, R. V. Selope Thema served on Native Representative Council, a dismal and innocous institution controlled by white liberals in order to deflect the real struggle for political and economic power by African people. The Councils were founded on the suggestion of Dr. Aggrey of Africa, whose hegemonic hold on the political imagination of the New Africans is still an enigma that is still to be fully analyzed.

[129] R. V. Selope Thema, "The African National Congress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 14, 1931.

[130] H. Selby Msimang, "Big African Congress Controversy: Mr. H. Selby Msimang Replies to Dr. Seme", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 18, 1933. In an earlier essay, he had already registered his reservations about the direction of the ANC: "A Message to the Native National Congress", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 24, 1924. In this early essay Selby Msimang was calling for the radicalization of the political imagination of the ANC.

[131] Busy Bee [H. I. E. Dhlomo], "Problems Of The African National Congress", *Ilanga lase Natal*, October 17, 1953. Dhlomo was capable of writing a warm and an appreciative

prompted by his observation that whites in South Africa did not know anything about Africans, their cultures, philosophies, customs and traditions, they do not speak African languages and are unfamiliar with African poets and novelists, yet the Europeans had the gall to feel superior to them and in the process legislate segregation, apartheid and racism against black people. In this article he was concerned with indicating how the experience of modernity had transformed the historical position and consciousness of the self among Africans. Dhlomo points out that there are two types of Africans: ther urban African who is 'detribalized' and the rural African who is 'tribal': "There is a vast difference between an African child born of educated detribalised parents in Johannesburg, and one born of illiterate tribal parents in Zululand."[132] From this observation he constructs a tripartite structure of the African: the Tribal African; the 'Neither-Nor' African; and the New African. The Tribal African is a proud patriot, leading a Jekyl-and-Hyde existence, whose ideology is that of militaristic nationalism. The 'Neither-Nor' African is caught in between being neither wholly an African nor full Europeanised, ignorant of the fundamental issues concerning the country's racial problems, yet caught in the process of industrialization, evangelization, civilization and progress. He/She is Christian, capitalistic and trying to be cultured and progressive, yet hostile to socialism and progressive revolutionary ideas. For Dhlomo the New African is made largely of 'organised urban workers' who are prepared to be led to political action by progressive African intellectuals and political leaders. This New African wants a new social order of equality, in which values and issues are of primary importance, and not race or colour. In short, the New African wants to bring a democratic South Africa into being. What is remarkable about this conceptualization of the making of the South African New African is its anticipation of Frantz Fanon's formulation in **The Wretched of the Earth** of the three stages in which the awakened historical consciousness of the committed African goes through: assimilation, ambiguous self-knowledge and uncertainty, combativeness.[133]

In making criticisms of the African National Congress with the aim for its betterment and through it the realization of the political aspirations of the African people, R. V. Selope Thema, H. Selby Msimang, H. I. E. Dhlomo were very much conscious of their historical role as New African intellectuals. The question of the responsibility of African intellectuals in the transitional period of modernity preoccupied the imagination of Selope Thema And Selby Msimang in much of the 1920s, with H. I. E. Dhlomo intervening on the topic

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evaluation when he thought it was so deserved: Busy Bee [H. I. E. Dhlomo], "Congress Conference In Retrospect", *Ilanga lase Natal*, January 1, 1955.

[132] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Racial Attitudes: An African Viewpoint", *The Democrat*, November 17, 1945; "African Attitudes to the European", *The Democrat*, December 1, 1945.

[133] Frantz Fanon, **The Wretched of the Earth**, trans. Constance Farrington, New York, Grove Weidenfeld, 1968, p.222.

in later decades. Both Selby Msimang and Selope Thema initiate the discussion in 1925 as direct response to two attacks on the African intelligentsia: one by General Smuts in 1923, then Prime Minister, on the African National Congress as an organization of intellectuals who do not understand and represent the desires and political will of the majority of African people as well as that of the Chiefs; the other by General Hertzog in 1925, who was then also Prime Minister, that the real "Native Problem" was the over-education of African intellectuals which made them ashamed of their Africanness and their race, rather than what he supposed to be the so-called problem of the oppression of blacks by the white ruling order. In response to the articulated positions of the Generals, R. V. Selope Thema argued that white South Africans generally were not only unwilling to see educated Africans as representing the ambitions, aspirations and thoughts of the African people, but also preferred to ignore their voice and opinions. Recognizing the existence of differences among and between African leaders and intellectuals, he thought it was short-sighted on the part of white political leaders and European intellectuals to ignore these complexly articulated differential positions and thoughts on the pretext that they were not representative of the African people.[134] This presumptiousness and arrogance, he believed, would not enduce and enhance better relations between the races. Besides, he further reflected, the "ignorant" masses cannot speak for themselves, consequently they need an enlightened African leadership to put their positions forth. For Selope Thema there was no such thing as a "Native Problem", but rather the difficult race relations between blacks and whites. Since African intellectuals were for justice for all, irrespective of colour, creed or race, they would like to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis facing the country which would be acceptable to all. He appealed to the Prime Minister Hertzog to meet with African intellectuals to search for ways to resolve the crisis facing the nation.

Assenting to R. V. Selope Thema's position, H. Selby Msimang stated that African intellectuals are bound to African people by the bonds of patriotism and brotherhood. That is the reason why the African intelligentsia did not wish to be treated differently by the white government from the manner in which it delt with the African masses.[135] Supporting Selope Thema, Selby Msimang stated that there is no organization that supported the interests of intellectuals, distinct from those of the African masses: in other words, African intellectuals were struggling together with the African masses. The slowness in the movement of progress, which he saw as having occurred, was due to this conjoint struggle. He criticized the government for not only interfering in the relations between African intellectuals and the Chiefs, it was also meddling in the meetings and conferences of the African National Congress. H. Selby Msimang believed that the Prime Minister was making

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[134] R. V. Selope Thema, "The 'Intellectuals'", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 12, 1925.
[135] H. Selby Msimang, "Bantu Intellectuals", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 12, 19, 1925.

imaginary accusations and grievances against African intellectuals which would not in the least alter the fact that African people had awakened to their historical condition of oppression. Contemptously referring to the Prime Minister as wishing to keep the "nigger in his [and her] place", he made it clear that African intellectuals would not rest and cower until the conditions of servitude and slavery under which black people lived were eliminated. H. Selby Msimang also made it clear that not only was the African intelligentsia not ashamed nor detached from the African masses, it was determined to learn from whites in order to improve the life of black people; African intellectuals were well versed and determined to help their people.

Returning to the theme a month later, in another essay entitled "Bantu Intellectuals", the immediate object of H. Selby Msimang's dissatisfaction was the state's insufficient allocation of money for the education of Africans when their contribution in the form taxes was higher than that of Europeans who were receiving an exponentially much higher percentage of funds for education.[136] Speaking of the spectacular changes which were destabilizing certainties and certitudes of all South Africans, Selby Msimang expressed indignation that at the moment modernity was making serious demands from the people, the state was uninterested in the regeneration of the African people. He praised the missionaries for working independently of, and in isolation from, the state, and thereby able to bring about transformations of the life experiences of Africans, consequently making possible for Africans to have access to higher culture through education and Christianity. Msimang concludes by lambasting the short-sightedness of the state for refusing to invest in the education of Africans.

R. V. Selope Thema, as the central theoretical force of the New African Movement, was not only preoccupied with the racist illusions and oppressive practices of the ruling white class order and the white government, but was also profoundly immersed in the misapprehensions and delusions of African intellectuals and the African people. In a series of essays, he calibrated the ethical and social climate in which black people lived. [137] Principally concerned with the problem of "the moral degeneracy of the race", in "The Test of Bantu Leadership" Selope Thema writes that the African leadership must not only work to free African people from the tyranny of European oligarchy and exploitation, but should concern itself with their moral degradation and social degeneracy. Seeing moral degeneracy as threatening

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[136] H. Selby Msimang, "Bantu Intellectuals", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, October 17, 1925.
[137] R. V. Selope Thema, all of them in *Umteteli wa Bantu*: ; "The Task of Bantu Leadership", October 23, 1926;"The Test of Bantu Leadership", November 27, 1926; "Intellectuals and the Chiefs", September 3, 1927; "The Responsibility of Bantu Intellectuals", March 9, 1929; "Bantu Leadership", March 30, 1929;"Bantu Leadership", July 13, 1929; "The Duty of Bantu Intellectuals", August 3, 1929; "The Duty of Bantu Intellectuals", August 23, 1930; "Bantu Patriotism", September 6, 1930.

the extinction of African people, he saw the struggle against white oppression as inseperable from their particular social problems of violence, alcoholism and other forms of social degeneracy. He suggested that simultaneous with the masses' fight for economic and political emancipation, the African leadership should also tackle the question of moral strength and the moral character of black people: in other words, not everything bad can be blamed on the evilness of Europeans. While applauding the irreversible influence of Western civilization on African people, thereby bringing into being a New Life experience, he lamented the disintegrating and demoralizing forces of modernity which were corroding the ethical life and ethical system of African people. Like African Americans, Selope Thema argued that Africans also should adapt themselves to the New Environment, assimilating the best of Western culture while discarding or rejecting its bad components or manifestations. He emphasized again that like African Americans, Africans should accept Christian civilization, and in accepting the power of God, African people like the Israelites in olden times would be delivered from the house of bondage. In another article, "The Task of Bantu Leadership", urging unity of African people against the Hertzog Bills that he correctly saw as disefranchising of Coloureds and Africans of their already limited voting rights in the Cape Province, which could only lead to perpetual serfdom, segregation, destruction of African unity and negation of African progress, Selope Thema urged the African leadership to forge race unity among African people as a condition for struggle for freedom. For him, this quest for freedom, cannot be predicated on provincialism and tribalism.

Commenting on the conflict between the then declining Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (representing modernity) and the African Chiefs (who represented tradition and custom), R. V. Selope Thema in "Intellectuals and the Chiefs" urged the African intelligentsia to accept and identify with modernity. Seeing the Chiefs as possible instruments for the perpetuation of white domination and unintentionally showing his conservatism, he argued that the political aim of modernizing Africans was not so much the overthrowing of white power and rule, as the share in the administration of the country. He advocated equal opportunities for all. For him the forging of perspectives by African intellectuals and African political leadership was aimed at overcoming white rule as well as struggling against exploitation, oppression and the exercising of tyranny over African people. Concluding his reflections, Selope Thema stated that the historical experience of modernity required a wise intellectual and political leadership of the people rather than a clever one. This essay exemplifies one of the paradoxes of Selope Thema's intellectual imagination: the combination of historical insightfulness and political conservatism.

Two years later, in 1929, with the essay "The Responsibility of Bantu Intellectuals", written in the context of the conflict between the African National Congress and Bantu Union, an organization which sought to

supersede the former, R. V. Selope Thema broached directly the question of the historical affiliations of the African intelligentsia. Fundamentally, he saw the role of African intellectuals at that particular historical moment as bringing to the attention of political leaders the things that were detrimental to the interests of the African people as a whole. Consequently he conceptualized the role of intellectuals as that of criticizing and correcting the mistakes of both leaders and people which run counter to their historical responsibilities. Writing these powerful words, he elaborates: "A writer is a prophet, and his duty is not only to prophesy but also to rebuke, when necessary, the people for wrong doing; to criticise, when occasion demands it, the conduct and methods of the leaders of his race, and to point out the way of salvation." For him this utilization of the dissenting critical imagination was particularly appropriate of journalism and the Press, whose tasks he saw as for the benefit of the community. In his estimation the responsibility of both these institutions was to guide public opinion concerning the welfare of the people: both should be the voice of African people in so far articulating their grievances, as well as being their conscience in repramanding their doing wrong. The ultimate aim of Selope Thema was to forge a critical united front and co-operative action between the people and the intelligentsia.

In two major articles with the same title, "The Duty of Bantu Intellectuals", he sought to understand the nature of intellectual awakening among Africans given the hegemony of Western civilization and the arrival of modernity in South Africa. Although he felt that there had been progress in education among Africans, given the increasing number of doctors and lawyers, there had not been a corresponding intellectual awakening among the people. This lack among the people he explained as indicating the absence of creative political and intellectual leadership in the African intelligentsia circles which otherwise would have been a driving force in the spiritual awakening of the people. For him a historically authentic political and intellectual leadership would not only concern itself with grievances emanating from political and economic conditions, but would combine these with intellectual and spiritual matters profoundly affecting the people. Reverting to the familiar, but by now obsessional theme, that African modernity is unrealizable outside the parameters of Christianity, since without it it would merely be a reversion to barbarism, and looking at these matters within the purview of Western ecclesiastical history, his observation that religious leadership had made Israelites survive the trauma of the diaspora, that Martin Luther made possible the spiritual awakening of large segments of Western civilization, and that the Reformationists did not discard religion but adapted it to their particular purposes, Selope Thema felt that a religious leadership among the African people would not only make possible an intellectual awakening and spiritual commitment, but it would centrally make possible the emergence of creativity among the people. Selope Thema did not necessarily think that this call for commitment to religion contradicted or absolve intellectuals from the historical responsibility of

awakening the intellectual capacities and capabilities of the people in the struggle for freedom against oppression. He strongly believed that through institutions such as lectures, organizations, debates, reading and writing, African intellectuals would make this intellectual awakening among the people a concrete possibility. For him intellectual awakening among the people, stirring their imagination, was one of the indicators that a nation had achieved a civilization and was definitely on the move toward progress. Without doubt these observations and recommendations were impressed on Selope Thema's imagination by his study of the situation of African Americans inside American modernity. In the other essay of the same name, R. V. Selope Thema castigated African intellectuals for being preoccupied with the self rather than the welfare of the people. Calling for the spirit of sacrifice among the African people, Selope Thema saw Booker T. Washington as an intellectual paragon that should be emulated by African people. Selope Thema ended his reflections by observing that the African people, including most of the African intelligentsia and intellectuals, were in a situation of the slavery of ignorance, which only knowledge as power could overcome.

As though the historical lessons of African American modernity could not possibly exhaust themselves for the emergent African modernity in South Africa, Selope Thema in "Bantu Patriotism" exhorted his black compatriots to do what their cousins in America had done in art, literature, science and music: search and establish something new and original which would really reflect their new historical experience. He attributed the progress of African Americans to two things: the patriotism of the political and intellectual leadership and the sacrifice of the people themselves. Again Selope Thema saw the foundations of African American progress in America as having being been constructed by Booker T. Washington. Articulating patriotism as a creative force that enables a people to love themselves, he urged the political and intellectual leadership to cultivate it as one of the means of negotiating the passage from Old Life to New Life among Africans. He saw patriotism as not only making possible for African intellectuals to strive for a position of prominence in the world, it would also make real for organized mass of people to climb the ladder of progress. Championing patriotism, which would enable the forging of nationalism and the oneness/unity of African people, R. V. Selope Thema saw himself as part of the struggle against what he called "the demon of tribalism": "There is no freedom, no progress and no strength where tribalism reigns supreme. . . We can be proud of our tribal traditions and achievements but let us learn to suppress our tribal pride in the interests of our racial unity and solidarity."[138] He understood patriotism as a fundamental part of modernity.

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[138] Twelve years later in an editorial in *The Bantu World* (of which he was the editor), R.V. Selope Thema clearly argues why tribalism is the enemy of progress and freedom and hinders the development of race consciousness, and reverting to one of his central themes, he writes: "Many Africans have been impressed by, and have admired, the amazing progress made by

In the two articles on "Bantu Leadership" written in 1929, Selope Thema criticises the leadership of the African National Congress, of the Bantu Union and of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union as lacking an understanding of the kind of patriotism that would bring into being the unity of African people and thereby establishing a united front against the diabolism of General Hertzog. The African leadership had made itself an instrument of divisiveness: "The past history of our race is a history of feuds and divisions, and we know today that one of the reasons why we have no place in the land of our ancestors is the lack of unity which prevailed at the time of the white man's settlement in South Africa." He spelled out the reasons for the profound crisis of African leadership: the resurgence of tribalism; the leadership seeing itself as above reproach and criticism; the positioning among leaders of personal ambition above African unity; the failure of the leadership to bring about a development of a sense of national consciousness; a leadership which is disdainful of reconciliation, preoccupied with its selfishness and characterized by the total absence of real patriotism. Lacking a serious organizational structure, characterized by demagoguery, and not seriously concerned with the unity of the African people, R. V. Selope Thema had deep reservations about the capability of the then African leradership to overthrow the tyrany of European hegemony. He saw the task of New African intellectuals like himself as that of implanting an intellectual

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American Negroes, and have wondered why the African people in this country could not do the same" (see: "The Menace of Tribalism", January 3, 1942). For nearly two decades, from the early 1920s to the early 1950s, Selope Thema championed the model of African American modernity for African modernity in South Africa. This advocacy as editor of *The Bantu World* had profound implications since the newspaper had the largest circulation among Africans in the two decades Selope Thema was at its helm (see: Les Switzer and Donna Switzer, **The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho**, op. cit., p.122-124). R. V. Selope Thema, especially in the early 1930s allowed wide coverage in *The Bantu World* of the achievements of African Americans. The front pages were taken with themes and titles like: "Once Slaves, Now Rich and Free: Amazing Feat of Negroes to Inspire Bantu" (see: August 20, 1932). Many other examples could be adduced. For instance, the newspaper published an article comparing Harlem to Orlando (see: April 16, 1932). Selope Thema also gave wide coverage to African American popular culture. The fascination with African American modernity was so deep and extensive that the then Minister of Justice complained that some African intellectuals were suffering from the disease of "Negrophilia" (see: *The Bantu World*, September 10, 1932). The retirement of R. V. Selope Thema as editor in 1952 was acknowledged and given prominence by R. R. R. Dhlomo and H. I. E. Dhlomo in *Ilanga lase Natal* (August 23, 1952). On the 50th anniversary of the founding of *Ilanga lase Natal*, the brothers published a congratulatory piece by Selope Thema: "Message From Mr. Selope Thema", June 20, 1953. The Young Lions of the Sophiatown Renaissance in the 1950s, practicising their brilliant journalism in *Drum* magazine, held R. V. Selope Thema in high esteem. See for a representative essay on him by the Dean of the Sophiatown Renaissance Young Lions: Henry Nxumalo, "The Most Controversial Man in Black Politics", *Drum*, May 1953. As Henry Nxumalo indicates, by this time Selope Thema had become profoundly anti-Communist, and was in the process of leaving the African National Congress which he believed was under 'Bolshevik' control and influence.

culture in South African that would enable the African leadership to rise to the historical occasion and mission.

R. V. Selope Thema was not the only intellectual figure around *Umteteli wa Bantu* to preoccupy herself/himself with the historical role of 'organic intellectuals' in an African context. Although Selope Thema's critical vision on this issue was the deepest and the most persistent and the most rigorously articulated, it does not diminish or lessen the importance of the reflections of H. I. E. Dhlomo on the vicissitudes of creating an African intellectual culture in South Africa. The difference in intellectual affiliations between these two great intellectuals is fascinating and will be examined elsewhere. While Selope Thema's penetrative gaze was focused on American modernity and African American modernism, Dhlomo was to a large extent preoccupied with European modernity and European modernism; despite his preoccupation with European modernism, Dhlomo was profoundly aware of what Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke and others were doing in United States.[139]

H. I. E. Dhlomo started self-consciously to reflect on the role of African intellectuals in the 1940s when he had already left *Umteteli wa Bantu* and was working with his brother in *Ilanga lase Natal*.[140] In "Our Intellectuals", Dhlomo expresses dismay that African intellectuals show timidity, lack boldness, have no sense of commitment, in representing the views and interests of the dispossesssed and the oppressed. What surprises him is that liberal European intellectuals showed a deeper sense of commitment on behalf of the African people against the oppression than African intellectuals. Equally, he is perturbed that the political leadership of the African National Congress has constantly had to appeal to the African intelligentsia not only to join the organization but also to play an active role in giving a sense of direction to the organization. Dhlomo hopes that young African intellectuals will not only play an active role in shaping the organization, but will also bring 'constructive thoughts' and ideas that will help the African people find their sense of destiny as well invigorating the organization itself. In the same year as the writing of this essay in 1943, younger intellectuals like Anton

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[139] H. I. E. Dhlomo's profound preoccupation with the effectivity and nature of European modernist cultural practices is evident in the column, "Weekly Review and Commentary", which he wrote under pseudonymn of 'Busy-Bee' in *Ilanga lase Natal* between January 1, 1944 and January 22, 1955. In so far as his connection to African American modernists, like Countee Cullen, Dhlomo had a passion for Romantic poets; together with Langston Hughes, Peter Abrahams, and Oliver Walker, he served on a short-story competition panel established by *Drum* magazine for the year1953 (see: "Short Story Contest", June 1953).

[140] "Our Intellectuals", July 31, 1943; "Intellectuals and Congress", November 2, 1946; "Hamlet And Ourselves", September 18, 1948; "Dilemma of Intellectualism", July 21, 1951; "Intellectual Slavery", April 17, 1954. Although all these editorials were written anonymously, internal evidence indicates that in all probability they were written by H. I. E. Dhlomo, rather than by R. R. R. Dhlomo, both of whom shared editorial responsibilities.

Lembede, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Jordan Ngubane, Robert Sobukwe and others formed the African National Congress Youth League whose fundamental results are apparent today in the presidency of Nelson Mandela. In the essay of 1946, "Intellectuals and Congress", again Dhlomo appeals to young African intelligentsia to play an active role in the affairs of the African National Congress. Holding the young Indian intelligentsia as exemplary in their struggle to transform and overcome the shortcomings of the South African Indian Congress, H. I. E. Dhlomo appeals to young African intellectuals to do likewise: "It is only when the masses are solidly organised under the banner that we can ever hope to make an appreciable effort towards united action".

In a remarkable essay of 1948, "Hamlet and Ourselves", he took the recently released film version of Laurence Olivier's Hamlet as a point of departure to argue that great art is laden with profound philosophical doctrines which can inform and impart ethical lessons to political practice. Combatting a sense of hopelessness, despair, pessimism and frustration that had enveloped African intellectuals at the beginning of the apartheid era, H. I. E. Dhlomo argued that the work of Wordsworth, Goethe, Virgil, Sophocles and other great figures clearly indicates that no matter how hopeless the situation may appear or actually be, there is always residual space in which human praxis can intervene to change and transform the seemingly abysmal situation. This sense of utopian hope, he takes to be the central lesson to be drawn from the author of **King Lear**: ". . . the whole Shakespearean idea of tragedy is that despite whatever Power that might be directing our lives, we too have a hand in it. We have our part to play. This is a scientific view showing that by understanding nature and himself, Man can do much for himself. In a world torn by troubles and misery, this is an important message." For Dhlomo therefore, it is incomprehensible why African and European intellectuals in South Africa should be possessed by a sense of pessimism and hopelessness in 1948 when the philosophy of outstanding art from antiquity to the present clearly shows that the fault lines of resistance can never be sealed off from a historicaly conscious people by an oppressive regime. In other words, utopian thought and hope can be empowering force in the hands politically conscious intellectuals. Dhlomo was arguing for a thesis that the aesthetics of art and the rationality of science were not incompatible and contradictory in informing political practice. What intrigued H. I. E. Dhlomo in 1951 into writing "The Dilemma of Intellectualism" was that despite the evidence of scientific fact and truth, the majority of supposedly highly educated white South African intellectuals believed in the racial superiority of white people. Dhlomo was seeking to understand how passion, prejudice and ideology can guide beliefs, attitudes and behavior of supposedly critical intellectuals, despite the evidence of knowledge and science. This uncritical logic can also guide ones ethnic and nationalistic prejudices, beyond the questions of colour. In 1954, two years before his death, in "Intellectual Slavery", H. I. E. Dhlomo condemns Bantu Education as a form of enslaving of Africans.

Rather than being immediately concerned with the historical role of African intelligentsia in the emergent South African modernity as was the case with the*Umteteli wa Bantu* intellectual circle including his brother Herbert Isaac Ezra, R. R. R. Dhlomo formulates the historical project of the New African as in actual fact a representation of the emergent African Middle Class. In other words, the New African was made by the African Middle Class, not by the Masses as his younger brother had supposed. For R. R. R. Dhlomo this class is the Real Voice of the Nation, in that it being economically independent, comparatively speaking, possessing political acumen as well as cultural sophistication, it was opening the pathways of African liberation. Before the Union of South Africa of 1910, he states that Africans were tribalistic in thought and social organization. The Natives' Land Act of 1913 accelerated the process of urbanization and detribalization. In its struggle against the Act and the horrendous consequences it unleashed, land dispossession, homelessness, alienation and servitude, the African National Congress forged a particular variant of African nationalism in order to bring about unity among the various strands of oppressed African nations. He saw that one of the recurrent consequences of the First and Second World Wars was the unleashing of the movement of labour from the countryside into the new industries; the organization of Africans caught in the exploitative relations in the new industries made possible the making and construction of trade unionism, especially among the ranks of the black working class. Taking the cue from the white middle class, R. R. R. Dhlomo argues that the African middle class has decided that making money was the key of the entrance into modernity: "Taking the cue from the others, he decided that Money was the be-all and end all. It was the key and the deciding factor. Without it, he found that his educational attainments, his political organisations, his militant leaders, and even representation in certain councils of the State would be useless."[141] This observation of R. R. R. Dhlomo is similar to what Solomon T. Plaatje had noted twenty years earlier. Whereas Plaatje saw in this the disintegration of traditional moral and cultural values, R. R. R. Dhlomo saw the coming into being of money culture by Africans as making possible the creation of a Talented Tenth which would re-create and re-interpret African culture into new forms and modes, and thereby creating a New Culture. For R. R. R. Dhlomo one of the historical missions of the New African Middle Class was to create the possibilities in which the New African could construct a New Culture.[142] It is this New Culture which the remarkable critical

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[141] R. R. R. Dhlomo, "Rise of the African Middle Class", *Ilanga lase Natal*, July 9, 1949.

[142] The changing consciousness of R. R. R. Dhlomo in relation to the experience of modernity is one of the most fascinating narratives that has still to be told. He was among the least enamored with African American modernity within the New African Talented Tenth. His resistance to the entrance of American jazz into the cultural consciousness of South Africans, as it will be apparent in a moment, is indicative of this. His serious intellectual debut in the 1920s in *Ilanga lase Natal* is as an unflinching cultural anti-Americanist and anti-modernist. Perhaps, his writing of historical novels in the Zulu language on heroic figures like Shaka was

writings of H. I. E. Dhlomo on the pages of *Ilanga lase Natal*, from 1943 when his elder brother became editor and himself assistant editor to 1956 when H. I. E. Dhlomo died, attempted to forge.

With the shift in the articulation of the historical project of New Africanism from *Umteteli wa Bantu* in the 1920s to *Inkundla ya Bantu* in the 1940s, there is a tendency of essentializing, absolutizing, Hegelianizing the categories of historical comprehension. Anton M. Lembede postulates a position that the only way the New African can realize its historical aim of overthrowing the racial and economic order of oppression is by forging the ideology of African Nationalism that would transform the dispirited and lethargic African population into a dynamic and active New African Masses. The principal aim in the founding of the African National Congress Youth League in 1943 was to transform the parent body of the African National Congress in this direction. As an ideologue of the Youth League, he makes the fundamental distinction that what must be overthrown in South Africa is "White Civilization" rather than Western Civilization. Lembede passionately argues that while it may serve the ideological interests of the ruling classes to imbricate them, it would spell unmitigated disaster for the future order if those actively struggling for the construction of a New Nation were to confuse them or collapse them into each other. In uncompromising terms, he states that the African National Congress must destroy "White Civilization" since it is nothing but White Colour Superiority, discrimination and

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an affirmation of his alliance with tradition. This is not to imply that the utilization of African languages in the creative process at this particular historical periodwas necessarily an implicit rejection of modernity. R. R. R. Dhlomo's contributions to R. V. Selope Thema's (editor) *Bantu World* in the 1930s indicate a shift, in that although they satirize the nonsensical and clumsy way in which Africans were adjusting to modernity, they recognize modernity as an event of historic importance, even if in a backhanded way. As editor of *Ilanga lase Natal* in the 1950s R. R. R. Dhlomo made possuble and facilitated the wide coverage of jazz culture on the cultural pages of *Ilanga lase Natal*. From Elijah Makiwane, Walter Rubusana and Solomon T. Plaatje through R. V. Selope Thema and H. Selby Msimang to Benedikt W. Vilakazi linguistic ambidexterity was taken for granted in intellectual discourse. With Jordan K Ngubane this ambidexterity begans to disintegrate or disappear as the English language becomes hegemonic as an expressive instrument of creativity as well as of critical reflection. With H. I. E Dhlomo, who is a transitional figure between the heterogenous first group of New African intellectuals (1900-1940s) on the one hand, the ANC Youth League intellectuals around *Inkundla ya Bantu* in the 1940s (Anton Lembede, A. P. Mda and Jordan K. Ngubane) and the *Drum* writers (1950s) on the other hand, the English language subordinates the indigenous languages in the public space of discourse as dictated by modernity. With Lewis Nkosi, a student and disciple of H. I. E. Dhlomo in his early days, and a colleague of Ezekiel Mphahlele at the terminating moment of modernity at the cultural stokfela of Sophiatown, the 'triumph' of English is marvelled at, not in the least interrogated. When Daniel P. Kunene, a biographer of the great Sotho novelist Thomas Mofolo, at the height of the *Staffrider* era (1976-1988), indicated the cultural consequences of the hegemony of the English language, there was a feigned sigh of incomprehension. With the triumph of the logic of modernity, if not of modernity itself, Mazisi Kunene is made to appear like a cultural recidivist, when in fact his monumental achievement should be made to interrogate the logic of modernity.

oppression.[143] For him Western Civilization was the great legacy of humanity which had to be preserved by all means. Though wishing to enhance the study of African Civilization, Lembede did not want it at the expense of the Other. This is one of the reasons that the Youth Leaguers in their intellectual and ideological forum, *Inkundla ya Bantu*, advocated the founding of an African Academy of the Arts and Sciences. Lembede saw the arts as interpreting the spirit of Africa, while the sciences would add to the value of knowledge: "It is science that will help us to adapt ourselves to the Western standards of life and to dispel the fogs of ignorance and superstition."[144] He saw the founding of the Academy as a normal evolutionary process since "all civilised and progressive nations have such academies." It is unclear whether Lembede was familiar with with the founding of the American Negro Academy by Alexander Crummell, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and others in 1897, on whose opening day W. E. B. Du Bois gave his lecture, "The Conservation of Races", a lecture which had profound impact on Solomon T. Plaatje as we have noted.[145] The wish to found an Academy of Arts and Research did not originate with the Youth Leaguers. H. I. E. Dhlomo traces this to the 1936 African Authors Meeting arranged by Dr. R. H. W. Shepherd of Lovedale. The idea itself was proposed by Professor C. M. Doke of Bantu Studies Department at the University of Witwatersrand. H. I. E. Dhlomo writes of the meetings held in which John Dube, Mr. and Mrs. Rheinallt Jones, C. M. Doke, R. T. Caluza, R. V. Selope Thema, Dr. Benedikt Vilakazi, D. D. T. Jabavu and others participated.[146] The outbreak of the

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[143] A. M. Lembede, "African Nationalism and the New African Masses", *Ilanga lase Natal*, June 21, 1947. It is very unfortunate that since the founding of the Pan Africanist Congress in 1959, Lembede has been appropriated to the cause of black nationalism which is purposefully confused with African nationalism. Like most of the intellectuals in the New African Movement, Lembede was anti-Communist, which does not mean therefore necessarily that because of it one becomes a black nationalist. The self-destruction of the Pan Africanist Congress in exile speaks for itself. Anton Lembede's position in South African intellectual history has still to be dealt with. Lembede in many ways had a deep European classical training, writing his M. A. thesis on Rene Descartes, which did not contradict his Africanism. Nelson Mandela has recently sketched a compelling portrait of Lembede: "From the moment I heard Lembede speak, I knew I was seeing a magnetic personality who thought in original and often startling ways. . . Lembede's views struck a chord in me. . . Like Lembede, I came to see the antidote [to paternalistic British colonialism] as militant African nationalism" (see: **Long Walk To Freedom: An Autobiography of Nelson Mandela**, Little, Brown and Company, New York, 1994, p.84-5). But Nelson Mandela also shows the limitations of this 'emotional African nationalism'.

[144] A. M. Lembede, "An African Academy of Art and Science", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, July 31, 1947; Jordan K. Ngubane, "An African Academy of Arts", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, July 31, 1947; A. P. Mda, "African Academy of Arts", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, July 24, 1947. Unfortunately, the Youth Leaguers saw the founding of the Academy as an exclusively an African affair, not inclusive of other racial and ethnic groups; A. P. Mda was particularly adamant about this exclusivity.

[145] David Lewering Lewis, **W. E. B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race, 1868-1919**, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1993, p.168-174.

[146] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Academy of Arts and Research", *Ilanga lase Natal*, September 10, 1949; Tim Couzens, **The New African**, op. cit., p.105, 294-95.

Second World War and the death of Benedikt Vilalazi scuttled these efforts at founding an inclusive Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Despite the complications in founding an Academy, Albert Luthuli, as President-General of the African National Congress, gave a major address in 1953 on "The Emergent African", which was in effect an appraisal of the achievements of the New African.[147] The date was appropriate since it could be argued that the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and the Congress of the People which drafted the Freedom Charter in 1955 were the culmination point of the cultural and political achievements of the New African. Speaking of the Spirit of the African that came into being as the result of Africa's entry into the modern world, Luthuli states that what Africa gained from the encounter with the West was not just Western Civilization but Christian Civilization. Reverting to the theme articulated 30 years earlier by R. V. Selope Thema at the moment of the founding of the concept of the New African, of the unending struggle between civilization and barbarism (heathenism), Luthuli saw the Christian Civilization as merely reinforcing the African ethical system (honesty, purity) which predated the arrival of Europeans in Africa.[148] For Luthuli the New African should follow the pattern of modern civilization in forging a synthesis: "The urgent task of African leaders is not so much to get Africans to embrace western culture as it is to stop him from indiscriminately becoming westernised when he should be building a modern African way of life which would be a synthesis of the best in the cultures represented in South Africa---Western, Eastern and African culture---so that ultimately he may make a distinctive variant to the broad South African way of life." Luthuli saw the New African as preoccupied with this historical project of synthesis: in the literary field---Solomon T. Plaatje, Tiyo Soga, Walter Rubusana, S. E. K. Mqhayi, John Dube, H. I. E. Dhlomo, Jordan K. Ngubane, R. R. R. Dhlomo, J. J. R. Jolobe; in educational achievements---R. V. Selope Thema, Z. K. Mathews, Benedikt Vilakazi, Anton Lembede, Selby Ngcobo; in music---R. T. Caluza, S. Ngubane, K. E. Masinga. An Editorial in *Ilanga lase Natal* a few years earlier had lamented that these New Africans were unknown to most white South Africans, presumably hence their support of the apartheid system.[149]

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147 A. J. Luthuli, "The Emergent African", *Ilanga lase Natal*, May 16, 1953.

148 In a very complicated way, the position of R. V. Selope Thema in South Africa is comparable to that of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in Argentina in early nineteenth-century. Ofcourse, the African never advocated the policy of extermination to achieve his goals as the Latin American did. Nevertheless, they were both strong advocates of public education, admires of European modernity, totally uncompromising in their beliefs that civilization must vanquish barbarism. On Sarmiento see Roberto Fernandez Retamar: "Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America", **Caliban and Other Essays**, foreword Fredric Jameson, trans. Edward Baker, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1989.

149 R. R. R. Dhlomo, "The Bantu in South African Culture", *Ilanga lase Natal*, May 29, 1948.

Most of these New African intellectuals were also listed in a book published twenty years earlier in 1933 whose title expressed their progress, movement, newness and optimism: **The Development of the African**. In selecting this intelligentsia for mention, the book was in effect establishing one of South Africa's intellectual canon(s). S. V. H. Mdhuli's book summarized the historical experience of the New African. In the Preface Mdhuli mentions that the New African must articulate new ideas which reflect new situations and new times. Arguing for the preservation of African languages, 'a nation that loses its language is never regarded as a nation', he argues that the hegemony of foreign culture could only be overcome through education, which would make possible the negotiation of new situations, the vanquishing of darkness, and the creation of conditions for progress. The book constantly returns to its first central theme of the fundamental importance in preserving African languages: "Although the English language is now the official language of this country, we believe that a knowledge of our mother language is also essential. Let us be up and doing. Let us be up and doing. Let us strike the iron while it is still hot. . . Good friends of the human race, let us live for the preservation of our culture chiefly our mother tongues. . . Books written in our African languages by Africans are easily understood."[150] Mdhuli praised John L. Dube, Solomon T. Plaatje, S. E. K. Mqhayi and Thomas Mofolo for writing in the African languages. Moving to his second central theme, Mdhuli mentioned Booker T. Washington for high praise, and like Selope Thema and other New African intellectuals, saw the experience of African Americans as holding many lessons for Africans: "Look at the Negroes and the tremendous work they have accomplished." Like the other New Africans, the one thing Mdhuli was not prepared to praise the New Negro for was in having invented jazz, which was then massively entering the cultural space of South Africa.

The first known note of negative reaction to jazz upon its intrusion into South Africa was sounded by R. R. R. Dhlomo in 1926.[151] It is clear from this attack that jazz is called into question for the effect it has on the body; seemingly unconcerned about the soul or/and the mind. Jazz is seen as not conducive to pure thoughts, because the style in which it is danced is said to be indecent and too intimate. Jazz is said to be having a bad effect on the character of young prople, especially of women. It is seen as deleteriously affecting the health and morals of young people. Ragtime music is also subjected to castigation for the bringing the dance craze in which jazz flourishes. R. R. R. Dhlomo concludes that jazz will lead young people into Hell, because it does not instill in them decency, love and cleanliness of thought and aspiration. This fulmination from the New African middle class

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[150] S. V. H. Mdhuli, **The Development of the African**, Mariannhill Mission Press, Natal, 1933, p.30-31. The book is marred by the crude anti-Communism which was dismayingly prevalent among the New African intellectuals. The issue will be broached elsewhere.

[151] Rollie Reggie [R. R. R. Dhlomo], "Dancing Craze", *Ilanga lase Natal*, March 19, 1926.

perspective is not much different from that of the New Negro middle class perspective which initially viewed jazz as 'a devil's music'. A year later, R. R. R. Dhlomo follows with another attack in which he uses clinical terms of condemnation, it is an 'infectious disease', it is 'sickness', it is a 'plague', it is too suggestive, passionate.[152] He then compares jazz unfavourably with classical music, which is supposedly inspiring and soothing; it is the kind of 'Pure' music that molds the caracter. Classical music is seen as probing deep into the soul, and it is supposedly characterized by godliness and goodness. R. R. R. Dhlomo concludes by disparaging jazz as plantation music. In other words, jazz is the music of the jungle, the zone of darkness, heathenism and barbarism which the New African middle class was escaping from through Christianity and modernization/Westernization. It was totally inconceivable to the incipient New African middle class that jazz was a consummate representation of the New Negroes' entrance into modernity par excellence.

What was even more galling to the New African middle class is that jazz was replacing and superseding Negro Spirituals, the very musical form which it had itself chosen and appropriated from African American modernity as facilitating its communion with the Supreme Being, as well as giving respectability to itself as a class that had historically arrived in terms of cultural expression. To note how seriously the Negro Spirituals had been embraced by the New African, *Umteteli wa Bantu* (based in Johannesburg) reprinted two major pieces by James Weldon Johnson on the their structure as well their historical origins in Africa.[153] These essays appeared at nearly the same time as R. R. R. Dhlomo's attacks on jazz in *Ilanga lase Natal* (based in Durban). In the first essay Weldon Johnson argued that the Negro Spirituals represent the expressive genius of African Americans.[154] Their

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[152] Rolfes R. R. Dhlomo, "Jazzing Craze", *Ilanga lase Natal*, August 5, 1927.

[153] The important role of Reverand Ray E. Phillips of the American Board missionaries in opening and establishing the lines of communication between African modernity and African American modernity cannot be overestimated. It was under his column in *Umteteli wa Bantu* that practically all of the writings by New Negro intellecuals were reprinted. Even though his work was undertaken as a Liberal ideological project against the African National Congress and other radical cultural solutions to the problems of South Africa, in a complicated way, it did leave enormous 'beneficial' results. Tim Couzens in **The New African** is very incisive and insightful about Ray E. Phillips: pp.92-99. What is necessary perhaps is a critical biographical study of him.

[154] James Weldon Johnson, "American Negro Spirituals", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, August 7, 1926. The New Africans whole-heartedly subscribed to James Weldon Johnson's fundamental observation, as their reflections and practices implied its subterranean influence: "A people may become great through many means, but there is only one measure by which its greatness is recognized and acknowledged. The final measure of the greatness of all peoples is the amount and standard of the literature and art they have produced. The world does not know that a people is great until that people produces great literature and art" (**The Book of American Negro Poetry**, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1922, p.vii). The New African intellectuals around *Umteteli wa Bantu* held him in such high esteem that they reprinted from Du Bois's *Crisis* a review of Johnson's autobiography, **Along This Way**, which was really an

form possesses the fundamental characteristics of African music, in that their rythmic quality is similar to that of African songs. Although identifiable and traceable to African songs, Johnson indicated an important distinction between them, since the Negro Spirituals had a complex melodic and and harmonic structure, beyond the rythmic form of African songs. Nevertheless, in much of the essay he showed how the slave songs and the Negro Spirituals were built on African music.

In the second essay, reprinted three years later, James Weldon Johnson argued that although the Negro Spirituals originated in African songs, they represent something new because of the infusion of Christianity into them. This is a theme that resonated very deeply with the New Africans. Christianity for them represented their entrance into modernity and leaving behind the backwardness of heathenism. The Negro Spirituals had a double function for the New African, not only had they enabled them to identify with African American modernity and the progress that African Americans had attained, they also enabled them to incorporate into their lived experience a Christianity defined and articulated by the pain of the black experience. James Weldon Johnson argued that the Negro Spirituals were a well of Christian virtues: patience, forbearance, love, faith and hope. These were the virtues which the New African wanted reflected in her existence as a new African in modernity. Johnson further argued that the Negro Spirituals, in the music itself not only in the words (lyrics), were an expression of a communal spirit.[155] With these observations, James Weldon Johnson enabled the New African cement its deep sense of identification with the historical experience of the New Negro. The reason for the remarkably long

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autobiographical sketch taken from the book itself: "James Weldon Johnson", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, December 30, 1933. *Umteteli wa Bantu* reprinted five years later an obituary on the great African American intellectual: "Death of Weldon Johnson: Great Negro Passes", December 3, 1938. The profound sense of historical and cultural identification with Negro Spirituals was not only confined within the New African Movement of the generation of R. V. Selope Thema in the 1920s, for also Ezekiel Mphahlele's passionate love of this great African American art form in the 1940s represents another generation's sense of transAtlantic connection: "The Negro spirituals had made a strong impression on me and I made them a starting point in my conversation with Rebecca [Mochedibane, his future wife]" (see: N. Chabani Manganyi, **Exiles and Homecoming: A Biography of Es'kia Mphahlele**, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983, p.82). Mphahlele's second autobiography which begins in 1957 when he went to self-imposed exile in Nigeria (the first was the classic published in 1959: **Down Second Avenue**, which terminates in 1957) clearly indicates that for the last generation of New African Movement the passion for Negro Spirituals was not incompatible with the love of the music of Errol Garner, Oscar Peterson, Coleman Hawkins, Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald as had been the case with middle generation of the Movement consisting of H. I. E. Dhlomo, H. Selby Msimang and others (see: **Afrika My Music: An Autobiography 1957-1983**, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1984, p.61-62).

[155] James Weldon Johnson, "The Miracle of Negro Spirituals", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 4, 1929. The New African was also interested in forms of popular culture that were deemed respectable (like Broadway black music shows), as witness Solomon T. Plaatje's moving obituary about Forence Mills: "The Late Florence Mills", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 12, 1927.

and in depth portraits of Paul Robeson and Roland Hayes published by *Umteteli wa Bantu* was because of their being great exponents of the Negro Spiritual art form, as well as being indicative of what the 'black' genius was capable of attaining.[156] This is what intoxicated the New African about the expressive forms of African American modernity, or those it could identify with in class terms as reflecting the highest achievements of black people.

The hostility to jazz by the New African makes historical sense from its middle class perspective and from the viewpoint of what it was attempting to attain. This opposition was not only incorrect, it was bound to be deservedly defeated. Besides R. R. R. Dhlomo's opposition, H. I. E. Dhlomo, R. V. Selope Thema, Solomon T. Plaatje registered their opposition, or belittled jazz as an art form.[157] But these were not authoritative or truly informed voices among

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[156] Anonymous, "Roland Hayes:From the Humblest to the Highest", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 21, 1930; Hulda Niebuhr, "Singing Himself Free: A Story About Roland Hayes", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, December 26, 1931. The newspaper published a long and laudatory Editorial which reviewed Paul Robeson's career in anticipation of his intended visit, which unfortunately never took place: "The Coming of Paul Robeson", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 3, 1933. Paul Robeson was later to become a problematical figure for the New African Movement because his expressive cultural practice became a synthesis of Modernism and Marxism. The New Africans were allergic to the latter, which explains their waning desire for Robeson. Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo's tribute of Paul Robeson at the United Nations in 1978, given as Secretary-General of the South African Communist Party, two years after the great tenor's death, takes cognisance of the inseparability of Marxism and Modernism in Robeson's historical consciousness: "Our people fighting against apartheid tyranny recall with deep gratitude invaluable assistance rendered by him [Paul Robeson] to our liberation struggle. His establishing of Council on African Affairs which sponsored Xuma's [then President of the African National Congress] first visit from the ANC to United States [was]. . . pioneering work in mobilising world public opinion against racism and colonialism. . . " (see: **His Speeches, Articles and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi**, Madiba Publishers, Durban, 1991, p.358). In another context we will indicate the historic importance of this intervention of Yusuf Mohammed Dadoo in reading politically the the cultural moment of African American modernity; a reading that corresponds in the 1950s with the political philosophy of *Liberation*. *Umteteli wa Bantu* took this occasion to temper its hostility to jazz, although applauding its supposed death: "The reaction from this came in the frenzied popularity of jazz, which with its syncopations swept the world after the Great War. Jazz may be dying away now, but it has certainly left its mark. It has strengthened all rhythm in modern music, and in doing this, has rendered a great service to art". It is incomprehensible how jazz could have been seen as dying during the Swing Era (1930s) when in fact it became America's popular music: Gunther Schuller, **The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945**, Oxford University Press, 1989. It needs to be added that after *Umteteli wa Bantu*, distanced itself from Paul Robeson, as he was progressively moving to the left, it was a cultural review such as *Fighting Talking* in the 1950s, under the editorialship of Ruth First, which valiantly fought against the attempted erasure of the remembrance of Paul Robeson among Africans: Eslanda Goode Robeson, "His Voice is Better Now than Ever", June/July (1958). A month later it published his fraternal greetings to a peace conference: Paul Robeson, "Congress for Discrimination and International Co-operation", *Fighting Talking*, August (1958).

[157] Solomon T. Plaatje, "Leadership", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, February 18, 1928; Anonymous, "Development of African Music", *Ilanga lase Natal*, June 20, 1953; Anonymous, "Evolution of Bantu Entertainments", *Ilanga lase Natal*, June 20, 1953. On the basis of internal evidence, both

the New African intelligentsia about matters concerning music. The informed oppositional voice concerning jazz belonged to Mark S. Radebe, Jr. As a critic of music in the circle of New African intellectuals in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, he wrote a series of appreciative, critical and theoretical articles on music.[158] In one of the articles he defined his philosophical credo of music criticism by stating that intelligent criticism is developed through the process of attending good concerts. This regularity of attendance is not so much in order to detect flaws in a work of an artist, he observed, but rather to gain a comprehensive view of the work of an artist. Radebe strongly believed that knowledge of music can be gained principally, if not only, through listening.[159] In another article he posited several principles which he felt the study of music demands: self-expression, concentration, memory, accuracy, self-reliance, rapid thinking and poise.[160] These articles as well as others, which are examined below, clearly show that Mark S. Radebe had a deep knowledge of music, in contrast to the other New African intellectuals who were just fulminating against a musical art form of which they had no serious understanding.

Making an allusion to R. R. R. Dhlomo's article of six years earlier which had blamed jazz for the emergence of dance craze in South Africa, Mark S. Radebe thought it too early and perhaps questionable to make such an associative condemnation.[161] By making this move, he sought to criticize jazz as a musical art form in and of itself. Setting forth a complexly nuanced articulation, Radebe argues that since the end of the First World War (1917) there had emerged all over the world demands for rhythmic forms and their representation. Consequently by capturing the imagination of the world, jazz was fulfilling a historical demand. But in fulfilling this world demand for rhythm, jazz had overloaded itself with rhythm to the point of self-destruction, or at least to the point of destroying the musical form holding it in organic totality. Although it had contributed invaluably to modern dance music by infusing an endless supply of rhythm, it had gone overboard, to "point of extreme agitation, outright epilepsy." Using strong language, Radebe criticised jazz of lashing the nervous system through "musical abortions": hot

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of the last two articles seem to have been written by H. I. E. Dhlomo on the occasion of the fiftieth-anniversary of the founding of the newspaper, of which he was co-editor with his brother, R. R. R. Dhlomo. Also R. V. Selope Thema was unremittingly hostile to jazz: (the source has since been misplaced).

[158] That Mark S. Radebe, Jr was held in high esteem by the New African intelligentsia is indicated in an article by an anonymous contributor which in passing praised his critical observations in a particular essay: Orpheus, "The Native and Music", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, March 22, 1930. An Editorial saluted Radebe and R. T. Caluza, the great South African composer, for putting African music in a prominent public place: "Native Music", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, July 11, 1931.

[159] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Music Chat", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, April 15, 1933.

[160] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Musical Malpractice", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 25, 1932.

[161] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Jazz", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 18, 1932.

breaks, chromatic runs, blasts and blue voicing. Modern jazz had achieved its inestimable influence through irritability, intoxication, excitement and nerve flaying. Although praising the "breaks" as processes facilitating improvisation, he nevertheless criticised them for "hot-playing" for its "terrible and destructive cacophony" and for its "weird notes". Although Radebe concluded his piece by implying that the world would not be able to resist this new musical form, nevertheless he was adamantly opposed to it. Having a greater knowledge of music than his New African intellectual associates, Radebe did not delude himself into believing that jazz would self-destruct.

In another article on the pedagogics of music, although fulminating against jazz for its "baneful influence", Radebe acknowledged that it was suited to the nature of modern high speed civilization because it represents a complex development of rhythm, melody and harmony.[162] For him it was clear that: jazz was the music par excellence for modernity, not only for black modernity or African modernity, but for world modernity period. In yet still another instance, Radebe combined his condemnation of jazz with that of "Marabi" music and dance, which were then emerging in South Africa and positioning themselves to hold the center stage of black music culture. He states unambiguously that the reason he created with others (particularly with H. I. E. Dhlomo) the African Eisteddfod was to ekiminate the "menace" of Marabi music; Radebe does not say so explicitly that the Eisteddfod was also aimed at destroying jazz. Since to his ears Marabi music was created through "banging and wailing [in] foul smelling so-called halls", it could not possibly represent the "high ideal" the New African was striving to attain. The African Eisteddfod were annual competitions held to promote what was deemed by Mark S. Radebe, Jr. as African classic music: largely choral music. The Eisteddfod was a solution to a dictum formulated by Radebe himself: "The problem of African music must eventually be solved by Africans".[163] In

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[162] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Music Appreciation in Schools", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 4, 1932.

[163] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "African Music for the Africans", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November 11, 1933. An article in the *Bantu World* newspaper also saw the "Marabi Dance" as a "great menace to the community" which must be "eradicated" by all means necessary: (see, Scipio Africanus, "A New Development of Dance Styles Takes Place Among the Reef Bantu", May 28, 1932). In another context, defining the Eisteddfod as a self-help undertaking (a characterization self-consciously identifying with Booker T. Washington's ideology of education in **Up From Slavery**), Radebe quotes the African Eisteddfod Committee stating the purpose for the music competition: "to preserve and develop the individuality of Native music, and, concurrently, to encourage the finer refinements of European music (see: Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Black Musical Festivals", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, June 6, 1931). Christopher Ballantine defines Marabi music in the following terms: "Essentially marabi was the music of a variety of secular social occasions, which had in common not only the activity of dancing but also that of consuming alcohol. . . It was also primarily a keyboard, banjo or guitar style based on a cyclic harmonic pattern, much as the blues was. . . (see: **Marabi Nights: Early South Africa Jazz and Vaudeville**, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1993, p.26, emphas is in the original).

other words, the African Eisteddfod was an attempt by New African middle class to find a solution to the working class "menace" or "problem" of Marabi music. *Umteteli wa Bantu* was unstinging in its support for The African Eisteddfod project, as evident by numerous articles on its events and competitions.[164]

There was a principled logic in Mark S. Radebe's enigmatic hostility to the intrusion of jazz into South Africa. The fundamental reason for the opposition is that Radebe could not see how jazz could be rationally situatable within the history of development of South African music. The other obvious reason is that he felt that it did not espouse the virtues of Christianity which a group of New African intellectuals from Selope Thema to Silas Modiri Molema saw as enabling progress, development and modernity among Africans. This is evident in his historical appraisal of the musical legacy of John Knox Bokwe, who was one of South Africa's outstanding composers in the era of the advent of modernity, that is before the moment of Rueben Caluza. Radebe begins by arguing that the origin of all music is rhythmical. He classifies African music into two categories: epic poetry with war songs, and songs of exorcism accompanied with tales and games. The importance of Bokwe is that in 1910 (a very important in South African political history since it was the beginning of the unification of the country into a single entity) he was the first African composer to express African music in European technique. Bokwe wrote typically African music, in Radebe's estimation: "full of tilt, freshness and pure melody".[165] By expressing African music through European techniques, Bokwe opened the way for later composers like Enoch Sontonga and others. Observing that we Africans have not as yet produced a Bach or a Schubert, and the African opera was still in the process of being produced, and since the era in which he was living was one of 'making', 'doing' and 'practical application of knowledge' (i.e., modernity), Radebe hoped that the National Eisteddford would locate potential talent which would invigorate and 'resurrect' African music.

In another context, Radebe states that patriotic songs constitute one of the noble traditions of music history in South Africa. Citing the compositions by

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Ballantine also indicates that it was theMarabi music genre which later evolved into South African jazz:mbanqanga; he rightfully laments that none of the early exponents of the music were ever recorded (p.6). David B. Coplan defines Marabi in these terms: "Growing out of shebeen [working class drinking places, usually homes and halls illicitly selling alcohol] society , marabi was much more than just a musical style. As music it had a distinctive rhythm and a blend of African polyphonic principles, restructured within the framework of the Western 'three-chord' harmonic system" (see: **In Township Tonight: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre**, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1985, p.94).

[164] A representative sample: "The Coming African Eisteddfod: Transvaal Festival of all Talents" *Umteteli wa Bantu*, October 28, 1933.

[165] Mark S. Radebe, "John Knox Bokwe Opens the Way to Bantu Talent and Art", *Bantu World*, October 21, 1933.

John Knox Bokwe, A Plea for Africa and Send the Light, as well as Sontonga's Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika, he mentions that patriotic songs are characterized by humanism, simplicity and nationalism. Structurally, although the songs do not have much melody and developmental material, they have a lot of harmonization. Patriotic songs, like Garibaldi's Hymn, which call for national unification, also seek to unite mankind in a fraternity.[166] From these observations, it would not be farfetched to extrapolate that for Radebe the ideology that inheres to jazz was too anti-nationalistic and definitely not humanistic given supposedly its origins, and structurally it does not possess an abundance of harmonization. In an article which argued that African music was essentially romantic rather than classical, he saw it as a synthesis of various components which were presumably missing in jazz: expressiveness, sympathy, religiousity, humour, the tragic, the meditative and the dramatic.[167] But all these theoretical formulations which sought to particularize the singularity of African music (too vague and vacuous a category) as incompatable with the representations of jazz could not possibly stem the actualization of jazz onto the cultural fabric of South African modernity. What is remarkable is that even when jazz proved more acceptable and popular among the majority of workers and enlightened Africans in the urban areas, the fundamental base of New Africanism, the New African intellectuals persisted in their hostility to jazz. Walter Nhlapo, together with Jordan K. Ngubane brilliant readers and supporters of H. I. E. Dhlomo's modernist practices, castigated jazz as inferior to classical music and drama; its very acceptance by many urbanized Africans was a mark of cultural degeneracy, which can merely be overcome by pointing to the grandeur of European artists (Shakespeare, Beethoven, Schubert, etc.).[168] It was only in the 1950s, during the Sophiatown Renaissance, that jazz was to find its major critic and interpreter: Todd Matshikiza. By then South African jazz had already cultivated some its great exponents: Boet Gashe, Solomon 'Zuluboy' Cele, Sullivan Mphahlele, Mackay Davashe and others.

It was in the literary field that the transAtlantic relation between United States and South Africa has been transacted without any traces of resistance, opposition or subterfuge. In fact, the interaction has been very spectacular, from Peter Abrahams finding a sense cultural and and literary identification in the achievements of the Harlem Renaissance as he indicates in his autobiography **Tell Freedom: Memories of Africa**, through Mphahlele examining the meaning of the late phase of African American literary modernism and Henry Dumas's appropriation of Zulu poetics in "Emoyeni,

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[166] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Patriotism in Bantu Music", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, September 24, 1932.
[167] Musicus [Mark S. Radebe, Jr.], "Romanticism of African Music", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, November5, 1932.
[168] Walter Nhlapo, "Drama Versus Jazz: Art Too Complex for Africans", *Bantu World*, February 24, 1940.

Place of the Winds", to Ishmael Reed's dramatic incorporation of Africa's cultural creations into American postmodernity in **Mumbo Jumbo**. Peter Abrahams had a deeper understanding and feel for African American literary culture than any other South African intellectual of previous generations. The proof of the depth of this encounter were the literary works he was subsequently to assemble. He speaks of Du Bois's **The Souls of Black Folk** as having had an "impact of revelation" and giving him "a key to the understanding of my world", while the poetry of Langston Hughes, Claude McKay and Countee Cullen gave him expansive understanding of the power of the word. This acquired American literary culture created a tension in Abrahams since he could not easily reconcile it with the already acquired English literary culture of Shelley, Keats and Charles Lamb.[169] This irreconciliability of acquired hegemonic cultures is one of the fascinating issues about the colonial and post-colonial subject in the twentieth century.

Lewis Nkosi posits deeper affinities between Richard Wright and Peter Abrahams, in that the development of the South African as a writer resembles and is infkuenced by that of the American. Both writers used the practice of the literary craft to get themselves out of poverty; their literary styles are similar; because of instability in the home lifes when they were young, they were sent to live with strangers and relatives; because were encouraged at a critical moment in their young lives by sensitive young white women.[170] Indeed, the naturalism of Abraham's **Mine Boy** was influenced by that of Wright's **Native Son**. Speaking of the influence of the social philosophy of W. E. B. Du Bois on the literary practice of Richard Wright, Henry Louis Gates has written: "This led Du Bois to pursue sociology as a discipline and to undertake a series of empirical studies of 'the Negro.' A similar impulse led Wright to naturalism as the mode of literary representation most 'scientific', most sociological, most objective, and indeed, most politically efficacious. And it was politically efficacious because its third-person omniscient narrative stance led inevitably to an indictment of the environment, the supra-force, that was impersonally responsible for the unfolding of fate it reported."[171] Through emulating the literary method of Wright, Abrahams was in effect establishing philosophical and spiritual

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[169] Peter Abrahams, **Tell Freedom: Memories of Africa**, Alfred K. Knopf, New York, 1954, p.222-31.

[170] Lewis Nkosi, "US Diary", *Southern African Review of Books*, November/December, 1993. In an autobiographical essay Richard Rive argues that African and Coloured writers of the 1950s were trying to ressurect Harlem in Sophiatown and in District Six, and the reason he himself appropriated African American writers was to analyze his situation through theirs as well as rationalizing his feelings through theirs: "The Ethics of an Anti-Jim Crow", in **Design and Intent in African Literature**, (eds.) David F. Dorsey and Stephen H. Arnold, Three Continents Press, New York, 1982.

[171] Henry Louis Gates, "Preface: Richard Wright (1908-1960)", **Richard Wright: Critical Perspectives Past and Present**, (eds.) Henry Louis Gates and K. A. Appiah, Amistad, New York, 1993, p.xii.

contact with his master, Du Bois. Richard Wright himself saw the affinities between himself and the ten-years younger Peter Abrahams. In an interview of 1947 arguing that the race problem in America was not just an an American problem, but a world problem since it affected all colonials, Wright elaborated: "For instance, while we [himself and his wife] were in Paris, we met a brilliant boy, Peter Abrahams, a 28-year-old Negro writer from South Africa. They've got a lulu of a situation down there, comparable only to the situation of the Negro on the plantation in the deepest South."[172] This same interview shows that **Tell Freedom** had a profound impact on Richard Wright, especially the section where Peter Abrahams writes of the many passes (in effect permissions) he had to obtain from one place to another or from one job to another.[173] The impact was such that it partly explains why Richard Wright after the reading the manuscript of the book seems recurrently to have compared the situation of Africans in America with that of South Africans, whether for the similarities and/or differences.[174] Wright

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[172] "Why Richard Wright Came Back from France", **Conversations with Richard Wright**, (eds.) Keneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre, University Press of Mississipi, Jackson, 1993, p.124.

[173] It is almost certain that Richard Wright read the manuscript of **Tell Freedom** at this Paris encounter, since the book itself was published for the first time seven years later. Apparently at this time, late 1946, Wright and Abrahams shared an apartment in Paris: Henry Nxumalo, "Peter Abrahams",*Drum*, December 1955.

[174] There are three excellent and instructive comparative texts, examining the structural processes and institutional forms that constructed racism and segregation in United States and South Africa: William J. Wilson, **Power, Racism, and Privilege: Race Relations in Theoretical and Sociohistorical Perspectives**, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1973; George M. Fredrickson, **White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1981; John W. Cell, **The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982. Fredrickson's recent dazzling study, **Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa** (Oxford University Press, New York, 1995), published and read by this author after the writing of this essay in the Summer of 1995, requires more extended comment since it traverses, although tangentially but with extreme lucidity, the intellectual terrain of Africans in South Africa and that of African Americans, the central theme of the present study. Fredrickson's approach is comparative, while mine cartographs the impact of African American intellectual culture on African intellectuals struggling to read and interpret the historical meaning of modernity. Fredrickson undertakes an inspired comparison: between Fredrick Douglass and John Tengo Jabavu, Du Bois's *Crisis* and and Allan Kirkland Soga's *Izwi la Bantu*, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Ethiopianism, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and Clement Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union of Africa, the South African Native Congress and the Niagra Movement, Booker T. Washington and John Dube, the African National Congress and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Black Consciousness Movement and the Black Power Movement, the American Communist Party and the South African Communist Party, the moral vision of Nelson Mandela and that of Martin Luther King, Jr., and so on. Fredrickson examines both the convergences and the divergences. Although he makes a signal contribution to South African intellectual history by indicating the historical importance of Allan Kirkland Soga, who has largely been forgotten in my country, Fredrickson I believe errs when he argues that Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu was the most important African intellectual in the 1920s; that figure I

was not the only one to have seen the historic importance of Peter Abrahams at the moment of his emergence. Charles S. Johnson, whom David Levering Lewis considers "the principal architect of the Harlem Renaissance", in a retrospective evaluation of the Harlem Renaissance thirty years later, saw the writings of Peter Abrahams and George Lamming as similar to, and reflective of, the writings of African American writers.[175] The affinities Lewis Nkosi detected between Richard Wright and Peter Abrahams had been made possible by the historical conditions of oppression.

In a chapter, "The Blacks: Dialogue Across the Seas", written specifically for the Second Edition (1974) of **The African Image**, Ezekiel Mphahlele relates that since they were school-mates together at St. Peter's Secondary School in Johannesburg in 1935, as Peter Abrahams was making the discoveries of African American culture which are memorialized in **Tell Freedom**, he was sharing his discoveries with school friends. Mphahlele himself was part of the excitement of the moment. From the time of these discoveries, Mphahlele more than any other South African intellectual or writer, has critically engaged the historical meaning of African American literary modernism for South Africans. He has sought to explain and understand the deep fascination Africans have for African Americans: "Nowhere in Africa does one find such a strong fellow-feeling towards the American Black as there exists among the Africans of South Africa. . . Afro-American success in America helped the South African to be able to stand up proudly before the white man who despised him and kept telling him he needed Christian trustee-ship. . . South African jazz musicians take their cue from Afro-American jazz."[176] Mphahlele explains the affinities between the two people as their having had to endure white arrogance, they suffered humiliation and dispossession, and that their histories are written in blood, pillage and

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believe to be R. V. Selope Thema, as this essay attempts to argue, precisely because Thema brought to the attention of South African intellectuals, such as H. I. E. Dhlomo, H. Selby Msimang, R. R. R. Dhlomo, Benedikt Vilakazi, Jordan K. Ngubane, Z. K. Mathews, S. V. H. Mdhuli and others, the challenges of modernity. Fredrickson errs even more when he characterizes Silas Modiri Molema's **The Bantu Past** (1920) as a 'rambling' and directionless text. I indicate here, though I do not argue the point, since it is an argument for another occasion, that **The Bantu Past** and Plaatje's **Native life in South Africa** (1916) are the books that centrally illuminated a large portion of South African modernity. Whereas Modiri at the time of writing his first book was an 'organic intellectual', D. D. T. Jabavu had always been a 'traditional intellectual'. All in all, **Black Liberation** is an impressive study.

[175] Charles S. Johnson, "The Negro Renaissance and Its Significance" (1954), **The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader**, (ed.) David Levering Lewis, Viking, New York, 1994, p.217.

[176] Ezekiel Mphahlele, **The African Image**, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1974 (1962), p.96-7. Also in our time, 1995 (on the first anniversary of Nelson Mandela's presidency), the powerful influence of African Americans on Africans in South Africa has not abated; note the witness account of a *The New York Times* reporter on a personal journey: Isabel Wilkinson, "South Africa Sojourn: Reflections on a Nation Being Reborn", *Essence*, 25th Anniversary Issue, May 1995, p.204: "Everywhere you go, you hear sounds of Luther Vandross and Toni Baxton wafting from people's windows."

plunder. The chapter is a study of the achievements of the poets of the Harlem Renaissance within the context of black international culture in the twentieth-century: the African American poets are appraised in relation to Nicolas Guillen in Cuba, Aime Cesaire in Martinique, Luis Pales Matos in Puerto Rico, and Jacquire Roumain and Jean Price-Mars in Haiti. Taking the cue from Du Bois's **The Souls of Black Folk**, Mphahlele reads the American poets as attempting to resolve their dilemma of cultural dualism: between their Africanism and their Americanism. Langston Hughes is commended not only for incorporating the blues and jazz into his poetic form, but also for his deep awareness of Africa. He himself being a member of the Sophiatown Renaisance of the 1950s, Mphahlele connected to the African American modernist movement through the figure of Hughes.

The only essay Mphahlele has written on a single American writer, was devoted to the examination of Langston Hughes poetic form; it is principally concerned with the jazzing of his poetry and the versatility of his cultural practices.[177] It is a paradox that Hughes should have such a hold on Mphahlele, when Mphahlele has not written much poetry. Perhaps the explanation may lie in the following sentence: "Langston Hughes was just incapable of striking poses. He acknowledges the long distance in time and space between him and Africa in the 1920s." The writer among the African Americans who had a much greater impact on Mphahlele's literary practice and sensibility was Richard Wright. In an essay on his emerging literary sensibilty, Mphahlele's writes that Wright together with Ernest Hemingway, among the Americans, gave him the lessons of the economy of prose.[178] Since at this time he was preoccupied with the short story form, the lessons he learned from the Americans were in the context of what he had already learned from Russian short story writers: Gogol, Chekhov and Tolstoy. The fascination of African Americans for Coloureds and Africans was never a matter of black essentialism, it was always mediated by other non-Africanist forms. As Mphahlele himself alludes, William Faulkner may have been more critical for his literary practice as a short story writer than the author of **Uncle Tom's Children**. Mphahlele's search for origins, affiliations, identifications in this literary genre is critical since the literary forte of the Sophiatown Renaissance was in the short story form.[179]

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[177] Ezekiel Mphahlele, "Langston Hughes", *Black Orpheus*, no.9, june 1961; this essay was reprinted in *Fighting Talk* as: "Negro Poet: Trumpet at His Lips", December 1961/January 1962. Note the allusion to jazz.

[178] Ezekiel Mphahlele, "My Experience As A Writer", **Momentum: On Recent South African Writing**, (eds.) M. J. Daymond, J. U. Jacobs, Margaret Lenta, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1984. Mphahlele has drawn a memorable sketch of James Baldwin consulting with him in Paris in preparation for his first trip to Africa: "An African in America", *Fighting Talk*, February 1962.

[179] Michael Chapman (ed.), **The 'Drum' Decade: Stories from the 1950s**, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1989.

Since Mphahlele lived for nine years in the United States during his 20-year Exile period, he had the opportunity for a deeper engagement with African American literary culture. In his other important book of literary criticism, **Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays**, he appraised the American cultural and literary movement that came into being forty years after the Harlem Renaisance: the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. The importance of the Black Arts Movement for South Africa resides not only that it gave a 'home' as a member to a South African who was in exile, Keorapeste 'Willie' Kgositsile, but also because through its aesthetic philosophy of 'black aesthetics' it inspired the artistic ideology of the *Staffrider* writers of the 1970s most of whom were aligned with the Black Consciousness Movement, as well as that the theatrical practices of Amiri Baraka and Ed Bullins were models for the theater of Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, Matsemela Manaka and Maponya which came into being in South Africa in the 1970s and the 1980s. In a Preface to a book assembling the plays of these new South African playwrights, Amiri Baraka acknowledged the similarity of their artistic projects: "In his heavy work **Marxism and Poetry** George Thomson says that drama is a form that rises to its most effective expression during periods of sharp social transformation. In the U.S there are two particularly productive periods of African-American drama: the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. . . : and the Black Theatre Movement, part of the Black Arts Movement. . . Today, the most universally significant struggle for social transformation is focused in South Africa. So significant because it is here that the last vestiges of open colonialism still exist. . . This is the reason the plays in **Woza Afrika!** exist as they do, in both form and content."[180] The prescience of Ezekiel Mphahlele in focusing on the Black Arts Movement is that it preceded the emergence of these influences and connexions by many years.

In a major essay, "Voices in the Whirlwind: Poetry and Conflict in the Black World", Mphahlele examines how African American poetry, which had fascinated him for years, is born out of situations of political controversy and conflict. He is specifically interested in the nature of African American poetic performance. Although finding the early poetry of Baraka difficult to decode because of its knotted language which moves in many directions and its linguistic parenthesis that seem endless, Mphahlele feels the coherent meaning of its poetics. The intellectual complexity of Baraka's poetry does not reside in its allusiveness, he postulates, but rather in its new language form seeking to capture or render the new black experience of the 1960s.[181] Mphahlele concludes that it is the kind of poetry that penetrates the blood. He finds in Baraka's poetry a great struggle between the experience of a "highly individual intellectual life" and the need to communicate accessibly to the

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[180] Amiri Baraka, "Preface", **Woza Afrika!: An Anthology of South African Plays**, (ed.) Duma Ndlovu, George Brazilier, New York, 1986, p.xiii. The Foreword is by Wole Soyinka.
[181] Ezekiel Mphahlele, **Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays**, Hill and Wang, New York, 1972, p.38.

general public. Considering other poets of the Black Arts Movement, Mphahlele finds Haki Madhubuti (Don Lee), Larry Neal, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni much more accessible, which does not mean necessarily that their poems are less intellectually rigorous. Mphahlele postulates this poetry as striving for the harmonizing of goals among black people, as well as educating a nation's communal consciousness. Since the Black Arts Movement artists, especially the poets, were striving towards creating a 'Black Aesthetics' which would hopefully be diametrically the opposite of the aesthetics in the Western tradition, Mphahlele questions the realizability and feasability of such a project, given that there are certain fundamental constancies in the work of art, no matter in which context it may be created nor with whatever particular purpose it may be intended for.[182] Making a

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[182] ibid., p.68-69. Mphahlele's interrogation of the viability of the Black Arts Movement's intent of creating a 'Black Aesthetic', brought a sharp response from one of the members of the Movement in the form of a review-essay of **Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays**: Addison Gayle, Jr., "Under Western Eyes", *Black World*, July 1973. Admiring Mphahlele as a brilliant prose stylist, Gayle makes several criticism from the Black Arts Movement perspective: situating the search for 'Black Aesthetics' in the same historical field as Negritude and Pan-Africanism, as autonomous zones contesting the hegemony of Western thought or 'Western Aesthetic', Gayle criticizes the search for synthesis between the African and the European, which himself characterizes as 'socialist humanism', as nothing but the continuation of Western intellectual hegemony - in other words, Mphahlele is in search for a non-existent modernity which is based on an untenable dualism; whereas Mphahlele saw the Harlem Renaissance writers as celebrating freedom of the writers' craft, Gayle sees them as very much artists still held in the American house of bondage; questioning the historical legitimacy of Mphahlele criticizing the Black Aesthetics movement as replicating the same elitism of the Negritude movement, Gayle rightfully wonders whether has there been an artistic or cultural movement which was in fact not led by elites of a particular class - Gayle could have asked Mphahlele whether the Sophiatown Renaissance was not in fact led by the last elite movement of the New African Movement which was destroyed in the Sophiatown Massacre of 1960; to Mphahlele's position that cultural traits are only specific to regions and cultures, Gayle dissents by arguing that racial experiences are just as capable of generating cultural traits; to Mphahlele's argument that 'Western Aesthetic' is not synonymous with 'white aesthetics', since human knowledge is cumulative in nature and is a product of hybridization, Gayle implies that 'Western Aesthetic' is just an expression of 'White Nationalism'; Gayle counterposses his exclusive black nationalism against Mphahlerle's integrative humanism. In short, for Gayle Mphahlele's search for an integrative humanism, hybridization and synthesis is a belaboring under the control of Western cultural hegemony (i. e., Mphahlele was looking at himself as an African through the optics 'bequathed' to Africa by Joseph Conrad in **Heart of Darkness**) . Mphahlele's response is vitiated by the fact it was responding to the political and cultural climate of the time, rather than to the specifics of Addison Gayle's critique: "Ezekiel Mphahlele's Reply To Addison Gayle, Jr.", *Black World*, January 1974. Mphahlele's position that Gayle questioned his integrity and 'indicts me fiercely' is absolutely unfounded. Stating that the fundamental theme of his life work is the study of the cultural imperatives that determine or guide the cultural productions that emanate from the imagination, Mphahlele argues that synthesis and unity of purpose are the unavoidables of historical experience. Pressing further his case against the possibility of a 'Black Aesthetics', Mphahlele cites Fanon's (whom he had met in Accra in 1958) famous statement, that there are only national cultures, such an abstraction as an 'African culture' or 'black culture' exist only as fantasies. Part of the importance of this Response is that it anticipates the theme of arguably the most

critique of Harold Cruse's **The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual**, which had rejected the project of the Harlem Renaissance because of its supposed disavowal of black nationalism or indifference towards it, and because of its profound influence on the Black Arts Movement quest for constructing 'Black Aesthetics' through the ideology of black nationalism, Mphahlele argues that an artistic form like poetry is not amenable to an ethnic aesthetic: only drama is persuadable of black nationalistic aesthetics. When Langston Hughes was incorporating into his poetry the musicality of jazz sounds, and Sterling Brown was approximating his poetry to the blues forms of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, according to Mphahlele, they were not so much creating a 'Black Aesthetic', as much as making their unique poetry by resonating it with rhythmic patterns of African Americans: in other words, new aesthetics can be created and forged through unique historical experience, but not through a unique racial ontology. The Harlem Renaissance poets were more concerned with searching for freedom which would enable them to express themselves truthfully, rather than questing for a racially ontologized aesthetics.

The poet who seems to have had a great impact on Mphahlele's imagination at this particular moment of his sojourn in United States is Gwendolyn Brooks: for he understand her to be a poet of large and profound syntheses. Whether it is an article written for *Presence Africaine* in 1972 or an essay on the imagination written for *College English* in 1993, Brooks becomes a central preoccupation of Mphahlele. In the former article she is memorialized as an artist who creates great poetry from the synthesis and tension between "the urge to create out of imagination and the urge to promote the revolution or fulfil any other urgent social purpose."[183] Reference is made to her Foreword

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important essay written by Mphahlele in the last twenty years: "Educating the Imagination", *College English*, vol.55 no.2, February 1993. This review essay by Gayle is much more penetrative in its analysis of the ideology and cultural splay of the Black Arts Movement, than his essay written at the height of the Movement in 1971 which has been taken as one of its principal and critical manifestoes: "Cultural Strangulation: Black Literature and the White Aesthetic", in **Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present**, (ed.) Angelyn Mitchell, Duke University Press, Durham, 1994. In all probability the texts assembled in this book will with time be seen as representing the canon of African American literary criticism in the twentieth-century. This exchange between Ezekiel Mphahlele and Addison Gayle, Jr is one of the most perceptive and loveliest in the history of the transAtlantic relations between United States and South Africa, at least concerning literary matters. For there is no reason for doubting that the collaboration between Archie Shepp and Dollar Brand on the Duet album (1978), or that between John Dyani and Don Cherry in Sweden, were not just as profound.

[183] Ezekiel Mphahlele, "Variations on a Theme: Race and Color", *Presence Africaine*, no.83, 1972, p.94. The text is a comparison of how African American writers and African writers in South Africa have been deeply affected in the utilization of their imagination by the cultural politics of racism: "In South Africa. . . [the dominant and white culture] . . . has refused, by constitutional and statutory physical apartheid, to share in the wealth of African culture, even where the latter has appropriated some Western techniques to lift it out of its limited village setting and idiom. . . Fascism has crippled them [the white English-speaking writers]

to an an anthology of poetry, **New Negro Poets**, compiled by Langston Hughes and published after the great poet's death in which she writes: "At the present time, poets who happen also to be Negroes are twice-tried. They have to write poetry, and they have to remember thay they are Negroes. Often they wish that they could solve the Negro question once and for all, and go on from such success to the composition of textured sonnets or buoyant villanelles about about the transience of a raindrop, or the gold-stuff of the sun. They are likely to find significances in those subjects not instantly obvious to their fairer fellows."[184] This double consciousness (echoes of Du Bois) on the part of African people in the United States and South Africa, acutely registered by artists, is what makes their historical experiences similar in many ways, yet simultaneously so different from each other.

In his appraisal of African American poetry in the twentieth-century, Mphahlele positions Gwendolyn Brooks as a contrast or counter-foil to the poetics of the Black Arts Movement. In "Voices in the Whirlwind" Mphahlele is enamored to her poetry whose large portion is about life in the streets, in rented rooms, backyards and kitchenettes. She is admired for her dramatic form which examines people's life in interesting settings, movement and character: "So she is interested in those features of her people's life that go to define the setting of conflict, without any direct reference to the conflict itself. She is interested in bringing out in its subtlest nuances the color of life that conflict eventually creates. Her verse teems with words and phrases that represent motion and outward appearance, which in turn lead us to something deeper."[185] Mphahlele admires her incomparable control of the dramatic form which invariably resonates with conflict.

In another major essay on the literary practices of African Americans in the twentieth-century, which appeared in several issues of Chinua Achebe's *Okike: An African Journal of New Writing* between 1973 and 1976, Mphahlele situates Gwendolyn Brooks at the center of this great American literary enterprise.[186] Situating her in context of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Lorraine Hansberry and James Baldwin, Mphahlele again admires and celebrates her as a poet who has attained a synthesis: "between the

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trying to make use African life as material for their literature. It has worked even greater havoc on African writing. . . " (emphasis in the original).

[184] Ezekiel Mphahlele,"Educating the Imagination", *College English*, vol.55 no.2, February 1993, p.184-5. In other instances also, Mphahlele has found it necessary to make reference to these words of Gwendolyn Brooks.

[185] Ezkiel Mphahlele, **Voices in the Whirlwind**, op. cit., p.26.

[186] Ezekiel Mphahlele: "From the Black American World", *Okike*, no.4, December 1973; "From the Black American World, II", *Okike*, no.5, June 1974; "Notes From the Black American World: III", *Okike*, no.8, July 1975; "Notes From the Black American World: IV: Images of Africa in Afro-American Literature", *Okike*, no.10, May 1976; "Notes From the Black American World: Images of Africa in Afro-American Literature--Conclusion", *Okike*, no.11, November-December 1976.

urgency of a social situation in their time and the quality of life that defies social or political or legal remedies, between rejection and acceptance."[187] Mphahlele indicates that the forte of Brooks poetic imagination are individual dramas, like death, motherhood, funerals, mother-child relationships, which hardly make reference to national dramas of rebellions (so-called 'riots') demonstrations and other social upheavals. He admires Brooks' poetry for being the conjuctive of the the particular (blackness) and the universal (humanity), and that although centrally concerned with internal drama it does not totally exclude external drama. In a slight recasting of what he had already considered in **Voices in the Whirlwind**, in contrast to the internal dramatizations characteristic of Gwendolyn Brooks poetry, Mphahlele posits three predominant themes in the poetry of the Black Arts Movement: a predominant element of mystical contemplation; a search for interconnectedness, distinguishing between a false sense of discovery and a genuine sense of what actually exists; and a dramatization of the self in relation to the public in a ritualization of spiritual forces. Concerning the Harlem Renaissance poetry, he enumerates three achievements: construction of a twentieth-century sensibility of modernity in contrast to what Paul Laurence Dunbar had achieved in the nineteenth-century; the predominance of Christian symbology; allegorizing the suffering and agony of Christ as representative of the condition of black people in the twentieth-century.[188] Probably one the most fascinatings things about these is their evaluation of the image of Africa in African American literary imagination. Mphahlele argues that with every emergence of a new cycle of black consciousness among Africans in United States, it is the memory and pain of Africa that impells its eternal recurrence.

Taking a longitudinal approach, moving from Phyllis Wheatley and Gustavus Vassa in the eighteenth-century through the slave narratives (1830-65) to Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Du Bois, Mphahlele focuses on the Harlem Renaissance. Mentioning Dunbar, just preceding the Renaissance, that even when he considers a particular country as he does in "Ode to Ethiopia", not only do his Victorian poetic mannerisms get in the way, Ethiopia becomes merely an idea rather than a physical and human reality. And this is said by Mphahlele not necessarily as criticism, for he has great admiration for Dunbar, but rather, as a commentary about historical location. In Claude McKay's "Outcast", he finds a profound sense of ambivalence: Africa is so near emotionally that one can easily move there, yet so far actually and historically, since a move there would be impractical (a critique of Garveyism). With regard to Countee Cullen's "Heritage", Mphahlele finds it frothing with romanticization of Africa, a pain of absence which is not deep enough, and a manipulation of bookish language which does not resonate with deep emotions. Also with Langston Hughes Mphahlele finds a

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[187] *Okike*, no.5, June 1974.

[188] *Okike*, no.8, July 1975, p.76-77.

problematical sense of identification with the realness of Africa. What these attempted identifications with Africa from the poets of the Harlem Renaissance era indicate is that the historical distance between Africa and the African Americans is real and deep, which does not mean therefore that reachings across the Atlantic are futile. This historical distance speaks to the complex cultural splay of black people in the late twentieth-century. Specifically between the two countries, whereas blacks in United States have largely made a full entrance into postmodernity, we in South Africa are still negotiating the wide horizons of modernity.

Still, there is poet who has crossed the transAtlantic historical distance with remarkable success: South Africa's Keorapeste Kgositsile. Coming into United States immediately following the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, Kgositsile has matured into a full poet in exile. Born a year later than the youngest member of the Sophiatown Renaissance movement of the 1950s, Nathaniel Nakasa (1937-1965), Keorapetse Kgositsile missed the last cultural constellation expressing the historical logic of New Africanism in South Africa in time to participate in American Black Arts Movement of the 1960s.[189] In fact today, it

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[189] Keorapeste Kgositsile inclusion in the first book put together by African American writers in memory to Malcolm X is sufficient evidence of his position within the Black Arts Movement: "Malcolm X and the Black Revolution: The Tragedy of a Dream Deferred", in **Malcolm X: The Man and His Times**, (ed.) John Henrik Clarke, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1969. The essay brilliantly, with poetic verveness, situates Malcom in the worldly revolutionary politics of the 1960s, as well as evaluating his written legacy within the purview of Fanonian revolutionary aesthetics. A fascinating contrast presents iteself here: Max Yergan moved in the opposite direction to that of Kgositsile in the 1920s by moving into South Africa: he became an American associate of the New African Movement as much as Kgositsile was to become an African associate of the Black Arts Movement. Another contrast could be drawn here between Max Yergan and Clements Kadalie in the transAtlantic space of the 1920s between the two countries: in that Kadalie, founder and general secretary of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa (still as yet not, of Africa) in 1919 and editor of its organ, *The Workers' Herald*, could be seen as hovering on the periphery of the Harlem Renaissance as a South African correspondent of *The Messenger* as of 1923. A. Philip Randolph, one of the co-editors of *The Messenger* with Chandler Owen, was so enthusiastic about the participation of Kadalie (who was born in present day Malawi but had thoroughly 'South Africanised' himself) that he used Kadalie and *The Workers' Herald* to make a dig at W. E. B. Du Bois and *The Crisis* (see: *The Messenger*, September 1923, p.807). In the conclusion to his first contribution, Clements Kadalie writes the following: "Will the enlightened American Negro now realize how his brother and comrade is forced to labor in this 'the land of his fathers'? 'To me,' to quote that great educator, Booker T. Washington, 'the history of the African natives in the Dark Continent seems like the story of a great adventure, in which for my own part, I am glad to have had a share.' Come to the rescue, 'come over into Macedonia and help' the toiling masses of your African brethren and comrades who are now suffering from the iron heel of capitalism" (see: "A Call from Macedonia", *The Messenger*, vol.5 no.9, September 1923, p.822). Clements Kadalie made his call despite his hostility to Garveyism. Clements Kadalie made several other contributions to the *The Messenger*: "Aristocracy of White Labor in Africa", vol.6 no.8, August 1924; "Black Trade Unionism in Africa", vol.6 no,11, November 1924; "Political Storms in Africa", vol.7 no.8, August 1925. Some of the contributions of Clements Kadalie appeared in the same issues as the contributions of Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale

is uncertain whether Keorapeste Kgositsile is an American poet or a South African poet. Ezekiel Mphahlele's consideration of him within a profile of African American poetry in **Voices in the Whirlwind** was appropriate. Commenting on the fact that Kgositsile had been disconnected from his South African audience, Mphahlele traces the metamorphoses of his poetic voice as it moved closer and closer to that of the new African American poetry of the 1960s: his diction becoming one with that of the Black Arts Movement. Mphahlele charts the developing combativeness of the poetry, as it becomes a "fighting poetry" moving with speed and emiting intermittent flashes. Reflecting on the situation of Kgositsile, Mphahlele makes the following observation about the historical dilemma of South African literature: "South African Negro writers wield the language of prose effectively but not of poetry. We lost the heritage of our Bantu poetry which spoke a metaphor and allegory that were native to us. When we were compelled to master English as a lingua franca to meet the demands of black nationalism, when we could have returned to our indigenous languages with dignity (both in oral and written forms), the white rulers had boxed them up and begun to promote literatures in them that glorified white rule and the policy of ethnic divisions."[190] Facing this historical situation, Keorapetse Kgositsile by learning from, and identifying with, the new African American poetry of the 1960s, was in effect, in Ezekiel Mphahlele's estimation, celebrating survival and developing strategems of a new poetic language.

It is remarkable that at exactly the same time as Keorapetse Kgositsile was fine-tuning his poetic form within the historical moment of the Black Arts Movement, Henry Dumas in a reciprocal mode looked to Zulu Izibongo

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Hurston and other members of the Harlem Renaissance. In turn, *The Workers' Herald* gave wide coverage to African American culture: "Great American Negro Boxers", April 6, 1926. The regular column of the newspaper, The Book Shelf, was invariably on African American culture; one full page of The Workers' Herald was devoted to the appraisal of the importance of the African American magazine, *Opportunity*: June 15, 1926. The newspaper now and then encouraged its working class and middle class readers to come to the reading room of The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union to read *Opportunity*. At other times, *The Worker''Herald* excerpted a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar or an essay by Du Bois which had appeared in *Opportunity*: July 15, 1926. As though taking the cue from *The Workers' Herald*, approximately thirty years later, *The Torch*, a Trotskyite newspaper of the Non-European Unity Movement, now and then gave coverage to African American culture in its regular column, Books We Should All Read: a review of Richard Wright's **Uncle Tom's Children** appeared on January 30, 1950; a review of the 1944 second edition of **An Anthology of American Negro Literature** (originally appeared in 1929, Modern Library Series) appeared on February 13, 1950; a review of **The Life and Times of Fredrick Douglass** within the context of the emergence of slave narratives appeared on March 27, 1950; and another review sought to estimate the historical monumentality of Douglass: April 10, 1950. *The Spark* (earlier from the moment of its founding it was known as *The Guradian* and as *The Clarion*), in the early 1960s followed this South African newspaper tradition of representing the great attainments of African Americans, in a rather halting way: nevertheless it did publish Herbert Aptheker's obituary of W. E. B. Du Bois: "To Dr. Du Bois With Love", March 21, 1963.

[190] Ezekiel Mphahlele, **Voices in the Whirlwind**, op. cit., p.97.

(praise-poems) tradition for part of his inspiration. His "Emoyeni, Place of the Winds" is a brilliant exemplification of the great South African poetic tradition. Besides correctly making Emoyeni designate the Place of the Winds, the poem also alludes that it is equally the Valley of the Spirits. The Winds in their passage through the Valley are paying homage to the Ancestral Spirits, as well as the Spirits themselves sing through the Winds celebrating Human Knowledge and Wisdom. Dumas connects America and Africa through orality in the form of singing present in the Negro Spirituals and Ancestor Worship, as one of the great art forms of the black genius. The poem speaks of climbing "the body of the hill" or of bowing to "the talking grass" or of the coming " of the long green rain", all of which are physical features of the Ancestral Valley. It so happens that Mazisi Kunene in a perceptive short essay on the great Zulu poet of the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century, Magolwane, shows that Zulu poetry preceding his advent was characterized by description of physical features, "the beauty of the human body, the beauty of friendship, and indeed, the beauty of life."[191] Mazisi Kunene argues that Magolwane revolutionized this poetic idiom by introducing political and social analysis. Although Kunene indicates that Magolwane discarded the description of physical features, what we would like to indicate is that Henry Dumas delves deep into the origins, sources and roots of the tradition of Izibongo. Dumas speaks of "I put my ear to the mouth of an old man", the transmission of knowledge, the rendering of oral history, and the passing on of Wisdom. The poem is not only concerned with the transmission of Knowledge from the Past, for the old man says, "Listen to the wind, my son/see the coming of its children/every nation leans down to bite the hill", it is also about Knowledge that will open gates into the Future, in which the Earth, Wind and the Sky form a singular totality.[192] The Wind measures Temporality, the passage of Time, passing through disintegration of geological formations. In its movement the poem makes reference to "the congo leaping" and "the rumbling of the falling rock", alluding to the great theme that spirituality is not necessarily seperable from the materiality of the body, as many religious orders would like to believe. The poem is studded with lines like, "I see with my skin and hear with my tongue" or the closing line "I see the coming of the long green rain", which have made Henry Dumas one the celebrated African American poets of the twentieth-century.[193] One of the most astonishing things about the "late" poetry of

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[191] Mazisi Kunene, "Portrait of Magolwane: The Great Zulu Poet", *Cultural Events in Africa* (Cambridge University), no. 32, July 1967.

[192] Henry Dumas, "Emoyeni, Place of the Winds", **Poetry For My People**, edited posthumously by Hale Chatfield and Eugene Redmond, Preface by Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1970, p.8-9. His sense of identification with Africa was profoundly deep, as is evident in another poem, "Genesis on an Endless Mosaic" (p.82-85). Dumas was also a powerful short story writer.

[193] There is a Henry Dumas special issue of *Black American Literature Forum* dedicated to the memory of this remarkable poet: vol.22 no.2, Summer 1988; Guest edited by Eugene B. Redmond. In a letter of September 17, 1974, as Editor at Random House invitating participants to a

Henry Dumas is that it had more affinities with the poetry of the great Zulu poet and scholar Benedict Wallet Vilakazi than to any African American poet, be it Langston Hughes or Amiri Baraka or Robert Hayden. His death at an early age of 33 on May 23, 1968 in Harlem at the hands of police brutality was indeed a very tragic loss.

Henry Dumas poem belongs to a particular lineage of the Izibongo. The achievement of "Emoyeni, Place of the Winds" is that its musicality, structure and tropes are in the classical tradition of Izibongo as they have been examined by two outstanding literary scholars and practitioners within the New African Movement: Benedict Wallet Vilakazi and H. I. E. Dhlomo.[194] In a major essay, "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu", which is undoubtedly one of the milestones in literary studies in South Africa, Vilakazi posits Izibongo as consisting of imaginative language which uses phrase(s) or sentence(s) to describe an object, a process or a feeling or a person. He argues that they can be classified as poetry because their compositional

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reading of Henry Dumas poetry and prose, Toni Morrison writes: "Circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear. Before that happened, however, he had written some of the most beautiful, moving, and profound poetry and fiction I have ever in my life read. . . He was brilliant. He was magnetic, and he was an incredible artist" (p.310). Ishmael Reed writes of him: "Crows, Nighthawks, Eagles--Henry Dumas's poetry is as avian as the winged dancers in Alvin Ailey's "Revelations." It soars, its head is high, like those, in Charles White's drawings--eyes aimed towards transcendence, which is as Dumas wants black people to be" (p.337).

[194] The profile of H. I. E. Dhlomo as a central member of the New African Movement is evident through his participation in the circle of *Umteteli wa Bantu* intellectuals. That of Benedict Vilakazi (1906-1947) is not so clearly delineated or sketched out. It so happens that there are three literary portraits of Vilakazi by H. I. E. Dhlomo. Remembering him five years after his death, Dhlomo recalls Vilakazi as devoted to serious intellectual labour, having learned Latin in order to read Catullus, Virgil, Terence in the original; this encounter with Roman culture had a profound impact on Vilakazi; he had wanted to supplement his D. Litt. with a Ph. D. in Literature from either Oxford or Cambridge; he was in the process of transforming "Bantu Studies" (i.e. African literatures in the African languages, in his particular instance) when he died; in Dhlomo's estimation Vilakazi was a genius: "Dr. Vilakazi", *Drum*, July 1952. What is so impressive about this literary snapshot is the very deep psychological portrait of Vilakazi that Dhlomo coveys. In another portrait, a review of Vilakazi's book of poems **Amal' Ezulu** (**Zulu Horizons**), Dhlomo celebrates a 'new' Vilakazi who identifies him with the struggles of the people while simultaneously achieving a deep poetic lyricism, in contrast to the Vilakazi of yesteryear who had been mainly obsessed with the idea of classicism; although praising him in superlative terms, Dhlomo makes the following astute criticism: "On the technical side, one was disappointed to find that Dr. Vilakazi did not decide to demostrate his interesting theory on Zulu rhyme in any of his poems" (see: "Dr. B. W. Vilakazi: Poet", *Ilanga lase Natal*, March 30, 1946). In what was in effect an obituary, appearing a day before Vilakazi's burial, Dhlomo memorialized Vilakazi as being in the process of organizing a Society for African Authors and Artists in order to establish an African Academy of the Arts at the time of his death: "Dr. B. W. Vilakazi", *Ilanga lase Natal*, November 1, 1947. H. I. E. Dhlomo's preoccupation with Benedict "Bambatta" Vilakazi, is a clear indication not only of his great affection for him, but also a clear recognition of the fact that he saw him as of the same intellectual stature as himself.

language has a deep imaginative tone that through associative images captures a complex emotional experience. It is important to note that Vilakazi had to seriously argue for Izibongo to be taken as a legitimate poetic form because South African white scholarship which had exercised hegemony in the study of African literatures in the indigenous languages had low estimation of the poetic or artistic quality of literary creations by Africans. Analyzing particular poems, Vilakazi shows the deep emotional range encompassed by this poetic form as well as the capaciousness of its intellectual content. In a dazzling display of his deep study of literature, he examines in detail the rhythmic structure of this poetic form. He also shows how Izibongo are in a certain sense lyric poetry in that in their construction and recitation the voice of the creator or recitator tunes her voice to the some melody when reciting an imaginative description. Henry Dumas's "Emoyeni, Place of the Winds" is masterly in this sense; its musicality is profound, which is not too surprising given Dumas serious love for gospel music. Studying the poetic genres of Izibongo, Vilakazi shows that though originally they were composed on particular ceremonial occasions in honor of king, hero, queen, or a woman of beauty, they have expanded in emotional range and intellectual complexity to also encompass in the imaginative space of animals, rivers and natural objects. Dumas's poem is a celebration of the natural environment, of the Winds, paying homage to Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind". In fact, "Emoyeni, Place of the Winds" is a profound synthesis of the Romantic poetics and African cosmological systems.

Quoting Simonides that poetry is vocal painting, Vilakazi reveals the nature of the beauty of Izibongo whose aim is to give aesthetic pleasure. Fearing the preponderance of the influence of the West on African literary creations, Benedict Vilakazi does not join in the 'uncritical' celebration of Western modernity, even if its mediated through their African American cousins, of R. V. Selope Thema, H. Selby Msimang, Elijah Makiwane or H. I. E. Dhlomo: "There is no doubt that the poetry of the West will influence all Bantu poetry because all the new ideas of our age have reached us through European standards. But there is something we must not lose sight of. If we imitate the form, the outward decoration which decks the charming poetry of our Western masters, that does not mean to say that we have incorporated into our poetry even their spirit."[195] Although these observations are sound, they could not have foreseen the existence in the late twentieth-century of a great African poet, incidentally writing in the Zulu language, who not only withstood the poetic influences of Western modernity, but also after living for nearly twenty years at the center of American postmodernity (Los Angeles), seems not to have been touched by it: Mazisi Kunene. Benedict Vilakazi concludes the essay by noting two things concerning the future of Zulu poetry. One, that the observations of Charles S. Wesley (professor of

[195] B. W. Vilakazi, "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu", *Bantu Studies*, vol.XII no.2, June 1938.

history at Howard University) in a 1931 article in *Southern Workman* praising Reuben Caluza's Zulu Double Quartett performance in England in 1930, Vilakazi states that Zulu poetry too in the era of South African modernity should restore and retrieve the indomitability of the Zulu spirit. Two, like the Negro Spirituals concerning the situation of African Americans, Zulu poetry must give power to the African mind and heart "to rise above all circumstances imposed on him [and her] by conquest and subjugation to Western conditions." It is interesting to note that the composer, Reuben Caluza, upon completing his studies of music at Hampton Institute and returning to South Africa, wanted to extend what he had learned about Negro Spirituals to South African music.[196] Among the things he did in the four-five years while studying in America, Caluza organized a Quartet consisted of himself and three West Africans singing African songs which travelled throughout United States accompanied by an American Quartet singing Negro Spirituals. It is on these trips that he met American artists like Marion Anderson, Roland Hayes, Cab Calloway, Bill Robinson and others. While he was at Hampton Institute, Caluza wrote a rare critical essay on the nature of African music. He defines African music as the language of the soul which gives spiritual aspirations to the nation and reflects the history and custom of the race.[197] In effect, Caluza defines African music in close approximation to Negro Spirituals.

In a riveting response to the incitement of "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu", H. I. E. Dhlomo, displaying the great power of his analytic mind, gives an insightful and dazzling response to an observation that had puzzled Benedict Vilakazi, namely that in some of the Izibongo there was an absence of a systematic treatment of the main theme within the totality of the poetic form. This incompleteness, which Vilakazi characterized as "gaps", were "mutilations and distortions" inside the body structure of the genre. Dhlomo argues that there are actually no gaps in the Izibongo which gave a sense of incompleteness, because in actual fact they are dramatic pieces in the form of theater. The gaps are in fact the beginning and end of a dialogue or speeches in a dramatic form or composition.[198] Laboring under the hegemony of the traditional form of poetic expression of Izibongo, the dramatic poets had to clothe their dramatic compositions of the ordinary

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[196] Simon S. Ngubane, "Reuben Tholakele Caluza", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, December, First Fortnight, 1946; "Reuben Tholakele Caluza", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, December, Second Fortnight, 1946.

[197] Reuben Tolakele Caluza, "African Music", *The Southern Workman*, vol.lx no.4, April 1931.

[198] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Nature and Variety of Tribal Drama", *Bantu Studies*, vol.XIII (1939). Writing a full decade after this illuminating exchange between Benedict Vilakazi and Dhlomo, which opened African literary culture to conceptual theorizing and analytical differentiation, C. L. S. Nyembezi is self-satisfied with a descriptive rehashing of what had prevailed before their electrifying intervention: "The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age", *African Studies*, vol.7, June-September 1948, pp.110-125; December 1948, pp.157-174.

in the form of Izibongo. Indicating with a few examples, Dhlomo transforms through restructuring and re-reading a traditional Izibongo into a dramatic piece with the implied dramatis personae. These Izibongo were composed for purposes of entertainment, rather than for adulation of kings or warriors. Dhlomo says that his rereading and resituating of a poetic form is merely an application to African traditional literature of what had already been done in Biblical Studies, especially in relation to the Book of Job. With deep insightfulness, Dhlomo constructs a periodization of the various forms of Izibongo in relation to the earth-shattering changes and upheavals wrought into being by Shaka: the Mfecane, the great upheavals that led to scattering of different nations in Southern Africa. He initiates an aesthetic and hierarchical analysis of Izibongo in relation to Ingoma (a form of pure drama which is a combination of poetry, song, and action).

Having carried a deconstruction (African and pre-Derridian) and reconstruction of mystifying Izibongo, reconstituting them as dramatic theater, Dhlomo tabulates the greatness of African traditional dramatic representation: it was national in that it treated matters that concerned the people as a whole; it was a magico-religious representation; it made possible great African traditional actors; the audience fully participated in them; make-up was fully utilized; the scenery was the surroundings in the form of dramatic representations. Seeing drama as "essentially a primitive man's art", Dhlomo questions the positioning of this art form in the context of modernity, despite the fact he was himself a dramatist. Stating that although the African traditional dramatic poet was not concerned with abstract thought and metaphysics, Dhlomo argues that she or /and he nevertheless used intuition and imaginative art to represent the Universal Mind. Dhlomo wanted African scholars, writers and artists to appropriate the traditional artistic forms to create something new and fresh. Although "Nature and Variety of Tribal Drama" was ostensibly H. I. E. Dhlomo's response to the provocation of Benedict Vilakazi, it was really directed at North-South relation on the issue of influences, affiliations and appropriations within modernity, for he poses the following question in the conclusion of the essay: "Cannot Africa infuse new blood into the weary limbs of the older dramatic forms of Europe?" In other words, should Africans continue to appropriate the historical lessons of African American modernity, or was it time for African Americans to begin learning something from the developing South African modernity! Should the transAtlantic relation between South Africa and United States be transformed into one of reciprocity rather than continuing being one of a one-way street. H. I. E. Dhlomo was the first one among the members of the New African Movement to pose the question in such direct terms in the year of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Although the South African Defiance Campaign of 1952 might have had a direct impact on the United States Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955, which was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement and later the Black

Liberation Movement, it was to be another quarter of a century that directly traceable forms of South African modernity left their imprints on United States late modernity. The relationship between Ezekiel Mphahlele and Houston A. Baker, Jr awaits the biographer of the latter, consequently it will no be our concern here. Miriam Makeba's impact on American popular culture in 1960s awaits examination, especially given that in the 1940s and 1950s, as she states in her autobiography, Ella Fitzegerald, Sarah Vaughan and Billie Holliday profoundly influenced her as she was developing and finding her voice in the context of the Sophiatown Renaissance. Hugh Masekela straddled a fascinating position in the imagination of African American artists in the 1960s. While tooling his trumpet, also within the context of of the Sophiatown Renaissance in 1950s, he was fascinated by the outcome and impact of the bebop revolution: "I started as a musician very young. My parents thought I had a gift because I used to sing with all the records, the 78 rpms from the Forties. . . I followed music very closely and I had idols who became role-models; people like Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie and Clifford Brown and Duke Ellington. . . people who had come from very humble and poor beginnings; they seemed to have pulled themselves up and gotten not only the attention of the world, but they brought the attention of the world to the sufferings of the African-American as individuals, as human beings. That amazed me. They were in a country that at the time was worse than South Africa, where they were being lynched."[199] Dizzy Gillespie, Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte brought Hugh Masekela to United States to study at the Julliard School of Music In New York City. One of the first albums he worked in United States together with Jonas Gwangwa was on An Evening with Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte. This was part of Belafonte's monumental struggle on behalf of the people of South Africa, continuing in the tradition of Paul Robeson.

On his arrival in United States, Masekela participated actively in African American culture. His encounter with Miles Davis, already recounted, was another way of establishing reciprocal connections between their respective countries.[200] What is remarkable about Miles Davis is that from this contact

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[199] Hugh Masekela, "Interview", **The Rift: The Exile Experience of South Africans**, (ed.) Hilda Bernstein, Jonathan Cape, London, 1994, p.340. Even at this late date of the 1950s there was still some residual resistance to jazz as an African musical expression: 'Naledi', "African Music - Which Way?", *Fighting Talk*, July 1956. But the main direction was towards accepting and acknowledging the existence of South African Township Jazz: Ezekiel Mphahlele, "I'm for a total boycott by overseas artistes!", *Fighting Talk*, July 1962; Anonymous, "Listen Africa", *Fighting Talk*, June 1962.

[200] Miles Davis (with Quincy Troupe), **Miles: The Autobiography**, op. cit., p.287-288. From the moment of his first personal encounter with Miles Davis in 1960 in New York City, Masekela's admiration of him has remained constant to the present: "The people I admire greatly are the late Miles Davis and Clifford Brown. Miles Davis especially because he was fearless in life. Besides music, he was an innovator and he did not take any gaff from white people in the US. He was one of the greatest militants. I am also a great admirer of non-musicians, like Nelson

with Masekela he developed into a serious interest in the political situation of black people in South Africa that led late in his career to record two CDs, Tutu (1986) and Amandla (1889), as well as recording by himself a rap song against apartheid. The music of Hugh Masekela inspired Alvin Ailey to create for his Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater a choreographic work called Masekela Langage (1969). Although the master choreographer in his recently published autobiography, **Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey,** does not mention the work at all or the trumpter himself, even the State Depatment sponsored trips to Africa with his Company, Judith Jamison, the great dancer and then member of the Alvin Ailey's company, and became its present Artistic Director upon the passing of Ailey, in **Dancing Spirit: An Autobiography** recalls the creation of Masekela Langage as a very memorable occasion.[201] She writes: "All those frustrations rolled into one. . . Alvin knew how to use all of that, and we, as professionals, knew how to use it as well. It worked. Therefore, you got a work like Alvin's Masekela Langage, which he based on the South African experience. Alvin had never been to South Africa, but he'd read about it and knew that those people were suffering the same way people were suffering in the United States during the 1960s. . . Masekela, in a way, is my favorite role. Masekela is many people doing a slow, continuous burn, until the situation boils up and then recedes--temporarily. The people in Masekela Langage survive. . . It's a continuing mounting of tension and then a release It's an incredible solo."[202] Jamison dances the solo with extraordinary power.

One of the dramatic symbolic representation of South Africa in the work of an African American artist, or for that matter in any American artist (notwithstanding the remarkable installations on South Africa by Hans Haacke in the 1980s), is the inclusion of the figure of Hugh Masekela in Ishmael Reed's great postmodern novel **Mumbo Jumbo**. Henry Louis Gates penetratively reads the novel as establishing endless intertextual connections: "Reed's third novel. . . is about writing itself; not only in the figurative sense of the post-modern, self-reflexive text but also in a literal sense. . . is both a book about texts and a book of texts, a composite narrative composed of

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Mandela. . . I think this country [South Africa], next to the United States, is the most gifted country in instrumental and vocal music [jazz]" ("Hugh Masekela: Interview", *Work in Progress*, October 1992, p.31, 32.)

[201] Alvin Ailey (with A. Peter Bailey), **Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey**, Birch Lane Press, New York, 1995. The book conveys the deep central importance of gospel music, blues, jazz and Negro Spirituals in any African American expressive creation. This writer first saw Revelations while in High School in Nairobi in 1967 during a tour of Africa by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. In a private conversation during an interview with Judith Jamison in 1989 in Los Angeles she recalled in evocative terms the making of Masekela Langage: "Zur Erinnerung an Alvin Ailey" and "Ntongela Masilela sprach mit Judith Jamison: Die Schonheit der Bewegung verstehen. . .", *Tanz Aktuell* (West Berlin), Marz 1990, pp.10-13.

[202] Judith Jamison (with Howard Kaplan), **Dancing Spirit: An Autobiography**, Anchor Books, New York, 1993, p.110-111.

subtexts, pretexts, post-texts, and narratives within narratives. It is both a definition of Afro-American culture and its deflation. . . the novel serves as a critique of black and Western literary forms and conventions, and complex relationships between the two."[203] Elaborating on these observations, we would argue that the novel is about material history, the cultural patterns of black history in the twentieth-century. It portrays the historical process, its cultural and literary reverberations, through intertextuality. The prologue of **Mumbo Jumbo** is not only a violent intertextual act against a great modernist text, but it also announces several things: that African history and mythology will be its central concern, that it will trace the cultural patterns binding together America and Africa, that it will build its narrative structure and its movement through collective representations, that imperialism has done enormous damage to black people all over the world, that 'black' Egyptian civilization was the mother of 'white' Greek civilization, that blackness is a historical condition and not a biological fact, that it will unravel the structure of African cosmology and the cultural forms of its diffusion through the process of slavery in America and in the Caribbean, that it will voice the qualitative nature of the cultural experience of the Harlem Renaissance for African Americans, that it will expose white hegemony over black people, that it will convey intersubjectivity through collective forms and processes, that class oppression and racism are endemic to American society, and lastly that its narrative structuration is a lesson learned from Langston Hughes's genius.

It is necessary to quote a few lines of the prologue: "We knew that something was Jes Grewing just like the 1890s flair-up. We thought that the local infestation area was Place Congo so we put our antipathetic substances to work on it, to try to drive it out; but it started to play hide and seek with us, a case occurring in one neighborhood and picking up in another. It began to leapfrog all about us. . . He said he saw Nkulu Kulu [God] of the Zulu, a locomotive with a red green and black python entwined in its face, Johnny Canoeing up the tracks. . . He said he felt like the gut heart and lungs of Africa's interior. He said he felt like the Kongo: 'Land of the Panther.' He said he felt like 'deserting his master', as the Kongo is 'prone to do.' He said he felt he could dance on a dime."[204] Following on this prologue, the whole logic of the narration in the novel indicates clearly that the text in context refers to the conceptual structure of history. This is made all the more clear when it is noted that among the many associative allusions present in the prologue is a critique of Joseph Conrad's understanding of the nature of imperialism. In other words, **Mumbo Jumbo**, a postmodern novel, opens a historical horizon for itself by making an unconpromising critique of **Heart of Darkness**, a great modernist text. That is, **Mumbo Jumbo** makes an intertextual critique of

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[203] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., **Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the 'Racial' Self**, Oxford University Press, 1987, p.252-253,

[204] Ishmael Reed, **Mumbo Jumbo**, Atheneum, New York, 1972, p.3-7, my italics.

Heart of Darkness in order to question the concept of history articulated in Conrad's novel. More than being merely formalistic, the critique is fundamentally historical. For Reed, the object at issue in this intertextual confrontation is imperialism, that is, the imposition of European history on African history. When Reed writes the following lines in the novel, he is enlisting Hugh Masekela in his fundamental project of vanguishing the Conrad's image of Africa which rules the European imagination: "Another man, a South African trumpeter, 'Hugh,' is in L.A. transmitting Black American sounds on home. He realizes that the essential Pan-Africanism is artists relating across continents their craft, drumbeats from the aeons, sounds that are still with us."[205] On his arrival in United States Hugh Masekela made a deep impression on African American artists preoccupied with the expressive forms of jazz because by the time he left South Africa he was a member of the best South African jazz combo, the Jazz Epistles, which included Jonas Gwangwa, the incomparable alto saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi, Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and Johnny Mackay. This South African Quintet was modelling itself on the great Miles Davis Quintet of the 1950s: Philly Joe Jones, Paul Chambers, John Coltrane, and Red Garland; with Cannonball Addley as a member of the Sextet.

The Jazz Epistles were the culmination point of the developmental process of jazz which the New Africans had attempted to extirpate even before it had began to establish a foothold in South Africa. But like Jes Grew in **Mumbo Jumbo** it confounded the intellectual ruling order of the New African Movement. While R. V. Selope Thema was the intellectual leader of the New African Movement around *Umteteli wa Bantu* circle by virtue of his prescience, range of vision, and intellectual rigour, even if in some instances the vision was reactionary and conservative, he held steadfastly against jazz, because he perceived it as anti-progress, anti-civilization, and more seriously anti-Christian, when Selope Thema became in the early 1930s editor of *Bantu World*, a newspaper catering to the newly re-made Africans at the centers of modernity in places like Johannesburg, he began to make a rapprochement with the jazzed musical expressive forms. Also R. R. R. Dhlomo, in his second decade as editor of *Ilanga lase Natal* in the 1950s, accomodated himself to the hegemony that jazz had begun to exercise in Durban concert halls. The entertainment, cultural and leisure sections of both newspapers began carrying reviews and/or announcement of jazz concerts in their respective cities. What made jazz historically inescapable or historically unavoidable is that swing bands of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman (with assistance of Fletcher Henderson), the singing of Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, made jazz in the 1930s America's popular music.[206] Since R. V. Selope Thema was still calling for the emulation of African American modernity, or at least a variant of it, it was unavoidable

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[205] ibid., p.83.

[206] The central theme of Gunther Schuller's masterpiece: **The Swing Era**.

that the Jess Grewing of United States would also lead to the Jess Grewing of South Africa. The jess grewing of South Africa in the 1930s and the 1940s was lead by jazz combos such as the Jazz Maniacs, the Merry Blackbirds, the Rythm Kings, the Pitch Black Follies, the African Hellenics, the Synco Down Beats Orchestra, etc. By the time Kippie Moeketsi joined the Harlem Swingsters in 1949, jazz was here to stay in South Africa.[207] Despite his intellectual authority, even H. I. E. Dhlomo's unreleting hostility to the "new movement" and "new music" of jazz, characterizing it as mongrel music, on the occasion of 50th anniversary of the founding of *Ilanga lase Natal* in 1953, could not turn the tide back.[208] Just two years after Dhlomo's tirade, the newspaper reprinted two serious profiles on two jazz giants: Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong and Duke Ellington.[209]

While *Ilanga lase Natal* and H. I. E. Dhlomo in many ways continued to fight the battles of the 1920s against jazz in the 1950s, completely unaware that a new cultural formation was in the process of emerging in that decade, the Sophiatown Renaissance, coming after the bebop revolution of the 1940s, saw jazz as the very expression and representation of the modernist experience. Consequently, whereas the first constellation of the New African Movement around *Umteteli wa Bantu*, R. V. Selope Thema, Solomon T. Plaatje, H. I. E. Dhlomo, H. Selby Msimang, saw jazz as a negative expression of modernity, the last pleaid of the Movement on the pages of *Drum* magazine and the *Golden City Post*, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, Can Themba, Bessie Head, Peter Magubane, Lionel Oostendorp, G. R. Naidoo, saw jazz, much more than literature, as linking United States modernity and South African modernity.

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[207] Kippie Moeketsi, "Kippie's Memories and the Early Days of Jazz", **Ten Years of Staffrider, 1978-88**, (eds.) Andries Walter Oliphant and Ivan Vladislavic, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1988, p.363.

[208] H. I. E. Dhlomo, "Development of African Music", *Ilanga lase Natal*, June 20, 1953; see also the accompanying article published on the same time, also by Dhlomo: "Evolution of Bantu Entertainments". As though giving cognisance to R. V. Selope Thema as the intellectual leader of the New African Movement, the editors of *Ilanga lase Natal*, H. I. E. Dhlomo and R. R. R. Dhlomo, requested him to say a few words on the occasion of the newspaper's golden jubilee (June 20, 1953). This gave Selope Thema an opportunity restate his views on the vital importance of modernity, which he had articulated thirty years earlier in *Umteteli wa Bantu*. Selope Thema praises the founder of *Ilanga lase Natal* in 1903, John Langalibalele Dube, as having been inspired by the need to struggle against the "slavery of superstition" and the "darkness of African life", by bringing to the Zulu nation the spiritual and intellectual enlightenment of Chistianity and Western civilization. In this, Selope Thema finds Dube to be comparable to Shaka, who is also praised for having "opened the country of the Zulus for white colonisation, evangelisation and civilization": "Message from Mr. Selope Thema", *Ilanga lase Natal*, June 20, 1953. Written just after his retirement from a twenty-year tenure as editor of *Bantu World* and two years before his death, this celebratory essay shows the consistency of his vision concerning the ideology of modernity.

[209] "Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong", *Ilanga lase Natal*, September 24, 1955; "Duke Ellington", *Ilanga lase Natal*, October 8, 1955. Both articles, unfortunately, were written by the Philip's Biography service.

Bloke Modisane and Todd Matshikiza formulated this position of the Sophiatown Renaissance with much more consistency and rigour than the other members.

Todd Matshikiza's 1961 autobiography, **Chocolates For My Wife**, is astonishing for its total disregard of jazz culture, when in fact his jazz criticism in the decade of the 1950s made many South Africans consider jazz as synonymous with modernity itself, as possessing more expressive power in representation of that particular historical moment than literature or film. Also surprising is its failure to register the cultural and historical uniqueness of the Sophiatown Renaissance, at whose center he wrote seminal criticism on the pages of *Drum* thereby arguably solidifying the transAtlantic relations between South Africa and United States than any member of the 'School', when in fact Ezekiel Mphahlele's autobiography, **Down Second Avenue**, published two years earlier, had already been profoundly conscious of the singularity and uniqueness of the 1950s. Thirdly, the autobiography is surprising in its refusal to memorialize Sophiatown, when in fact he appears in a memorable fashion in a book that hautingly laments the destruction of that great town: Bloke Modisane's **Blame Me On History**. What these absences indicate is that **Chocolates For My Wife** is really in the tradition of Solomon T. Plaatje's essay of 1914, "Native Delegation to England", in that both aim to memorialize that point of encounter between the African imagination, on the one hand, and European modernity encapsulated in a metropolitan city like London, on the other: both writers were fascinated by St. Paul's Cathedral. The book stands at that not easily definable position of passionately embracing both African American modernity and European modernity, reflecting Todd Matshikiza's training in classical music and his identification with jazz.[210]

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[210] Todd Matshikiza, **Chocolates For My Wife**, Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1961. In a review estimating the prose style of the autobiography, Ezekiel Mphahlele emphasized that Matshikiza was first and foremost a musician, then a journalist and lastly maybe a writer: "His writing then shows something of what we were used to seeing in his journalism in South Africa: jazzy staccato, the sound of whip-cracks and a characteristic, sudden and outrageous twist of prose to suit his needs. All these are produced by the cross currents of jazz, the literature of jazz, Negro literature and the South African experience that run in the writer's veins" (see: "Chocolates for the Police", *Transition*, vol.2 no.5, July 30-August 29, 1962). Nearly 25-years after the death of Todd Matshikiza in Zambia in 1968, Esme Matshikiza in 1991 gave a searing and illuminating sketch of her husband about his cultural background and education, as well as his deep commitment to music (see: Hilda Bernstein, **The Rift**, op. cit., pp.325-329). The sketch is haunted by the pain of Exile: "Exile inflicted a great tragedy on me and my family by taking Todd away. We miss him to this day, and ever will." Despite his deep knowledge of American jazz music, Todd Matshikiza does not seem to have been tempted to immigrate to the United States. Equally intriguing, is the case of Bloke Modisane, who does not seem to have had much 'use' for United States, prefering Europe, even though **Blame Me On History** bears the deep imprint of American popular culture. The other biographer of Langston Hughes, Faith Berry, has a fascinating portrait of Modisane momentarily living in Hughes's

Todd Matshikiza not only wrote important essays on South African jazz and American jazz in *Drum* magazine, but also wrote various columns which gave him ample territory to amplify further his meditations on this great twentieth-century musical form. In the magazine he wrote three columns: Music for Moderns, Disc-ussing, and Record Review, and occasionally, Gramo-go-Round. In the newspaper *Golden City Post*, in the mid-1950s, he wrote three columns: Nite Life, In the Groove, and occasionally, Social Swing.[211] In three remarkable essays of historical retrieval and cultural placement, that have become the fundamental point of reference in jazz studies in South Africa today, Matshikiza sought to draw the conceptual parameters and the theoretical structure of South African jazz.[212] In the first piece, "Stars of Jazz", which is written in an autobiographical vein, he recalls as a young boy in 1928 hearing the jazz music of Boet Gashe, a jazz organist, in the location [black section] of Queenstown. He remembers Boet Gashe as performing from house to house in various towns, where there was much liquor and continuous dancing, with dust ascending from the floor making visibility practically impossible. In effect, the performance sessions of the jazz organist where characterized by perpetual effect and delirium with him "supplying persistent chords with [the] right hand, improvising effective melody with [the] left hand." Remembering the brilliance of Boet Gashe, he

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house in Harlem in the early 1960s (see: **Langston Hughes, Before and Beyond Harlem**, Westport, Conn., 1983).

[211] It would be wrong to give the impression that Todd Matshikiza only wrote on matters that concern only music. He wrote a political portrait of Rev. Z. R. Mahabane who was twice President-General of the ANC in the 1920s and in the 1930s in the Masterpiece in Bronze series (see: *Drum*, May 1957 (?), the title of the article and the date are not quite legible). Masterpiece in Bronze series were biographical sketches by different writers of famous personalities from James E. K. Aggrey of Ghana, who was the first in the series (March 1951), to Langston Hughes (September 1953), who seemed to have been the last in the series: in between there were: Dr. Ralph Bunche (April 1951), Duke Ellington (May 1951), Dr. George Washington Carver (July/August 1951), Ethel Waters (September 1951). The Masterpiece in Bronze series seems to have been a particularly effective way for *Drum* magazine to present African American intellectual and music culture to black South Africans; the predominance of black Americans in the early part of the series speaks for itself. In January 1953, April 1953 and March 1957, Todd Matshikiza, respectively, sketched the portraits of Louis Armstrong , Art Tatum and Lionel Hampton for the series. Later the Masterpiece in Bronze series included outstanding South African figures. There were portrayals of black Americans other than the series: the November 1957 issue of *Drum* has biographical portraits of Harry Belafonte and Jack Johnson, the great boxer. The sketch of Johnson is deeper, as is continuing from the October issue. African American intellectuals and writers seem to have contributed directly to Drum from America: John Henrik Clarke contributed a short story, "The Boy Who Painted Christ Black" in the in the August 1952 issue; Langston Hughes contributed cultural portraits of Cuba and Haiti in the July and August (1957) issues. Clarke's interested in South Africa never abated as was evident in his historical portrait of Bambata: "Portrait of Bambata", *Presence Africaine*, vol.17 (1963).

[212] Todd Matshikiza: "Stars of Jazz", June 1957; "Jazz comes to Joburg!", July 1957; "Where's Jazz Going Now?", August 1957: all in *Drum* magazine.

writes that from Friday evening to Monday morning Gashe made time stand still while making the organ deliver continuous talk. His main audience consisting of miners and prostitutes (no wonder the Christianized New African intelligentsia were enraged by jazz). The way Matshikiza writes of the jazz organist it is as though he occupies a comparable mythic position in South African jazz, as that occupied by Buddy Bolden in American jazz. Boet Gashe not only performed Marabi music, but also performed ragtime classics with prefigurations toward jazz. In so far as the making of ragtime music, Matshikiza situates Gashe in the relation to Darktown Darkies, Versatile Six, Darktown Strutters, the "unbeatable genius" of Jonathan "Koppie" Masoleng and others, all of whom, as is evident, were profoundly influence by African Americans. Since the ragtime songs were learned through records played on gramaphones and through car radios, Matshikiza speaks of the importance technology in making the experience of modernity accessible and meaningful to Africans.

It is interesting to observe that while Negro spirituals came into South Africa through people, McAdoo and other African Americans, ragtime music largely implants itself through technology. And while classical music or European music was found to be boring, the blues and Marabi were migrating from town to town. Matshikiza concludes his reflections on Tebejana ("father of the original and authentic black jazz") as transforming Marabi tunes into jazz idioms. The construction or composition of new jazz idioms necessarily necessitated the creation of new dance forms. In the second essay of the series, "Jazz comes to Joburg!", he traces the movement or migration of jazz from the hinterlands to Johannesburg through pianists, jazz singers, jazz groups and the innumerable halls in which the music was performed. He mentions a line of brilliant jazz pianists from Bob Kwaza to Sullivan Mphahlele, and the great singer, Snowy Radebe. He also enumerates the outstanding jazz bands of the 1930s and the 1940s: Peter Rezant's Merry Blackbirds, Solomon "Zuluboy" Cele's Jazz Maniacs from which two jazz giants emerged, Sherwood Makwenkwe "Mackay" Davashe and Wilson "King Force" Silgee. Matshikiza makes clear that the making of South African jazz was accompanied by an intellectual and critical process, the founding of the first black music magazine, *African Sunrise*, by Wilfred Sentso, an educationist and band leader. In the last essay, "Where's Jazz Going Now?: Yankee jazz came knocking at the door, but the jazzmen of Africa wanted their own music", Matshikiza laments the disappearance of the great jazz band, the Jazz Maniacs, whose first leader, "Zuluboy" Cele, had wanted to create an original South African jazz, emerging from Marabi music, and totally autonomous from American jazz: "Zulu Boy Cele was not an antagonist of American swing, but he saw in the use of more instruments the possibility of developing African jazz. . . Marabi. . . into an orchestral form so that music of African origin would find its place side by side with imported dance music. And if he adopted the Western idea, he would at least give vent to the African form of expression. The African idiom. But the continuity of African

jazz was swallowed up by American jazz for a few years. . . We invented 'Majuba' jazz and gave jive strong competition. We syncopated and displaced accents and gave endless variety to our 'native' rhythms. We were longing for the days of the Marabi piano, vital and live. Blues piano, ragtime piano, jazz band piano, swing and modern piano had taken it away from us."[213] Despite this lamentation of the superimposition of American jazz on South African jazz, Todd Matshikiza was fascinated by the jazz giants of "Yankee" music, two of whom he sketched in memorable portraits: Louis Armstrong and Art Tatum.

On Armstrong, Matshikiza wrote several analytic portraits, appreciative pieces and celebratory homages. One of the most renown is the essay, "Louis Armstrong: The King of Jazz", which appeared in the Masterpiece in Bronze series of the *Drum* magazine.[214] Matshikiza grapples with the enormous achievement of Armstrong, given the conditions of misery and dispossession from which he emerged. He credits Armstrong with having pulled jazz from the stench and mire of its origins through his unparalleled improvisational powers and formidable technique. In his estimation, it was Armstrong who truly developed jazz into a great art form. Although acknowledging that he had strong and original predecessors, like Joe Oliver and Freddie Keppard, not to mention Buddy Bolden, he argues that "Satchmo" was the most original and compelling among them. From this moment onward, Louis Armstrong was to be the informing point of reference in the jazz criticism of Todd Matshikiza. Another jazz giant to whom Matshikiza was to devote a Masterpiece in Bronze essay was Art Tatum. In "Art Tatum: The Blind Wizard of the Piano", Todd Matshikiza admires the dynamic skill, the

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[213] The breaking of sentences is in the original. It is interesting to note that the attempt by some leading South African jazz practitioners to use Marabi music as a shield against the hegemony of American jazz, was only true during its Swing period, when on the public stage white American musicians dominated and colonialized the form by aligning it with American film musicals of the 1930s. This domination was illegitimate since it was not based on musical originality and performance, but rather based on the white ethnocentrism of cultural politics. The result being that Benny Goodman is designated as the "King of Swing music" when Duke Ellington was writing some of his great masterpieces; when Goodman, not visible to the public, was being constantly supplied fresh musical ideas by Fletcher Henderson: see Gunther Schuller's **The Swing Era**. South African artists had a deep knowledge of American cultural politics in the making and production of jazz: misappropriation and expropriation. When bebop revolution occurred, initiated, among others, by Thelonius Monk, Kenny Clarke, Charlie Parker, it galvanized South African jazz, producing a Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Kippie "Morolong" Moeketsi, among others. The unavoidability of African American culture in the cultural practices of Africans in South Africa is evident that when a "new" variant of jazz form is "invented", "Majuba" jazz, supposedly in opposition to American classical jazz, it is named after the African American dancer of the nineteenth-century, "Juba", otherwise known as William Henry Lane (see: Richard A. Long, **The Black Tradition in American Dance**, Rizzoli, New York, 1989, p.10-11).

[214] Todd Matshikiza, "Louis Armstrong: The King of Jazz", *Drum*, January 1953.

phenomenal memory bank and the endurance power of the great pianist.[215] He examines the relationship, which was based on mutual admiration, between Thomas "Fats" Waller and Tatum. Four years later, in a review of the five volumes of albums of the music of Tatum produced by Norman Granz, Matshikiza situates the pianist among the pianists of the like of Teddy Wilson, Count Basie and others.[216] It would seem that Art Tatum had a deeper personal significance to Matshikiza than any other jazz artist (precisely because Matshikiza himself was also a pianist). Matshikiza devoted one more Masterpiece in Bronze essay to the vibraphonist, Lionel Hampton: "One thing about jazz is its tremendous influence in the hands of capable men like Hamp, Father of the Vibes. . . He has been described as a swing factory, a fantastic soloist, grunting and graning, a genius of the vibes, the piano and drums."[217] What all these jazz portraits indicate is that Todd Matshikiza had a much greater knowledge and appreciation of jazz than the other members of the New African Movement, especially much more than those like H. I. E. Dhlomo, Solomon T. Plaatje, R. R. R. Dhlomo, who fulminated against the one great musical art form of the twentieth-century. The older generation of the New Africans were preoccupied with a different cultural ethos.

Bloke Modisane had a cultural ethos similar to that of Todd Matshikiza, since they were both members of the Sophiatown Renaissance. In his column, Nite Life written under "Showman Todd" in the *Golden City Post*, Todd Matshikiza praises Modisane as a jazz enthusiast, a master record collector and as a connoisseur.[218] But other witnesses of the time, Obed Musi, Jurgen Schadeberg, Sylvester Stein, who worked with Modisane and Matshikiza in *Drum* magazine, recall that when they visited "Sunset Boulevard", Modisane's one-room place of residence in Sophiatown, they were likely to hear Mozart or Beethoven, rather than for instance Miles Davis, since he did not possess even a single jazz record, while he had reams and reams of classical records.[219] Yet upon replacing Todd Matshikiza in writing the column Nite Life in the mid 1950s, Modisane wrote quite iluminatingly on jazz. Later Modisane shifted the column from a total preoccupation with jazz

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[215] Todd Matshikiza, "Art Tatum: The Blind Wizard of the Piano", *Drum*, April 1953. Matshikiza reviewed the music of Fats Waller very warmly: "Musical Ghosts", *Drum*, January 1954. Matshikiza's deep love for the art of Art Tatum and Fats Waller is partly explained by the fact that he was himself a pianist, not wholly a devoted a jazz pianist, since he had a passion for choral music: W. 'Bloke' Modisane, "Matshikiza Makes Music", *Drum*, December 1956.

[216] Todd Matshikiza, "The Genius of Tatum", Drum, *February* 1957.

[217] Todd Matshikiza, "Rock 'Em, Hampton!", *Drum*, March 1957.

[218] Todd Matshikiza, "All the Encores were for Emily", *Golden City Post*, September 18, 1955.

[219] Mike Nicol, **A Good-Looking Corpse**, Secker and Warburg, London, 1991, p. 288-291. In a statement that could be taken as a confirmation of these observations, Bloke Modisane writes: "Jazz is a real gasser, but it ain't the end of the line. There's serious classical music richer in tradition and intellectual content" (see: "A Vulture For Some Culture", *Golden City Post*, June 6, 1958).

culture as it had been under Todd Matshikiza's direction, to largely preoccupying itself with popular American film culture. But this gravitation to writing about American film culture presented insourmountable problems, in that since Africans were barred from seeing most of these films by the apartheid state, Bloke Modisane was reduced to practically writing a gossip column about the life style of American films stars from Kim Novak through Sydney Poitier to Dorothy Dandridge. But despite this problem, which embittered him enormously, his passion for film and acting never abated as is evident in **Blame Me On History**, the book opening with the dramatic gesture of his resignation from the *Golden City Post* in order to work on Lionel Rogosin's film, Come Back Africa, whose script was conjointly written by Modisane and Lewis Nkosi together with Rogosin. Paradoxically, this "American" film is one of the high expressive moments of the Sophiatown Renaissance. The extraordinary power of the film in representing "South Africanness" has not been equalled, nor is it likely that it will ever be surpassed.[220]

At the time William "Bloke" Modisane was writing jazz criticism for *Golden City Post* in early mid 1957, the weekly was running an extensive serialization of Billie Holiday's **Lady Sings the Blues** in competion with *Drum* magazine which was serializing Louis Armstrong's autobiography. In one of his controversial pieces, Bloke Modisane criticised South African jazz of stagnation and stasis, perhaps even of retrogression, for its failure to learn or assimilate the modernist revolution initiated and undertaken more than a decade earlier by the be-boppers like Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, Howard McGee and others at Minton's Place in Harlem.[221] Pressing his case, and using the catchword of "progress" which had become the obsession of the New African Movement, he argued that African Jazz not only was not progressive, but it was characterized by repetitiveness, besides being boring and monotous. In other words, Modisane was demanding that South African jazz should, or must, school itself, in the unceasing improvisational qualities of American jazz. The only South African jazz artist he singled out for praise was Jerry "Kippie" Moeketsi. Modisane concluded his polemical piece by asking readers to comment on the issues he had raised. While waiting for a response from the readers, he wrote another piece in which he appraised South African jazz in terms of its approximation to American jazz, rather than of its own intrinsic qualities. Although giving cautious praise to that movement within South African jazz that sought to learn from the "cool style" of West Coast Jazz, he felt that African Jazz would receive the necessary

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[220] I have attempted elsewhere to indicate the historic importance of Come Back Africa, which was premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 1959: *Jump Cut*, Fall 1991.

[221] Bloke Modisane, "African Jazz Is Now Deadbeat", *Golden City Post*, May 19, 1957. Since Modisane was not only a writer deeply immersed in music, but was also an actor, and as such seems to have been deeply influenced by Canada Lee: William "Bloke" Modisane, "Canada Lee", *Drum*, October 1955.

lessons it truly needs when it learned from the lessons imparted by the modernism of bebop jazz.[222]

The most serious response to the polemical challenge posed by Bloke Modisane was by Walter M. B. Nhlapo, a senior member of the New African Movement, who had worked closely with H. I. E. Dhlomo and R. R. R. Dhlomo on the pages of *Ilanga lase Natal*, and had been on the outer fringes of the *Umteteli wa Bantu* intellectual circle in the 1920s and in the early 1930s. Because of these early associations, one would have expected him to be hostile to jazz as his colleagues had been in the early period. But he exudes a warmth uncharacteristic of his generation which had largely associated jazz with brothels, vulgar dancing and with the Devil himself. Without directly saying so, for him the issue is not so much the question of South African jazz schooling itself in American jazz, as much as that jazz artists in South Africa should just school themselves in the nature, structure and theory of music period![223] In other words, they should learn jazz through the intellect and mind, rather than through the ear! It should be added in parenthesis, that Walter M. B. Nhlapo is one of those few intellectuals in the New African Movement who were not amored, not necessarily hostile, to the modernist achievements of the New Negroes across the Atlantic. Continuing with his thesis, he found South African jazz artists to be lacking in creativity, musicianship, in understanding harmony, and in improvisational skills: "To me, African jazz is not dead wood without a beat. The dead wood without a beat are the very modern jazzmen who try and interpret it to the world. It can achieve a niche for itself when African jazzmen can evolve an original style of their own."[224] What these exchanges indicate is that jazz was becoming an object of intellectual discourse among the intelligentsia of the New African Movement at the moment of its historical twilight, on the eve of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960.

The historical twilight of the New African Movement in the 1950s, the termination of its historical logic, occurs at the moment of astonishing cultural effervescence usually associated with *Drum* magazine, but designated as the Sophiatown Renaissance: the brilliant photography of Peter Magubane, Bob Gosani, Jurgen Schaderberg, Lionel Oostendorp, Alfred Kumalo and others; the short stories of the *Drum* journalists, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Henry Nxumalo, Can Themba, Casey Motsisi, and of their intellectual 'associates',

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[222] Bloke Modisane, "Good Jazz, Cool and Modern", *Golden City Post*, June 16, 1957. In an adjacent space, Modisane published the opinion of a reader, Peter Stainbank, who expressed the view that Kippie Moeketsi was being too imitative of Charlie Parker, when the great American altoist himself was supposedly becoming dated.

[223] Walter M. B. Nhlapo, "Get Rid of 'Dead Wood' Jazz", *Golden City Post*, July 7, 1957.

[224] Walter M. B. Nhlapo was a brilliant intellectual in his own right. This is evident in his writings known to this author, most of which appeared in *Ilanga lase Natal*, and some in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, *The Bantu World* and *Liberation*.

James Mathews, Jordan K. Ngubane, Richard Rive, Alex La Guma; the penny whistle music of Spokes Mashiyane and Lemmy Special; the jazz sounds of Kippie Moeketsi, Early Mabusa, the Jazz Epistles; the serious emergence of music drama like "King Kong" and African musical film like Song of Africa;[225] the sounds of Miriam Makeba and the Manhattan Brothers; and so on.

At the moment of its final act, the *Drum* intellectuals, as the last collective cultural expression of the New African Movement, connect in a spectacular way with one of the last great figures of the New Negro modernism, Langston Hughes. In 1960 (the terminanting moment of the New African Movement) Hughes assembled an anthology of African critical and creative writings: **An African Treasury**. In the "Introduction" to the anthology Hughes states that his interest in African literature began in the early 1950s when the editors of *Drum* magazine asked him to participate in a panel of judges in evaluating a short story competition.[226] In selecting many of the *Drum* writers, Langston Hughes, unbeknowst to himself, was inadvertently presenting to the world some of the literary products emanating from the cultural experience of the Sophiatown Renaissance. This gesture of recognition was reciprocated when Richard Rive dedicated his first collection of short stories, **African Songs**, to the author of **The Big Sea**, whose poem, "The Weary Blues" prefaces the anthology; Mphahlele writes an essay on his poetry in *Black Orpheus*, and invites him to be the keynote speaker in the first gathering of Anglophone writers which took place in Kampala in 1962.[227] What is most remarkable about **An African Treasury**, that which makes it an eerily prophetic text, again 'inadvertently' done, is the subtext of its profiling South Africa with Nigeria and Ghana, and a few other countries, was the pronouncement that the historical logic and rationale of the New African Movement gazing at the astonishing achievements of the New Negro had perhaps run its course, and that South Africa should look to Africa,[228] as it was confirmed with Ezekiel

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[225] Todd Matshikiza, "Song of Africa: All-African Musical Film", *Drum*, April 1952.

[226] Langston Hughes, **An African Treasury**, Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1960, p.ix . The book was a product of long planning and genesis as is evident in a call for contributions which was placed in *Ilanga lase Natal*: "Opportunity for African Writers: Langston Hughes Plans [An] Anthology", July 3, 1954. The absence of H. I. E. Dhlomo is very conspicuous; but, perhaps, the explanation is that by 1954, he was encountering serious health problems, two years before his death. *Fighting Talk* published an enthusiastic review of the anthology by M. and D. B.: "Writers of Africa", November 1960.

[227] Richard Rive, **African Songs**, Seven Seas Publishers, Berlin, 1963. Langston Hughe's selection, as a member of the adjudicating panel, of Rive's famous story, "The Bench", as a winner in a *Drum* competition, opened a friendship between the two writers. Ezekiel Mphahlele, "Langston Hughes", *Black Orpheus*, June 1961. Mphahlele's relationship to Richard Wright and Langston Hughes, see: "My Experience as a Writer", op. cit.

[228] This is not to imply that the New African intellectuals ever saw South African as anything other than as part of Africa. A representative example is Ezekiel Mphahlele in 1955, having spent six months in Lesotho as a consequence of his having opposed the imposition of Bantu Education: "Why I Left Basutoland", *Mohlabani*, Loetse/September, 1955: "You see, I always

think of our country in relation to the rest of our bleeding Africa." With the exception of Mphahlele, no other New African thinker engaged himself/herself more profoundly in the 1960s with Africa than Z. K. Mathews. It was Mathews (1901-1968) when New Africanism came to a cul-de-sac in the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, who attempted in some of his last writings to, from the perspective of South Africanism, turn the modernist experience, from a national preoccupation into a continental linkage and wordly experience. Through his research and working with international organization, Mathews believed that education not totally severed from ecclesiastical thought would enable Africa to engage modernity in a serious way: "Christian Education in a Changing Africa", *International Review of Missions*, January 1963. His autobiography, **Freedom for my People** (David Philip, Cape Town, 1983), indicates how he went about theorizing and implementing the strategy of utilizing education as an entry way into modernity for the whole of Africa, an endeavor which drew admiration from Kwame Nkrumah to Jomo Kenyatta, with both of whom he had been students in London in the 1930s. Concerning modernity as a wordly experience, he edited **Responsible Government in a Revolutionary Age** (Association Press, New York, 1966), which as he explained in the Foreword, sought to understand modernity as an accelerated process of change and transformation which paradoxically required stable and durable institutions, especially governmental and ecclesiastical, in order for civilization to continue on its path of progress without destabilizing ruptures. This articulation of modernity is similar to that exemplified by Albert Luthuli in his autobiography, **Let My People Go**: "The revolution which Christianity brought into the lives of converts was profound, as can perhaps be imagined. Conversion meant an entirely new way of life, a new outlook, a new set of beliefs--the creation, almost, of a new kind of people" (McGraw-Hill Book, New York, 1962, p.20, my italics). Luthuli pays great homage to Z. K. Mathews. But much more fundamentally, there was generally a whole symmetry of thought from R. V. Selope Thema in the early 1920s to the retrospective reflections of Luthuli and Mathews in the 1960s that African modernities were inconceivable and unrealizable without Christianity at their center(s): "The story of my life may be summed up in the phrase, 'up from barbarism.'. . . Nothing has reflected more honor upon European civilization than the eagerness and enthusiasm with which European nations have sought to share with less favored races the beneficent influences of the Christian religion and the civilizing agencies of education" (R. V. Selope Thema [with J.D. Rheinallt Jones], "Our Changing Life and Thought in South Africa", in **Thinking with Africa**, (ed.) Milton Stauffer, Missionary Educational Movement, New York, 1927). It was only in the decade before the expiration of New Africanism, the 1950s, that the Sophiatown Renaissance intellectuals disengaged African modernities from Christianity: with them was the beginning of the secularization of the modernist experience in South Africa: to the earlier generation of New Africans this was simply inconceivable. As a prove that the termination of the national experience modernity by apartheid (a variant of fascism) was effected, as it were, extraterritorially, rather than through the contradictions of its internal logic, at the moment of the most important change in our political history, South Africa's first democratic elections of April 1994, the ANC representing modernity had to struggle uncompromisingly against the Inkatha so-called Freedom Party (IFP) regressively pushing for tradition in KwaZulu-Natal about Zulu cultural symbols: S. Klopper, "'He is my king, but he is also my child': Inkatha, the African National Congress and the Struggle for Control over Zulu Symbols", *Oxford Art Journal*, vol.19 no.1, 1996. This historical relevance of modernity as a horizon of present political struggles in Natal, makes it all the more unfortunate that two articles which recently apperared in *Theoria*, based at the University of Natal, examined the concept of modernity as European intellectual constructs rather than as lived historical experience by contemporary South Africans: Graham Pechey, "Eternity and Modernity: Bakhtin and the Epistemological Sublime", October 1993; Raphael de Kadt, "Modernization and Moral Progress", October 1994. What is urgently needed in South Africa are books on modernity comparable to this

Mphahlele moving to Nigeria in 1957, with Arthur Maimane moving to Ghana in 1958, with Alfred Hutchinson on the road to Ghana in 1958 with Richard Wright's **Black Power** under his arm,[229] with Bloke Modisane in 1959 being bade farewell at the railway station (Park Station) in Johannesburg by Lewis Nkosi on a one-way trip that would make him not see South Africa again, with Modisane's 'adopted' brother, Lewis himself taking the same royal road in 1961, surviving to return and witness May 10, 1994, the great moment which the whole word had been waiting for during the unfolding of the twentieth-century.[230]

Beginning in 1957, with the independence of Ghana, the historical narrative becomes less that of United States and South Africa under the auspices of modernity, but rather, South Africa in Africa, under the supervision of the politics of decolonization, with South Africa and Nigeria making a rendezvous, with Lewis Nkosi and Christopher Okigbo collaborating with each other in Rajat Neogy's*Transition* in Kampala, and Ezekiel Mphahlele and Wole Soyinka cooperating together in Ulli Beier's *Black Orpheus* in Nigeria. But the disjuncture of the historical narrative between United States and South Africa at the end of modernity in the 1950s is historically resumed or rather, recreated at the onset of postmodernity in the 1980s as again imaginatively South Africa travels to United States to connect to African American postmodernity, a reconnection which is reflected in Bheki Mseleku's Timelessness (1994), in collaboration with jazz giants, Joe Henderson, Elvin Jones, Pharaoh Sanders, and the incomparable Abbey Lincoln (who earlier together with Max Roach in the early 1960s had made Freedom Suite Now LP (1961), a haunting condemnation of apartheid) as well as others; also Njabulo Ndebele's extraordinary **Rediscovery of the Ordinary**, a collection of essays, reconnects to United States by modelling itself on the essay form of James Bladwin and Ralph Ellison.[231]

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extraordinary text: Terry Smith, **Making the Modern: Industry, Art, and Design in America**, University of Chicasgo Press, 1993.

[229] Alfred Hutchinson, **Road to Ghana**, The John Day Company,New York, 1960, p.183.

[230] A remarkable Special Issue of *Ebony* magazine captures the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa on that historic date: August 1994. Perhaps it was this issue that inspired the appearance of *Ebony South Africa* as of November 1995.

[231] For a superb mapping of African American postmodernism see Cornel West: "The Postmodern Crisis of Black Intellectuals", **Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times**, vol.1(Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism), Common Courage Press, Maine, 1993, pp.87-101. The author heard it presented at the historic international conference, "Cultural Studies Now and in the Future" at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 4-9, 1990. The presentation was electrifying, as Cornel West began by stating that by making presentation personally, he had missed attending the burial service of Sarah Vaughan, which had taken place the night before in Newark, New Jersey. The importance of Bheki Mseleku is in the process of being widely acknowledged, as is evident in the South Bank Show (London) performance study, Bheki Mseleku (1993). Courtenay Pine's astute observations on Mseleku and his playing with him (also Hugh Masekela) in the Show brings the question of the need for a study of the interaction in London between what Henry Louis Gates calls the Black British

This then is the historical field (characterized by ruptures, breaks and discontinuities), stretching from Elijah Makiwane at the onset of modernity in the nineteen century to Njabulo Ndebele at the high point of postmodernity in the late twentieth century (to Ndebele although it terminates twenty years earlier with the moment of Lewis Nkosi and G. R. Naidoo in the 1950s), representing a part the complex structure of the transAtlantic relations between United States and South Africa.[232]

As Rosangela Maria Vieiria, a young brilliant African Brazilian scholar, activist and feminist, has recently written, it would seem that the reciprocal relations between Africans in South Africa and African Americans in United States, as well as their singular political struggles and battles, hold many 'historical lessons' for African Latin Americans: "In the long term, Brazil's legacy of racism can be overcome. But change will be slow unless Afro-Brazilians themselves take a major role and become the protagonists of their own liberation; without their full participation the process will be incomplete and ineffective. One first step would be to trace and follow the basic strategies employed in the civil rights and liberation struggles of the United States and

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Renaissance and the South Africans during the Exile Period. A few months ago (April 1995) Mseleku was here in Los Angeles to record Star Seeding with Billy Higgins and Charlie Haden. Without a doubt Bheki Mseleku is the latest instance of the connection between South Africa and United States across the Atlantic. Thelonius Monk, Kippie Moeketsi, Pharaoh Sanders have been some of the seminal influences on him. Concerning Njabulo Ndebele, note the indelible impriting of James Baldin's essay "Everydbody's Protest Novel" (1948) on Ndebele's "The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa" (1984) and "Redefining Revelance" (1990?). **Rediscovery of the Ordinary** (COSAW, Johannesburg, 1990) captures on an unparralleled level the dramatic and traumatic changes South Africa had been undergoing from the Soweto Uprising of 1976 to the Inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in 1994: the central theme of the collection is the ethos of literary representation of history at the moment of its dramatic unfolding; the rigour of the essays is profound. Hence it is not surprising that Rob Nixon in his fine book, **Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond**, praises Ndebele as " the distinguished South African novelist and critic. . . South Africa's finest cultural critic" (Routledge, London, 1994, p.95, p.118). Rob Nixon was among the first to indicate the importance of Njabulo Ndebele; in fact **Homelands** carries a dialogue with **Rediscovery of the Ordinary** about Bessie Head, a writer characterized by Wole Soyinka as a great novelist. While Bheki Mseleku and Njabulo Ndebele are looking from the South to the North, Coco Fusco is intellectually gazing from the North to the South: "A Letter to Artists in South Africa", in the 1995 Johannesburg Biennale catalog (downloaded from the Internet).

[232] Perhaps the Nelson Mandela celebrated visit to United States in June of 1990 to thank the American people for their support of South African people in their struggle against apartheid portended, following his release from a 27-year prison confinement on February 11, the beginnings of the influence of black South Africa on black America. The Mandela visit totally galvanized America, particularly African Americans. During the ten-day visit, daily *The New York Times* published an eight-page section each day covering the visit. In many ways the visit was a historic event.

South Africa, adapting them to the Brazilian reality." There is little doubt that the front lines of the struggle in the twenty-first-century against the oppression of black and poor people are in all probability going to be led by African Latin Americans in "Latin" America itself.[233]

[233] Rosangela Maria Vieira, "Brazil", in **No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans Today**, (eds.) Minority Rights Group, Minority Rights Publication, London, 1995, p.43. One of the last great classical Pan-Africanists, Abdias do Nascimento from Brazil, argues that the designation Latin America denies the Africanity or Africanness of that continent: "The African Experience in Latin America", in **African Presence in the Americas**, (eds.) Tanya R. Saunders and Shawna Moore, Africa World Press, 1995, pp.97-117.