

REFORM
RESISTANCE
RECONSTRUCTION

*An exploration of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality as a
means for interpreting the politics of culture
in South Africa (1976–1994)*

Nicolaas Vergunst



As above, so below: Apollo and Dionysus as the mythopoeic personification of cosmos (order) and chaos (disorder) in the universe.
After a bronze head of Apollo from the early Hellenistic period. After a marble head of Dionysus from the late Hellenistic period.



Cosmos: Apollo, the sun god, crowned by the concentric rays of his own brilliant, radiating light. Apollo is, according to Hermes Trismegistus, "set up in the midst and wears the cosmos in a wreath about him" (Purce 1974:48). Both figure and ground belong to a Roman mosaic pavement from the first century CE.



Chaos: Dionysus, a nature-god, is related to the concept of chaos and, according to Philaetha's *Introitus*, "Chaos is a fiery dragon . . . the dragon [symbolizes] the dissolution of bodies" (Cirlot 1978:88). The figure of Dionysus is taken from an Egyptian woven textile from the fourth century CE. The background fractal formation depicts chaos as an ordered pattern. After a computer graphic by Dietmar Saupe (c. 1986) illustrating the effects of chaos theory.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE		9
INTRODUCTION	THE APOLLONIAN-DIONYSIAN DUALITY AS FRAME OF REFERENCE	10
SECTION ONE	DEFINING AND MEDIATING REALITY	19
CHAPTER 1	<i>defining reality through language</i>	20
CHAPTER 2	<i>mediating reality as drama</i>	34
SECTION TWO	TRACING THE APOLLONIAN-DIONYSIAN DUALITY	47
CHAPTER 3	<i>mythology and history</i>	48
CHAPTER 4	<i>philosophy and aesthetics</i>	56
CHAPTER 5	<i>art and culture</i>	62
CHAPTER 6	<i>society and politics</i>	76
SECTION THREE	APOLLONIAN REFORM AND APARTHEID CULTURE	85
CHAPTER 7	<i>reform and apartheid-capitalism</i>	86
CHAPTER 8	<i>reform and the arts establishment</i>	94
SECTION FOUR	DIONYSIAN RESISTANCE AND PEOPLE'S CULTURE	103
CHAPTER 9	<i>resistance and ethnic nationalism</i>	104
CHAPTER 10	<i>resistance and black consciousness</i>	110
CHAPTER 11	<i>resistance and the mass democratic movement</i>	120
SECTION FIVE	RECONSTRUCTION AND NATIONAL CULTURE	143
CHAPTER 12	<i>reconstruction and an emergent national culture</i>	144
CHAPTER 13	<i>constructs of nation, democracy and culture</i>	162
CONCLUSION	BEYOND THE APOLLONIAN-DIONYSIAN DUALITY	176
AUTHOR'S NOTES		189
REFERENCES		190
BIBLIOGRAPHIES		202

According to Nietzsche we cannot understand the development of art without an insight into the Dionysian and Apollonian duality.

Johan Degenaar
Art and the meaning of life (1986)

Nietzsche drew attention to the antithesis between Apollo and Dionysus as symbols of extreme views of art and of life, drawing man, respectively, towards either order or chaos.

Juan Cirlot
A Dictionary of Symbols (1978)

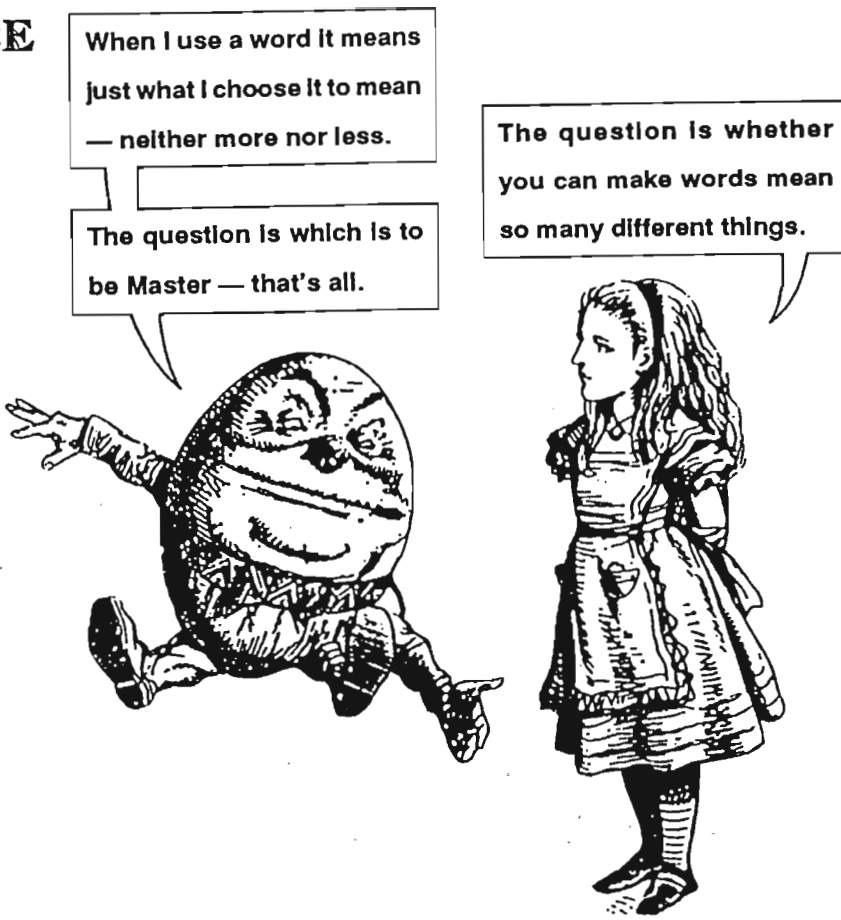
The Apollonian and Dionysian, two great western principles, govern sexual personae in life and art . . . Art reflects on and resolves the eternal human dilemma of order versus energy.

Camille Paglia
Sexual Personae (1991)

The most familiar aspect of Nietzsche's view of art is the identification of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles. Commentators often associate Apollo with the rational world of thought, and Dionysus with the vital forces of the preconscious or unconscious. In terms of art, this point of view is associated with "Apollonian form or appearance (and) Dionysian content or substance".

Herlo van Rensburg
Approaches to Picasso's Vollard Suite and a Dionysian view of art (1991)

PREFACE



1. Humpty Dumpty conversing with Alice, from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Drawings by John Tenniel.

When Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) drew attention to the Apollonian-Dionysian duality, he not only helped to identify two opposing views of art and life, but also indicated that a philosophical mythology (master narrative) lies hidden in the language we use to define reality. He suggested that language not only reproduces a prior understanding of the world, but that meaning is already predetermined by the concepts and images which language employ. Accordingly, there is therefore no objective (non-mythological) language through which we can know the world in an absolute or final way. Rather than making “truth claims” about reality, Nietzsche invites us to explore the world in a variety of ways through the creative and imaginative use of various metaphors (e.g. Apollonian order, Dionysian chaos, etc.). Metaphorically, the duality between Apollo and Dionysus offers us concepts and images with which to broaden our perception of reality and to interpret the world differently.

As the title of this study suggests, I wish to explore the Apollonian-Dionysian duality as a paradigm case for an interpretation of the cultural politics behind reform, resistance and reconstruction in South Africa. The Contents should, furthermore, indicate that a dualistic paradigm is useful for framing: (i) reform and apartheid culture in terms of an Apollonian sensibility; (ii) resistance and people's culture in terms of a Dionysian sensibility; (iii) reconstruction and national culture in terms of the reconciled relations (synthesis) between conflicting forces associated with Apollo and Dionysus. The latter implies that we move from a dualistic to a pluralistic paradigm — i.e. a paradigm wherein the co-existence of multiple, variable and complex (and not only the single, stable and simple) forces frame our attempts at forging a future democracy in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

FRAMING THE MYTHS OF APOLLO AND DIONYSUS

This study is predicated on my fascination with the constructs of order and chaos. Constructions of an ordered and/or chaotic universe are traditionally conceived in terms of dualities. Dualistic conceptions of the universe, and specifically of our own world, are found in ancient cosmogonies, classical mythology, modern philosophy and contemporary physics. Today, contemporary advances in science have made it possible for us to reappraise our dualistic conceptions of order (cosmos) and disorder (chaos):

Accustomed as we are to think dualistically, we are well used to thinking of cosmos and chaos, order and disorder, as two opposites in perpetual contrast. Our assumption tends to be that order is a good thing and disorder a bad thing . . . Latterly, however, a new science has been coming into being, the science of chaos, the science of certain things which just cannot be brought into a state of dependable order¹ (Shearman 1990:346).

Recent developments in physics have radically revised traditional epistemological conceptions of order and chaos. This “conceptual revolution” has been the basis for an emergent new science, *chaos theory*, which questions the notion of deterministic, asymmetric and hierarchical relations between order and disorder in classical (Newtonian) science. This new theory of chaos has proven to be, at least since the 1970s, as revolutionary as the theory of relativity and quantum physics: “Where chaos begins, classical science stops” (Gleick 1988:3). Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, the acclaimed authors of *Order out of Chaos* (1984), add:

Our vision of nature is undergoing a radical change toward the multiple, the temporal, and the complex. For a long time a mechanistic world view dominated Western science. In this view the world appeared as a vast automaton. We now understand that we live in a pluralistic world [i.e. light can be seen as *both* particles and waves in motion] . . .

In the classical view the basic processes of nature were considered to be deterministic [mechanistic] and reversible [atemporal]. Processes involving randomness or irreversibility were considered exceptions. Today we see everywhere the role of irreversible processes, of fluctuations (1984:xxvii).



2. The 'discovery' of a mechanistic universe conformed to the principles of contemporary clock-work inventions. Woodcut (c. 1530).

Here new scientific conceptions concur with old mythopoeic conceptions of dualities as dynamic, interactive relationships. Accordingly, I use the term “duality” to signify the potentiality for repeated and irregular variations (fluctuations) of opposing forces in a relational process. Dualistic conceptions should not be seen as proclamations of an ‘absolute’ or ‘objective’ reality. As such, dualities do not posit ‘truth claims’ about reality, but invite us to (re-)interpret the world in which we live. I regard these dualities as representing symbolic or mythopoeic relationships.

This study adopts the Apollonian-Dionysian duality for an interpretation of the dialectics underpinning the cultural politics of modern Western society (in general) and contemporary South African society (in particular). But, let us first turn to the mythical characteristics of Apollo and Dionysus, so as to obtain an understanding of what it is they symbolize:

I am Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto.²
 I am the solar-god Apollo who is also called Phoebus.⁴ I am Mithras-Apollo the Invincible.⁶ I am Apollo-Katharsios the Purifier.⁸ I am Helios-Apollo the bright, shining sky-god who divides and disperses my opponents.¹⁰

I am Dionysus, son of Zeus and Semele.³
 I am the earth-god Dionysus who is also called Bacchus.⁵ I am Dionysus-Lusios the Liberator.⁷ I am Phanes-Dionysus the Creator.⁹ I am Dionysus-Zagreus the wild, chthonian nature-god of the twilight realm (shadow) who is torn to pieces.¹¹



3. The personae (masks) of Apollo and Dionysus contrasting youthful (moral) sobriety with aged (decadent) inebriation. After a Roman mosaic.

Apollo and Dionysus, as with many other deities, are merely the personae representing some of the assumed dualities which seemingly pervade all existence and experience. Throughout human history, various cultures have mobilized different personae to personify the apparent cause and effect of such dualities.¹² I employ the Apollonic and Dionysiac personae because they are, in my opinion, amongst the most potent and compelling traces of the duality between order and chaos in western epistemic discourses.



4. Apollo personifies utopian culture and civil order; Dionysus wild chthonian nature. After *Apollo Belvedere* (c. 350 BCE), a Roman copy of a fourth century Greek statue; and — much adapted here by the author — a sculpture of *Dionysus-Bacchus* (1497) by Michelangelo.

Most significantly, the Apollonian-Dionysian duality is a pagan dialectic which focuses on the supposed contradictions, both between and within, culture and nature, civil order and chthonian discord. The cultural theorist Homi Bhabha, argues that these contradictions underpin the “dualities in which colonial space is traditionally divided: nature/culture, chaos/civility” (1994:124). I maintain that dualities are not only the product of a “colonial nonsense”,¹³ but exist as the exemplification of human experience throughout history. It is the means whereby we make sense of, and give meaning to, our lives. Eduard Fraenkel suggested, for instance, that the Apollonian-Dionysian duality is the “intelligible, determinate, mensurable” as opposed to the “fantastic, vague, shapeless” (1935:25). Dialectically, this demonstrates the tension between and within *cosmos* and *chaos*, *order* and *disorder*.

I have also tried to trace these symbolic or mythopoeic relationships in social, political and cultural discourses. This study proposes that the Apollonic and Dionysiac sensibilities (or constructs of reality) function as a recurrent frame of reference in modern society, politics and culture. We shall look for traces of how the Apollonian-Dionysian duality has manifested in recent South African history.

The Apollonian-Dionysian duality as frame of reference

This study is premised on traditional epistemic discourses (i.e. mythology and philosophy) which assume that dualities permeate our existence in, and our experience of, the world.¹⁴

Western dualistic conceptions can be traced back *inter alia* to Græco-Roman mythology and philosophy. In particular, the myths of Apollo and Dionysus provide some useful metaphors (correspondences) and analogies (resemblances) for our analysis of the dualities framing society and politics, culture and history. For instance, the Roman Apollo is associated with established patriarchal authority, male-domination, a rational consciousness, as well as an ordered and autocratic polity. In turn, I associate the Græcian Dionysus with vanquished matriarchal power, female-subordination, the unconscious and irrational mind, as well as the chaotic and anarchistic.¹⁵

More specifically the adoration of Apollo promotes autocracy through acts of reform measured against collectivized anarchy (social chaos); while the worship of Dionysus promotes a sense of unity and communal power through acts of resistance pitted against a centralized and authoritarian government (political order). My thesis can be stated as follows: *while the autocratic cult of Apollo is **reformative** in so far as it strives to rehabilitate declining social structures and waning political order; the anarchistic rites of Dionysus are **revolutionary** in that they embody popular struggles against perceived corrupt or unjust forms of government.* The Apollonian-Dionysian duality may thus be used as a paradigm case for interpreting the dialectics between “the state” and “the people”.

The State is One. Apollo is the One through whom we experience the dictates of uniformity and orderliness.¹⁶

The People are Many. Dionysus is the Many through whom we experience multiplicity and variability.¹⁷



5. According to Plutarch (c. CE 46–c.120), Apollo is the One and Dionysus the Many, the state is one and the people are many. From an engraved title-page for Thomas Hobbes's treatise, *Leviathan* (1651). (Quotations from Plutarch, cited by Paglia 1991:97).

I am Apollo who slays serpents and dragons:

My personae are the Japanese Susano, the Persian Rustam, the Phoenician Cadmus, the Greek Perseus, the Teutonic Slegfried, the Anglo-Saxon Saint George and the Zulu Sikulume.¹⁹ We are the One before whom all will succumb.

I am Apollo, the founder of States.¹⁹

I am Dionysus who is slain and dismembered:

My personae are the Egyptian Osiris and the Indian Prajapati.²⁰ We are the victims who have been cut to pieces. Our bodies are divided and dispersed. We are the Many seeking to be whole again by striving to unite ourselves as one nation.

I am Dionysus, possessor of the People.²¹



6. Apollonian order triumphs over Dionysian chaos, light over darkness. This editorial cartoon, entitled "The day dawns!", appeared in *Die Burger* on the morning of 31 May 1961 when the Republic of South Africa was established.

Although the South African political power struggle between apartheid-capitalism ("the state") and social democracy ("the people") can be traced back several decades, the prevailing power relations throughout the 1980s were framed in terms of a crude binary opposition: *reform* versus *resistance*. On the one hand official (Apollonian) reform aimed at maintaining a repressed labour economy by adapting relations of socio-political power secured by an aspirant and privileged ruling-class elite, while the other utilized acts of popular (Dionysian) revolt to challenge the apartheid régime and to empower an oppressed and deprived working-class majority. Even though such dialectical terminology was an expedient over-simplification (it reduced complex political forces into two antagonistic camps, namely the "apartheid camp" and the "people's camp"), the same dualistic terms have been adopted in this study — but for the purpose of analysis only. We should, however, bear in mind that such dynamics are always far more complex, and never as simple as it is presented here.

We enter the myth of Apollo through acts of reform. Apollonian reform sets out to suppress dissent. The Apollonic sensibility represses rebellion and promotes autocracy through the self-vested authority of "the state". Historically, this is well evidenced by Roman republicanism, German totalitarianism and Italian fascism.

The cult of Apollo is reformative in so far as it strives to preserve out-moded social structures and political order. All too often our reformist actions are inspired by an atavistic and idealized classicism. Apollo personifies civilized order. He gives utopian culture a human face.

We enter the myth of Dionysus through acts of revolt. Dionysian revolt sets out to oppose autocracy. The Dionysiac sensibility rebels against authority and promotes dissent through the self-proclaimed power of "the people". Historically, this is well evidenced by Greek democracy, French anarchism and Soviet socialism.

The rites of Dionysus are revolutionary in that they embody the struggle against corrupt and unjust forms of government. All too often our revolutionary actions are inspired by a nostalgic and rarified romanticism. Dionysus personifies primal chaos. He gives chthonian nature a human face.



7. In this reversal of roles, draconian state control is depicted as a dragon. Apollonian reform suppresses dissent, Dionysian revolt opposes autocracy. Cartoon by Jonathan Shapiro (1987.8.18).

The aim of this study is to show that — on a metaphorical and analogical level — traces of an atavistic Apollonic sensibility for an ordered polity and the nostalgic Dionysiac sensibility for a united society can be used to frame relations between so-called "apartheid culture" and "people's culture" in South Africa. I believe that this historical opposition should be reconciled if we are to succeed in forging a "national democratic culture" for all South Africans.

Attempts to reconcile the legacies of reform and resistance — especially since the early 1990s — resulted in the call for a nation-wide programme of social, political and economic reconstruction. In this regard, I propose that South African politics be understood in terms of dialectical relationships: reform (thesis), resistance (antithesis), reconstruction (synthesis).

The purpose of this study will be to analyze how social and political experiences, as well as cultural and historical events in South Africa, (unwittingly) reproduce the metaphors and analogies associated with Apollo and Dionysus. Our interpretation of the Apollonic and Dionysiac sensibilities shall be based on the following dualities:

<i>Apollonian</i>	<i>Dionysian</i>
cosmos	chaos
balance , equilibrium and stability	fusion, fluctuation and movement
separatism and order	unity and discord
utopian culture (cultivated)	chthonian nature (wild)
civilization	barbarism
sobriety and austerity	Inebriation and ecstasy
moderation	transgression
reason and intellect	emotion and will
rational and analytical thought	passionate and receptive feeling
transcendental phenomenon	elemental noumenon
Intelligible (abstract)	sensible (concrete)
appearance (illusory-image)	substance (corporeal-material)
presence (signifier)	absence (signified)
manifest	occult
conscious	preconscious or unconscious
Individuation	plurality
productive	transformative or metamorphic
life-death (linear)	death-rebirth (cyclic)
victory	sacrifice
morality and aestheticism	sexuality and eroticism
day and sun, light and sky-god	night and moon, darkness and earth-god
patrifocal monarchy	matrifocal oligarchy
monotheism	polytheism
masculine and male-centric	feminine and female-orientated
virility	fertility
hard and dry	soft and wet
static and solid	fluid and liquid
stasis	change
authority and autocracy	rebellion and anarchy
repression and reform	resistance and revolt

Dialectically, these *dualities* are not fixed, but in constant flux. The mutual contradictions which co-exist between these opposing forces are interdependent, even interchangeable: order can arise from chaos, chaos from order. Or, as Heraclitus observes: "Opposition brings discord. Out of discord comes the fairest harmony" (Watts 1969:46).

Camille Paglia, a contemporary cultural theorist, defines the Apollonian-Dionysian duality in her controversial book on western art and decadence. In *Sexual Personae* (1991)²² she writes:

Dionysus is identification, Apollo objectification. Dionysus is the emphatic, the sympathetic emotion transporting us into other people, other places, other times. Apollo is the hard, cold separatism of western personality and categorical thought. Dionysus is energy, ecstasy, hysteria, promiscuity, emotionalism — heedless indiscriminateness of idea or practice. Apollo is obsessiveness, voyeurism, idolatry, fascism — frigidity and aggression of the eye, petrification of objects . . . Apollo makes the boundary lines that are civilisation but that lead to convention, constraint, oppression. Dionysus is energy unbound, mad, callous, destructive, wasteful. Apollo is law, history, tradition, the dignity and safety of custom and form. Dionysus is the *new*, exhilarating but rude, sweeping all away to begin again. Apollo is a tyrant, Dionysus a vandal. Every excess breeds its counterreaction. So western culture swings from point to point on its complex cycle, pouring forth its lavish tributes of art, word, and deed (1991:96–97).

We may recall that the Græcian Dionysus is associated with the Roman Bacchus through a mutual identification with the intoxicating influence of wine. But we should, however, distinguish between two states of altered consciousness resulting from drunkenness: the *divine madness or ecstasy* of Dionysus and the *vulgar or riotous excess* of Bacchus. This ecstasy, this state of rapture, is what Nietzsche calls Dionysian *Ruach*.²³ The often aged or androgynous Dionysus is associated with animals, agriculture and the cultivation of the vine. He is linked to nature through vegetative rites. In contrast, the youthful and masculine Apollo is associated with emperors, kings and solar hierophanies.²⁴ He is linked to culture through the cult of the hero.

Hence Apollo is the embodiment of an idealized, civilized *culture* — he personifies civilized *order*; whereas Dionysus embodies the continual, unpredictable manifestations and transformations of *nature* — he personifies primal *chaos*. For Nietzsche the duality between Apollo and Dionysus is a symbol of the “extreme opposition” between order and chaos.

The opposition between order and chaos may, politically speaking, be translated as *autocracy* versus *anarchy* or as *reform* versus *revolt* (see Sections 1–2). In South African politics an autocratic government has maintained the *status quo* through acts of reform, while extra-parliamentary organizations during the 1980s tended to be anarchistic in their rejection of this *status quo* through acts of revolt (see Sections 3–4). The Apollonian-Dionysian duality is a useful paradigm case for interpreting how protest art, as a specific manifestation of resistance culture, gives voice to popular revolt as an antithesis to official reform.

This study, though emphasizing the Dionysiac sensibility underlying the visual arts (i.e. painting and sculpture, drawing and photography, as well as posters and comics), will show that the atavistic adoration of Apollo achieves political *order* through (official) acts of reform; whereas the nostalgic worship of Dionysus achieves social *unity* through (popular) acts of resistance. Ultimately, the “extreme opposition” between autocracy and anarchy can be reconciled through social, political and economic reconstruction — giving rise to a democratic culture based on political equality, social justice and economic development.



SECTION ONE I

DEFINING AND MEDIATING REALITY

Unlike the Dionysiac sensibility which seeks to *reflect* itself in nature, the Apollonic sensibility seeks to *project* itself through culture — and most demonstrably through language. The Apollonian construct of reality not only shapes and forms culture, but also defines and mediates meaning through language.

However, modern philosophy and contemporary cultural studies have challenged traditional Græco-Judeo-Christian beliefs about the ability of language to *represent reality reliably*. As a result, we are able to assert that while language allows us to gain and force meaning onto reality, it also mediates possible (mis-)interpretations of events and experiences.

The processes whereby we make *sense* and give *meaning* to reality — and specifically how we ascribe *value* to events and experiences — is part of the Apollonian inheritance. To this end the 1985 Langa massacre will be taken as a case study to show that an event does not just “happen” but, instead, can be used to reproduce or reinforce *value*. This event became a contested symbol for both official (Apollonian) reform and popular (Dionysian) resistance in the making of recent South African ‘history’.

CHAPTER 1 *defining reality through language*

Both Hellenistic and Judaic constructs of reality — which so profoundly influenced Christianity — assume the centrality of the spoken and written word, of language itself, in framing and forming civilized culture. This chapter briefly reviews some modern developments in western epistemic discourses wherein language is given priority as frame of reference for exploring reality.

genesis and logos

Plato and Aristotle

Descartes and Spinoza

Vico and Kant

Peirce and Saussure

Levi-Strauss and Barthes

Culler and Derrida

CHAPTER 2 *mediating reality as drama*

This chapter traces the Apollonian-Dionysian duality behind the diverse interpretations of the Langa massacre of 1985. The event was framed in terms of several binary oppositions: *repression versus defiance, autocracy versus anarchy, order versus chaos*. This dualistic framing produced several conflicting accounts of the event — none of which should be regarded as “true”.

from event into story

a case study



DEFINING REALITY THROUGH LANGUAGE

genesis and logos

Let us begin with two *beginnings*. The first Book of Moses claims that in the beginning God made all of creation while in the Gospel of St John it is claimed that the Word, or *Logos*, made all things that were made. According to the metaphorical discourse of the Judeo-Christian bible, these two myths of creation assert that *genesis*, or the origin of all things, is caused by the utterance of words; that the form and order of all things are *spoken* into existence. However, *logos* does not refer to “words” alone, but also to “speech”, “language” or “account”, and subsequently to all that is expressed through speech namely thought, reason and knowledge (Gadamer 1982:181). Both texts, written in Hebrew and Greek respectively, proclaim that creation is an act of *articulate speech*. Thus in the Judaic world-myth, creation and revelation are made manifest through the *Voice of God*; while according to the Hellenistic world-myth, the *Word of God (Christ the Logos)* creates and reveals through speech all that was and is made.

Yet what of the human genus, *homo loquens*, which creates words and creates with words?¹ Are humans not also the creative agents of their own being and becoming through language? Do humans, as creatures empowered by the spoken and written word, not create the world and themselves in their own image? The English literary theorist, George Steiner (b. 1929), asks: “Does this act of speech, which defines man, not also go beyond him in rivalry to God?” (1985:56).

Man is a being of the word.²



1. Aristotle (cited by Steiner 1985:55).

According to Steiner's *Language and Silence* (1967), the primacy of the word (of speech and writing) is characteristic of the Judaic and Hellenistic genius that so profoundly influences Christianity, and for which western civilization owes its essentially verbal character (1985:30–31). In my opinion, the classical and medieval vision of the world is based on the Apollonian construct of reality which tries to order or structure human experience within the governance of language.

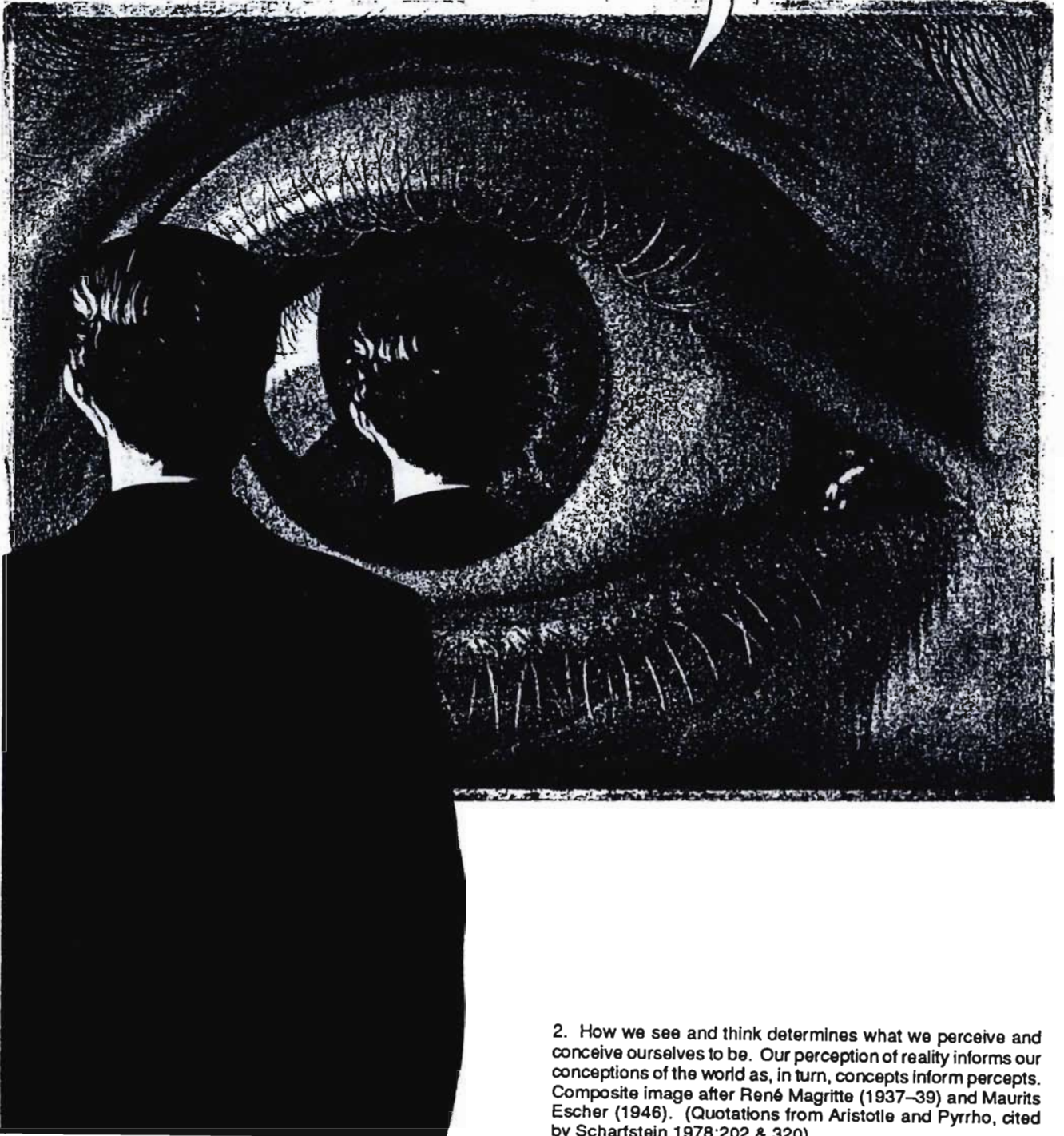
This world-view (*weltanschauung*) led to the belief that ‘truth’ can be framed by language and that language can bring the mind into accord with *reality* (Steiner, 1985:31–32, 38).

Plato and Aristotle

The assumption that words reliably represent the world is to be found in the philosophical and poetic treatises of Plato (c. 427–347 BCE), Aristotle (384–322 BCE), Saint Augustine (354–430 CE) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274). It is through their contribution to epistemology — their postulations about the processes of *knowing* itself — that our study of the western philosophical tradition begins. Let us glance briefly at some of the early ontological reflections in classical philosophy:

. . . to perceive that we see or think is to perceive that we exist.³

. . . we admit that we see, and we recognize that we think this or that, but how we see or how we think we know not.⁴

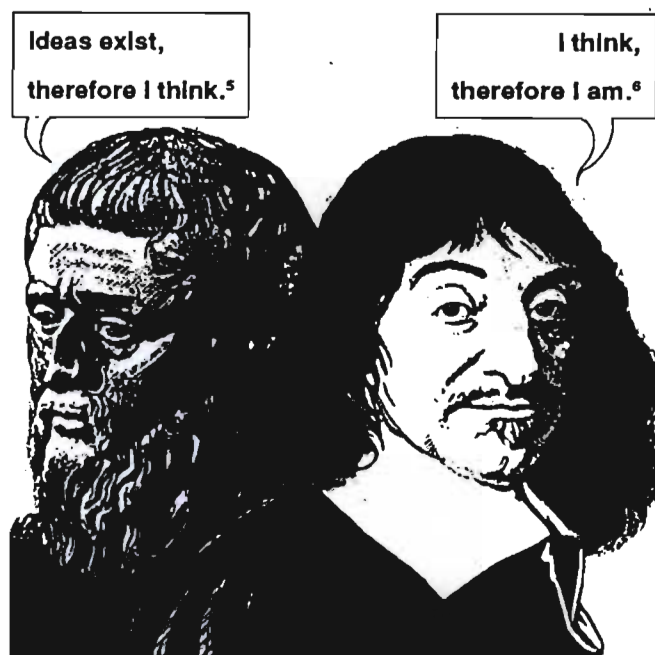


2. How we see and think determines what we perceive and conceive ourselves to be. Our perception of reality informs our conceptions of the world as, in turn, concepts inform percepts. Composite image after René Magritte (1937–39) and Maurits Escher (1946). (Quotations from Aristotle and Pyrrho, cited by Scharfstein 1978:202 & 320).

Descartes and Spinoza

Our enquiry into epistemology begins with the French philosopher, René Descartes (1596–1650), and the Dutch philosopher, Benedictus de Spinoza (1632–1677), who set out to challenge the prevailing assumption that language conveys an accurate account of reality.

Descartes, like the Greek sceptics centuries earlier, claims that scepticism is implicit in all philosophical enquiry. His celebrated dictum *cogito ergo sum* reveals the sceptical view that, doubting all else, we cannot doubt that we are thinking beings.



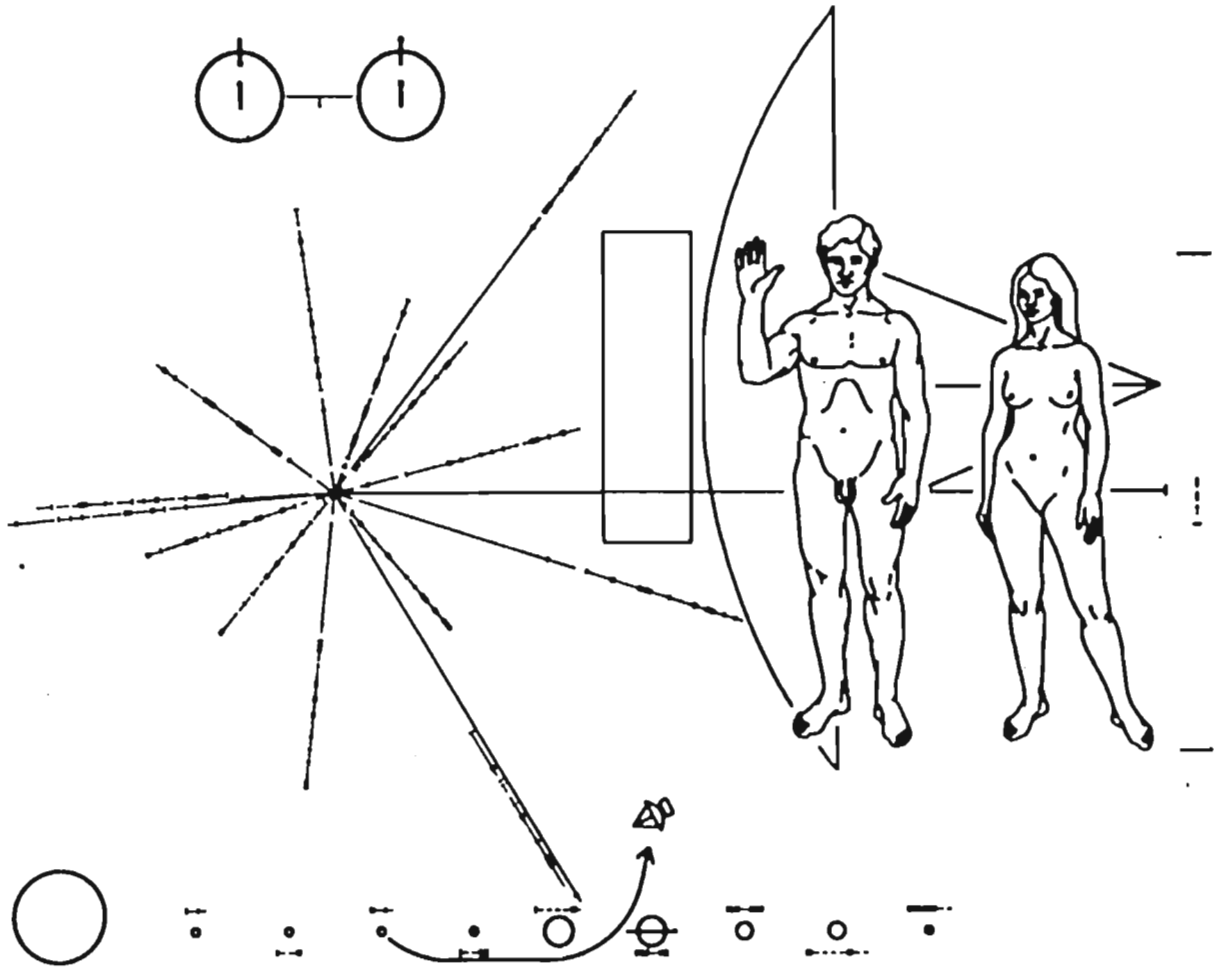
3. Plato (source of quote unknown) and René Descartes (cited by Haldane & Ross 1934:224).

Descartes writes in his *Principles of Philosophy* (1637):

While we thus reject all that of which we can possibly doubt . . . we cannot in the same way conceive that we doubt these things are not; for there is a contradiction in conceiving that what thinks does not at the same time as it thinks, exist. And hence this conclusion *I think, therefore I am*, is the first and most certain of all that occurs to one who philosophizes in an orderly way.⁷

For Descartes, this philosophical postulation alone provides a basic criterion of certainty with which thoughts reconstruct relationships between separate entities such as between mind and matter, or between knowledge and experience, or even between language and reality. Herewith Descartes establishes his famous notion of *Cartesian dualism*. But Descartes also establishes a dualism between metaphysical truth and mathematical proof. For him the verbal propositions of metaphysics are less reliable in their certitude than are the non-verbal propositions of mathematics. Descartes, doubting the assumption that words engender reliable apprehensions of the world, becomes extremely sceptical of the authenticity behind metaphysical *truths* (in the form of *certain knowledge*) and hence prefers to trust the validity of mathematical *proofs*. This led to his refuting language as the reliable means of conveying the 'true' facts about reality. This is a crucial turning point in the proto-history of linguistics. Spinoza, likewise, recognizes that verbal language fails to postulate demonstrable 'truths'. For him the non-verbal language of mathematics alone can guarantee verifiable proofs:

Unlike numbers, words do not contain within themselves functional operations. Added or divided, they give only other words or approximations of their own meaning. Spinoza's demonstrations merely affirm; they cannot give proof. Yet the attempt was prophetic. It confronts all subsequent metaphysics with a dilemma; after Spinoza, philosophers know that they are using language to clarify language, like cutters using diamonds to shape other diamonds (Steiner 1985:39).



4. Visual representations of metaphysical and mathematical propositions. Pictorial plaque on the *Pioneer F* spacecraft (1972).

Steiner, as does Spinoza, adds that metaphysics loses its innocence. Hereafter philosophers come to accept that although we live *inside* the act of discourse, reality exists *outside* the act of speech, beyond verbal language. Speech or verbal language may, Steiner argues for Spinoza, render the perceptible world less factually than mathematical calculus and notation (1985:35).

Thus both Descartes and Spinoza identify differences of validity between metaphysical truth and mathematical proof. For them the former fails to verify while the latter succeeds in demonstrating 'truths' about reality. This recognition splits western consciousness into what Charles Snow later calls "the two cultures".⁸ With this split he wished to stress the division between humanistic and scientific cultures or, more particularly, the conflict between linguistics and mathematics. Steiner, following Snow, stresses the profound implications behind the declining power of language and the ascending authority of mathematics:

Mathematics had its long, brilliant history of symbolic notation; but even mathematics was a shorthand for verbal propositions applicable to, and meaningful within, the framework of linguistic description. Mathematical thought, with certain notable exceptions, was anchored to the material conditions of experience. These, in turn, were ordered and ruled by language. During the seventeenth century, this ceased to be the general case, and there began a revolution that has transformed forever man's relationship to reality and radically altered the shapes of thought (1985:32).

Vico and Kant

Hereafter the belief that language brings the mind into accord with reality, or that words reliably represent the world, no longer remains a convincing possibility and it thus becomes possible to challenge our assumptions about language. The Italian jurist, Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), and the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), begin to assert that thoughts are not *reflections* of reality, but *projections* on reality by our minds.

Vico's *New Science* (1725) is an important elaboration on the humanism of his time. He proposes a model for a new social science based on the natural science of his compatriot, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), and his contemporary, Isaac Newton (1642–1727). The objective is the construction of a “physics of man” to complement the contemporary “physics of nature”. Vico's decisive contribution comes with his claim that humans possess an inherent “poetic wisdom” (*sapientia poetica*), which informs responses to the environment and transforms these into myth. Myths, for Vico, are seen to be the “civil histories of the first peoples who were everywhere naturally poets” (See Bergin & Fisch 1968:352). We should note that the Greek word for “poet” is derived from the word “maker” (*poietae* meaning “maker”).

Myths are the instruments by which we continually struggle to make our experience intelligible to ourselves. A myth is a large controlling image that gives philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life; that is, which has organizing value for experience.⁹



5. After a marble head of a philosopher from the Classical period. (Quotation from Mark Schorer, cited by Watts 1963:3).

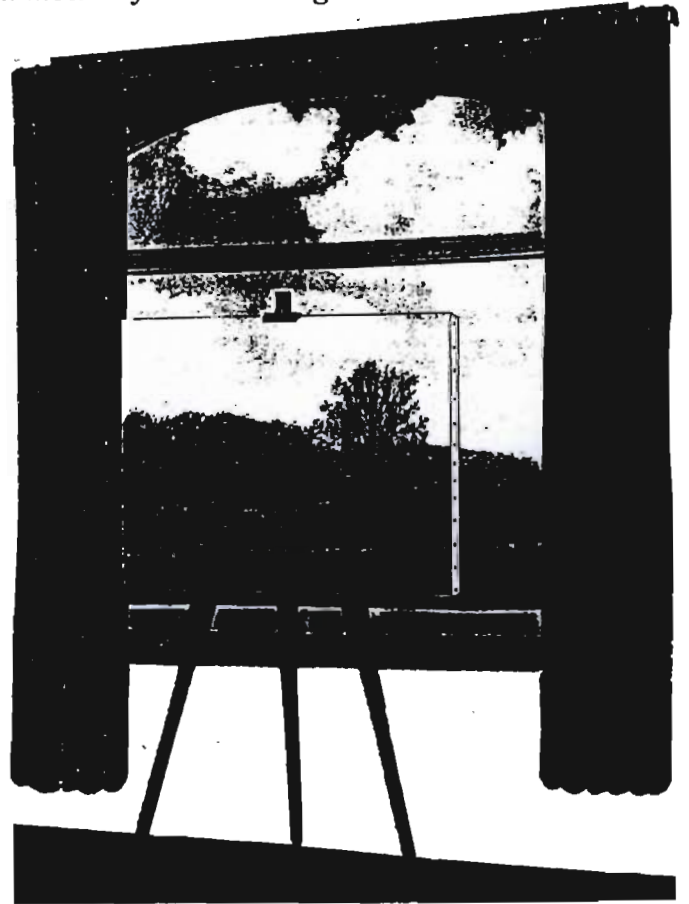
For Vico, a human being is characteristically and pre-eminently a maker — humans *create* themselves.¹⁰ The English literary theorist, Terence Hawkes, adds that “man constructs the myths, the social institutions, virtually the whole world as he perceives it, and in so doing he constructs himself. This making process involves the continual creation of recognizable and repeated forms which we can now term a process of *structuring*” (1985:14). We may also infer that humans do not only possess poetic wisdom, but are also possessed by it. As will be shown later in this chapter, humans not only formulate structures, but also submit their own (Dionysian) nature to the demands of such (Apollonian) structuring which shapes reality into forms perceived as “sovereign” and “anonymousness”, or even as “given” and “true” (Hawkes 1985:13).

Kant, like Vico, states that the mind imposes itself upon reality by structuring, or *synthesizing* experiences and perceptions of the world. In pursuit of this statement Kant strove to redeem the philosophical notions of verification among the empiricists and positivists, as well as the negation of self-validation among the sceptics. Empiricism and positivism upheld, firstly,

that knowledge was derived ultimately from verified experiences and perceptions while, secondly, that scepticism tried, but failed, to demonstrate a necessary connection between thought and reality — between the laws of reason and the laws of “Nature”. The sceptics therefore believed that all self-validating knowledge of the real world was impossible. But, as Kant claimed in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), it is possible for the human mind to understand or know the world if only in a *mediated* way — knowledge is derived from how the mind *interprets* the world.

I suggest that Kant's treatise on the theory of knowledge is based on a duality between the inner (Dionysian) aspect — the noumenon, and the outer (Apollonian) aspect — the phenomenon. To simplify — this implies that the noumenonal aspect refers to the *world-as-is* while the phenomenal aspect refers to the *world-as-known*.

The main target of Kant's argument is *reality* — reality is “a formless chaos of which one cannot even speak in the first place” (Jameson 1972:33). If we restate Kant's doctrine in Apollonian terms, then it is only through “rational belief” that we can discover a resemblance, or correspondence between the noumenonal world of *real* objects and the phenomenal world of *appearing* objects (Hoffmann 1978:286).



6. René Magritte, *The Human Condition I* (1934), oil on canvas.

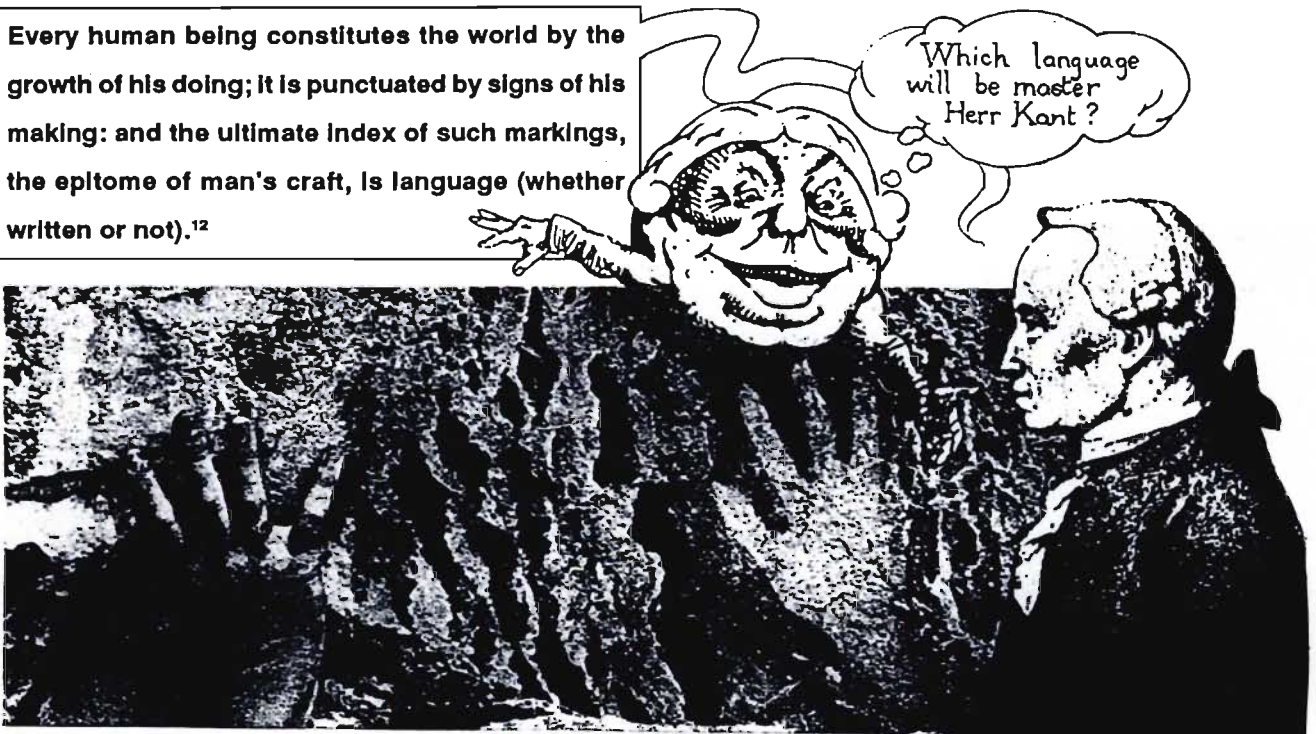
The interpretive mind is always sorting and categorizing, as well as unifying, the chaos of perceptual experiences (or *appearances* of reality) into systematic schemas, but the “schematism by which our understanding deals with the phenomenal world . . . is a skill so deeply hidden in the human soul that we shall hardly guess the secret trick that Nature here employs”.¹¹ According to Kant we seldom guess that our understanding is tricked into believing that we can know “truth” through nature. In other words, we fail to realize that appearances are not *real* but *illusions*. Thus the modern philosophical quest is no longer for an absolute or transcendental *truth about reality* but rather, a question of *how we construct an illusion of the real as true*. Yet the constructing, or structuring habits of the mind are, for Kant, so deeply vested in human understanding that they offer a new foundation for philosophy. With this he found a way out of the impasse in philosophy. Kant's new doctrine on reality is a result of his struggles with the traditional epistemological problem of scepticism (Devitt & Sterelny 1987:199). Henceforth Kantian philosophy concerns itself not with the delusory quest for ‘truth’, but with the *a priori* ideas or thoughts that constitute human understanding (Norris 1984:4).

Jacob Bronowski (1908–1974), the late American physicist, demonstrates how the (Apollonian) structuring of language — and other related orders of representation such as art, religion and science — all reveal an ongoing quest to transform (Dionysian) chaos into form. This pursuit of order and structure, he says, is the driving force behind cultural evolution. In *The Ascent of Man* (1973) Bronowski adds that humans alter, rather than adapt to, their environment through inventive acts of the imagination, through (Apollonian) reason and (Dionysian) emotion: “And that series of inventions, by which man from age to age has remade his environment, is . . . not biological, but cultural” (1973:19–20).

Yet humans do not merely make and remake their environment, they also continue re-making meanings for things — man is a *homo significans*, the maker and reader of signs. Since primordial times the human species has, in one way or another, made signs (or marks) for the primary purpose of communication:

When early man stencilled an impression of his outstretched hand on the dark wall of a cave, he was deliberately making his own mark on the world around him. The story of art has been largely the story of man’s continuing search for meaningful marks — for the shapes, sounds, words, pictures, and dance movements — that can most eloquently express his experiences of the inner [Dionysian] and outer [Apollonian] worlds, and so enlarge and perpetuate them (Bronowski *et al.* 1964:20).

Every human being constitutes the world by the growth of his doing; it is punctuated by signs of his making: and the ultimate index of such markings, the epitome of man’s craft, is language (whether written or not).¹²



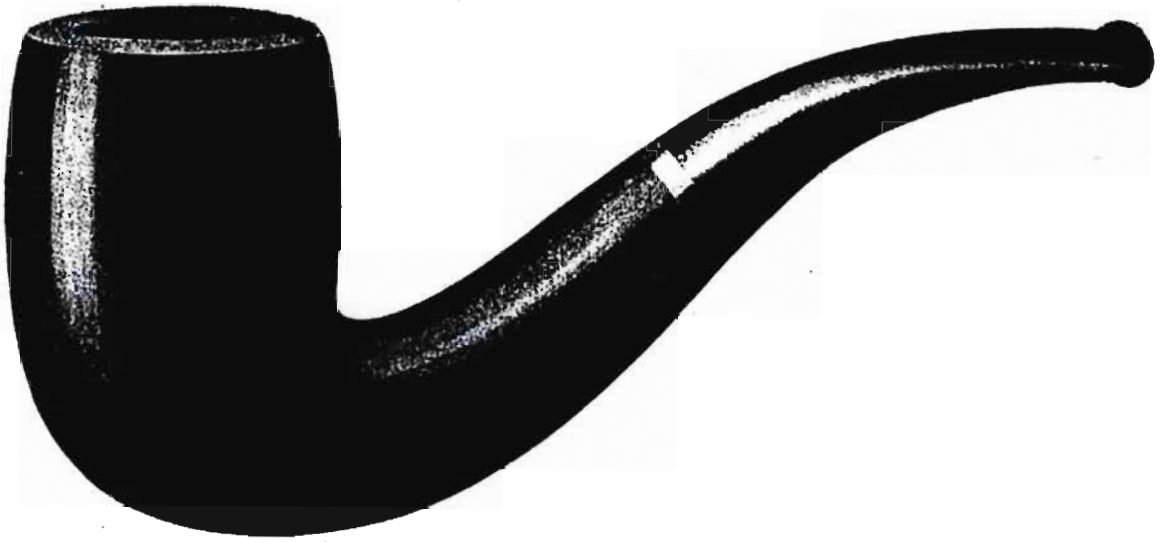
8. Immanuel Kant contemplates the mark of a stencilled hand painted onto the rock-face of a prehistoric cave. (Source of quote unknown).

This suggests that humans not only give expression to their experiences through various orders of representation, but that language (as with art, religion or science) serves to represent both subjective (inner) and objective (outer) worlds. I believe that language serves to represent both the Apollonic and the Dionysiac sensibilities. However, the most dominant forms of language privilege the Apollonian desire for reason over and above the Dionysian yearning to gratify the senses.

The dialectics between the objective (outer) and subjective (inner) worlds seem to echo Kant's notion of an intrinsic dualism between both constructed objects and structured subjects, or between perceptions (outward phenomena) and conceptions (inward noumena).

. . . concepts without percepts are empty;
perceptions without conceptions are blind.¹³

. . . artists can put together the various conceptions
and comprehend their variety in one perception.¹⁴



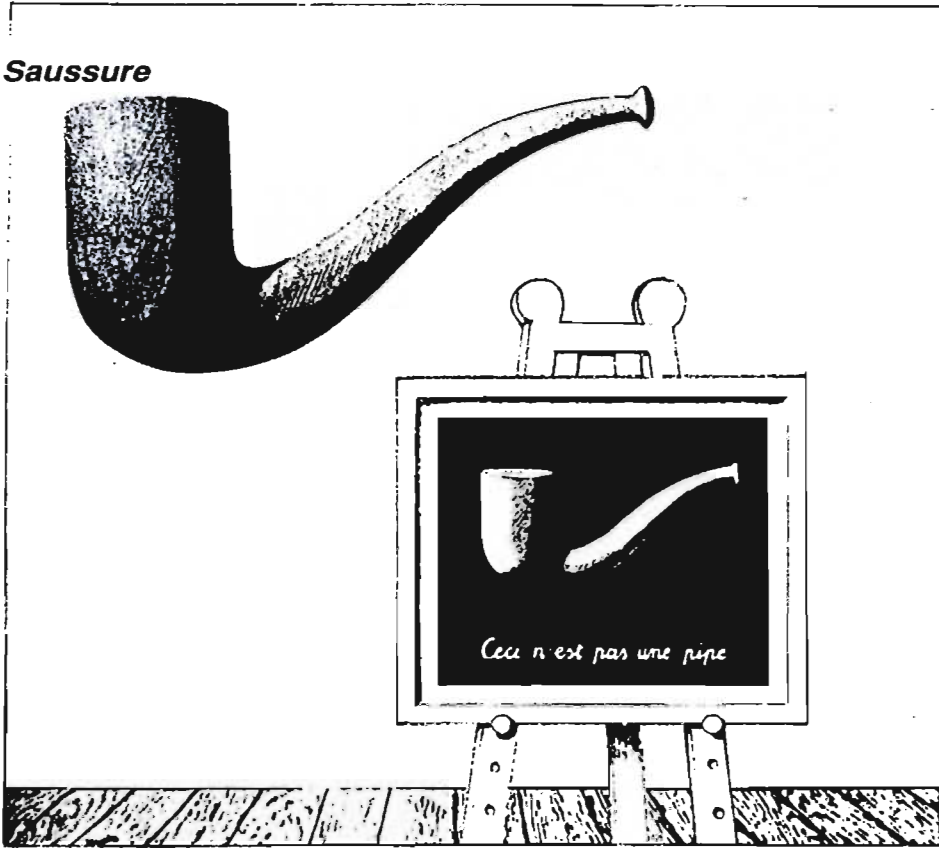
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

9. "This is not a pipe". René Magritte, *The Deception of Images* (1928–29), oil on canvas.
(Quotations from Immanuel Kant, cited by Hoernle 1952:121 and Chipp 1968:256).

Just as subjects and objects constitute reality, so do percepts and concepts constitute representations of that reality. However, the verbal and visual representations we use do not reflect a mirror image of the world, but project a construct of what we *take*, or rather, *make* the world to mean. The English sociologist Stuart Hall explains that "representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of *making things mean*" (1984:64).

The act of producing meaning is defined as a *signifying practice* and the basic unit of all orders of representation is the *sign*. The science that studies the use of signs within society is known as *semiotics* or *semiology* (from the Greek word *semeton* meaning "sign"). The term semiotics is preferred by English speakers out of deference to the American philosopher, Charles Peirce (1838–1914), while semiology is preferred by Europeans out of deference to the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (see Guiraud 1975:1–4). While semioticians and semiologists share some similarities in their aim and methodology, their respective epistemological premises often differ. They are indeed incommensurable (Shepperson & Tomaselli 1993:161).

Peirce and Saussure



10. Is the painted pipe on the easel less real than the large pipe? Or are both equally real? In fact, they are not real objects, but signs. As signs they represent an object (pipe) for the subject (viewer). René Magritte, *The Two Mysteries* (1966), oil on canvas.

Peirce claims that the study of signs confronts the foundations of logic itself. With this he rehabilitates the Kantian view that we construct an illusion of the real as 'true'. As Hawkes points out:

The complexity of Peirce's system clearly arises from the fact that, given his point of departure, anything which can be isolated, then connected with something else and "interpreted", can function as a sign. This means that one of the most important areas in which his notion of signs will usefully operate will be that of epistemology (1985:128).

Similarly, Saussure also claims that epistemology requires a study of sign-systems, or of language itself, as the basis for understanding the processes of knowing.¹⁵ Here Hawkes adds that:

Saussure's revolutionary contribution to the study of language lies in his rejection of that "substantive" view of the subject in favour of a "relational" one (1985:19).

That is, humans are no longer seen to exist outside language, but rather inside the operations of language. Both scholars are interested in the sign as the basis of all signification systems. The sign is not only applicable to linguistics but to all orders of representation, including artistic and scientific modes of signification.

Saussure, also following Kant, argues that our *knowledge of the world is inextricably shaped and formed by the language that serves to represent reality*. Furthermore, Saussure's insistence on the arbitrary nature of language as a sign-system, led to him undoing the connection that common-sense assumes to exist between thought and reality, or between word and world (Norris 1984:4). To this Norris adds:

Meanings are bound up, according to Saussure, in a system of relationship and difference that effectively determines our habits of thought and perception. Far from providing a “window” on reality or (to vary the metaphor) a faithfully reflecting “mirror”, language brings with it a whole intricate network of established significations. In his view, our knowledge of things is insensibly structured by the systems of code and convention which alone enable us to classify and organize the chaotic flow of experience. There is simply no access to knowledge except by way of language and other related orders of representation (1984:4–5).



11. Courtesy of *Punch*.

Yet Saussurean linguistics is more than a model for exploring referential relationships between the *word* and the *world* it represents. Rather, it is a conceptual tool for analyzing how meaning is transmitted as a social practice, or as a determinate form of human labour. Meaning is thus continually conducted through the signifying practices of culture. Hall's seminal essay, *The rediscovery of 'ideology'* (1982), examines the critical paradigm of the Structuralists. It is worth quoting at least one pertinent paragraph:

In the Structuralist approach, the issue turned on the question of signification. This implies, as we have already said, that things and events in the real world do not contain or propose their own, integral, single and intrinsic meaning, which is then merely transferred through language. Meaning is a social production, a practice. The world has to be *made to mean*.¹⁶ Language and symbolization is the means by which meaning is produced. This approach dethroned the referential notion of language, which had sustained previous content analysis, where the meaning of a particular term or sentence could be validated by simply looking at what, in the real world, it referenced. Instead, language had to be seen as the medium in which specific meanings are produced. What this insight put to issue, then, was the question of which kinds of meaning get systematically and regularly constructed around particular events. Because meaning was not given but produced, it followed that different kinds of meaning could be ascribed to the same events. Thus, in order for one meaning to be regularly produced, it had to win a kind of credibility, legitimacy or taken-for-grantedness for itself. That involved marginalizing, down-grading or de-legitimizing alternative constructions (1984:67).

Although Hall is careful to relate theoretical problems to political developments, his analysis reflects his own British location. He does not, for instance, address these issues within the context of apartheid. We shall do so in Chapter 2 (mediating reality as drama).

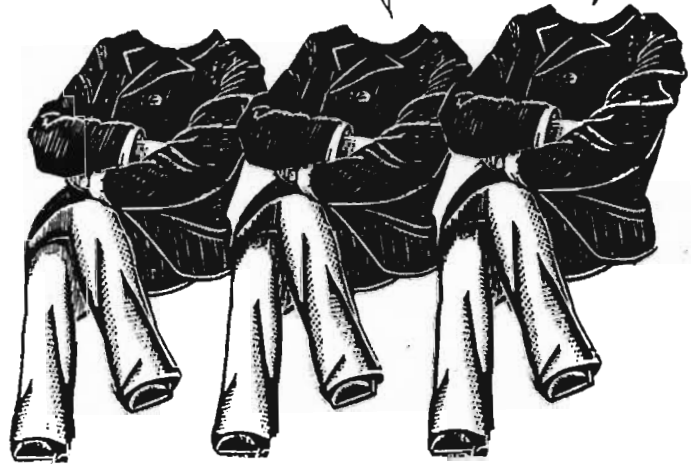
Levi-Strauss and Barthes

Here we should note that the Structuralist's project becomes a model for analyzing culture (the way in which we give meaning to our existence and experience). For them culture might also represent an act of codification based on the model of language. Culture might itself be a language. This is the view take by French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and literary critic Roland Barthes. Levi-Strauss, like Vico, claims that the notion of a myth-making "poetic wisdom" is what animates human responses to the real world. He also aims to produce a general "science of man" wherein he can demonstrate that humans *make themselves* (1972:353).

humans create themselves

humans make themselves

humans make their own history, but at the time they do not know they are making it.



12. Giambattista Vico, Claude Levi-Strauss and Karl Marx.

Levi-Strauss, in his *Structural Anthropology* (1958), asks whether different aspects of social life (including art, religion and science) can be studied by the same methods and concepts as employed in linguistics and, furthermore, whether these aspects of society constitute phenomena whose inmost nature is the same as that of language (1968:62). Thus the analysis of language may propose an appropriate model for the analysis of culture.

The French literary critic, Roland Barthes, who strove to mesh semiotics and semiology, also demonstrates that the structuring process of language is at work in all human affairs and that this process is pervasive in society. This led to the study of culture (particularly through myths) as the sum of all human activity and reflection which reproduce meaning through the interplay of signs (1972). Barthes postulates that the relationship between *signifier* and *signified*, or between *meaning* and *object*, is not a matter of "equality" but of "equivalence". The relationship between these elements is not based on the sequential ordering whereby one leads to the other, but the correlation which unites them.¹⁷

However, Barthes eventually turns away from the Structuralist notion of semiology as a "metalanguage". Where Structuralists like Levi-Strauss assume that invariant and ordered systems of meaning — corresponding to some 'objective' mental-set or 'universal' pattern of mind — determine the limits of intelligibility, Barthes claims that semiology conspicuously fails to recognize that the concepts and methods employed are necessarily bound up with the signifying processes it, as a science of signs, sets out to analyze. For Barthes there can be no final analysis to the metalinguistic concept and method of Structuralist thought. Structuralism fails when the concept of structure succeeds in dominating all forms of analysis. Analysis is an open-ended play of paradoxical and ironic language games. This marks the point at which Deconstruction begins to unsettle the Structuralist paradigm.

Derrida

Barthes shifts the emphasis of the Structuralist paradigm. He turns attention away from a study of content to a study of the *conditions* of content. This displaces the formalist tradition obsessed with content analysis. With this a new “poetics” (theory of language) emerges which concerns itself, not with *content* or *structure*, but with the *process* or *practice* whereby meaning is formulated. In this regard the English literary critic, Jonathan Culler, sets out a generalized theory for the new direction in Structuralist (pre-Deconstructionist) criticism. Through his *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) he claims that such a theory of criticism is a poetics which strives to define the conditions of meaning.

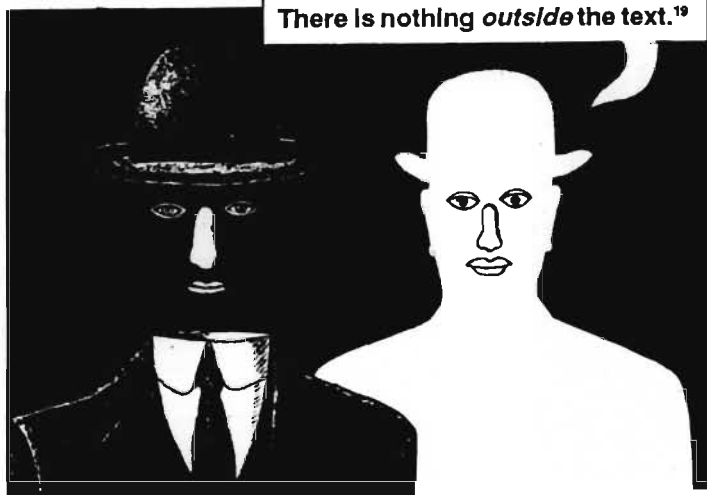
As with Kant, Culler begins with a sceptical divorce between the *mind* and the *reality* it seeks to know or understand. But Culler continues to search for a poetics which would encompass all the various means we possess for making sense of, or interpreting, literary texts. Norris adds, on behalf of Culler, that interpretation “is a quest for order and intelligibility among the manifold patterns of sense which the text holds out” (1984:5). Such neo-Kantian relativism, or the relativity between *thought* and *meaning*, is sustained by Culler through a moderating (Apollonian) presence of mind which comprehends the conventions at play in the text’s structure and a reader’s interpretation. Culler’s implicit equation between the structure of language and the user/interpreter’s competence is precisely the interpretative ploy that Barthes’ post-Structuralism and Derrida’s Deconstruction sets out to challenge.

Like Barthes, the French philosopher Jacques Derrida challenges the Structuralist’s suppositions about the ‘objectivity’ and ‘universality’ that exists beyond an interpretative critique. This led to the proposal that we not only know reality in terms of the language we use to define it, but that reality has no meaning beyond our endeavours to mediate it through the act of discourse.

We live *inside* the act of discourse . . .
reality begins *outside* verbal language.¹⁸

There is nothing which is not in
need of interpretation . . .

There is nothing *outside* the text.¹⁹



Derrida applies pressure to Kant’s distinction between the noumenal world and the phenomenal world, between reality independent of knowledge and reality dependent on what we know. According to Derrida we cannot establish a correspondence between the extra-linguistic world and the world of language. There is in fact no reality to speak of beyond language — everything is an intertextual event.

Thus Derrida opposes the Structuralist’s claim of a fixed point of ‘origin’ (or source) and ‘finality’ (or closure) in regard to both form and meaning. For Derrida new modes of structuring and interpreting a text are always possible.²⁰

13. Steiner (1985:31, 36) and Derrida (cited by Norris 1984).

Like the Structuralists, Derrida argues persuasively that we cannot think without language. In fact, it is language that informs the way we think — and hence informs the way in which we make sense of, or give meaning to the world. And so Derrida challenges the way in which Structuralism continues to attach itself to a western metaphysics of meaning.

It is with Derrida that, finally, the entire edifice of traditional western philosophy collapses upon its own foundations. He deconstructs the privileged status of reason by showing how it falsely assumes that philosophy exists beyond language and can therefore authenticate the 'truth' independently. "What Deconstruction persistently reveals is an ultimate impasse of thought [reason] engendered by a rhetoric that always insinuates its own textual workings into the truth claims of philosophy " (Norris 1984:49).

Derrida also challenges the manner in which philosophy deploys metaphors and analogies to validate, even authenticate, its own epistemic suppositions. These figurative devices become so enmeshed in the metaphysics of meaning as to offer, conveniently, no other reading of a text. To this end the metaphorical and analogical *allusions* produce an *illusion* of 'truth'. Norris again:

One way of describing this challenge is to say that Derrida refuses to grant philosophy the kind of privileged status it has always claimed as the sovereign dispenser of reason. Derrida confronts this claim to power on its own chosen ground. He argues that philosophers have been able to impose their various systems of thought only by ignoring, or suppressing, the disruptive effects of language. His aim is always to draw out these effects by a critical reading which fastens on, and skilfully unpicks, the elements of metaphor and other figurative devices at work in the texts of philosophy. Deconstruction in this, its most rigorous form, acts as a constant reminder of the ways in which language deflects or complicates the philosopher's project. Above all, Deconstruction works to undo the idea — according to Derrida, the ruling illusion of western metaphysics — that reason can somehow dispense with language and arrive at a pure, self-authenticating truth or method. Though philosophy strives to efface its textual or 'written' character, the signs of that struggle are there to be read in its blind-spots of metaphor and other rhetorical strategies (1984:18-19).

Since this study adopts the metaphors and analogies associated with the myths of Apollo and Dionysus, we should proceed with caution so as to avoid the same rhetorical pitfalls. I shall avoid using these figures of speech to insinuate a supposed "truth claim" about reality. My metaphorical and analogical readings do not suppose an 'objectivity' or 'universality' beyond an interpretative critique. May it suffice for me to say that we should not use these figures of speech to suppress an interplay of other possible readings of social and political experiences, or of cultural and historical events in South Africa.

The next chapter examines how an event, like any text, remains forever open to a variety of possible (mis-)interpretations of unstable signs.

CHAPTER TWO



MEDIATING REALITY AS DRAMA from event into story

Drama is an imitation of an action,
and not the action itself.¹

A dramatist is a maker of stories.²



1. Aristotle (cited by Hartnoll 1971:7 and quoted from *Poetics*).

Drama, as a cultural strategy in western society, is historically linked to traditional Dionysian rites of worship in ancient Greece.³ Initially drama formalized the transition *from ritual to mimesis*, that is, *from action to representation* or, *from event to story*. This transformation (of *real events* into *dramatic stories*) led to the emergence of classical Greek theatre in Athens during the fifth century BCE.⁴ The process marks a gradual shift from priest to actor, from religious *action* to theatrical *representation*, from the immediacy of Dionysiac *experience* to the mediacy of Apollonic *performance*.

A performance makes experience visible for spectators to see — Dionysian experientialism is transformed by Apollonian voyeurism. In other words, I suggest that something which has *been* becomes a thing to be *seen* — *deed* is transformed into *words* and *images*.

As discussed in Chapter 1 (defining reality through language), all words and images are part of a linguistic-symbolic communications network.⁵ Language is, *par excellence*, the most privileged means of communication among humans.⁶ Language (used here to refer to verbal and visual sign systems only) is used to interpret our experience of the world. But language does not only *mediate*, it also *defines* how we interpret reality.⁷ This implies that events in the real world do not transfer their own intrinsic meaning only through language. Meaning is a social production, a signifying practice. Events, like all other things, are *made to mean*.⁸



Ceci n'est pas une pipe

2. "This is not a pipe". René Magritte (1964).

Language is, therefore, the means by which meaning is produced. While language offers no final, definitive, or even *objective* interpretation of the world, many of us assume that language represents reality as if such *objectivity* may exist. But the world cannot be *objectified*, nor can an event become an *object* of 'truth'.

Despite the lack of objectivity underlying television, radio and newspaper reports, news coverage continues to reinforce the assumption that for a story to be 'true' it must be credible, or at least capable of securing credibility as a statement of fact:

It is not because news is true that we believe certain items of communication encoded in a particular way to be news. It is because we recognise the codes that we provisionally accept the fact that the news is probably true (Van Zyl 1990:1).

Firstly, instead of focusing on any *probable truth* underlying news, we should examine how news coverage *constructs meaning* by making sense of, and by giving value to, the events which constitute the world. Secondly, while news serves to mediate different and even conflicting accounts of the world, it is not a "daily mirror" accurately reflecting actual events in the world — but is a *drama* which represents events according to conventional storytelling codes. Eve Bertelsen explains:

It becomes clear that news as *story* or *narrative* possesses many of the basic qualities of other stories and other TV genres . . . News offers a prime example of discursive conflict: every news item, every broadcast, is a small *drama* forming part of a larger cultural contest over the way reality may be signified (1991:175).

This contest is evident in the conflicting accounts broadcast and printed around the 1985 Langa massacre — where the South African police shot into a funeral procession marching from Langa to KwaNobuhle, two black townships situated on the outskirts of the white group-area of Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape. The event made immediate news headlines. It instantly became a newsworthy story. Bertelsen adds:

Not all events qualify as news. Nor can an event as such be communicated. It must be narrated (represented in a selection of words and images) — i.e. it must become a story in order to be communicated (1991:175).



3. Selling news. A member of the S A police buying the *Evening Post* from a 'Rastafarian' newspaper seller. Courtesy of *The Argus*.



4. International newspaper headlines (1985.3.22-25).

a case study

The Langa massacre exemplifies how an event became a story — how communicative strategies turned this incident into a frontpage news item. On Friday 22 March, the day after the massacre, several sensational headlines broke the news internationally in (strategically) crude racial and numerical terms: "S[outh] African police gun down 17 blacks" (*Guardian*); "17 die as police fire on black marchers" (*Daily Mail*); "Seventeen demonstrators killed on 25th anniversary of Sharpeville" (*Financial Times*); "17 shot dead" (*Sunday Times*). Most headlines were accompanied by photographs. These words and images — all of which appeared after the event — contributed to the framing of this incident as *history-in-the-making*.

OUS
! sale
today
files

22 MAR 1985
ONTYANG

Cape Times

Stuttafords
Beauty Voyage event
The Miss Dior Coffret

FOUNDED 1878 NO. 624P

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1985

30c (27c plus 3c GST)

17 shot dead



Police vehicles patrol Fourteenth Avenue, Langa, where police opened fire on a crowd of up to 4 000 people in the township yesterday morning.

Own Correspondent
PORT ELIZABETH. — At least 17 men, women and children were killed and dozens more injured when police opened fire at a large crowd in Langa, Uitenhage, yesterday.

And following widespread reaction and condemnation of the shooting, the Minister of Law and Order, Sir Louis le Grange, told Parliament yesterday afternoon he regretted to have to announce that "a most unfortunate incident took place about 1800".

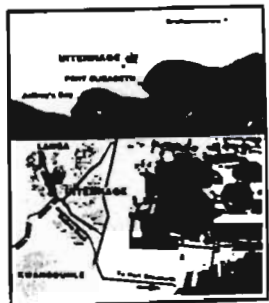
He said a crowd "armed with stones, sticks, petrol bombs and bricks" was confronted by a police unit and told their march was illegal in terms of the prohibition on open-air gatherings.

These instructions were ignored and when the crowd advanced to within five metres of the police, the commanding officer fired a warning shot into the ground next to the leader.

'Self-defence'
When this had no effect and the crowd, according to Mr Le Grange, refused to disperse, the police and police dogs with stones, sticks and other missiles including petrol bombs. The police officer had no alternative but to order fire in self-defence.

Late last night hospital staff at 14 de Waag, Port Elizabeth's Easton Hospital were still in a state of shock over the shooting. Some said to be in a serious condition.

The official toll last night was 17 dead and 20 wounded, according to police spokesmen. The shooting, which has resulted in the biggest death toll since the 1976-77 student protests in the Eastern Cape, started just over a year ago — the black people's fight for



way to a memorial service in his hometown on Wednesday funeral of several victims scheduled to take place yesterday and today were restricted by a 15-kilometre curfew. Mr Mzimela said until Sunday.

The crowd was fired upon at a 1 km junction on the Matielas Road less than a kilometre from a township where a residential area.

Later at a press conference at the 14 de Waag police station, Colonel Van Heerden said that men, women and children had been killed and estimated that 200 to 300 were injured. He said the police had been ordered to fire in self-defence.

Minister of Law and Order, Sir Louis le Grange, said that the police in the Eastern Cape were ordered to fire in self-defence. The Eastern Cape Minister of Law and Order, Sir Louis le Grange, said that the police in the Eastern Cape were ordered to fire in self-defence.

World spotlight on SA shootings

From JOHN BATTERSBY of our news correspondents in London. — Both the British and American media yesterday gave prominent coverage to the shooting of 17 people in Uitenhage, South Africa. The British Council of Churches also condemned the shootings, describing them as a "barbaric act".

5. Front-page of the Cape Times (1985.3.22). Courtesy of the South African Library.

The South African government and the Mass Democratic Movement also seized upon the opportunity to frame this incident as an *historical* event — as having "societal significance".⁹ Both politicians and extra-parliamentary activists immediately realized the serious ideological implications behind the incident: it did not just "happen" — it reproduced meaning. For Zou Kota, then regional Publicity Secretary of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the event symbolized "a declaration of civil war".¹⁰ Within weeks the then State President, Pieter Willem (PW) Botha, appointed judge Kannemeyer to conduct a Commission of Inquiry into the incident.¹¹ The event rapidly became a political symbol for both the dispossessed masses and the ruling minority — symbolizing popular defiance against restrictive laws and banning orders, while *simultaneously* symbolizing the institutionalized maintenance of law and order.

I propose, on the one hand, that this event represents Dionysian *transgression* and, on the other, Apollonian *repression*. It also represents the conflict between anarchic and autocratic forces.

I do refer me to the Oracle — Apollo be my Judge.¹²



6. Apollo and Shakespeare (quotation from *A Winter's Tale*).

According to the late Louis le Grange, then Minister of Law and Order, the march from Langa to KwaNobhule was illegal in terms of a standing prohibition on open-air gatherings. According to the Internal Security Act, the law restricted people from holding funerals on a weekend (to limit mass gatherings aimed at political organization) while a last minute magisterial order prevented people from burying their dead during that specific week (to restrict rallies commemorating the 25th anniversary of Sharpeville Day). Both orders were obtained by the same security police officer, a captain Goosen, and were legally in force at the same time.¹³ In effect, the "State" simultaneously banned funerals on Sunday *and* banned funerals except on a Sunday. It was hence impossible for "the people" to bury the dead and honour the law at the same time.

Social anthropologist Robert Thornton compares this dilemma, in his own riveting study of the Langa massacre, to the play *Antigone* by Sophocles (496-406 BCE). Both tragedies represent a conflict between submission to a coercive power and its edicts, and the moral and customary duties of burying the dead. He quotes this poignant speech by Antigone:

Now tell me, in as few words as you can,
Did you know the order forbidding such an act?

And yet you dared
to contravene it?

I knew it, naturally.
It was plain enough.

Yes.



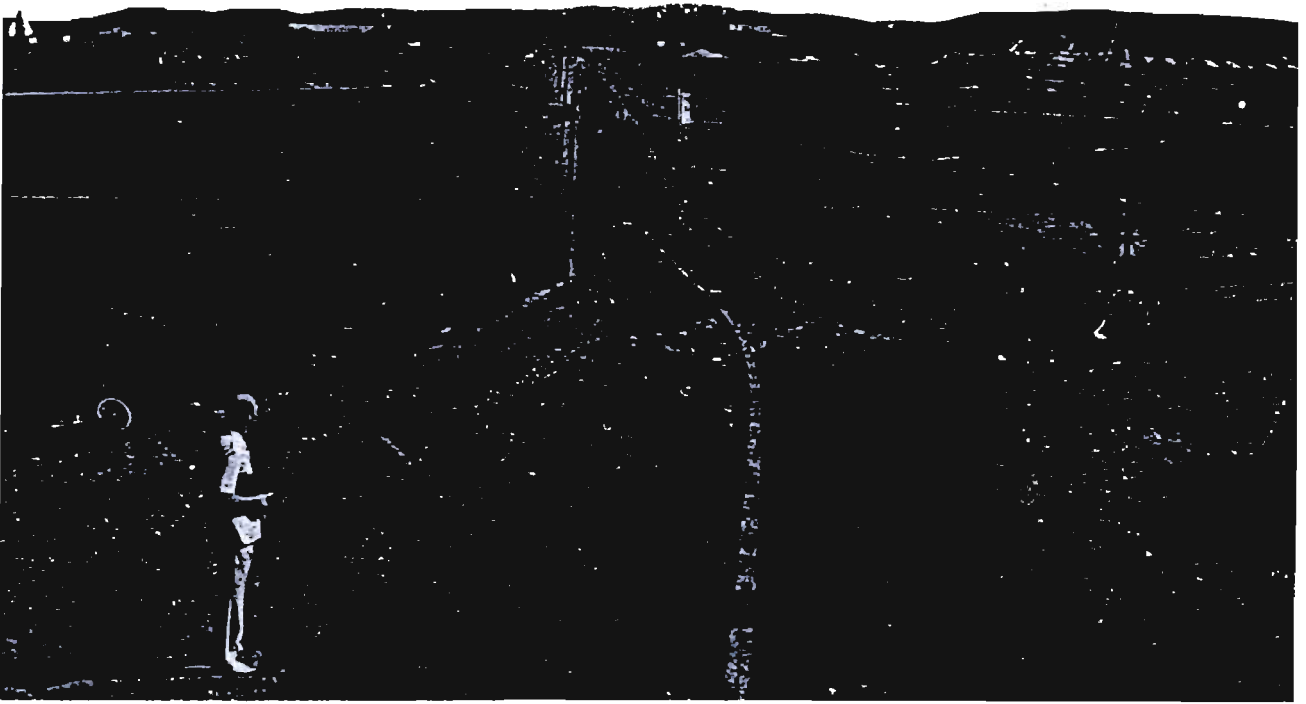
7. Creon and Antigone (quotation from *The Theban Plays*).

I did not think your edicts strong enough to overrule
the unwritten unalterable laws of God and heaven,
you being only a man . . .

I knew that I should have to die, of course, with or
without your order. If it be soon, so much the
better. Living in daily torment, as I do, who would
not be glad to die? The punishment will not be any
pain.

Only if I had let my mother's son lie there unburied,
then I could not have borne it. This I can bear. Does
that seem foolish to you? Or is it that you are
foolish to judge me so!¹⁵

Antigone dared to contravene the order forbidding her from burying her brother.



8. View of Maduna Road, as seen from where the casspirs had parked, looking toward the spot where the funeral procession halted in front of the police blockade. Bucwa's bicycle lies on the verge at bottom left. Courtesy of the *Cape Times*.

Likewise, on the morning of 21 March 1985, local residents came to bury their dead — a boy killed earlier that week by the police. The mourners assembled at an intersection along Maduna Road in Langa, a place usually used as a bus terminus and known as “Maduna Square”. It would appear that they intended to travel the 10kms by bus from Langa to KwaNobuhle. But public transport was not operating normally that day due to a stayaway commemorating the 1961 “Sharpeville shooting”. Evidence collected by the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) shows that the police prevented people from boarding those vehicles which were available.¹⁶ According to official records, this was held to have been the immediate cause for the crowd setting off on foot. As the funeral procession moved down Maduna Road, it came face to face with a police blockade about 1km outside Uitenhage. The commanders of the two Casspirs (police armoured vehicles) were warrant officer Pentz and lieutenant Fouché. Both officers claimed afterwards that the crowd, now allegedly several thousand strong and led by an abusive Rastafarian, had been singing a song about “killing the white people” of Uitenhage. Significantly, neither Pentz nor Fouché understood the actual words used in this Xhosa song, particularly the refrain “Hay!, Hay!” (meaning “No, No” and not “Kill, Kill”). According to Pentz the crowd had been “screaming, dancing and shrieking”.

The above account portrayed the crowd as a tribe of barbarous savages, i.e. as “Other”. This concurs with similar descriptions given by Fouché wherein he claims: “A Coloured woman with bare breasts threw a stone at the Casspir. Simultaneously the crowd threw stones. I realized here is trouble and immediately shouted ‘fire’ ”.¹⁷ Unwittingly, both Pentz and Fouché described the crowd as if they were part of a chanting Dionysian procession — vulgar and riotous, mad and hysterical. I would like to recall that Dionysian rites were often led by women who danced, half-naked, in a state of mad or hysteric frenzy. These Thracian Mænads were formerly the worshippers of the Great Mother Goddess. They were the wild women who allegedly transgressed the law and subverted the moral order of an Apollonian society. It was they who allegedly threatened the stability of a civic polity.



9. Judge Kannemeyer, at the scene of the incident, collecting information from warrant officer Pentz and lieutenant Fouché (seen on right in their regular blues). Courtesy of the *Cape Times*.

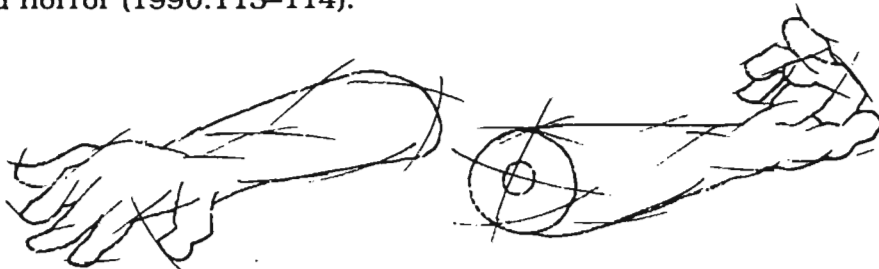
During the hearing, Fouché admitted that the police patrol and its vehicles had *not* been under attack. This admission contradicted the bizarre statement made earlier in Parliament to the effect that the “police were suddenly surrounded and pelted with stones, sticks and other missiles including petrol bombs”.¹⁸

But other accounts regarding what led to the first shots being fired also exist. According to several survivors the police opened fire on a boy, Kwanele Bucwa, as he tried to cross the road on a bicycle between the crowd and the Casspirs (Bucwa's bicycle can be seen at extreme bottom left in the photograph on the previous page). The boy had tried to pass the procession on his way to work in Uitenhage. For fear of being seen as disloyal to his community, he raised his fist in an “Amandla” or “Black Power” salute, a gesture witnesses believed was the spark which set off the first shot. Bucwa, who survived a shot to the back of his head, said in testimony that he raised his fist in *solidarity* with the mourners, and not in *defiance* of the police. Although judge Kannemeyer regarded Bucwa as a reliable witness, he interpreted the boy's gesture as an act of provocation directed at the police. But, notably, the official outcome of the Inquiry found that, to maintain law and order, the police were not justified in opening fire on the crowd with sharp-point ammunition. According to the Report, the intention to use such ammunition, instead of birdshot or teargas, was deliberate. It would thus be fanciful to believe that there was no intent to kill when using these lethal weapons. Yet judge Kannemeyer added that no personal blame could be attributed to any member of the police patrol. However, had there been no banning order there would probably have been no confrontation: “Had the holding of the funeral not unnecessarily been prohibited on doubtful grounds, there can be little doubt that the procession would have passed through Uitenhage without incident . . .”.¹⁹

Tragically events were to follow another course that day. Immediately after the shooting at least twenty bodies lay strewn about — men, women and children — most of whom had been shot in the back. According to the Report, thirty-five of the forty-seven dead and wounded were shot from behind. But no reliable records of exact casualties exist. The residents of Langa claim that forty-three people were killed while the memorial marker in KwaNobuhle listed only twenty-nine. The commission, however, reported no more than twenty dead, including the “Rastafarian” and the “Coloured woman with bare breasts”.

Renegade reporter Rian Malan, on his return to South Africa in 1986, explored the madness of apartheid and its effects on his fellow countrymen — particularly the White Afrikaner. During his post-exile journey to the Eastern Cape he, quite unexpectedly, met lieutenant John William Fouché in the commander’s office of a local police station. They discussed the notorious incident:

Taken aback by Fouché’s pathetic defense of unspoken charges, I asked him for his side of the story. He started talking about something terrible he’d seen in that very township, something that had shattered his nerve . . . he saw a man carve a slice off one of the charred bodies [belonging to the family of a suspected ‘collaborator’ who had been burned to death] and eat it. I shook my head in disbelief, but Fouché gave me his word. I checked it out later, and it was true in all save one respect — it had happened in the explosion of rage that followed the Langa massacre, not before it. Still, I seemed to have returned to a country in which anything could be true — even the most far-fetched horror (1990:113–114).



Here again I feel that, through his description of frenzied dismemberment, Fouché evokes the violence associated with Dionysian *sparagmos* (Marsyas, a disciple of Dionysus, was flayed alive and then dismembered by Apollo and the Scythians).²⁰ Even Malan’s narrative is an evocation of the irrational behaviour associated with the rites of Dionysus-Zagreus. But while Fouché fears the crowd’s madness, Malan extols it: the former sees the wild crowd as being *different* while the latter identifies with them — he sees himself as being the *same*). Fouché seems overcome by Apollonian attempts at objectification (the crowd is represented as ‘Other’) while Malan is subsumed by Dionysian identification (his “Self” is represented by the crowd). As stated in the Introduction, it is the chthonian realities which the Apollonic sensibility tries to objectify, but with which the Dionysiac sensibility identifies. However, it is the dehumanizing brutality, the horror and cruelty of wild (natural) barbaric behaviour which we block from consciousness in order to retain our moral integrity as civilized humans. As culture evades nature, so Apollo avoids Dionysus. Apollonian order rejects Dionysian discord.²¹ Civilization cannot tolerate barbarism. Apollonian decorum rebukes Dionysian decadence (Paglia 1991).



10. Kevin Brand's sculptural installation of *nineteen boys running* (1988) as seen at the Michaelis School of Fine Art (University of Cape Town) where it was first exhibited. Photograph by Jac de Villiers.

In 1988 a sculptor from Cape Town, Kevin Brand, exhibited a sculptural installation entitled *nineteen boys running*.²² In spite of the well publicized death tolls, Brand's sculpture depicts only nineteen young black male figures. The designated number and the common gender of these figures are, quite obviously, at variance with all other accounts — official and otherwise. These anomalies are, perhaps intentionally, in keeping with all the contradictory evidence collected. Understandably, we may query what 'objective' facts Brand's sculpture is based on since it certainly brings us no closer to the so-called 'truth'. Yet, I believe that this is the critical function of his work — it is in itself a statement on the *impossibility of knowing or understanding what actually happened in any absolute or ultimate way*.

Brand does not try to interpret the facts, but comments on the so-called 'factual' interpretations behind the event. He presents us, not with portraits of the known victims, but with a rudimentary portrayal of the nameless (yet still numbered) dead. Every figure can be identified by a numbered metallic-grey plate, as if each were like a morgue specimen. Each anguished figure rests upon a crude, coffin-like crate. Brand chose to use materials which were easy to handle and quick to dry, thus allowing him to work rapidly.²³ The painterly brushstrokes render an impression of one brief, fleeting moment as we glimpse the figures disappearing and re-appearing behind each other. At a glance the blood-red splashes of colour draw the truncated torsos together. Yet the overall impression seems to be without a coherent centre. The viewer's traditional *gaze* is displaced by a *glance* as we struggle to see the entire installation as a unified whole. It is as if we are in the midst of a seething crowd where space, time and distance are hard to judge. Figures emerge and recede as we try to bring them into focus.



11. Figures from *nineteen boys running*. Courtesy of the South African National Gallery.

Art critic Elsa Miles suggests that, when confronted by the sculpture in a gallery, the viewer sees the exhibited boys as if through the eyes of the policeman, or better still, through the eyes of the pathologist: "You are not only the policeman with the murder-weapon, but also on duty as the state pathologist doing an autopsy".²⁴

In Brand's sculpture important details seem insignificant while apparently unnecessary features loom up larger than normal. Brand also distorts and exaggerates features to dramatize the immediate confusion and instant turmoil which erupted after the first shot: "The boys are in a state of pandemonium, but as a group they can also cause chaos to those around them. We don't know who is manipulating who".²⁵ Brand implies that both the residents and the police were "manipulated" by the dictates of those who commanded authority or power over them.

In Brand's view the event was predictable, even inevitable, given the ideological objectives behind the main protagonist's respective actions. In turn, each submitted affidavits, even fabricated allegations afterwards, to "manipulate" media coverage and public opinion. Records and the Report remain inconclusive and inconsistent. In other words, there is simply *no single account that can offer finality or closure on the matter* — there are, or were, only biased accounts which purported to tell the 'truth'. According to Thornton again:

The records relating to the shooting are sufficiently rich to permit a nuanced interpretative understanding that reveals a multiplicity of perspectives . . . In fact, it is not possible to know precisely what actually happened, and for the purpose of interpretation of the significance of the event the actual events are less important than the narratives into which they were cast (1988:4).



12. Figures from *nineteen boys running* (detail). Courtesy of the South African National Gallery.

As in Thebes, so in Langa. As with Antigone's family, so too the family of the boy who had been killed by the police. Both parties wished to honour the dead by observing the customary burial. But given the peculiar circumstances, neither party could do so without defying the law. Here, again, are traces of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality; Apollonian autocracy induces defiance, Dionysian anarchy induces oppression.

As stated in the Introduction, the Apollonian-Dionysian duality offers us a recurrent frame of reference for understanding (interpreting) official acts of reform as an antithesis to popular acts of protest and resistance. Representations of such events, albeit as drama or as news, constructs the protagonists as antagonists.

As already mentioned in Chapter 1 (defining reality through language), news coverage not only constructs meaning by making *sense* of or giving *value* to the events which constitute the world, but also serves to mediate different or conflicting accounts of the world. Following Stuart Hall, we can add that, in order for one meaning to win credibility, it involves the marginalization and delegitimation of alternative constructions:

Thus, in order for one meaning to be regularly produced, it had to win a kind of credibility, legitimacy or taken-for-grantedness for itself. That involved marginalizing, down-grading or de-legitimizing alternative constructions (1984:67).



13. Within days of the Langa massacre some local children re-emerged on the streets with home-made wooden figures clad in old clothes representing the dead and wounded. Courtesy of *The Argus*.

The Langa massacre, like so many other events, became a site of struggle as interested parties appropriated the facts, each in turn claiming to possess the “true” facts, the “real” facts, or even the “plain” and “hard” facts of history. Each maintained that their account was closer to the *probable truth* than any of the other narratives. It would be more accurate, however, to say that these ‘objective’ accounts are open to all manner of strategic (mis-)interpretations.

Significantly, Brand’s sculptural installation offers us an incisive commentary on the so-called ‘objective’ facts behind this tragedy. As an artist he also shows us something of his own personal response to the prevailing political tensions and dynamics of the 1980s, particularly during the prolonged States of Emergency (1985–1990). In as much as this work represents a refusal to forget the incident,²⁶ it is also a reminder of the other countless acts of political violence that still occur in the 1990s. Similarly, this event is also a reminder of a recurring duality — that of official reform and popular resistance, of autocracy versus anarchy — which permeates both our political and personal experience in South Africa.

But before we examine these further, we should return to the metaphors and analogies of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality in Græco-Roman and Judeo-Christian mythology and history.

SECTION TWO II

THE APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN DUALITY

An exploration of the mythological and historical dimension of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality, as well as the Nietzschean duality of order-chaos in philosophy and aesthetics, provides several analogies and metaphors for (re-)interpreting modern re-enactments of reform and revolt in art and culture, society and politics.

CHAPTER 3 *mythology and history*

The symbolic aspects of Apollo and Dionysus are foregrounded in numerous texts. Select references to these will be made to establish the mythological and historical dimension of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality.

CHAPTER 4 *philosophy and aesthetics*

Nietzsche expounded his vision of art in terms of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality. Apollo and Dionysus offer some useful metaphors and analogies for exploring the relationship between art and life.

CHAPTER 5 *art and culture*

As a recurrent frame of reference in western epistemic discourses, the Apollonian-Dionysian duality can be found in the art of the Renaissance and Baroque, Neo-classicism and Romanticism, Impressionism and Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism, Modernism and Post-modernism.

CHAPTER 6 *society and politics*

The atavistic adoration of Apollo advocates reform by means of individual and governmental authority; whereas the nostalgic worship of Dionysus promises unity and communal power through revolt. The former tends toward autocracy, the latter to anarchy.

The reform/revolt duality may also be shown to frame relationships between so-called *official* and *populist* arts or between so-called *dominant* and *oppositional* cultures in South Africa. Thus the reformative dimension of "apartheid culture" and the revolutionary dimension of "people's culture" can be traced back, respectively, to an autocratic (Apollonic) sensibility and an anarchistic (Dionysiac) sensibility.

CHAPTER THREE



3

MYTHOLOGY AND HISTORY

Herodotus (c. 490–425 BCE) writes in *The Histories* (c. 446 BCE) that the Greek myths and related rituals of Apollo and Dionysus can be traced back to ancient Egypt:

In other ways the festival of Dionysus is much the same as the Greek, except that the Egyptians have no choric dance. Instead of the phallus they have puppets, about eighteen inches high; the genitals of these figures are almost as big as the rest of their bodies, and they are pulled up and down by strings as the women carry them round the villages. Flutes lead the procession, and the women as they follow sing a hymn to Dionysus (1983:149).¹

Elsewhere Herodotus claims that “Horus is the Apollo and Osiris the Dionysus” (1983:187). Heraclitus, already in the sixth century BCE, writes: “But Hades is the same Dionysus in whose honour they go mad and keep the feast of the wine-vat”.² Despite his various personae, Dionysus is associated with orgiastic rites:

The Dionysiac religion contained orgiastic rites that implied the need for an initiate to abandon himself to his animal nature and thereby experience the full fertilising powers of the Earth Mother. The initiating agent for this rite of passage in the Dionysiac ritual was wine. It was supposed to produce the symbolic lowering of consciousness necessary to introduce the novice into the closely guarded secrets of nature, whose essence was expressed by a symbol of erotic fulfilment . . . (Henderson 1972:141).



BACCHUS ET BACCHICAE CHORIS

STANT IN BACCHICAE CHORIS. A THESEO BACCHICAE SVO REPERTO CYRUS. ASE E CANTHARO IN GEFENI POCTUM NIL UNUM TENDIT LACRIMOSA S. BACCHICAE CHORIS STATI ET SUGA
 FACTUS ALIAT LI ANTIACITUTE. A. UNOR VOLITAT CYTH FLORIBUS SEP VEXILLA BU'NO EXCITAT. SATYRAS ENCIUS NIGRUM LITTONIT. FORMA QUATIT APPI CRUS IN NIMORIAN
 TANTHEI DISCEP II BACCHUS ASE CERYR DUCITUS EST. A. CANTHARIS CITH ESTI TITANUM VINO INCIANTANT ACERATRACTIT. LLELLI ENT

Chorus of Bacchic women, with the god Dionysus in the chariot, from the Bacchic sarcophagus at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

Pietro Bartoli and Giovanni Bellori

1. Drawing after the Bacchic sarcophagus (front left) at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome by Pietro Bartoli and Giovanni Bellori (1693).

Plutarch (c. 46–120 CE), who was himself initiated into the Dionysian Mysteries³, describes the transformative — hence destructive and re-creative — power of Dionysus:

We hear from the theologians, both prose writers and poets, that the god is by nature indestructible and eternal, he undergoes transformations in his being . . . When the god is changed and distributed into the winds, water, earth, stars, plants, and animals, they describe this experience and transformation allegorically by the terms 'rending' and 'dismemberment'. They apply to him the names Dionysus, Zagreus, Nyctelius, Isodaites, and they construct allegorical myths in which the transformations that have been described are represented as death and destruction followed by restoration to life and rebirth.⁴

The Romantic dramatist Christian Grabbe (1801–1836), recalls ancient Dionysiac rites of fragmentation — the act of frenzied *sparagmos* ("tearing apart" or "rending"): "There was a god, but he was dismembered — we are the pieces".⁵ Dionysus is, however, not only associated with dismemberment, but also with states of disencumberment. To this end the Renaissance humanist Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), writes in the preface to *Mystical Theology* by Dionysius the Areopagite:

The spirit of the God Dionysus was believed by ancient theologians and Platonists to be the ecstasy and abandon of disencumbered minds, when partly by innate love, partly at the instigation of the god, they transgress the natural limits of intelligence and are miraculously transformed into the beloved god himself: where, inebriated by a certain new draught of nectar and by an immeasurable joy, they rage, as it were, in a Bacchic frenzy.⁶

Thus the Græcian Dionysus is identified with the Roman Bacchus through a mutual association with the intoxicating influence of wine. The Neo-Platonists, like Ficino, furthermore distinguish further between two states of altered consciousness resulting from drunkenness.



2. Drawing after the Bacchic sarcophagus (front right) at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome by Pietro Bartoli and Giovanni Bellori (1693).

But drive far off the barb'rous dissonance
of Bacchus and his revellers.⁷

Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and harpstring of gold,
A bitter God to follow, a beautiful God to behold?⁸



3. Amico Aspertini, *Bacchic Triumphal Procession* (c.1500).

4. Raphael, *Apollo and Marsyas*, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican.
(Quotations from Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Swinburne's *Hymn to Proserpine*).

According to the doctrine of Neo-Platonic philosophy, I propose that the former state of *divine madness* or *ecstasy* be linked with Dionysus, whereas the latter state of *vulgar* or *riotous excess* be linked to Bacchus.⁹ Following James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (c. 1912) and Juan Cirlot's *A Dictionary of Symbols* (1962), we may claim that Dionysus, while analogous with Zagreus of Thrace and Bacchus of Rome, is also associated with animals (including husbandry), agriculture (including harvesting) and the cultivation of fruit trees (including viticulture). Hence he is linked to nature through vegetative rites. The vine, sacred to Dionysus, is an ambivalent symbol of fertility and sacrifice — ivy or vine leaves were used to adorn the seasonal cycle of Dionysian ceremonies. Camille Paglia points out that Dionysus is associated with fluids and liquids — blood, sap, milk, honey and, of course, wine (1991:30).¹⁰

The unambiguously masculine Apollo, analogous to Mithras of Persia and Helios of Greece, is associated with kings and rulers. He is hence linked to culture through the cult of the hero. The laurel, sacred to Apollo, symbolizes victory and honour: laurel leaves were used to weave festive crowns for triumphant conquerors returning from war (Cirlot 1978:181). Thus, according to the Delphic Mysteries, Apollo is the embodiment of an idealized, civilized *culture* — he personifies civilized *order*, whereas in the Orphic Mysteries, Dionysus embodies the continual, unpredictable manifestations and transformations of *nature* — he personifies primal, primitive *chaos*. For Nietzsche the antithesis between Apollo and Dionysus is a symbol, or metaphor, for the "extreme opposition" between order and chaos.

When modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them.¹²



5. This illustration is based on a reconstruction of an ancient Attic vase-painting showing Dionysus attended by satyrs in the *Cart of Thespiis*; a boat-shaped vehicle known as a *carrus navalis* or *carne vale*, from which comes the word "carnival". (Quotation from Plato's *Republic*).

Inspired by the "chaos of creation" the poets, actors, musicians, singers and dancers of the Hellenic world banded together into various artist's guilds, of which Dionysus was the leader. The literary critic and art historian, Ernst Fischer (1899–1972), suggests:

It was the purpose of music from the start to evoke collective emotions, to act as a stimulus for work, orgiastic gratification, or war. Music was a means of stunning or exciting the senses, of spell-binding or spurring to action; it served to put human beings into a different state, not to reflect the phenomena of the outward world . . . This power of music to produce collective emotions, to make people *emotionally equal* for a certain time, has been particularly useful to military and religious organizations. Of all the arts, music is the most apt to cloud the intelligence, to intoxicate, to create ecstatic obedience, or, indeed, a willingness to die (Fischer 1981:187).

For apparent reasons, Apollo displaced Dionysus and assumed patronage of the arts.¹¹ These artists acquired their craft through the sacred ceremonies of Dionysus which were, at first, performed in remote or secluded groves. Much later, the Dionysian rites of fertility and sacrifice also took place in the Apollonian temple or theatre. Jungian psychoanalyst Robert Johnson (b. 1921) explains: "It is to this celebration of Dionysus' death and rebirth that we owe the classical Greek theatre. The joyous celebration of his resurrection gave birth to comedy [called after the chanting Bacchic reveller, the *comoedus* or "singer"]; and the bemoaning of his death — the singing over the sacrifice of the symbolic goat, the *tragodia* or 'goat song' — became tragedy" (1989:15).¹³ In the country festivals to honour Dionysus-Bacchus the bands of revellers, or *comoi*, went about on foot or in carts, carrying the emblematic phallus and indulging in amusing ribaldry (Hartnoll 1971:11, 27). According to Aristotle, comedy originated from these phallic processions (Mendl 1957:21).

Apollo, god of light, is one of the first Olympian gods while Dionysus, god of ecstasy, is amongst the last to appear on Mount Olympus. Yet, from the early Classic to the late Hellenistic periods the Greeks held both in equal esteem, attributing *moral virtue* to Apollo and *erotic pleasure* to Dionysus. According to Yehudi Menuhin:

The Greeks believed absolutely that the beautiful and the good are indivisible. They had a single word for both: *Kalokagathia* (*kalos*, meaning beautiful and *agathos*, meaning good). Moral precepts paid tribute to aesthetic principles. The effort to cultivate a high Apollonian moral purpose was tempered by that other equally potent aspect of man represented by the Dionysian rites. The Greeks abandoned themselves to ecstatic, intoxicating urges, for, like all of us, they had two souls: the one striving for clarity, temperance and moderation, the other for the ecstatic and the orgiastic (1979:37).

Art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968), like Nietzsche, attributes pathos and movement to Dionysus, beauty and moderation with Apollo. “But”, he adds, “in Greek art these principles are neither inimical nor even divisible; they are united ‘through a miracle of the Hellenic will’. In it there is neither beauty without movement nor pathos without moderation” (1983:312). Subsequently, Panofsky proposes that Bacchus and Apollo embody distinctive characteristics common to a single deity. Charles Dempsey takes this statement further:

This god is no simple deity, but a fusion of two of the most prominent gods of the Græco-Roman pantheon, Bacchus and Apollo. More properly speaking, he is a compound of the spiritual characteristics of Bacchus and Apollo, a *numen mixtum*, in which the spiritual essence of the two major gods are conjoined (1966:224).

The Romans, I submit, separated Apollo from Dionysus and thereby reinforced an assumed duality between order and chaos, moderation and transgression, austerity and ecstasy. I believe that the cult of Apollo promotes, at best, moderate or reasonable acts of *reform* whereas the rites of Dionysus promote ecstatic or irrational acts of *revolt*. At worst Apollonian reform becomes a foil for the tyranny behind *autocracy* and *authoritarianism* while Dionysian revolt becomes the veil for the madness behind *anarchy* and *rebellion*. However, when monotheism replaces polytheism, or as Apollonian adoration displaces Dionysian celebration, commandments affirming moral virtue triumph over the traditions celebrating erotic pleasure. Johnson explores the loss of this Dionysian tradition in his book *Ecstasy* (1987):

How did we lose Dionysus? Psychologically, the story of his loss is the triumph of rationality over irrationality; thinking over feeling; the concrete ‘masculine’ ideals of power, aggression, and progress over the intangible ‘feminine’ values of receptivity, growth, and nurturing. As the patriarchal religions gained in power, the old matrifocal ways of Dionysus were diminished and finally lost . . . In his place the Romans elevated Apollo, the god of light, who had at one time been honoured equally with Dionysus at Delphi. Apollo gradually came to represent analytical thought and the preservation of law and order. The unpredictable, irrational, ecstatic Dionysus had no place in this scheme — was, in fact, the enemy of it (1989:15).

Johnson explains how the animosity between Apollonians and Dionysians reached a climax when, around 186 CE, the Romans began persecuting the worshippers of the Dionysian Mysteries and perverting the related sacrificial and purification rites associated with pagan nature. The Romans no longer regarded Dionysus-Bacchus as a god of wine who induced ecstasy, but as a god of drunkenness who produced madness. With this the Roman senate finally banned the Bacchanalian orgies — previously the phallic processions of Dionysus, while the adoration of Apollo — after assimilating Mithraism — dominated all other cults in the Roman Empire.¹⁴ Like the Romans, both Jews and Christians also subverted Dionysus as his rites retain aspects of the Great Mother Goddess cult.¹⁵ Johnson also observes: “The original Dionysian worshippers were the dæmonic Maenads. These wild women of the mountains were the last devotees of the Great Goddess, the ancient matrifocal religion (earth-god) that the new patriarchal religion (sky-god) was beginning to replace” (Johnson 1989:34). According to Mircea Eliade, the Mother Goddess is also known as “The Goddess of the Vine”,¹⁶ and hence primitive fertility magic was assimilated into the rites of Dionysus. According to Paglia (1991:25).



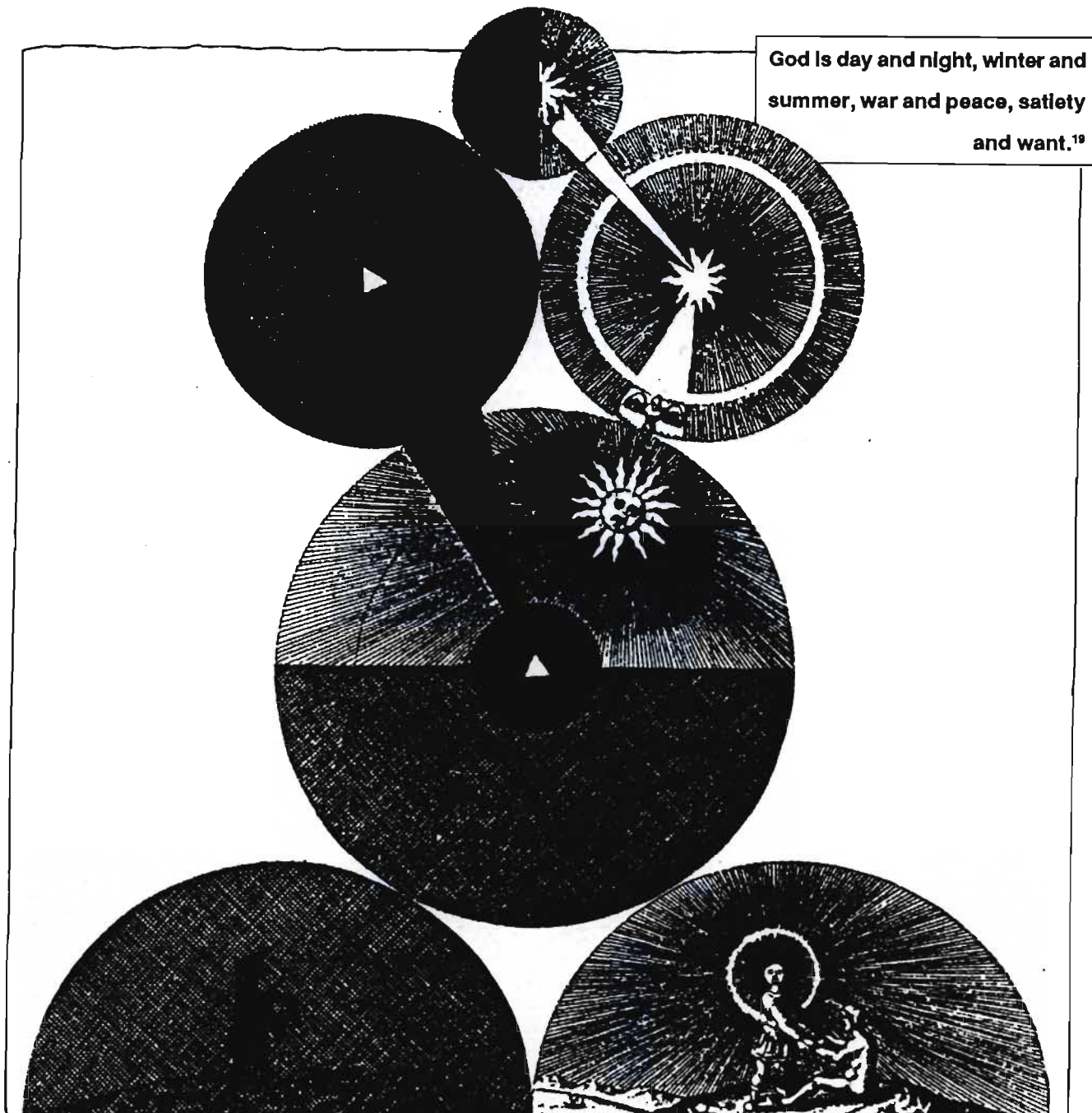
Christianity was a development of Dionysian mystery religion which paradoxically tried to suppress nature in favour of a transcendental other world.¹⁷



6. Renaissance and Victorian depictions of Dionysus (along with the Maenads, Silenus, Pan and others) associate the deity with the devil.

Furthermore, Judaism and Christianity transformed the image of the goat — a manifestation of the Dionysian-Bacchanalian satyr — into a symbol of the devil (or “scapegoat”).¹⁸ According to Jung: “The Church has the doctrine of the devil, of an evil principle, whom we like to imagine complete with cloven hoofs, horns, and tail, half man, half beast, a chthonic deity apparently escaped from the rout of Dionysus” (1974:233). According to Paglia again: “Christianity turned the dæmonic into the demonic. The Greek dæmons were not evil — or rather they were both good and evil, like nature itself, in which they dwelled” (1991:4).

On the other hand, Mithras-Apollo; the sun-god, is transformed into the image of a solar Christ (Panofsky 1983:303). The Apollonian deity belongs to the sky above and is associated with light and day, the Dionysian dæmon/demon to the world below and with darkness and night. This reinforces the belief that even God has a dual nature. Alan Watts, in *The Two Hands of God* (1963), shows how *explicit opposition conceals implicit unity* (1969:15–17, 134–169).



7. Frontispiece engraving for Robert Fludd's *De Philosophia Moysalca* (1638).

The esoteric philosophy of Christianity, which retains knowledge of the ancient Mysteries, sees darkness and night as the *occult*, or the Dionysian aspect of God while light and day is seen as being the *manifest*, or the Apollonian aspect of God. According to David Maclagan's *Creation Myths* (1977), the bottom hemispheres in this alchemical engraving depict Night and Day in which, respectively, "God is Dionysian, the source of severity, punishment" and "God is Apollonian, the source of beauty, harmony" (Maclagan 1977:17). We shall now explore the Apollonian-Dionysian duality in relation to a Nietzschean philosophy and aesthetics of art.



8. (Apollonian) light pushes back (Dionysian) darkness. Soviet poster (1965) designed by Vilen Karakashev.

CHAPTER FOUR

4

PHILOSOPHY AND AESTHETICS

Nietzsche's philosophical explorations revise traditional notions of a hierarchical duality in western methodologies and discourses. Degenaar's critical paper on constructing and deconstructing theories of art, *Writing and re-writing* (1987), offers the following:

Traditional binary oppositions in western thinking are the following: speech/writing, truth/fiction, male/female, conscious/unconscious, literal/metaphorical, signified/signifier, presence/absence, reality/appearance. These hierarchical oppositions in which the first term is given priority over the second term are said to be at the heart of logocentrism which describes the nature of western thinking. However, thinkers such as Nietzsche and Freud have revolutionized thinking by radically questioning the validity of these hierarchies. Nietzsche prefers Dionysus to Apollo, emotion and will to reason, proclaiming that we need chaos, not cosmos, to give birth to a dancing star (1987:7).¹

Both Nietzsche and Freud reverse the properties, giving preference to the 'negative' rather than the 'positive' aspect of each duality.² Art historian Herlo van Rensburg, in several rigorous studies of the Nietzschean aesthetic in art, asserts that the Dionysian experience of destruction and recreation (as a state of chaos) finds expression by disrupting or displacing the Apollonian illusion of structure and order (as cosmos). For instance:

Nietzsche does not so much denounce Apollonian thought, but attempts to re-affirm the exigency of Dionysian nature. He insists on the destructive and re-creative nature of the Dionysian-Apollo [sic] relation. It requires that thought is never to be codified into 'truths', systems of logic, or the structures of reason. Consequently he opposes all cultural structures which uphold the codification of Apollonian illusions, such as science, or religious and political dogma. Furthermore, Nietzsche asserts the multi-layered dimensions of reality which can never be commensurated by any system of thought or rational augury (1989:389).

As a poet and philosopher, Nietzsche expounds his earlier ideas on the duality between Apollo and Dionysus in his famous treatise, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). However, art critic Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829) and the aesthetic philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), already anticipated Nietzsche's reconstruction of Dionysian *Rausch* (as a state of ecstatic awe or frenzied rapture). Schopenhauer describes the tremendous awe which seizes humans when they suddenly begin to doubt the cognitive modes of experience (1962:27). If we add to this awe the glorious transport which arises in man, even from the very depths of nature, as the shattering of the *principium individuationis*, only then can we apprehend the essence of Dionysiac rapture (*Rausch*) as expounded by Nietzsche. Both Schlegel and Schopenhauer emphasize the non-rational aspects of existence and the primacy of the *Will*. Schopenhauer insists that the latter, the "will-to-live", is the driving force behind human nature.

Through the artist mankind becomes an individual and the world one world.³

This intellectual faculty came into being in order to perform the service of the will.⁴



1. Friedrich von Schlegel (cited by Wiedmann 1979:7), Arthur Schopenhauer (1962:27), and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Schlegel seems to stress both the Apollonian striving for individuality and the Dionysian yearning for collective unity. As a Romantic, however, Schlegel is biased in favour of the “infinite unity” found in primeval or primitive cults of worship. “To become an artist”, he writes, “means nothing less than to dedicate oneself to the deities of the underworld”.⁵ The aesthetic philosopher, August Wiedmann, adds that artists tend to worship the dæmonic and destructive denizens who obey only Dionysus. Whereas Schopenhauer, profoundly influenced by Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, stresses how the operations of this insatiable, blind *Will* causes endless suffering which philosophers and artists can strive to overcome. “Schopenhauer and Nietzsche,” says Italian (surrealist) painter Giorgio de Chirico, “were the first to teach the deep significance of the senselessness of life, and to show how this [the blind, insatiable *Will*] could be transformed into art”.⁶ Considering the influence of Schlegel and Schopenhauer on Nietzsche, we can say that Dionysian worship engenders religious ecstasy. Nietzsche explains the meaning of *Rausch* in *The Twilight of the Idols* (1888):

The essential feature of *Rausch* is the feeling of increased strength and abundance . . . In this state a man enriches everything from out of his own abundance . . . He transfigures things until they reflect his power . . . This compulsion to transfigure into the beautiful is — Art.⁷

To this Van Rensburg adds that "Nietzsche's view of *Rausch* extends beyond the creative aspects of "Dionysian nature" to include the destructive aspects of the God Dionysus, thus implying a view of destruction and restoration as a central aspect of creativity" (1990:17); Quoting Nietzsche again, he continues:

The word "Dionysian" means . . . an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life as that which remains the same, just as powerful, just as blissful, through all change; the great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence, the feeling of the necessary unity of creation and destruction (1990:17).

Elsewhere, Van Rensburg continues:

The Dionysian sphere is related to *Ur-eines*, a mythological image of the primordial oneness with nature. Dionysus is associated with passion, *Rausch* (ecstasy) and the creative enthusiasm of the erotic drive. Yet the Dionysian is necessarily formless and needs to constitute itself in the Apollonian dream world of communicable reflections and artistic inventions "The primitive text of nature", the French philosopher Jean Granier observes, "is thus the chaotic being that manifests itself as a significant process". The serene world of Apollo is a necessary veil of order, structure and artifact drawn over the Dionysian substratum. In order to prevent Apollonian illusion from being codified into 'truth' and 'ideals' by tradition, convention, and abstraction, Nietzsche requires a cyclical relation of destruction and re-creation between the base nature of the Dionysian sphere of metamorphoses and the Apollonian sphere of thought and reflection. Above all, the Dionysian intervention in the illusionary world of Apollonian form aims to reveal the corporeal-physical base, formulated by [German philosopher] Martin Heidegger as "the living nature of man in which artistic doing and observing occur, as it were, in conformity with a confinement to nature".⁸



2. "The Bird Dance". A mythological image of the primordial oneness with nature (*Ur-eines*) and the ecstatic passion for life (*Rausch*). After a Greek black figure vase painting from the sixth century BCE.

Nietzsche's construct of *Ur-eines* later develops into a more ambivalent, and therefore much more complex, concept of the *eternal return* (as the recurrence of the same through all change). Van Rensburg again:

Nietzsche's concept of the "eternal return" is a concept of the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular course of all things, a concept which refers back to traditional images of wisdom. Although strikingly similar to many aspects of mystic thought and metaphysical philosophy, Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return, as an attitude to life, is also an ecstatic repudiation of any depreciation of the moment or of direct experience (1990:18).

Now let us review the Nietzschean reconstruction of Apollonian and Dionysian metaphors:

Apollonian traces are manifest most visibly in the art of sculpture and architecture . . .

(i.e. in form and structure).

Dionysian traces are manifest most audibly in the art of music and dance . . .

(i.e. in sound and movement).

Wilson Knight proposes: "The Apollonian is the ideal, forms of visionary beauty that can be seen, *sight* rather than *sound*, intellectually clear to us" (1967:268). For Paglia (1991:98), Apollo *freezes* our perception while Dionysus *moves* us to experience the world anew.

Through the mask of Apollo we speak the mediated language of the individual intellect.

It is the voice of reason and rational articulation which seeks expression through form and appearances.

Through the mask of Dionysus-Bacchus we speak the immediate language of the collective will.

It is the voice of emotion and ecstatic intoxication which seeks expression through content and substance.



3. After a Picasso etching depicting the mask of a bull and a faun, two traditional metaphors for Dionysus (1934).

As mentioned in the Preface, the reconciliation of the Dionysiac and the Apollonic sensibilities can constitute an affirmative and transfigurative art form, namely *tragic art*. For Nietzsche, such artistic creation empowers us by transforming our consciousness. Thus the ancient Aristotelian form of tragedy is reappraised by the modern Nietzschean sense of *tragic art*.

According to Aristotle, art is an imitation of reality that tempers life through catharsis.

According to Nietzsche, art is an illusion of reality that transforms life through creativity.

Tragedy is an imitation of a worthy action complete in itself . . . which by means of pity and fear achieves the catharsis of emotions of that kind.⁹

. . . tragic and comic catharsis are one.¹⁰

Tragic art is not merely an imitation of the reality of nature but rather a metaphysical supplement placed beside reality for its overcoming . . . art makes life worth living and prompts the desire to live on in order to experience the next moment.¹¹



4. Aristotle (quoted from *Poetics*), Plato (quoted from *The Symposium*), and Nietzsche (quoted from *The Birth of Tragedy*).

According to Paglia, comedy is born of the clash between Dionysus and Apollo (1991:6).

Degenaar, in his lucid and succinct critique of Nietzsche's discovery of the psychological dimension in philosophy, says that the affirmation of happiness in Dionysian art "requires mystical *unity* with the creative power beyond individuality" (1986a:4) while the transfiguration of suffering in Apollonian art "opposes both the negation of the individual and the negation of the phenomenon of the world" so that order may be established (1986a:5). According to the Dionysian and Apollonian mysteries, the former achieves *unity through sacrifice* (animals are torn to pieces in Dionysian rites) whereas the latter achieves *order through victory* (Apollo slays the serpent-dragon). When we reconcile Apollo with Dionysus our human condition is transfigured into "images of life" (Nietzsche) through which are reflected *both* the Apollonian individuation involved in being human, and the Dionysian suffering caused by the collective fate of humanity. In *tragic art* we neither lose ourselves in the flow of life, nor do we distance ourselves from it. According to Degenaar again:

Tragic art succeeds in depicting the individual life as individual *human* existence. In tragedy we do not merely meet dramatic characters. We are confronted by the human condition. Tragedy transforms the life of an individual into human reality which is not only seen to be presented on stage but which is also recognized as being our own. The transfiguration in tragedy causes a transformation in our own consciousness (1986a:10).

Dionysus speaks through Apollo
and Apollo through Dionysus.¹²



When the Dionysian and Apollonian impulses are reconciled in *tragic art*, then we may say with Nietzsche that in *tragic art* Dionysus speaks with the voice of Apollo, and Apollo with the voice of Dionysus.

So *tragic art* reveals to us that we are the creators of symbolic images through which the realities of our life can be given significance continuously: "*Tragic art* provides us with a way of apprehending this reality that enables us to come to terms with it — and not only to endure, but also to affirm what we thereby see, as we thereby learn to see it" (Schacht 1977:300).

Let us now explore the Apollonian and Dionysian duality in western art and culture — leading toward the Apollonic and Dionysiac sensibilities which inform (however unconsciously) the work of some artists.

5. Johan Degenaar (1986:4) speaks through Nietzschean mask.

CHAPTER FIVE

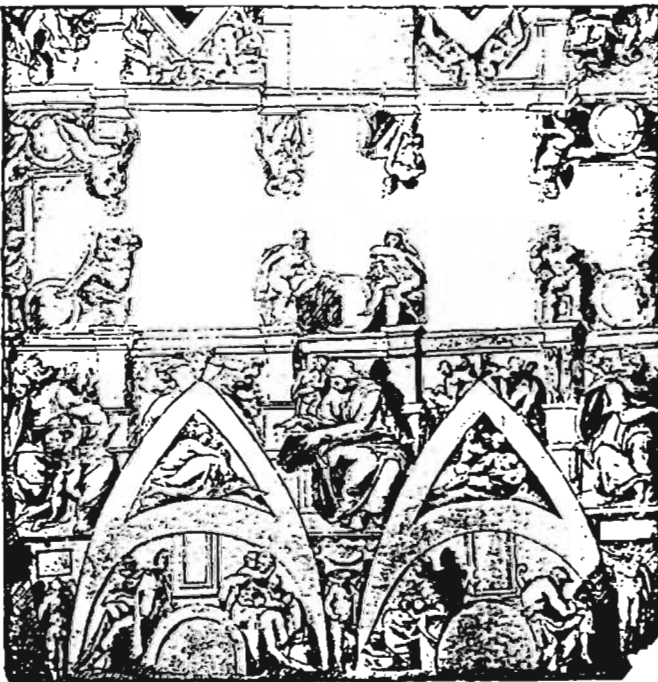
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ART AND CULTURE

As we have seen in Chapters 3 (mythology and history) and 4 (philosophy and aesthetics) the Apollonian-Dionysian duality represents a mythopoetic, symbolic relationship between order and chaos. On the one hand we perceive ourselves to be rational, analytical beings with a structured consciousness while on the other we seem to be passionate, emotional and receptive beings with an unconscious mind that determines our 'lust-for-life' or 'our will-to-live'. The Apollonic sensibility enables us to distance ourselves (by means of reason) from the chaos of life while the Dionysiac sensibility enables us to lose ourselves (by means of the senses) in the flow of each and every lived moment.¹

We shall now look at manifestations of this split (between reason and the senses) in western culture after the 'crisis' of the Renaissance. Estelle Marais relates (Apollonian) logic and (Dionysian) emotion to Neo-classicism and Romanticism respectively:

In the Greek separation of the cults of Apollo and Dionysus, recognition was given to two almost conflicting spiritual worlds, yet both basically creative. This division between the Apollonian and Dionysian started a split that ran through the dawn of western thinking into the aesthetic spirit of our own times . . . Thus there was, on the one hand, the logical [or reason]: the passion for harmony and balance, for linear perfection and the underlying force of superb draughtsmanship of the [Neo-]classical movement. On the other hand the intensity of emotion [or the senses]: supremacy of the imagination using the tools of colour, dramatic movement and tonal contrasts to give form to it in terms of the Romantic 'spirit'.²



1. Detail from Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling cartoon (c. 1512).



2. Detail from Michelangelo's Sistine wall cartoon (c. 1541).

Marais suggests that Michelangelo Buonarroti's (1475–1564) frescoes on the ceiling and wall of the Sistine Chapel are the respective precursors of Neo-classicism and Romanticism.

It was after the Renaissance in Europe that these two trends emerged in the form of Neo-classicism and Romanticism. Marais adds: "The two, equally impassioned approaches reached their peak in the nineteenth century in the work of two opposing creative forces of the time: Ingres and Delacroix, whose antagonism reached mythical proportions" (1987:2).



3. "Dual to the death between M.Ingres, the Thiers of line; and M.Delacroix, the Proudhon of colour". *Journal pourrire* (1849). (Both Ingres and Delacroix cited by Murray & Murray 1976:231).

This antagonism, exceedingly exaggerated by contemporary critics, was based on the unsettled dispute over form. Arguments in the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* raged on between aesthetic preferences for line or colour as the more 'honest' medium for rendering form. But, as Walter Pach notes, "even the idea of form was sensed in a confused way" (1939:242).

Thus Neo-classicism was defined as a school of art, or class of artists, preoccupied with the use of *line* whereas Romanticism was obsessed with *colour*. According to René Huyghe, member of the *Académie Française*: "Reactionaries versus revolutionaries, draftsmen versus colourists, [Neo-]classicists versus Romantics — contemporary opinion was determined to reduce everything to this simplification" (1963:233). However, the Catholic debate between colour and line goes back to the imitators of Titian Vecellio (1488–1576) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) or, on the other hand, Raphael Sanzio (1483–1520) and Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). The Rubenistes and Poussinistes were equally engaged in violent argument, known as the 'Quarrel of Colour and Design'⁵ which, cunningly, was used by the latter to promote French patriotism. Charles Lebrun, the virtual dictator of the arts in France under King Louis XIV, officially settled the matter: "The function of colour is to satisfy the eyes [or the senses], whereas drawing satisfies the mind [or reason]".⁶

Once more we find a recurrent manifestation of distinct and yet inseparable sensibilities: the duality between reason/senses, logic/emotion or thought/feeling. Within European Christianity a similar split occurs; Protestant ritual is dogmatic, Catholic ritual is ecstatic and erotic. The Catholic church still retains traces of the sensual (erotic) pleasure of a pagan past — of ancient chthonian mysteries while the Protestant church negates sensual pleasure and imposes moral virtue. Protestantism is Apollonian, Catholicism Dionysian.

The work of Neo-classicist Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) and Romantic Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) exemplify the Apollonic and Dionysiac sensibilities in the art of this



4. Details from David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1784) and Delacroix's *Liberty leading the People* (1830), oil on canvas. These two paintings depict contrasting scenes of heroic sacrifice and victory.

period. Let us turn to two examples by way of the following details. Victory is depicted as the pre-Homeric Amazon with one breast bared. (The Amazon allegedly cut off their right breast to draw the bowstring.) The legendary battle between the Greeks and the Amazons symbolized the struggle of civilization against barbarism (Paglia 1991:77).

David's rational portrayal of sacrifice is expressed through compositional balance and linear exactitude — giving credence to the ideals of Roman republicanism of the past. Paradoxically, the very notion of paralleling current historical conditions with a world far distant, i.e. Rome, is a decidedly Romantic one. This Neo-classical work looks backwards. It is a statement proclaiming an atavistic political *order achieved through reformation*. Delacroix's emotive portrayal of victory is expressed through contrasting colours and dramatic movement — giving credence to the ideals of French socialism for the future. This Romantic work looks forwards. It proclaims a new social *unity achieved through revolution*.

I found myself, and still find myself, in a strange situation. Most of those who have taken my side were, in general, merely taking their own . . . and using me as a flag. They have enlisted me, whether I would or no, in the Romantic coterie.⁷

Many art historians have shown that Jean Auguste Ingres (1780–1867), more so than his teacher David, was as much a Romantic as Delacroix was a Neo-classicist. However, neither belonged exclusively to one ‘category’ of art. Huyghe affirms that Delacroix “hated to be saluted as a flag of Romanticism, and his retort was: ‘I am a pure Classicist’ ” (1963:234). But, the French writer, Charles Baudelaire, said of him: “Eugène Delacroix never lost the traces of his revolutionary origin” (Fischer 1981:74).



5. Eugène Delacroix (cited by Huyghe 1963:233).

Thus, as Nietzsche has made clear, the Dionysian voice speaks through Apollo and the Apollonian through the mask of Dionysus. Hence we find sacrificial acts of Dionysus in Apollonian art and victorious actions of Apollo in Dionysian art. Or, as Panofsky says: “The Apollonian is Dionysian *in potentia* while the Dionysian is Apollonian *in actu*” (1983:312). Restated, it represents the potentiality of sacrifice and the actuality of victory. The late scholar of mythology, Joseph Campbell (1904–1987), adds:

Let me recall at this point Nietzsche’s statements regarding Classic [rather Neo-classical] and Romantic art. He identified two types or orders of each. There is the Romanticism of true power that shatters contemporary forms to go beyond these to new forms; and there is, on the other hand, the Romanticism that is unable to achieve form at all, and so smashes and disparages out of resentment. And with respect to Classicism likewise, there is the [Neo-]classicism that finds an achievement of the recognized forms easy and can play with them at will, expressing through them its own creative aims in a rich and vital way; and there is the [Neo-]classicism that clings to form desperately out of weakness, dry and hard, authoritarian and cold.

According to Plutarch, the Greek artists attributed to Dionysus “variability”, “playfulness, wantonness, and frenzy” but to Apollo “uniformity, orderliness, and unadulterated seriousness”.⁸ The Dionysian sensibility uses dæmonic energy to create, to improvise, to metamorphize. It is an enthusiastic celebration of life’s awesome vitality. August Wiedmann’s philosophical treatise on *Romantic and Modern Art* (1979) considers the implications behind such Dionysian vitalism:

The Romantics' craving for unity carried over into the social sphere and into their reading of history. Their attitude was marked by a deep communal sense and a strong tendency towards collectivism. While affirming the variety and differences between peoples and nations, they foresaw a world community which would join all societies into one single whole, a community based on and ruled by the common ideals of love and the brotherhood of man . . . This cult of love in Romanticism must not be confused with a state of langour and the vapours. It was quite compatible with a worship of force, with a Dionysian celebration of life which harboured within itself tremendous potentials of energy — often subversive energies (1979:5, 8).

On the other hand, the Apollonian glorification of life harbours within itself a force that controls and directs Dionysian energy for its own political legitimacy. Art theorists have traced these two cultural currents through recurrent cycles in recent western art history. Newspaper columnist Paul Fechter, who applied the term *Expressionism* in 1914, proposed that after the Renaissance and Baroque, followed by Neo-classicism and Romanticism, the modern equivalents can be seen as Impressionism and Expressionism respectively. He sees the expressionist creative impulse as “responsive to the *zeitgeist*, rather than to the individual artist”.⁹ For Fechter, like Schlegel, the duality between “individuality” and “communality” is repeated once again. In addition, Wiedmann’s aesthetics endorses the communal “quest for unity” among both Romantics and Expressionists:

In Expressionism we are again face to face with the Romantics' ecstatic striving for fusion with all creation. Once more a restless desire for union and communion with the inward existence of the world consumed artist and poet. A longing to transcend fragmentary experience and attain a vision of the whole was at the very root of the Expressionist movement. The Expressionist's desire was not merely to express reality in aesthetic terms. His overriding aim was to restore the essential unity between man and nature, to recapture an experience of the world that went far beyond the visual toward a cosmic feeling with deep religious overtones. Expressionist art and literature were permeated by this titanic striving for wholeness (1979:21).



As already stated in the Introduction, I regard this ecstatic striving for fusion and the restless desire for union as a typical re-enactment of the Dionysian myth.

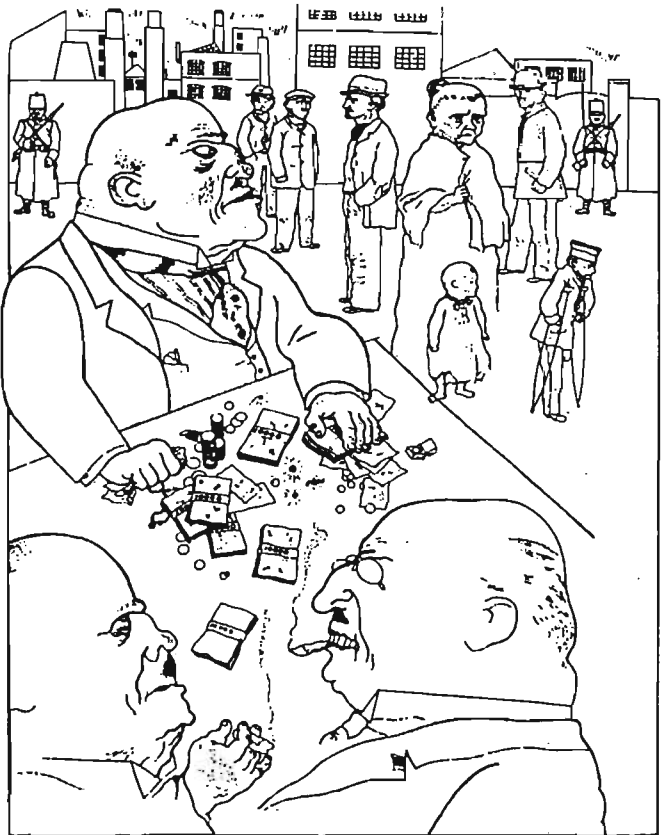
The Expressionists enter the myth of Dionysus, not only through their longing to restore unity or wholeness, but also through acts of rebellion and protestation directed against divisive state control. For instance, Expressionists like Max Beckmann (1884–1950) and George Grosz (1893–1959), satirize

As always in such circumstances it was thought that re-establishing order would provide a solution. But order re-established with violence carries a hidden danger: In Germany, that danger was Nazism.¹⁰

socio-political values in Germany. Both depict grim and grotesque individuals in a politically corrupt and decadent society where human alienation results in unspeakable suffering and despair. Or, more specifically, they revolt against the terrifying tyranny of an authoritative bureaucracy in Germany during the 1920s as the Dadaists and Surrealists were subsequently to oppose the emerging threat of fascism as represented by Hitler, Mussolini and Franco in the 1930s.

But, according to Johnson:

The negative Dionysus [where subversive energies are controlled and directed by the Apollonian craving for order] has perhaps nowhere been as destructive as it was when expressed as the Nazism of the 1930s and 1940s in Germany (1989:51).



6. George Grosz, *The Owners*. Frontispiece for *Die Pliete* (1920).

Van Rensburg adds that the concept of Dionysian *Rausch* was used, particularly by the philosopher Georges Bataille (1897–1962) and artist André Masson (1896–1987), in an attempt to counter the ascending military sovereignty of fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain (1989:394). To this end Bataille inserts himself within the vicious debate surrounding the fascist (mis-)appropriation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and *Rausch*, trying to keep Nietzsche's aesthetic concept of destruction and recreation separate from the fascist's ideological concept of violence, as well as trying to differentiate between Nietzschean "primitivism" and fascism's "idealism": "Bataille's explorations of Nietzsche's Dionysus, and the violence of the Dionysian aesthetic of destruction and re-creation, reflects an essential influence on, and interaction with, central aspects of French art in the 1930s" (Van Rensburg 1989:395). Furthermore, Van Rensburg's study of *The image of Dionysus in French art of the 1930s* (1991) examines the influence of ancient Minoan myths — resulting from the rediscovery of Knossos at that time — on the philosophical and aesthetic milieu in France:

These myths were adapted by, amongst others, Freud and Jung as vehicles for some of the characteristics of their theories of the psyche. The Surrealist interest in the unconscious, also concurred with an interest in Nietzsche's Dionysian view of art that became a foundation for the Surrealist aesthetic of destruction and recreation.¹¹

Van Rensburg also shows how the myths of Dionysus and the Minotaur merge in the aesthetic sensibility of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), particularly his *Vollard Suite* (1933–1937):

At various times in his writings, Nietzsche also calls the styled ambiguity of his work and his language an attempt at masking, a play with appearances, the denial of the principle of identity, and indeed, the basis of his Dionysian view of art. Dionysus is the god of transformations, of ambivalence, and the god of the mask, a significant image in the *Vollard Suite*. Nietzsche's Dionysus, eventually, constitutes himself in the ambivalent sphere of illusion and appearance. Picasso, through the influence of Bataille, presents a Dionysian view of art that is both complex and sophisticated (1991:20).



7. Pablo Picasso, detail showing Dionysus with mask (1934).

8. Pablo Picasso, *Bacchanal with Minotaur* (1933), etching.

With reference to the Nietzschean aesthetic in Picasso's work of this time, Van Rensburg adds:

The most familiar aspect of Nietzsche's view of art is the identification of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles. Commentators often associate Apollo with the rational world of thought, and Dionysus with the vital forces of the preconscious or unconscious. In terms of art, this point of view is associated with "Apollonian form or appearance (and) Dionysian content or substance".¹²

Since then, the metaphors of Apollonian autocracy and Dionysian dissent continue to find expression throughout Modernism and Post-modernism. This is not to say artists need be conscious of these sensibilities in their work, rather the imagination draws unconsciously upon such myths and metaphors. In South Africa, a striking depiction of political corruption, social decadence and human alienation is to be found in the work of William Kentridge (b. 1955). His drawing (and filmmaking) exemplifies the expressionist reaction to cultural decay as social structures disintegrate, and a response to dislocated individuals desperately trying to conserve an old order in society. Neville Dubow links this drawing with German Expressionism. In his article, *Art of Protest* (1986), Dubow looks at the similarities between the Weimar Republic of Germany and the Republic of South Africa:

There are strong echoes of Central European angst to work like his *Conservationist's Ball*. His work has affinities with the contemporary Neo-expressionist German school, and they, like he, are heavily in debt to Weimar (1986:65).



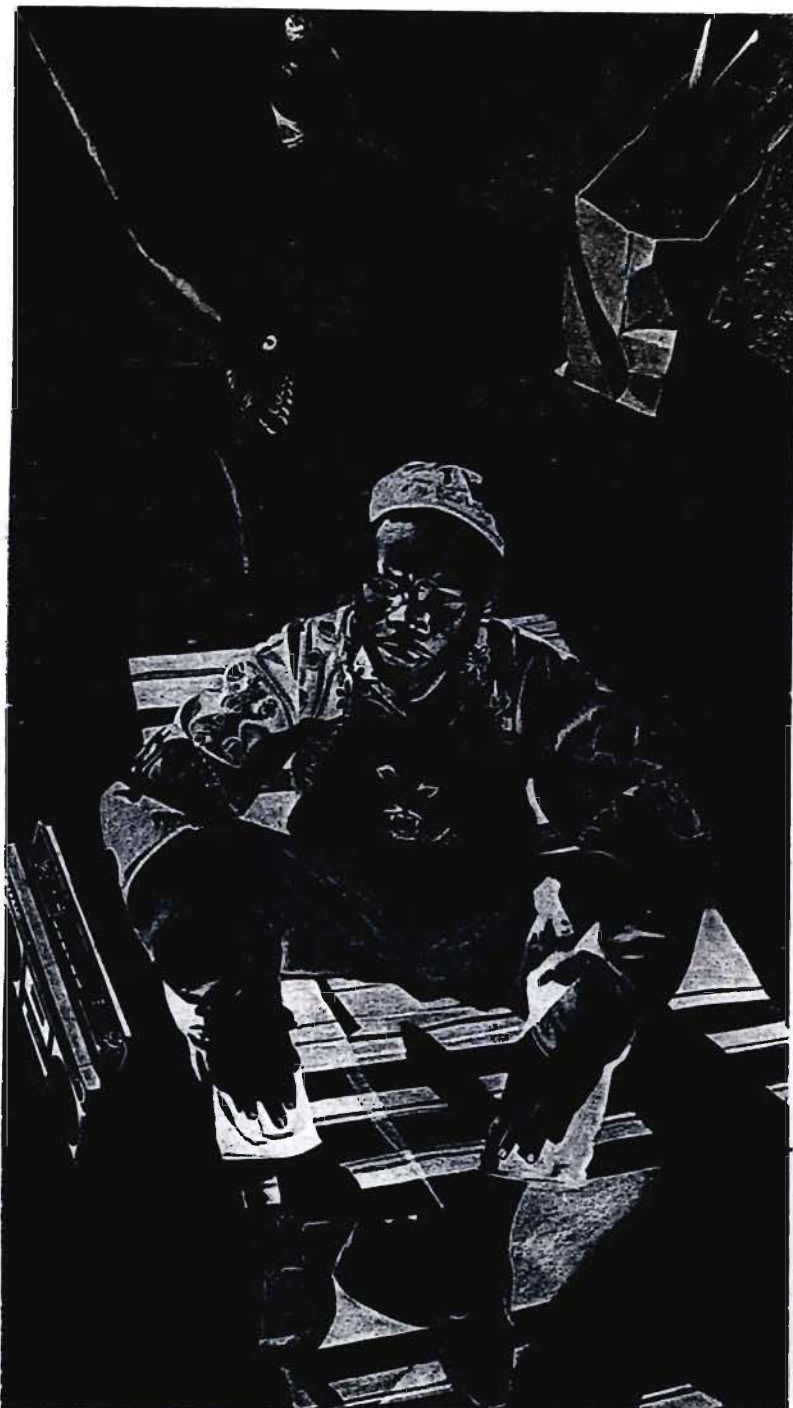
Examples of the Dionysian sensibility in contemporary South African art.

14. (top) Billy Mandindi, *Cape of Storms* (1988), linocut.

16. (below) Philippa Hobbs, *Skaapbrand played knick knack on my jolligheid*, detail from diptych (1991), woodcut.

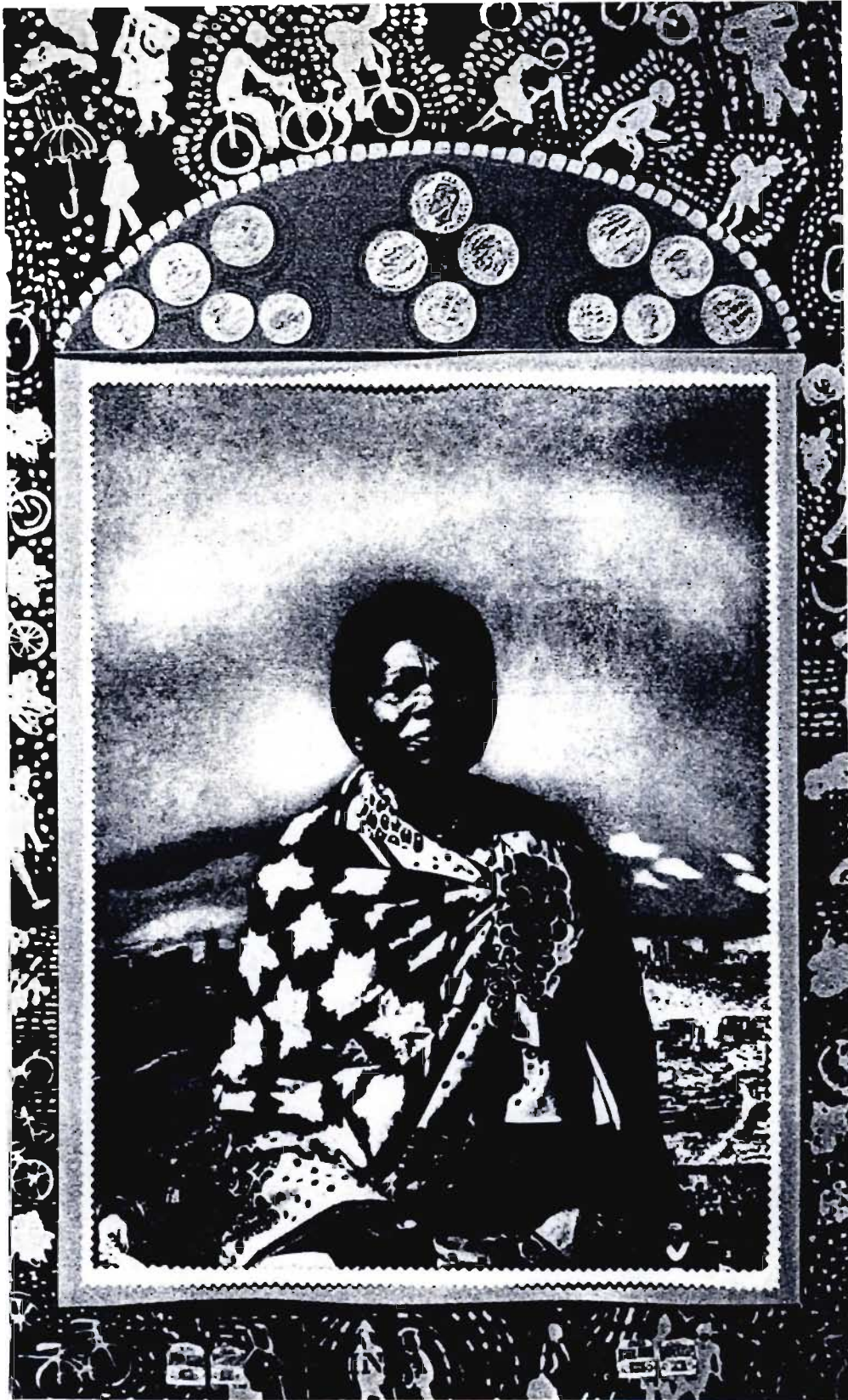
15. (top) Clive van den Berg, *Old Hero* (1990), oil on canvas.

17. (below) Hendrik Stroebel, *Red Roses for a Blue Lady* (undated), earthenware.



Examples of *tragic art* in South Africa show how the Apollonian-Dionysian sensibilities may be reconciled and articulated in unison.

18 and 19. Nietzsche's notion of *tragic art* represents, by way of irony or paradox, both Apollonian individualism and collective Dionysian suffering. Keith Dietrich, *Daniel Malakamma Became Tired of Listening to 'His Master's Voice'* (1987), chalk pastel on paper; Elliot Malekutu with *Bicycle, Bucket and Bananas* (c. 1990), chalk pastel on paper.



Another example of the Apollonian-Dionysian sensibilities (reconciled) in contemporary South African art.

20. *Tragic art* enables us to endure and affirm the realities of our own human condition through the experiences of others. It allows us to come to terms with our own life and thereby to live on to experience the next moment. Sue Williamson, *Virginia Mngoma* (c. 1986), etching screenprint.

CHAPTER SIX

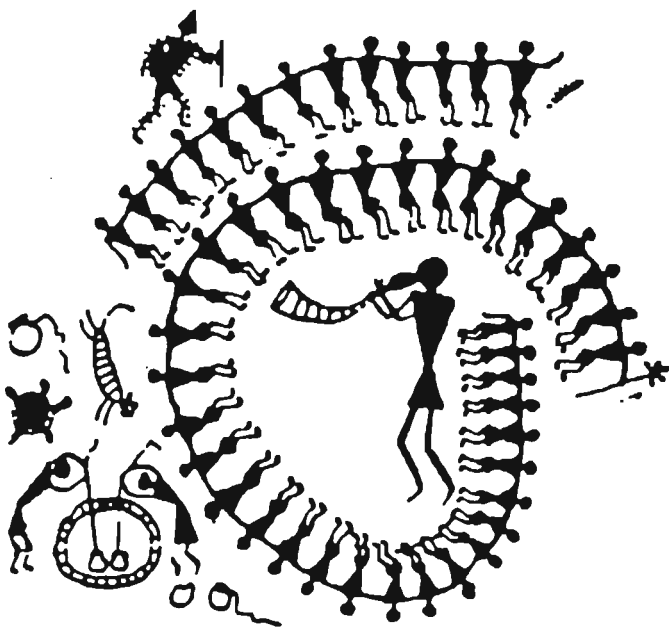
6

SOCIETY AND POLITICS

... our world is one whole.¹



1. Jackson Hlungwani, *Wisdom Circle* (1983), silkscreen. (Hlungwani cited by Schneider 1989:58).



2. Deumba fertility ritual of the baVenda, South Africa.

Anywhere is the centre of the world and the world is one whole, says artist Jekisemi Hlungwani (b. 1923): “It is here at Jerusalem that everything begins and ends, the centre of the world, at the meeting point of heaven and earth, east and west. It is here that the laws of God and the ancestors are being enacted”.² New Jerusalem is situated on a hillside near the village of Mbhokota in Gazankulu. Here Hlungwani has built — upon the ruins of an ancient Iron-Age settlement — a stone sanctuary where he lives and works as a prophet, teacher, healer, minister, and artist. According to Lionel Abrahams, almost all this work arises from Hlungwani’s sense of “communal belonging” and “celebratory worship”. He adds to this the claim that “Hlungwani’s creations are his sermons” (1989:14, 15). Hlungwani’s shamanism is an expression of the Dionysian yearning for *unity, wholeness and the centre*.

“Shamanism, a part of many ancient cultures, is an ecstatic religion. The spiritual journey of the shaman is intended to heal the human spirit and bring wholeness. To do this the shaman learns to live in both worlds, just as Dionysus bridges both worlds” (Johnson 1989:71–72).

Similarly the San trance dance preserves the social and political *unity* of the band because — as a shamanistic curing ritual — it ensures a powerful sense of communal *wholeness*. Contemporary anthropologists and archaeologists also claim that this ritual preserves the psychic-spiritual unity of the San, or Bushmen.

In *Images of Power: understanding Bushman rock art* (1989), David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson write:

Through the use of blood from highly potent animals, such as eland, the shaman-painters infused their paint with potency. For Bushmen, the potency flowed from the animal, via its blood, to the paintings where it was stored, and then from the paintings to trancing shamans. Painted sites were thus storehouses of the potency that made contact with the spiritual world possible, that guaranteed humankind's existence by facilitating healing, rain-making and animal control, and that, by flowing between nature and people, gathered up all aspects of life in a single spiritual unity (1989:36).

The shaman in primitive tribal society was in the most profound sense a representative, a servant of the collective.³



This striving for wholeness is itself as old as the yearning to restore a sense of unity through art. Ernst Fischer, as a Marxist art historian, states that the 'origin' of art, as with religion and science, can be traced back to the pre-existence of magic in a time when humans still experienced *the world as a whole*. Just as magic corresponded to a sense of unity and identity with all existing things, so art became an expression of the *alienation* between humans and nature. Fischer describes this process in *The Necessity of Art* (1959):

The perfect unity of man, animal, plant, stone, and source, of life and death, collective and individual, is a premise of every magic ceremony. As human beings separated themselves more and more from nature, as the original tribal unity was gradually destroyed by division of labour and property ownership, so the equilibrium between the individual and the outside world became more and more disturbed. Lack of harmony with the outside world leads to hysteria, trances, fits of insanity. The characteristic posture of the Mænad or Bacchante — the body arched, the head thrown back — is the classic posture of hysteria (1981:39).

Fischer likens this state of hysteria to the ecstatic rites of Dionysus. The Greek word for *ecstasis* ("being outside yourself") refers to a trance state of altered consciousness and shifting personality. He asserts that the condition of hysteria ("being beside oneself") is a forcible recreation of the collective, of world unity (1981:40). Although we only touched on this in Chapters 4 (philosophy and aesthetics) and 5 (art and culture), we can now add that the Dionysiac sensibility enables us, if only briefly, to *stop being ourselves* as we identify with other people, other places, other times (Paglia 1991:97).

Through the intoxication of Dionysian art we 'loose' ourselves in the chthonian chaos of (wild) natural phenomena. Dionysian art enables us to identify with nature. Identification is Dionysian.

In Dionysian politics we identify ourselves with collective yearnings for social intergration. We are united within a classless society — we are Many. Our Dionysus is dismembered — we are the pieces.



Through the articulation of Apollonian art we 'distance' ourselves from the chaos of ever-changing phenomena in nature. Apollonian art enables us to objectify nature. Objectification is Apollonian.

In Apollonian politics we objectify ourselves by striving for social differentiation. We are appointed to rule by virtue of our class position in society — we are One.

Our Apollo empowers us.

In this regard Plutarch states that Dionysus' dismemberment is a metaphor for the god's metamorphosis "into winds and water, earth and stars, and into generations of plants and animals" (Paglia 1991:95). Plutarch calls Apollo the One: "denying the many and abjuring multiplicity" (Paglia 1991:97). Following Plutarch, Paglia translates the Dionysian and Apollonian principles into politics: Dionysus represents the Many — the *hot polloi* of democratic mob-rule. Apollo represents the One — the emperor of Republican dictatorship: "The Apollonian is aristocratic, monarchist, and reactionary".⁴

As social differentiation increased, those possessed by ecstasy and hysteria attempted to restore, or at least re-establish, a disturbed unity and harmony with the outside world, and so art emerged to regain the loss of magical power. However, the emergent class society recruited art, "that powerful voice of the collective" (Fischer 1981:40), to further the particular purposes of the ruling aristocracy: Apollo (the representative of imperial domination) becomes the patron of music — thus adopting, adapting and, ultimately, controlling Dionysian creativity for his own power and glory. This is another instance of Apollonian appropriation as discussed in Chapter 3 (mythology and history). Let us recall Plato: "When modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them"⁵. Again Fischer adds:

On the one hand we find the Apollonian glorification of power and the *status quo* — of kings, princes, and aristocratic families and the social order established by them and reflected in their ideology as a supposedly universal order. On the other hand there was the Dionysian revolt from below, the voice of the ancient, broken collective which took refuge in secret associations and secret cults, protesting against the violation and fragmentation of society, against the *hubris* of private property and the wickedness of class rule, prophesying the return of the old order and the old gods, a coming golden age of commonwealth and justice. Contradictory elements were often combined within a single artist, particularly in those periods when the old collective was not yet too remote and still continued to exist in the consciousness of the people. Even the Apollonian artist, herald of the young ruling class, was not entirely free from this Dionysian element of protest or nostalgia for the old collective society (1981:41).

As indicated in Chapter 5 (art and culture), Fischer's approach is informed by Marxian historical materialism, and Campbell's by Jungian psychoanalysis. They both agree that the structuring forms necessary for civilization are expressed through art. Yet they differ as to whether social organization is determined primarily by the economy or by the mythology of society. Fischer follows Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Frederick Engels (1820–1895) in describing the disintegration process of tribal collectives, the development of tools (including language), the gradual growth of productive forces, the progressive division of labour, the emergence of barter trade, the transition to patriarchal rule, and the beginnings of private property, social classes, and, eventually, the founding of the State.

In this regard, Greshoff claims that the fundamental aim of any revolution is to destroy the old order and to rebuild a new State; to replace the *ancien régime* with a *nouveau régime*. In his lecture series, *The Revolutionary Phenomenon and the French Revolution* (1991), Greshoff describes revolt and reform, or rather destruction and reconstruction, in terms of a Manichean duality:

Finally, if indeed the revolutionary phenomenon has its roots in the urge to destroy a corrupt world in order to build a new and uncorrupt one, then another facet is revealed: its essential Manichean nature. The Manichean sees the world as the stage of a struggle between the forces of light and good and the forces of darkness and evil. These two are locked in an eternal conflict. This is also how the revolutionary sees the world as a struggle between the [Apollonian] forces of reason, justice, virtue, or progress against the [Dionysian] forces of superstition, corruption and dark reaction (Greshoff 1991:8).

About revolt and reform . . . both are equal.⁶



4. The Persain prophet Mani (cited by Greshoff 1991:8).

It should be obvious that protest against all forms of state control, such as a fascist or an *apartheid* system, is most evident in repressed societies or oppressed communities. This, I suggest, is due to the basic human desire to be a part of the "social collective" or a member of a "communal whole". This desire is based on a belief that we are able to transform social relations and historical conditions within which we are situated, believing that our sense of 'time' and our sense of 'place' belongs to us. The struggle to reclaim a sense of social belonging or historical placement is most willfully expressed in revolutionary terms, such as the slogan of the French Revolution; *Liberty, Equality and Unity*. Social revolt becomes a rousing collective act directed against the alienation of society's disunited members.

This rousing collective act was seen in the emergence of township parks; namely the so-called “people’s parks”. According to community art teacher, Steven Sack:

Progressive community organizations saw the need for new structures of “people’s power”. The primary aim was to bring unity to the townships . . . (1989a:1).

These parks sprang up amidst the turbulence of the mid-1980s in the black urban ghettos of Mamelodi, Alexandra, Kagiso, Oukasie, Mohlakeng and Soweto. According to Mark Gevisser, art journalist and critic, these parks were perhaps the most politically engaged form of so-called “township art”. We shall discuss some of the problems surrounding this term in Chapter 12 (reconstruction and an emergent national culture). For the moment, let us deal with the issue of “people’s parks”:

“Organized by activists”, Gevisser continues, “the parks were created from found objects [and] served two functions: they mobilized the community around cleaning up the debris-littered townships at the same time as they celebrated the struggle for freedom” (1989:35-37).⁷ For Sack, the parks were also founded to reclaim a space that was safe from the interference of police, soldiers and gangsters in the townships.⁸ This attempt failed as most of the parks were vandalized or destroyed. Yet, as a creative initiative, these parks played an important role in bringing back a sense of belonging and placement. As Sack points out, many were called “Peace Park” or “Freedom Park”, but most common of all names was “Unity Park” (1989a:1).



5. Gill de Vlieg, *The Garden of Peace, Alexandra Township* (1985), photograph.

NATIONAL LAUNCH

20 AUGUST 1983 CAPE TOWN

Let us now relate the above (this Dionysian yearning for unity) to the formation of the now defunct United Democratic Front (UDF) and its appeal to *unite* the proletariat in South Africa. With its formation in the early 1980s, an unequivocal call for *unity* was repeated in speeches and reiterated in messages of support. The UDF's national launch in Cape Town was described as "A day of *unity*: Today — August 20, 1983 — we speak with the voice of *unity* . . . We have launched the UDF so that we may go forward in *unity*".¹⁰ Then President of the Western Cape UDF branch, Oscar Mpetha, sent out a message which read:



6. United Democratic Front pamphlet (1983).

We are all aiming at achieving a new South Africa. We cannot achieve that goal unless we *unite*. *Unity* is strength. The Nationalist Party [NP] is in pieces because it is threatened by the *unity* of the people. The more we *unite* the nearer we are to our goals.¹¹

The extra-parliamentary politics of the UDF, including its alliance with the African National Congress during that period, was premised by the need to unite people through street, block, and area committees, as well as by means of regional and national structures. While the UDF spoke of "unity and empowerment", the NP used the discourse of "divide and rule".

Through Dionysus we protest to reclaim unity; unity is our strength, together we are strong. We are united in our diversity and speak with the powerful voice of the collective.

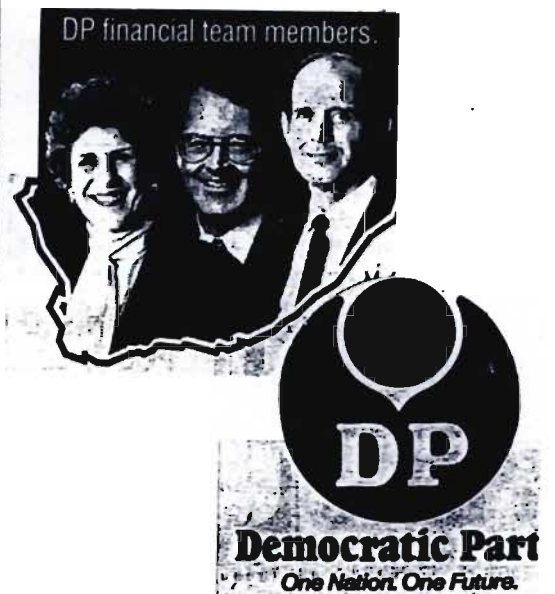
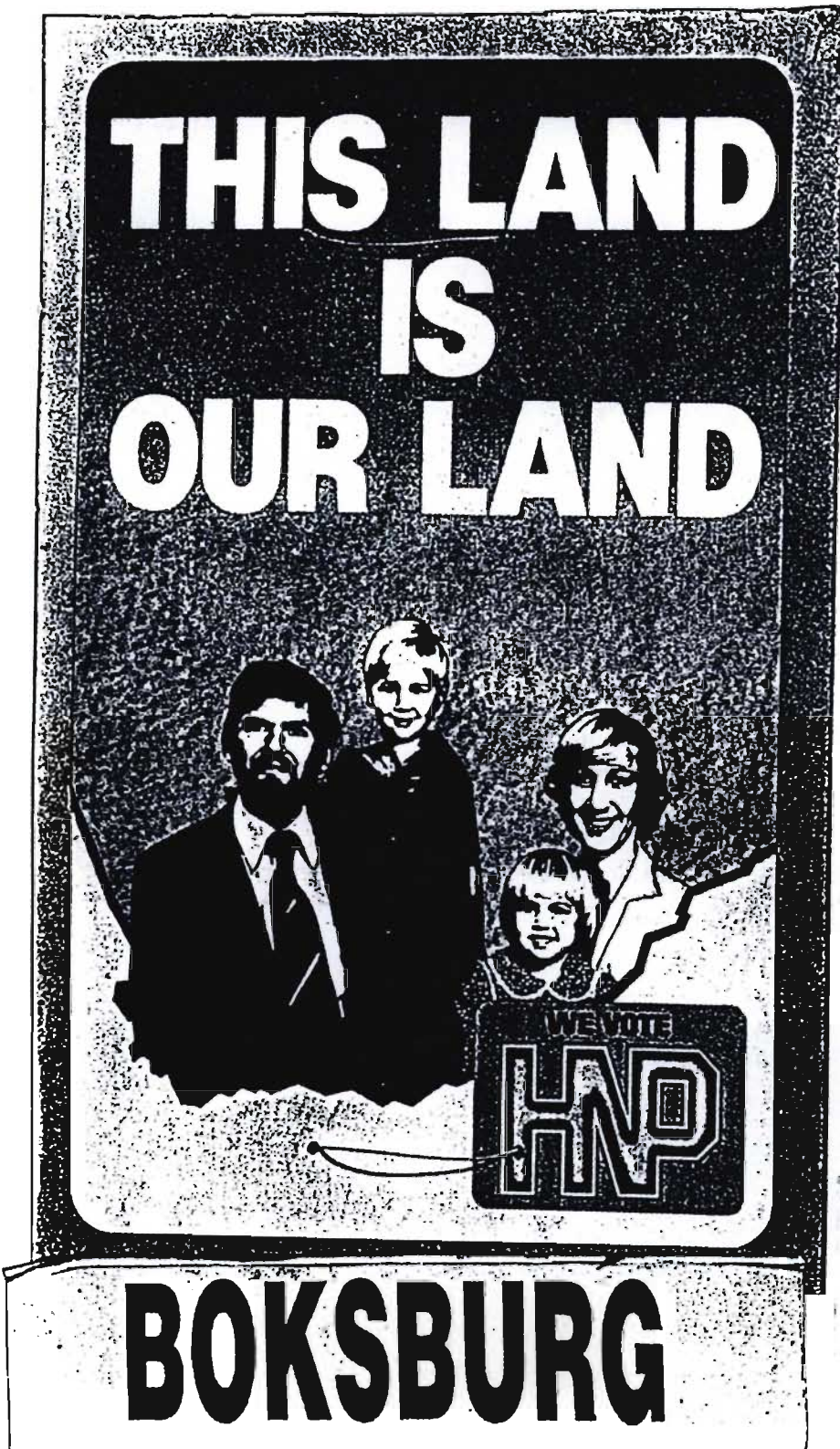
The *hol pollol* speak with one voice.

Through Apollo we (re-)form to maintain order; separated by power, divided we control. We are divided by our diversity and speak with the strong voice of authority.

We obey the voice of the One.



7. "May Day is Ours — on the land, in the streets, in the mines, in the factories, in the world". CAP mural collective (c. 1985).



The combined voice of Apollonian and Dionysian propaganda. Examples of the 'common' rhetoric and imagery used during the 1980s by various political parties and extra-parliamentary organizations.

8. (above) "This Land Is Our Land". HNP election campaign poster (c. 1985).

9. (top) "Forward to a Free South Africa" NSF campaign poster (c.1985).

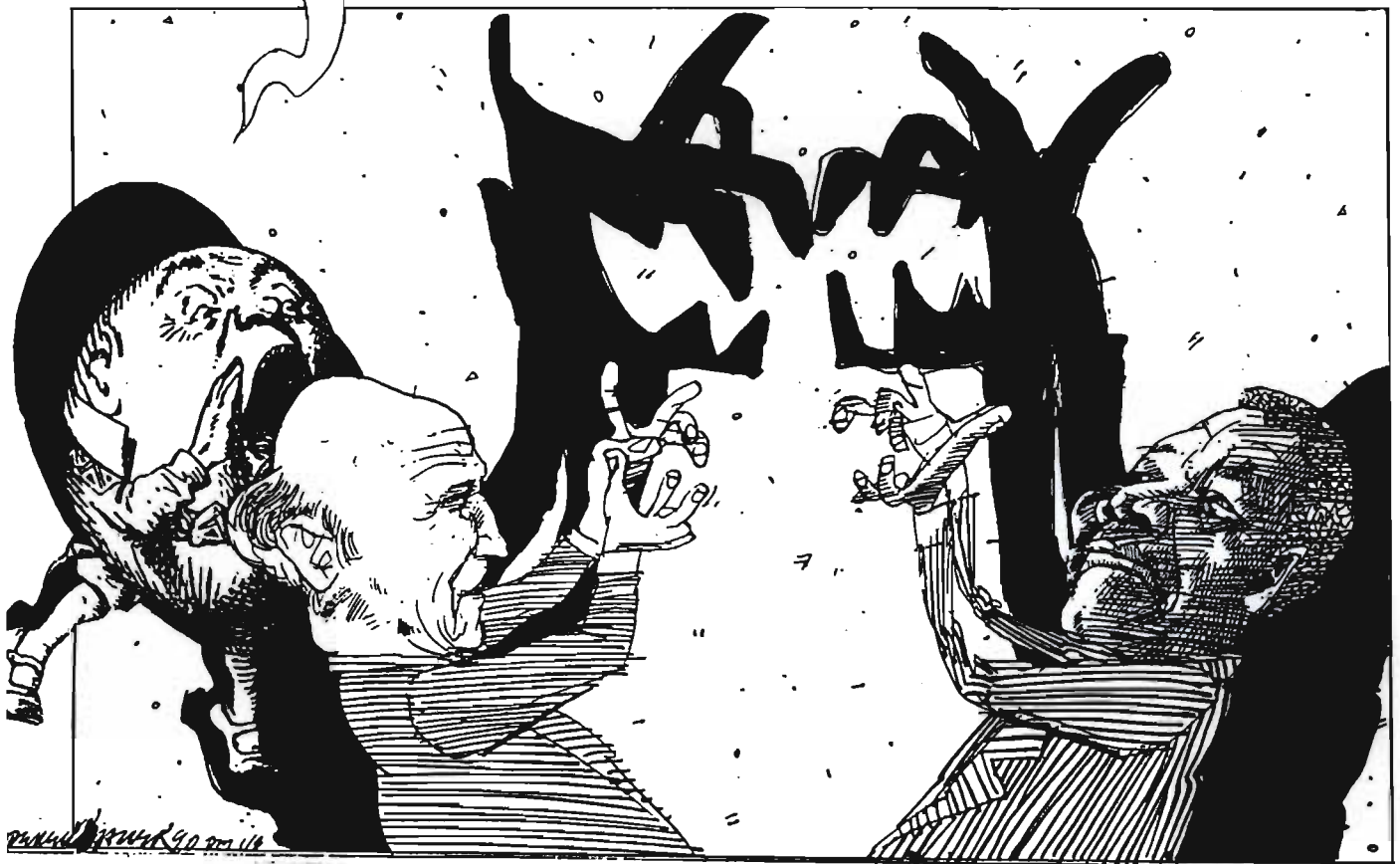
10. (middle) "Workers Unite" UDF mass rally poster (c.1984).

11. (below) "Secure your future" Detail from a campaign advertisement (c.1989).

During the 1980s, neither democrats nor nationalists, liberals or conservatives, spoke the language of Dionysus or Apollo alone, but combined contradictory elements which belonged to the rhetoric of both. Nor did any political party or extra-parliamentary organization reconcile the Dionysian and Apollonian sensibilities in their propaganda. They all failed to develop a cultural discourse which could have enabled us to come to terms with, or which may have affirmed, our apprehension of contested socio-political agendas in South Africa during the 1980s:

From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, these political agendas were based on shifting policies and strategies for reform and resistance. Crudely, the former aimed to maintain the *status quo* by adapting relations of power secured by a dominant bourgeoisie, while the latter contested the prevailing order and aimed at empowering the proletarian majority. To this end reform has been most visible in an official or establishment arts culture; whereas resistance has been more visible in protest art or revolutionary culture.¹²

There are, in any case, kinds of revolution and kinds of reform. To act reasonably under some conditions may require us to choose either revolution or reform. Or it may require that, in some senses at least, we choose both.¹³



12. De Klerk and Mandela. Cartoon by Derek Bauer, *The Weekly Mail Calendar* (1991). (Quotation by Parsons 1972:16).

SECTION THREE III

APOLLONIAN REFORM AND APARTHEID CULTURE

The politics of (Apollonian) reform, legislated by the government of South Africa during the 1980s, ensures the repression of mass-based dissent and anarchy in a desperate bid to maintain the status quo. Tyrannically, the nationalist government held on to the existing social structure and political order. This tyranny was born out of weakness, it was dry and hard, authoritarian and cold (Campbell 1988:50).

CHAPTER 7 *reform and apartheid-capitalism*

This chapter examines the consequences of governmental reform initiatives and the concomittant manifestations of corporate sponsorship within the arts establishment — or within a culture of (Apollonian) apartheid-capitalism.

historical context

governmental reform

corporate sponsorship

CHAPTER 8 *reform and the arts establishment*

This chapter examines the effects of reform within liberal (English) and conservative (Afrikaans) arts bodies.

historical context

liberal arts bodies

conservative arts bodies

CHAPTER SEVEN



REFORM AND APARTHEID-CAPITALISM

historical context

The ideology of apartheid-capitalism — devised by the National Party (NP, founded 1914) after it came into power in 1948 — rationalized racial class segregation and legitimized separate development on the basis of ethnic-economic categorization. Apartheid legislation in the 1950s sanctioned — in deference to a privileged (white) minority of nationalists and capitalists — the continued control of (black) labour resources and the allocation of reserves or “bantustans” for a surplus work force. While the economic boom of the 1960s¹ strengthened the political position of the governing NP, the institutionalized practices of apartheid-capitalism failed to maintain a steady growth rate during the early 1970s². The resultant effects of this political and economic crisis reverberated through educational, industrial, commercial and even legal practices — giving rise to an era of tumultuous political struggle which included the growth of the Black Consciousness (BC) movement and the re-emergence of several independent trade union alliances in South Africa.³ By the mid-1970s, the white minority state-bureaucracy was challenged by the dispossessed and oppressed working class through acts of protest and revolt. Here we find, on the one hand, an Apollonian state-bureaucracy as the supposedly universal order and, on the other, the Dionysian revolt from below protesting against the violation and fragmentation of society and the wickedness of class rule (See Fischer 1981:41).



Against this background thousands of black students and workers joined the tide of renewed resistance to apartheid practices in schools, at factories, or on the mines. Following the unexpected uprising in Soweto 1976 (as after Sharpsville 1960)⁴, individual leaders of the liberal business community decried the government's economic and political policies, calling upon the NP to relax the infamous influx control and despised pass laws. Employment regulations were crude and effective; no pass, no work. Thus the interests of institutionalized apartheid and monopoly capitalism were in open conflict.

1. Soweto Day symbol. Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Petersen, a thirteen year old schoolboy shot dead on June 16. This image won the 1976 best news picture award. *The World*.

Nevertheless, the government's reluctance to alter relations of power prompted further acts of (Apollonian) repression aimed at curbing all potential (Dionysian) resistance. By late 1977, the government banned numerous organizations and arrested various political activists and trade unionists, including BC leader Steve Biko and unionist Neil Aggett, both of whom were killed in detention.

It was against this background that Pieter Willem (PW) Botha, then still Minister of Defence, declared that the "total onslaught", or the Communist and Pan-Africanist threat to state security (the so-called *root- and swart gevaar*) would be countered by a strict national security programme, or "total strategy" (Vale 1983: 12-13).



2. Steve Biko commemorative poster produced by Azapo.

The programme's fundamental aim was to align the military with industry by combining the forces of defence and capital, as well as to privilege Whites, Indians and Coloureds by securing their "hearts and minds" in favour of a free-enterprise system. Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, director of IDASA (Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa, founded 1987) argued:

The pattern and tempo of reform has to be understood in terms of how the white minority has defined its security interests, reshaped the security system and co-ordinated the whole state-bureaucracy to deal with any conceivable threat to its [white minority domination] interests (1987:3).

Economic and social reform also provided for an enlarged middle-class which, first and foremost, would act as a "buffer-bloc" between the ruling (white) élite and the disenfranchised (black) masses. According to André Odendaal:

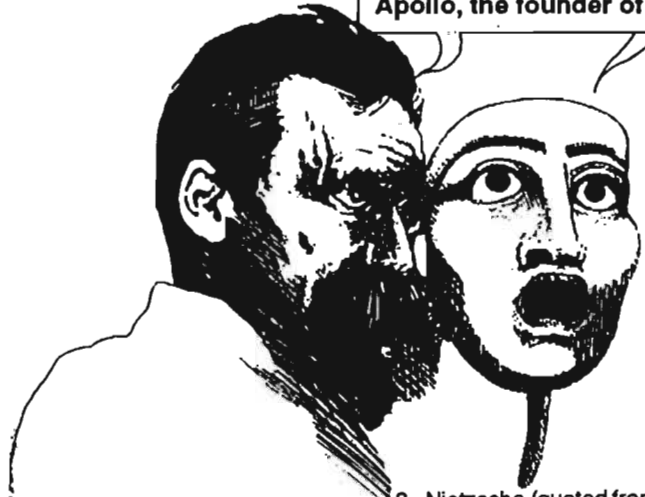
The government wished to create a stable black middle-class and a relatively privileged stratum of workers — divided from the mass of rural Africans and migrants — who would be ready to strike a bargain with state and business. This was the purpose of "reform". The Afrikaner nationalist government was attempting to broaden its narrow ethnic power base by co-opting English-controlled big business and a black élite into a new multi-racial ruling-class alliance. In this way the white-minority government hoped to stave off the mass of blacks for full political rights in an undivided South Africa . . . This strategy of simultaneous repression and reform was at the heart of the Botha modernization programme (1989:127, 128).

governmental reform

As the newly appointed State President, PW Botha issued a reform package which firmly entrenched the myth of racial supremacy and apartheid ideology in South Africa. The traditional “divide and rule” stratagem of the Afrikaner nationalists remained in place behind the NP’s hasty proposals for a “New Deal” Constitution. This scheme offered improved — but still unequal — opportunities for political, social, economic and cultural investment within a merely modified dispensation. The subsequent imposition of a tricameral parliament in 1984 effectively favoured Whites in preference to Indians and Coloureds, while Blacks were still blatantly excluded from participating in central government.⁵ Centralized power and authority thus remained within the ambit of the National Party. The future of the old polity was secured.

I am Apollo, the never-vanquished and invincible.⁶

Apollo, the founder of states.⁷



The Apollonian obsession for order promotes an autocratic dictatorship through acts of reform.

The cult of Apollo is reformative in so far as it strives to rehabilitate declining social structures and waning political order.

Apollonian reform aims to preserve a labour repressive economy by adapting relations of socio-political power secured by an aspirant and privileged ruling-class elite.

An Apollonian dispensation differentiates — it separates and isolates.

3. Nietzsche (quoted from *The Birth of Tragedy*) with mask of Apollo (cited by Panofsky 1983:301–303).

Fundamental to this new dispensation was the distinction between matters pertaining to “own affairs” and “general affairs” (Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill of 1983). In the concomitant **Cultural Promotion Act of 1983** (which replaced the National Cultural Promotion Act of 1969), the term “own affairs” referred to facilities for art, culture and recreation — including galleries, theatres, libraries, museums, and historical monuments (*Government Gazette* 1984:65).⁸ In 1983 the Director General for Education dissolved the National Cultural Council to make way for the establishment of regional councils for cultural advancement. The dissolution of the national advisory body — established in 1970 for the cultural advancement of Whites alone — now provided for the differentiated cultural advancement of the three “population groups” represented in parliament. This bid for reform, however, required the triplication of cultural resources and facilities for Whites, Indians and Coloureds. However, most people rejected the ongoing racist divisions implicit in the new Constitution as being both morally and logistically absurd (except, of course, those who opted for the financial benefits awarded to “own affairs” institutions and projects⁹). Eventually, after failing to implement this scheme successfully, the National Party officially abandoned “own affairs” legislation in April 1993 — although the effects were still evident by the first democratic election in April 1994. Apollo succumbs to Dionysus, apartheid to democracy.

But public criticism of “own affairs” preceded its official implementation. In response to the general outcry over the proposed “own affairs” and, more particularly, to formal representations made in 1981 by members from the arts establishment, a state-subsidized Commission of Inquiry into the Promotion of the Creative Arts was conducted.¹⁰ This three-year long investigation, simply known as the *Schutte Report* of 1984, recommended that a statutory arts council be established for the promotion of the various artistic disciplines.

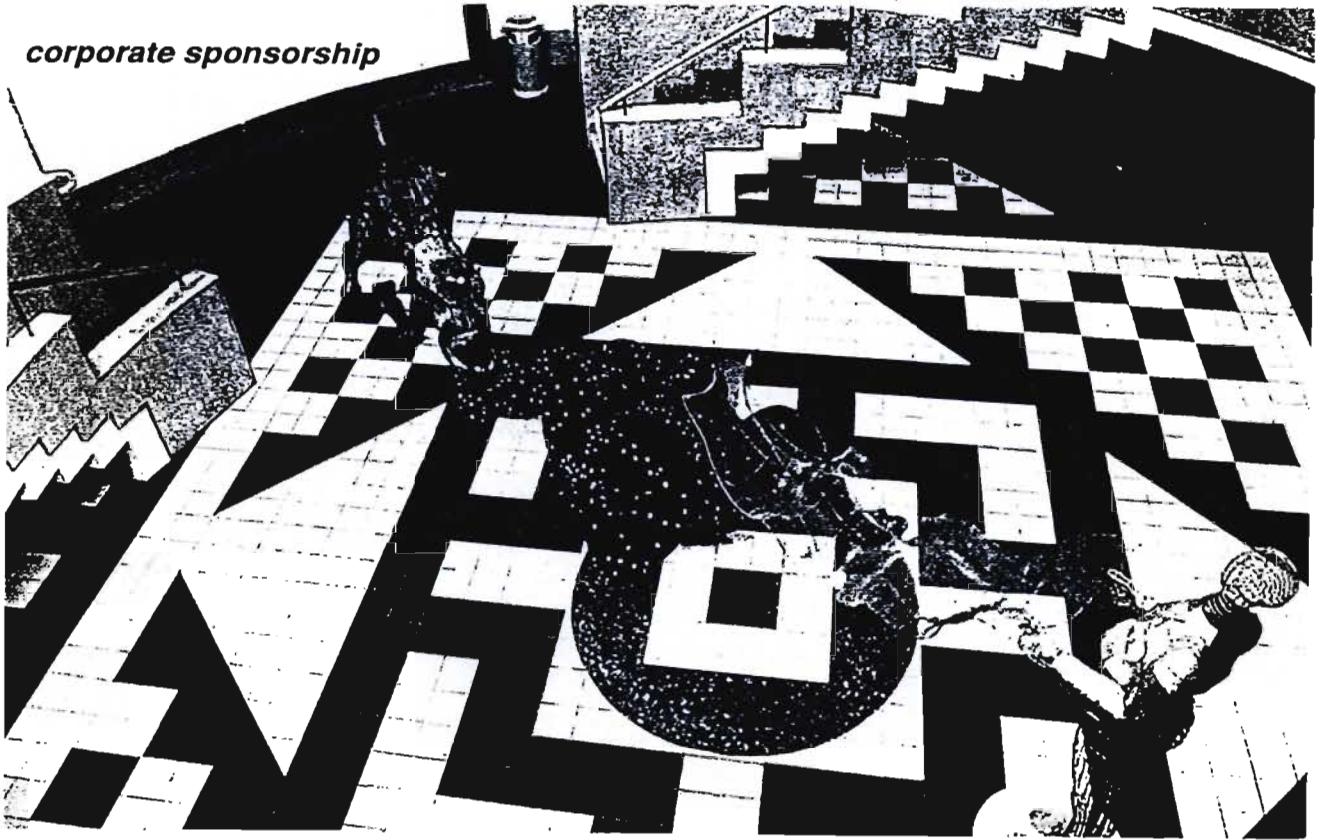
As an autonomous body, the FCA was to provide financial support for artists and organizations, award research, travel and subsistence grants, and finance related publications, workshops and training facilities. Funds were to be derived from a single amount allocated by government or related authorities, as well as donations from the private sector. The commission’s findings concluded that, despite the existing Cultural Promotion Act, the government should not interfere nor regiment the arts by prescription (*Schutte Report* 1984:14–16).¹¹ Restated, I believe Apollonian patronage should not divest artists of their Dionysian potential for creativity. Nor should it restrict the subversive (or transgressive) energies of Dionysus.

After shelving the *Schutte Report* for several years, the NP’s Department of National Education (DNE)¹² eventually convened its first and only national arts conference at Stellenbosch University (US) in April 1988. Delegates at the arts conference — most of whom represented state-subsidized cultural institutions — were invited by the relevant Minister of Education, then Fredrick Willem (FW) de Klerk, to address the recommendations of the *Schutte Report* with regard to the establishment of an umbrella arts council (or “company”) for the promotion of art and culture. With an initial sum of R2 million from the state treasury, the Foundation for the Creative Arts (FCA) was constituted in February 1989 to administer funds for the promotion of the *creative* arts (as opposed to the *performing* arts — which already received about R80 million of the more than R450 million set aside for promoting art, culture and recreation).¹³ The establishment of the FCA — following the outcome of the *Schutte Report* — brought to closure a decade of deliberations between the arts establishment and the Department of National Education.



4. Malcome Payne, *Face Value: Old Heads in Modern Masks*. An exhibition funded by the Foundation for the Creative Arts.

corporate sponsorship



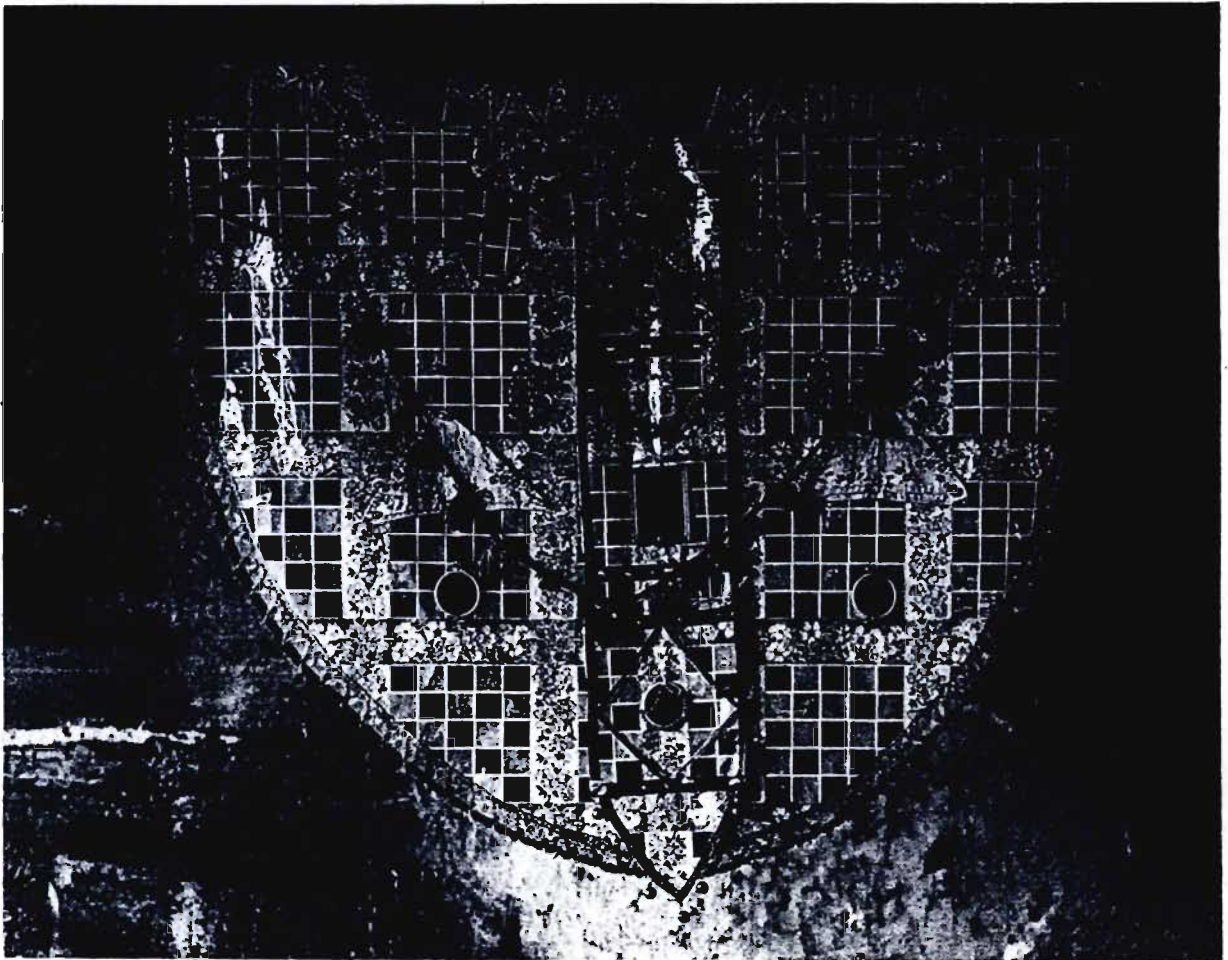
5. Entrance foyer of the Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg. Sculpture by Andries Botha, winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year (1991). Photograph by Ronnie Levitan.

Following the Commission of Inquiry into the Tax Structure of the Republic (also known as the *Margo Report*) in 1987, the government continued to exclude cultural institutions from those liable to benefit from tax incentives under Section 18A of the Income Tax Act. As a result, museums and libraries (unlike schools or universities), suffered due to the absence of a tax rebate system. It is also important to note that, under Section 18B, patrons and sponsors did not enjoy any significant tax relief for donations or funds made in favour of the visual arts inside the country — unless their donations were given to declared educational institutions or projects. Despite this, the most significant donation made by business throughout this period of reform came in 1985 when Anglo American donated a sum of R6 million to the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) for investment (including acquisition) and extensions (including restoration). Art critic Rose Korber described this as “the largest single contribution to the visual arts in South Africa” (1985:4). Funding from beyond the arts establishment remained a matter of grave concern.¹⁴

In addition to the financial support rendered in favour of art institutions like the JAG, Anglo American also acquired an impressive corporate art collection of its own. But it was not alone in this field — other companies which collected South African art included Barlows, First National Bank, Mobil, Metropolitan Life, Nedbank, Peter Stuyvesant, Rembrandt, Sanlam, Sasol, Standard Bank, Volkskas and Wooltru (see Miles 1989:48). Although some collections dated back to the 1930s, serious collecting with business or shareholder’s money was still a relatively new area of investment in the 1980s. According to Julia Meintjes “a number of corporations prefer to remain silent about their activity, believing that public knowledge of expenditure on fine art assets will anger the trade unions” (1992:31). Others felt obliged to appease their shareholders.

For instance, BMW staged an impressive and unprecedented exhibition in Johannesburg, entitled *Tributaries*, which emphasized the corporation's commitment to South Africa's economy and culture. According to Antoinette du Plessis (1992:23):

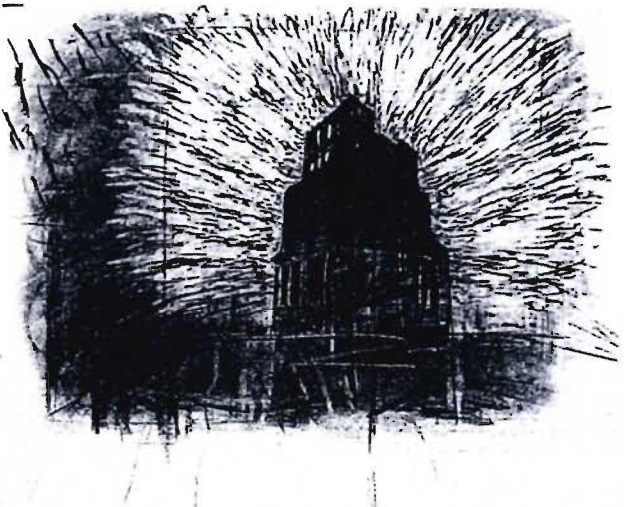
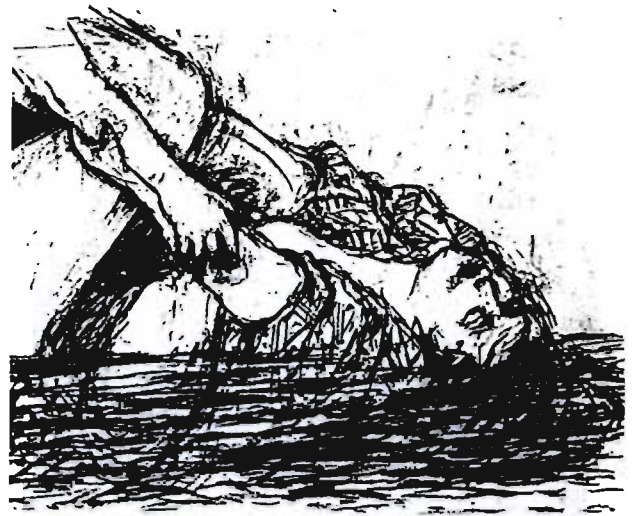
The exhibition was primarily a public relations exercise for the sponsor, which had to face anti-apartheid lobbying in Europe. An integrated exhibition of art from South Africa was probably considered an excellent opportunity to illustrate BMW's commitment to "corporate responsibility in relation to cultural life" (Rickey Burnett, introductory essay to the *Tributaries* catalogue 1985).



6. An exhibit from the *Tributaries* exhibition (1985). Maria Mabhena, *Ceremonial Mantle* (undated), tablecloth, beads, mirrors. Photograph by David Goldblatt (1985).

This exhibition, as a form of Apollonian appropriation, launched contemporary urban (or so-called "township") art as a viable commodity — especially for overseas markets. As a result reform initiatives (during the period 1982–1986) also saw a sponsorship "rush" among, *inter alia*, banks and insurance companies as they each staked their claim in a rapidly expanding, but limited, market — the national art competition:

The quest for a nationally representative art exhibition has been with us at least since 1913, when the South African Fine Arts Association and the South African Society of Artists held an exhibition, open to all South African artists, in Cape Town. This phoenix has had many incarnations, ranging from the *Artists of Fame and Promise* competitions and the *Quadrennials* of the fifties and early sixties to the *Quinquennial* of 1969 and the *Cape Town Biennial* of 1979. During the eighties its embodiment was the *Cape Town Triennial* (Du Plessis 1992:15).



8. Example from the *Cape Town Triennial* exhibition (1991). William Kentridge, *Sobriety, obesity and growing old* (1991), video.

By the beginning of the 1980s Raymond van Niekerk, former Director of the South African National Gallery (SANG), secured the then largest sum of private sponsorship for what was to become the most prestigious, and also the most controversial, art competition in the country — the *Cape Town Triennial*. For almost ten years the *Triennial* exhibitions (held in 1982, 1985, 1988 and 1991) dominated the local art scene — setting trends and launching careers. As a national travelling exhibition it gave the selected artworks unrivalled status and prestige.

horses
ops tell Sisulu to stop celebrations
DEATH THREAT
Election balls-up
New for Guyana
Women defiant



9. Another example from the *Cape Town Triennial* exhibition (1991). Willie Bester, *Crossroads* (1991), mixed media.

However, by the beginning of the next decade the sole sponsor, the Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation (founded 1964), withdrew its support amid much contested criticism that such tax deductible “advertising” did not prioritize the interests of the arts community, but rather the company’s own image as a leading patron of the arts.¹⁵

At this time *AA Life*, which had been sponsoring the *Vita Art Now* exhibition since 1987, also withdrew their support and, for a while, it looked like national art competitions would flounder financially. Within this context, the annual *Volkskas Atelier* emerged as the single surviving national art competition in the country. By 1994 no other national travelling exhibition had replaced the *Triennial*.

In addition, the 1993 *National Arts Festival* in Grahamstown celebrated 10 years of continuous support from Standard Bank — making this the longest standing corporate sponsorship of the arts in the country. These initiatives were part of the post-1990 period of reconstruction leading up to the 1994 national elections and will be discussed again in Chapter 12 (reconstruction and an emergent national culture).

This chapter has examined governmental reform and corporate sponsorship in terms of (Apollonian) patronage and appropriation. The next chapter examines how developments within the arts establishment were dictated to by Central Government. It also presents this relationship in terms of (Apollonian) patronage and appropriation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REFORM AND THE ARTS ESTABLISHMENT



1. Frontcover illustration for the proceedings from the *State of Art in South Africa* conference (1979).

historical context

I regard the first major art event in this study period (1976–1994) to have been *The State of Art in South Africa* conference at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1979. Enthusiastic delegates attending the conference argued that art education, patronage, and even criticism, had been impoverished and curtailed by governmental control. The delegates resolved, firstly, that art education, and the material access thereto, be made open to both black and white students by means of legislation, and secondly, that “committed” and “relevant” artists should effect change towards a post-apartheid society. While such calls were well-intentioned, many delegates (of whom most were professional artists, art educators or museum administrators) seemed to be uninformed about the institutional mechanisms of apartheid education. Regrettably, none of the “appropriate authorities” were present. Thus there was thus no official representative with whom to debate the issues of inadequate state support in the field of art education and training. Furthermore, no one proposed a concrete plan of action. Nor was a development programme even discussed. The financial dependency of the arts establishment was not articulated. Delegates failed to acknowledge that their reliance on central government reduced their self-sufficiency and independence from the dominant interests which control state capital. And yet they strongly urged “artists to refuse participation in state-sponsored exhibitions until such time as moves are made to implement the above-mentioned change” (Skotnes, Ainslie & Verster 1979:159). While this event can be seen as an act of resistance, it was, for all intents and purposes, still firmly located within the arts establishment.¹

Relationships between liberal or conservative arts bodies and central government (or between cultural intergration and apartheid separation) can be likened to relations between Dionysian guilds and the Roman senate. As we have seen, the creative sensibilities and subversive energies associated with Dionysus were controlled and directed by the ruling élite — the State became the patron of the arts and thereby ensured control in perpetuity. In the South African context these relationships existed between the liberal South African Association of Arts (SAAA: founded 1946) and the conservative Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK, Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations, founded 1929) on the one hand, and the National Party's Department of National Education on the other.



2. Logo for the Republic Festival (1981).

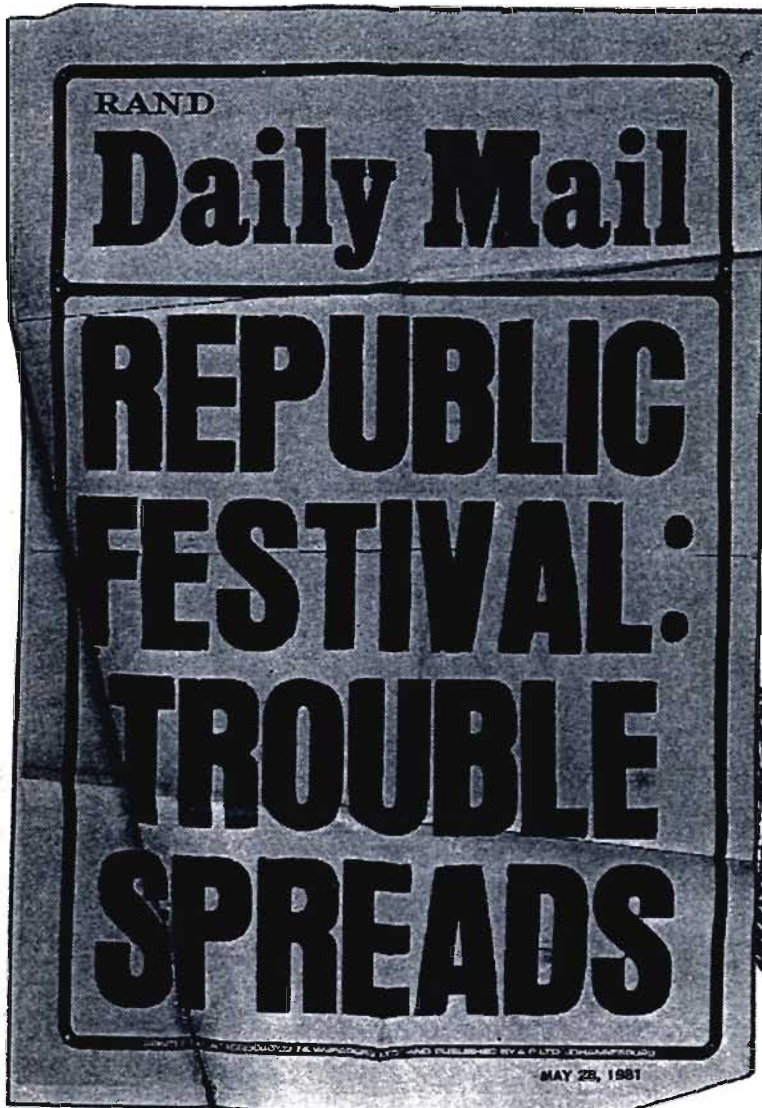
liberal arts bodies

The resolutions adopted at the 1979 *State of Art* conference were to have profound repercussions for subsequent state-funded events, especially the 1981 *Republic Festival Art Exhibition* in Durban. The event, organized under the auspices of the Department of National Education, and assisted by the South African Association of Arts, was severely criticized because most South Africans did not share the fervour with which this anniversary was celebrated.²

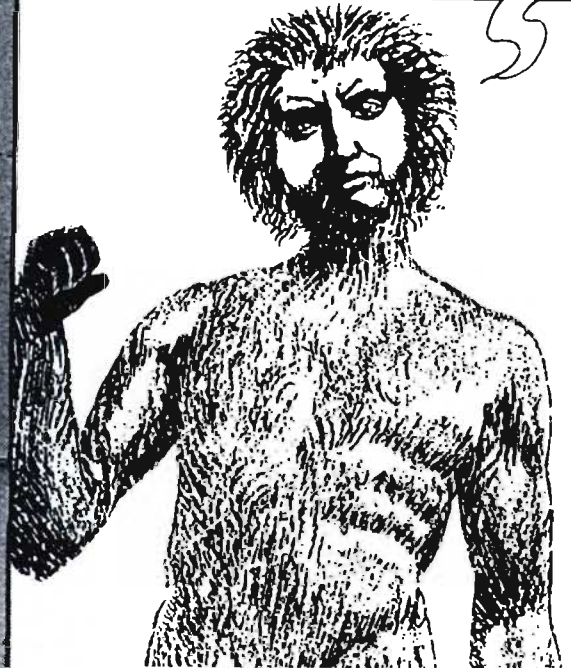
Art historian, Esmé Berman, recalled how, following the resolutions adopted at the *State of Art* conference, two regions of the SAAA (Western Cape and Natal), decided to dissociate themselves from the *Republic Festival Art Exhibition*. Individual artists, dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, elected to follow suit, and before long loyalties were challenged and reckless accusations made concerning members compromising the Association through their involvement and participation in government-sponsored affairs. Soon the liberal arts "community" was torn by factional dissent and both the Festival and the Association came close to collapsing (Berman 1983:374).

Coincidental deliberations about governmental interference, organizational incompetence and public apathy in the arts led to the formation of an Artists' Guild (founded 1980, disbanded c. 1986) in Cape Town. This union-type organization — intent on forming a national federation — dealt with matters relating to the material and practical requirements of the fine arts. Unlike the Association, which embraced the general interests of amateurs and the public alike, the Guild was designed to serve the specific needs of professional artists.

Despite differences in their respective roles and purposes, the Guild gave expression to artists' disenchantment with the Association's weak and poor management of its own affairs. Furthermore, with growing professional dissatisfaction among artists about the intrusion of partisan politics on their careers, many dissociated themselves from official exhibitions, particularly events sponsored by Central Government.



The creative potentials — even the subversive energies of an artist — are not easily recruited. Patronage and appropriation is sometimes unable to tempt the artist who strives to retain a sense of independence.



3. Reactions to the *Republic Festival*.

Throughout the 1980s, only the South African Association of Arts claimed to be an autonomous and representative umbrella body for the visual arts. Although the organization received a nominal R30 thousand per annum (during the mid-1980s) from the Department of National Education, some regional branches refused to accept their share of tax-payer's money because of the attached "own affairs" conditions. Nevertheless, with its own art galleries in many urban centres, the organization's main function was to maintain contact and sustain continuity in national and regional art affairs while also promoting both effectual and acceptable programmes on behalf of those artists it strove to represent. In spite of this, the Association was criticized for continuing to administer "White" exhibitions for the Department of National Education — especially when the latter sponsored shows for overseas events. Some artists strongly disapproved of official links with Government because "participation in such events implied tacit acceptance of an ideological order to which they did not subscribe" (Berman 1983:23).

These objections had, in part, taken cognisance of the fact that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) had already endorsed the decision that “all states and organizations are to suspend cultural, educational, sports and other exchanges with the racist régime and with organizations and institutions in South Africa which practice apartheid” (*UN General Assembly Resolution 2396*, 1969). Artists from South Africa were not invited to participate in the *Venice Biennale* after 1968, nor did the South African government allow participation in the *Sao Paulo Bienal* after 1977.³ While the banned African National Congress, post-1960, implemented the boycott from abroad, little was done to endorse the boycott inside the country before the late 1970s — except by the Black Consciousness movement. Gradually artists from South Africa began to uphold these sanctions until the cultural boycott was finally abandoned — or just ignored — after 1991.

There were, of course, some artists who rejected the boycott throughout this period and allowed their work to be shown abroad. The Association — which sent work by selected individuals (so-called “Springbok artists”) to the *Valparaiso Biennial* in Chile — became the centre of controversy with regard to alleged “boycott-busting” during the late 1980s (Richards & Powell 1989:27).

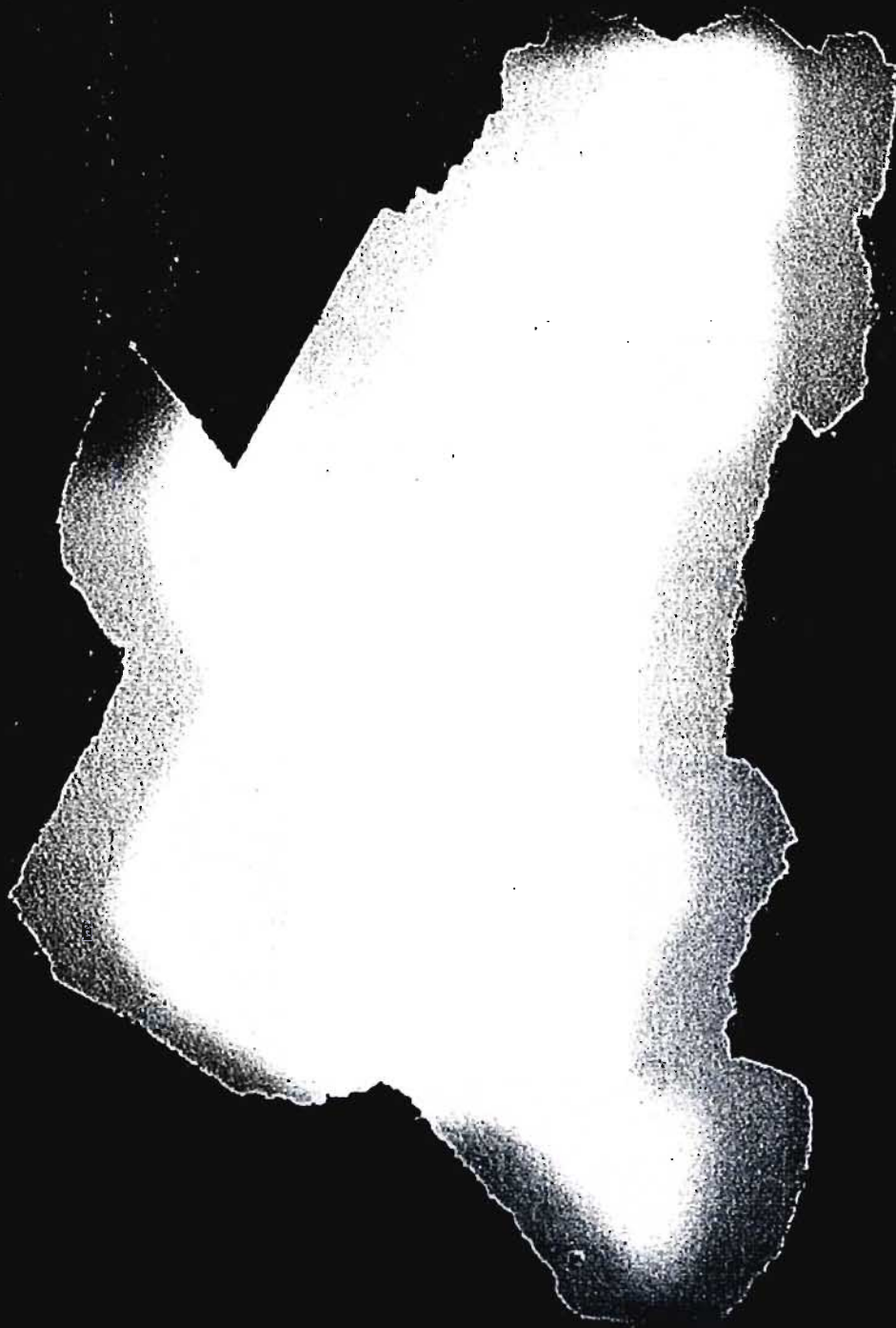


Exhibits from the *Valparaiso Biennial* exhibition (1989).

4. (above) Karel Nel, *Transitional Figure Dreaming* (1987), pastel on bonded paper.

5. (right) Margaret Vorster, *Blood on the Leaves* (1987), oil on canvas triptych.

RIOT



6. Example from the *Venice Biennale* exhibition (1993). Kendell Geers, *Untitled/'Riot'* (1993), mixed media.

South African artists “officially” re-entered the international exhibition circuit when they received an invitation from the Italian government to participate in the 1993 *Venice Biennale*. The President of the Association — amid confusion as to *who* decides *which* artists should represent their country — took overall responsibility for the consultation and selection processes. Due to the difficulties encountered during these processes, the Association called for the formation of an ad-hoc co-ordinating committee to take responsibility for organizing participation in future international exhibitions — such as the 1994 *Sao Paulo Biennial* in Brazil.



7. Another example from the *Venice Biennale* exhibition (1993). Sandra Kriel, *We were not born to control and destroy* (1991), detail from triptych, embroidery. This work won an award at the 1991 Cape Town Triennial, and was used for the exhibition poster.

conservative arts bodies

While the Department of National Education utilized the South African Association of Arts to make inroads into the English-speaking arts community, it also used the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK, Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations, founded 1929) to reach an Afrikaans-speaking constituency. Unlike the Association, the Federasie was uncritical of “Own Affairs” legislation. As a national umbrella organization established by the *Broederbond* (Brotherhood)⁴ the FAK helped to ensure the “purity” and “unity” of the Afrikaner nation.



8. Book cover for the sensational exposé of the Broederbond (1980).

Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom, in their controversial exposé of the Broederbond, revealed the extent to which the organization influenced and determined the entire system of Christian national education in South Africa. Their book, *The Super-Afrikaners* (1980), refers to the collusion between Broeders and education administrators in their joint pursuit for ethnic purity and national unity. Their tactics were isolationist and separatist — perpetuating the Apollonian tyranny:

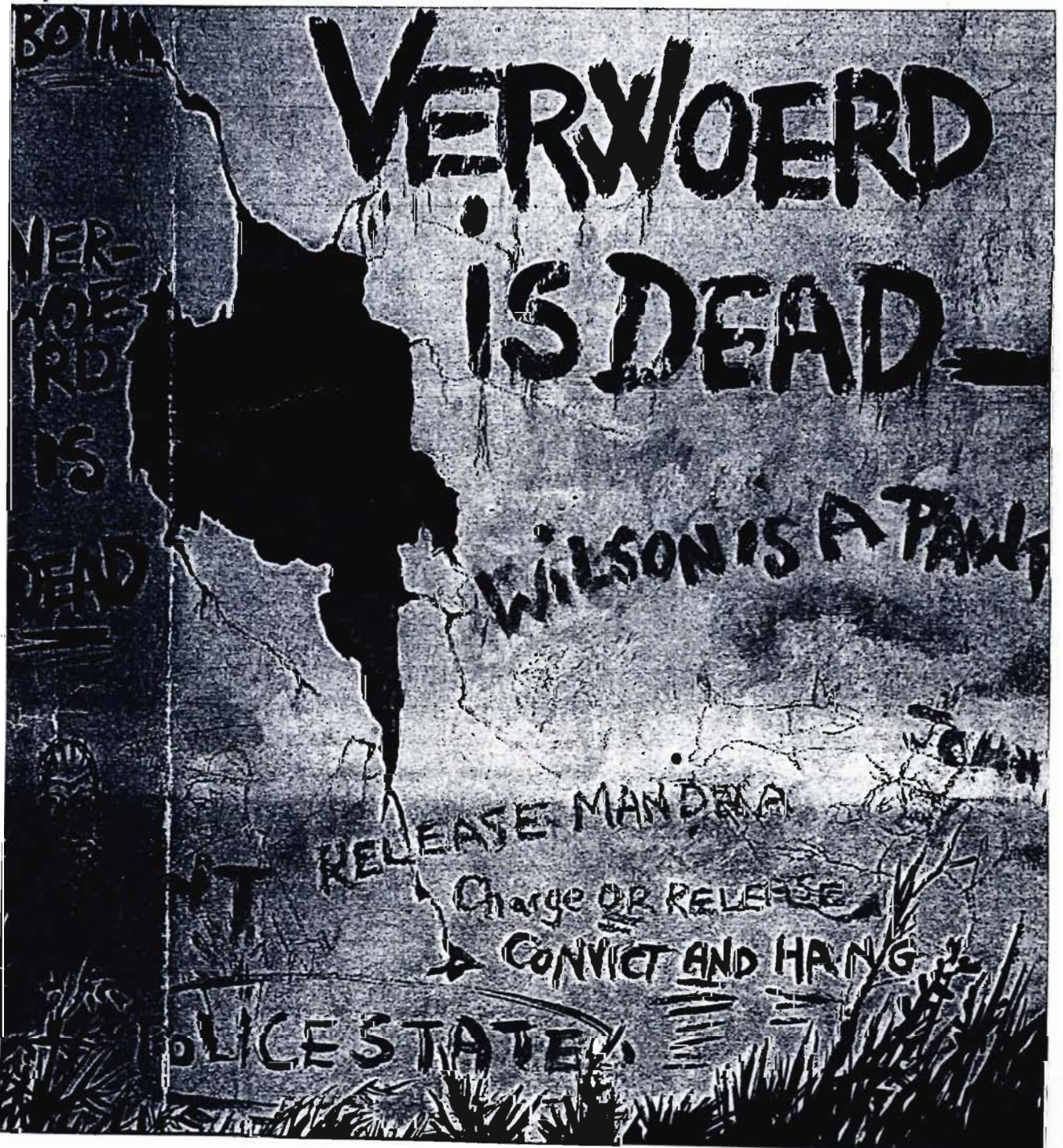
It's zealous pursuit of division and ruthless passion for “order” in South African society are faithfully reflected in the education systems it [Broederbond] helped create for the various race groups in South Africa (1980:251).

With secret cells in major organizational and administrative institutions, the Broederbond used the FAK as its public front and thereby succeeded in giving content — including Christian ethics — to Afrikaner culture (Adam & Gillomee 1979:250).⁵ Besides collecting traditional folk songs and arranging exhibitions or competitions of Afrikaans art and literature, the FAK also held large-scale public festivals, or so-called “Kultuurfeeste”.

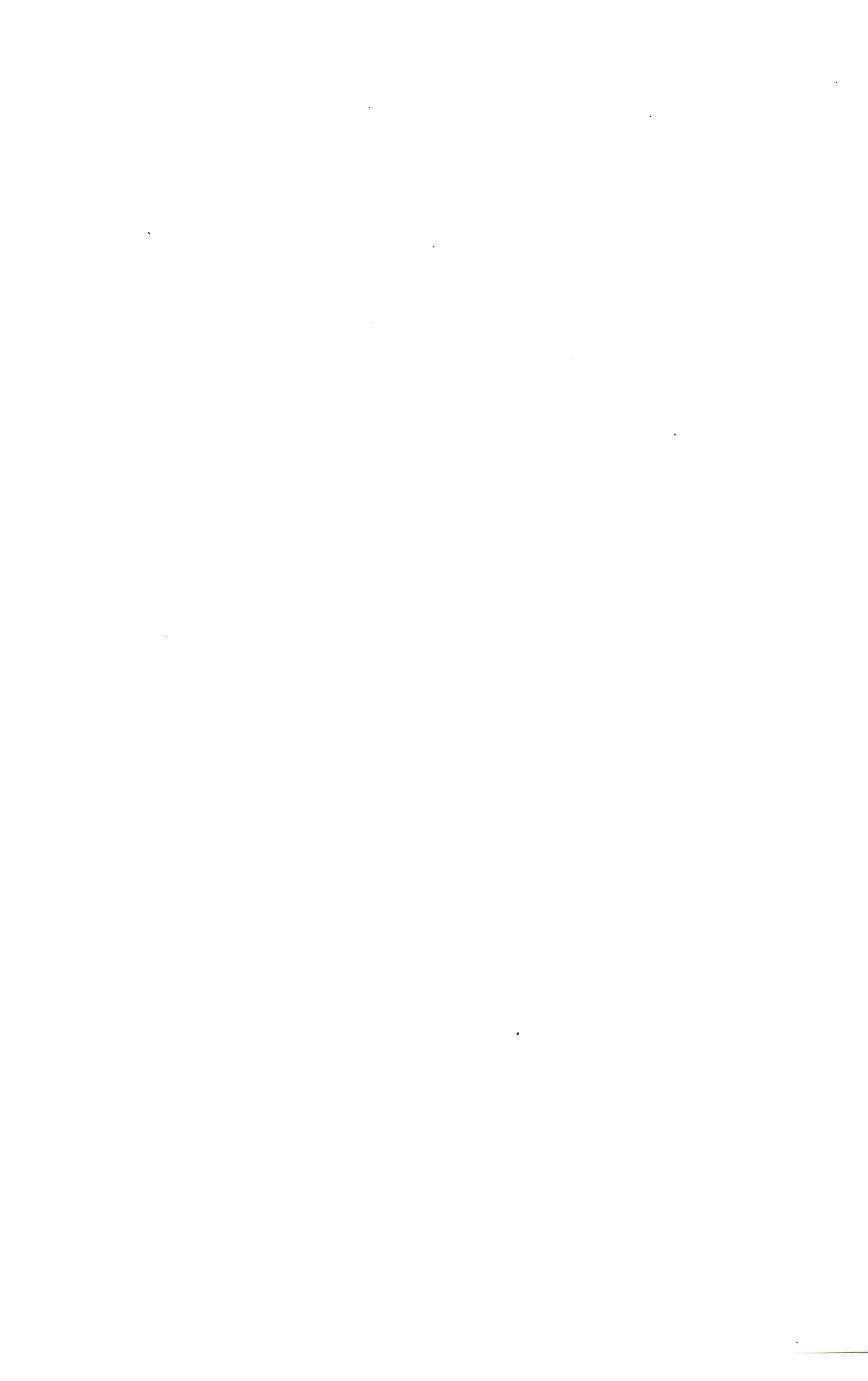
According to social historian, John Omer-Cooper: “It also organized large-scale people's congresses (volkskongresse) at which ideas developed within the Broederbond could be publicly debated and receive mass endorsement” (1987:174). The Federasie decided that May 31, Union/Republic Day, should not only re-affirm the civic unity of white South Africa, but could also celebrate white Afrikaner culture throughout the country (Dunbar Moodie 1975:148). During the following decades the FAK — with the endorsement of the Department of National Education and the Boederbond (Wilkins & Strydom 1980:250) — continued to declare its intention to “guard” and “build” a separate Afrikaans cultural character and identity. (The Bond's motto was *handhaaf en bou*).

But, when the National Party opened its membership to all races in 1990, the FAK faced an unprecedented dilemma as one of the official organs of the ruling party. The FAK could no longer promote Afrikaans culture as the exclusive inheritance of a white minority (*Patriot* 1990.8.31). At a meeting in December 1990, president FW de Klerk addressed representatives from the Federasie and associated cultural groups, including the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (SA Academy for Science and Art, founded c. 1918), and emphasized the FAK's need to broaden contact within society while, at the same time, ceasing to depend on future funding from Central Government.

I assume that, against a background of shifting political priorities, Apollonian patronage of the arts could no longer be sustained. Evidently, Afrikaner culture was not an immediate priority in the socio-political development of a nationalist future.



9. White Afrikaaners have endured radical socio-political changes since the 1960s. Book cover for Jan Botha's *Vervoeed Is Dead*.



SECTION FOUR IV

DIONYSIAN RESISTANCE AND PEOPLE'S CULTURE

While popular (Dionysian) resistance united and mobilized mass support during the 1980s, it was also an expression of an antithesis to institutionalized autocracy and reform in South Africa.

CHAPTER 9 *resistance and ethnic nationalism*

This chapter examines the consequences of "self-determination" among Afrikaner and Zulu nationalists.

afrikaner nationalism

zulu nationalism

CHAPTER 10 *resistance and black consciousness*

This chapter examines reactions to reform within political organizations and the concomittant manifestations of resistance which were visible in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).

historical context

political organizations

cultural organizations

CHAPTER 11 *resistance and the mass democratic movement*

This chapter examines reactions to official (Apollonian) reform within political organizations affiliated to the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and their concomittant manifestations of anarchy and resistance.

historical context

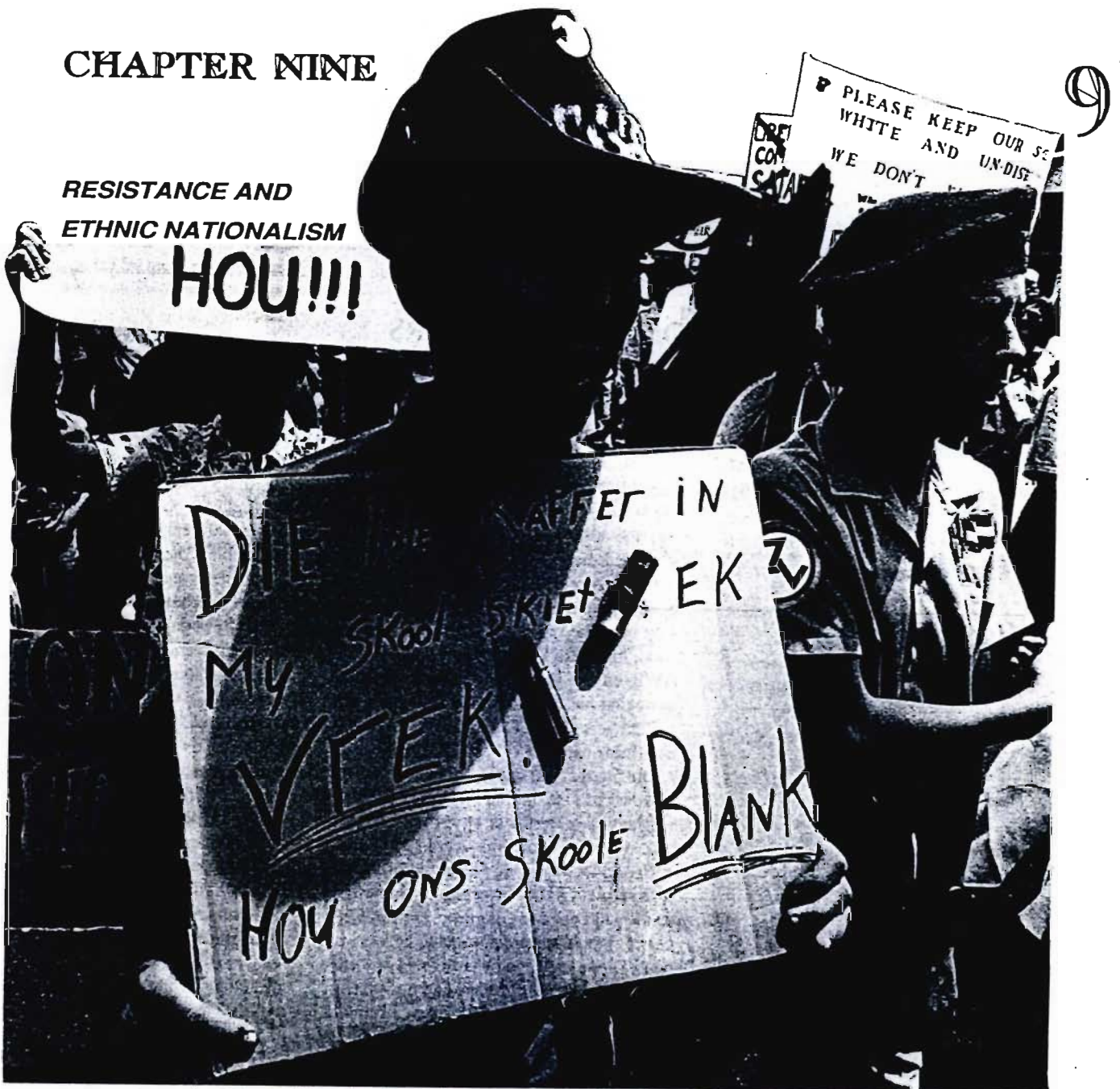
political organizations

cultural events

cultural organizations and centres

CHAPTER NINE

RESISTANCE AND ETHNIC NATIONALISM



1. Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging supporters at rally. Photograph by Kevin Carter (c. 1991).

afrikaner nationalism

While the early 1980s were a traumatic period for Afrikaner nationalists, PW Botha's insistence on implementing the "New Deal" Constitution split the National Party. Politically, matters worsened when he issued his notorious ultimatum; Afrikaners must either "adapt or die" in an era of imposed reform.¹ By 1982 the notion of a monolithic Afrikaner formation was destroyed — unity was shattered (Welsh 1987:10). Inevitably, white minority rule experienced a structural crisis from which it was unable to recover (Gillomee 1982). Within the Konserwatieve Party (Conservative Party/CP, founded 1982) and the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP, founded 1969) the so-called *verkrampste* (ultra-conservative) whites initially sought support in the radical Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB, Afrikaner Resistance Movement, founded c. 1973) and the atavistic Afrikanervolkswag (AVW, Guardian of the Afrikaner People, founded 1984). For a while the former became the military wing while the latter the cultural wing for organizations struggling to establish a legitimate and independent *volkstaat* (nation-state).²



2. "Promised Land". From the photographic exhibition by Gideon Mendel of the 1988 Great Trek Festivities.

Between 1986 and 1988, tensions between the NP's *Federasie van Kultuurverenigings* and the KP-HNP's *Afrikanervolkswag* increased to what amounted to a dramatic battle for ideological supremacy. The issues centred around the commemorative celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the *Groot Trek*. This ritual re-enactment of their epic migration symbolized the Afrikaner's struggle for freedom from foreign domination and for their survival in a sovereign fatherland:

Here then we see in motion the use of an interpretation of history being connected with an emotionally powerful cultural event aimed at producing a consciousness that will support the Verwoedean partition of the country. What is at stake is the degree to which the far-right, led by the *Afrikanervolkswag*, can reclaim the cultural symbols and power of Afrikanerdom from the NP . . . and use this cultural challenge to consolidate its bid for power (Currie 1988:26).

Inevitably the NP won the day — but not without suffering some critical losses. The ruling party no longer enjoyed sole monopoly over Afrikaner cultural symbols.

In more recent years, particularly since the unbanning of political parties in 1990, the *Federasie van Kultuurverenigings* proposed staging an alternative *Kultuurfees* in opposition to the English-orientated *National Arts Festival* in Grahamstown. As a marginalized grouping, the FAK intended to hold an Afrikaans-orientated festival at Bellville in the Cape to help their *volk* (nation) forge a cultural identity of its own.

At the same time the Conservative Party enlisted increasing support amongst white Afrikaners — drawing into their ranks those disaffected from the National Party. According to Conservative Party spokesperson, Pieter Mulder, the CP would be part of a loose alliance of white trade unions, cultural bodies and agricultural organizations.³ Mulder (1993) added that the mobilization of rightwing forces opposed to majority rule included "self-defence services" — amounting to the formation of a private army. Shortly afterwards, in May 1993, a military-type "junta" was formed when former generals of the S A Defence Force established a powerful new political bloc — the Afrikaner Volksfront (Afrikaner People's Front). This led to the subsequent formation of the Freedom Alliance which included, *inter alia*, Inkatha.⁴

Beyond any divisions which appear to be present in black society, there is a deep-rooted nationalism.⁶

Inkatha aims to organize Africans of Zulu origin into a cultural unit, regaining whatever had been lost of their traditional values.⁶



3. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi arriving at Kings' Park Stadium, Durban, for the launch of UWASA on 1 May 1986. Photograph by Ken Oosterbroek. (Quotation from Buthelezi cited by Klopper 1989:3; Bengu cited by Mare & Hamilton 1987:75).

zulu nationalism

Like the reactionary rightwing Afrikaners, the predominantly Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP, founded 1975) promoted an atavistic culture to commemorate past victories and heroes while also celebrating traditional rites and customs. The cultural politics of Inkatha displayed an Apollonic sensibility for an ordered and autocratic polity, while also the Dionysiac sensibility for a united and empowered oligarchy. Although Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi used so-called "traditional cultural symbols" to reproduce a sense of Zulu nationalism,⁷ he struggled to legitimize the formation of an independent nation-state. Having assumed the status of a national figure within the suppressed Black Consciousness movement in the 1970s, Buthelezi subsequently extended his KwaZulu power base in Natal by attempting to solicit wide support for the cultural politics of Inkatha. However, ambitious plans for co-operation with organizations reclaiming the traditions of the 1952 Congress Alliance failed because of the inherent ethnic and nationalist predisposition of Inkatha, as well as Buthelezi's own increasing acceptance of state patronage and his involvement with



4. Inkatha supporters with their "cultural weapons". Photograph by Cecil Sols (1991).

capitalist investment in KwaZulu/Natal. In June 1980, after Buthelezi took repressive action against boycotting students in Natal, the African National Congress broke off relations with Inkatha (Nusas–SRC 1990:6).

Between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s, often with tacit support from the South African security forces, the violence in Natal escalated whenever Inkatha members clashed with supporters of an ascendant mass democratic alliance over the proposed *Indaba* ("affair" or "gathering"). The KwaZulu/Natal *Indaba* was to ensure agricultural, commercial, industrial and administrative benefits for the privileged (white and black) élite, while also separating the Zulus — as the dominant ethnic group in the region — from the rest of the disenfranchised and proletarianized black population. For the latter, as an increasingly militant working-class, the KwaZulu/Natal *Indaba* was a regional, and not a national, solution. A separate settlement in favour of Inkatha would fragment, and thus weaken, the forces of the united democratic movement (Sewpershad 1987:41; Erwin 1987:90). Inkatha has, since the early 1990s, obstructed multi-party negotiations toward a single, unitary state — arguing instead for a confederation of states which would allow for KwaZulu to become a "self-determined" region.



5. Thousands of young Zulu women gather for the annual Reed Dance at Nongoma, Natal. Photograph courtesy of *Umxoxi* (1989).

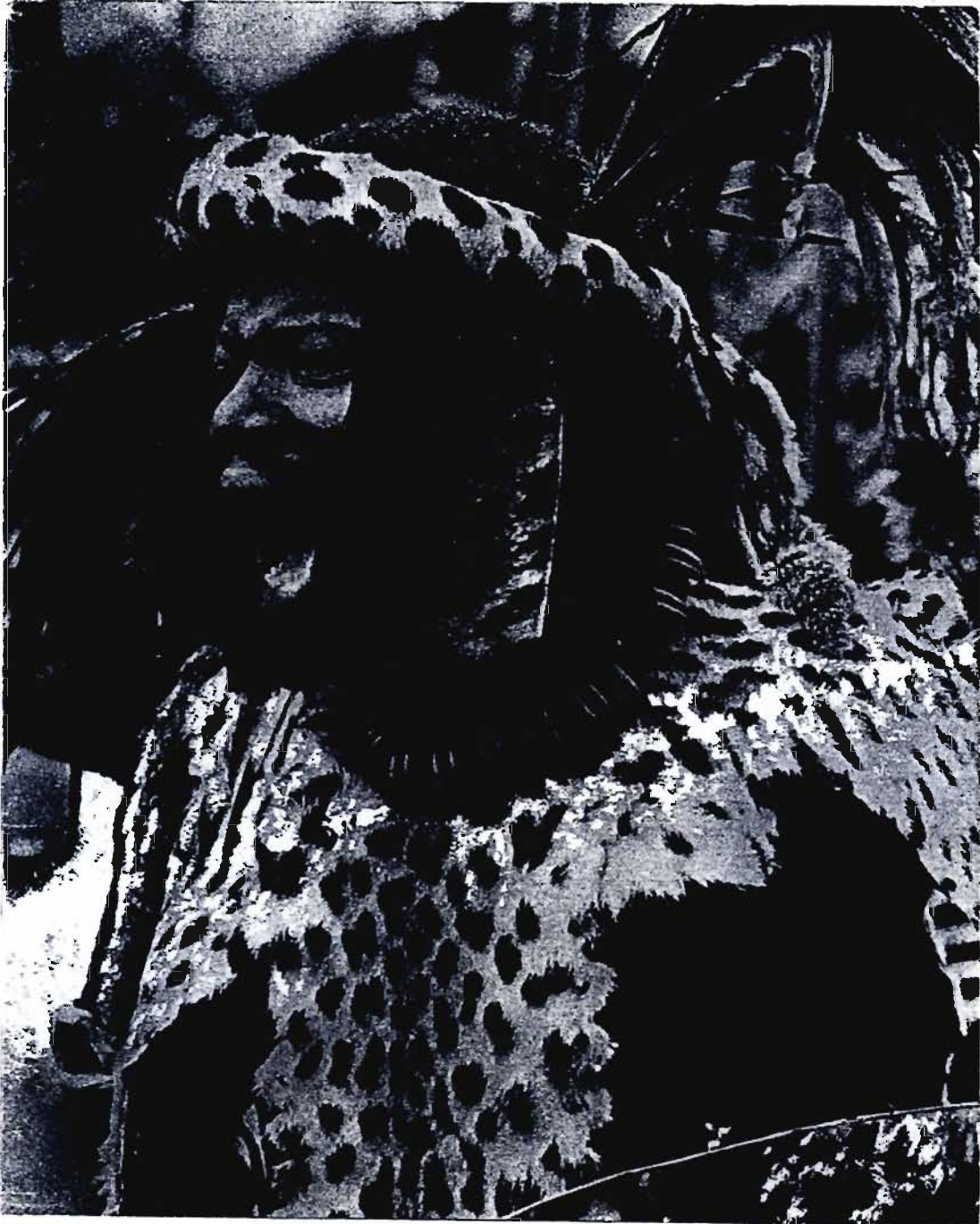
Buthelezi's role in South African politics has been full of contradictions. Graham Linscott eloquently points out some of these:

From a power-base founded almost exclusively on Zulu ethnicity, Buthelezi has proclaimed the virtues of non-racialism. He has fought the government but used its structures to afford his power-base a system of state-sponsored patronage. He has fought the African National Congress because he rejected an armed struggle, but flexed the muscle of Zulu military tradition to assert his claim to power. His presence looms over a province which has demonstrated the best and worst South Africa can do: on one hand, a laudible draft constitution for KwaZulu/Natal produced, at his initiative, by black and white in negotiation; on the other hand, a gruesome struggle, now five years old, between supporters and the young men of the ANC, a battle for territory and

resources whose outcome will have enormous impact on the nature of South Africa's transition to majority rule (1991:70).

With this we find the Apollonic usurping the Dionysiac — the craving for political order to be at the expense of social unity. Political differences are set before social preferences.

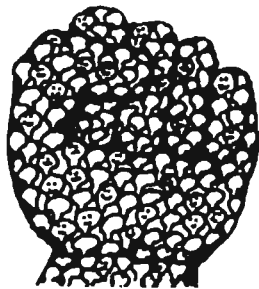
I am the founder of the modern Zulu nation-state — I am the never-vanquished and invincible leader.



6. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 'traditional' leopardskin regalia.

In reaction to the reformist initiatives of the NP, both Afrikaner nationalism and Zulu nationalism share common political objectives — that is, they intend to determine their own political destiny and cultural identity within an exclusive nation-state. To this end, the FAK and IFP have collaborated on joint ventures since the late 1980s.

CHAPTER TEN



RESISTANCE AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

Viva! Dionysus Lusios is our Liberator.

Pro-independence imagery from the South African frontline states.

1. (above right) Book cover for *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution*.
2. (below left) Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army poster (c. 1975).
3. (below right) Book cover for *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* (1981). Photograph by Neil Libbert.

MOZAMBIQUE

From Colonialism to Revolution



Zimbabwe must be free!



The Struggle for ZIMBABWE



historical context

The successful struggles for independence among the southern African front-line states — Mozambique, Angola and later Zimbabwe — acted as a catalyst in the striving for “self determination” among the majority of disenfranchised (black) South Africans. As a result, a renewed sense of economic, political and ideological confidence emerged among BCM activists aligned to the exiled Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC, founded 1958) and the banned Azanian People’s Organisation (Azapo, founded 1978) during the late-1970s and early 1980s. This period was marked by a popular (Dionysian) yearning for emancipation and liberation.



4. Poster design for a township 'clean-up' operation (1986).

political organisations

The primary aim behind the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa was to “emancipate” and “liberate” blacks from institutional and psychological oppression inflicted on them by the forces of imperialism and colonialism. Civic leaders and political activists resolutely developed and promoted Black theology, Black communalism and Black business.¹ Following an international socialist programme, they concerned themselves with literacy, welfare and health projects as well as with bulk-buying co-operatives and the establishment of training, trading and service collectives (Matiwana & Walters 1986:27). Although the PAC (acting through Azapo inside the country) rejected all forms of apartheid-capitalism, their non-collaborationist tactics were sometimes compromised when organizations accepted “tainted” funds from government authorities or from multi-national corporations. Most BCM projects, however, were sponsored by church bodies and through private foundations.

It was assumed that only the black working class could give content to questions of “national identity” and “national culture”. This assumption included the notion that workers should represent the interests of *all* citizens in the struggle for a future nation-state. Inevitably, “nation building” was seen as a historical task which the working class alone was destined to fulfill. However, adherents of Black Consciousness ideology rejected the 1955 *Freedom Charter*² — as well as the involvement of Whites and Indians in the anti-apartheid movement — and subsequently formed the National Forum in 1983,³ of which Azapo became the most significant participant. Neville Alexander qualifies this exclusivist principle by adding that white membership would only be possible after liberation that is, during the second phase of revolution when a socialist state — the Azanian nation-state — would be established (1985:19).⁴

Our nation is dismembered —
we, the people, are torn apart.



5. Norman Cathrine, *Martyr* (1991), oil on canvas.

There is a myth of an African cultural
past of blissful purity and goodness.⁶



6. Detail from *Vuzi Goes Home* (1982). Artwork by Andy Mason.

As already discussed in Chapter 6 (society and politics), the Dionysian revolt from below took refuge in secret (“underground”) organizations through which the *hoi polloi* protested against social fragmentation and political violence (Fischer 1981:41). They rebelled against the wickedness of class rule while prophesizing the return of an old order. In South Africa, the Black Consciousness Movement prophesized a return to an assumed utopian polity that existed before the arrival of European (white) settlers. Pre-colonial Africa was, according to this BCM prophesy, a vast, unspoilt realm where societies lived in harmony; it was a “golden age” of freedom that knew no enslavement, no famine and no poverty.⁵ The romanticization of such an ancestral commonwealth was essential to the myth of an Azanian nation.

Karen Press, in her succinct dissertation *Towards a Revolutionary Artistic Practice in South Africa* (1987), argues that the myth of a utopian (pre-colonial) Africa also perpetuated the belief that an indigenous culture can be easily revived and restored:

There is an assumption that the “original” indigenous culture of the oppressed people has remained intact throughout the period of colonial domination, and is available to be mobilized by them at the moment of independence. And there is, too, a belief in the necessary progressiveness of this indigenous culture, whose values are “dialectically opposed to those of the ruling class”; the implication here is that there were no oppressive aspects to the traditional culture and consciousness now being revived (1990:56).

Continuing with Press, we should also critique the BCM strategy for recruiting (working class) artists and stimulating (traditional) cultural activity during the late 1970s and early 1980s:

Many black writers, actors, painters, musicians, and others first began to practise their arts in this context; and whether working as individuals, or as members of the many cultural groups initiated at the time, they defined their work as part of this process of asserting black identity, black humanity and creativity, in defiance of a dehumanizing social system . . . But it cannot be denied that the BCM's insistence on the significance of culture in the process of political struggle forged a link between individual artistic practice and political, organizational work which had not previously existed, and which laid the foundations for much of the cultural activity taking place within the liberation movement (1990:21).

A poem, for example, isn't just an individual thing; it grows out of the poet's own cultural background — their community, their class. To take this a bit further — a poet can either draw inspiration from the traditions of his or her own community, and use his or her work to advance the interests and hopes of the people. Or, he or she can try to escape and betray those traditions.⁷

. . . we are not starting with empty hands. The working class in South Africa has a long and honourable tradition, a massive cultural foundation upon which to build. Workers know the songs, they know their heroes, they are making their history now, today.

In a future non-racial South Africa this working class culture will come to fruition.⁸



7. Book cover for "Worker Culture", a *Staffrider* publication (1989). Painting by Shelley Sacks. (Quotes cited by Press 1990:29 & 31–32).

While the working class has an undeniable history of resistance that goes back generations, their past cultural “traditions” were not pure or uncontaminated, but had been subjected to colonial and imperial reconstruction (see Klopper 1989). Furthermore, so-called ancestral traditions do not arise organically, but are reconstructed by the descendants to fit ever-changing socio-political demands. Press argues persuasively:

But traditions do not perpetuate themselves in some spontaneous, “natural” way; they are perpetuated, and altered, by the choices which people make in the context of particular social processes that shape their lives. The ways in which these traditions are mobilized must therefore be scrutinized, to determine how they are being used . . . The value of the indigenous must be assessed in terms of its relevance to the lives of the oppressed population. It is important that people should see their own world depicted in the art produced for and by them; a people which does not have access to an aesthetic vocabulary for expressing its own material experience, is deprived of a tool for examining that experience. And it is important, equally, that the lifestyle and cultural habits of a society should grow out of its own history and present needs, rather than aping an inappropriate model imported from elsewhere. The indigenous, insofar as it serves the social and cultural needs of society, should be incorporated into a progressive national culture; it should not, however, find its place there simply because it is indigenous (1990:32, 59).



8. The art and architecture produced by Ndebele women reveal their adaptability, resilience and resistance to apartheid oppression. Photograph courtesy of *World View* (1994).



9. Entrance mural at the FUBA (Federated Union of Black Arts) Centre, Johannesburg. Artwork by Johannes Phokela (1986).

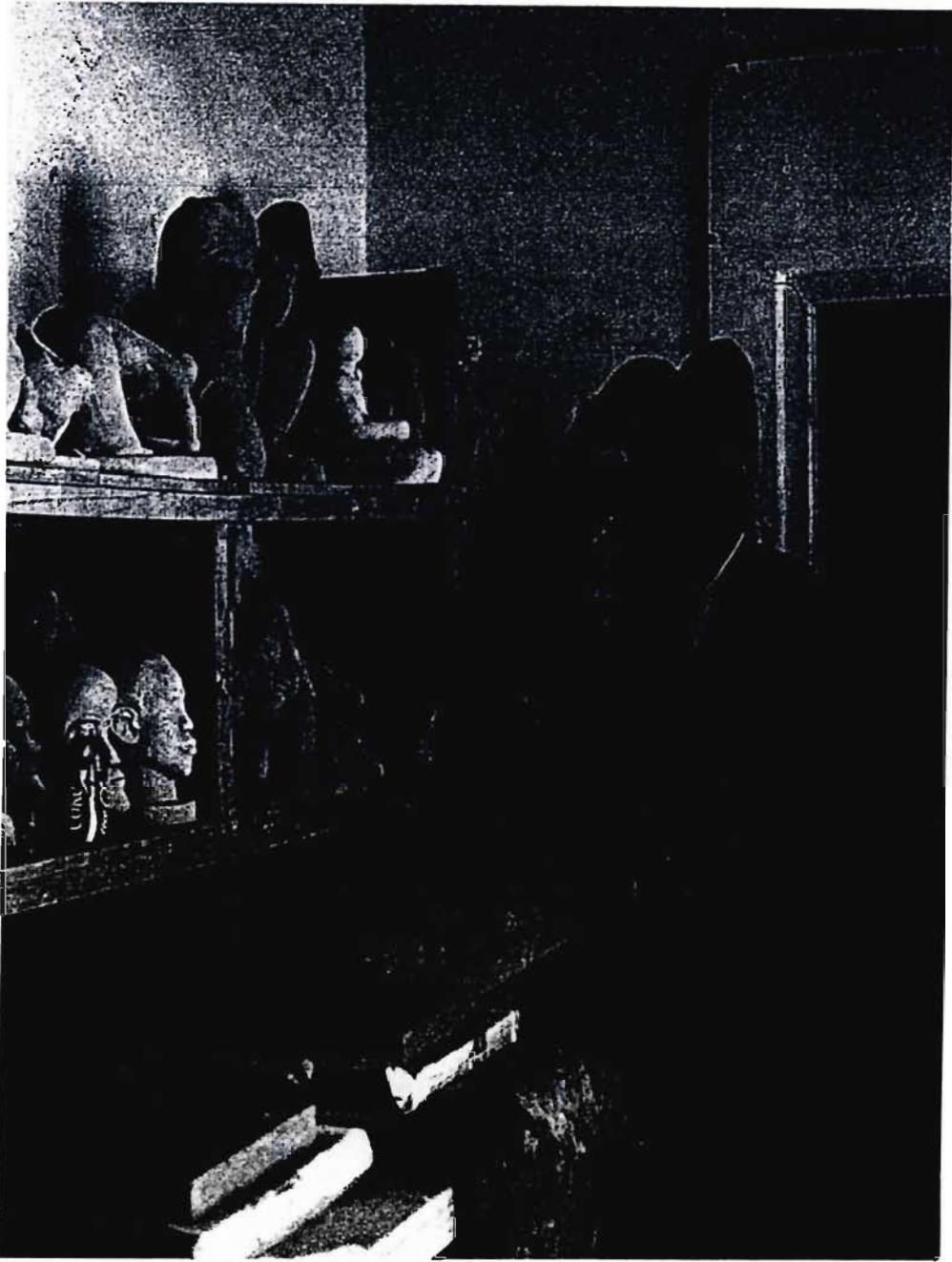
cultural organizations and art centres

While the Black Consciousness Movement played a major role in resurrecting (traditional) indigenous culture, there were many aspirant urban and petty-bourgeois (black) Africans who also appropriated (contemporary) Afro-American culture from abroad (Manaka 1987:16). These (adulterated) traditions were significant sources of cultural inspiration behind the upsurge of Black drama, poetry and art of the townships in the 1970s.

Among the many so-called "community" art centres and projects which emerged (mostly in the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising) were the Katlehong Art Centre (KAC, founded 1976); the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA, founded 1978); the Nyanga Art Centre (NAC, founded 1979, disbanded 1990); the Vakalisa Arts Collective (founded 1980, disbanded 1990) and the Afrika Cultural Centre (founded 1981).

Other terms, such as "grassroots" or "ground-level", have also been used in reference to community orientated projects and art centres. These terms implied the active will of "the people"⁹ in the organization of their own administrative affairs. Art historian, Lise van Robbroeck (1991:93), cites some general aspects of ideology and practice behind so-called community art centres in South Africa.¹⁰ She lists their main aims as follows:

- To provide any member of the community who so wishes the opportunity to participate in creative activity free of charge or at the lowest possible expense. In accordance with this ideal, there are no entrance requirements at community arts centres, and they are non-profitable.
- To serve as resource centre where participants can, with the help of expert advice and free materials, become economically self-sufficient.
- To demolish elitist and academic conceptions of high art and craft as distinct, hierarchically differentiated categories by incorporating a variety of interdisciplinary and multi-media activities.



10. The former sculpture studio at the Nyanga Art Centre, Cape Town. Artist Sydney Holo (c. 1985).

- To provide sufficient artistic skills and education to enable students to serve as art teachers in their communities.
- To encourage and develop grassroots cultural activities within the larger community and to provide cultural recreation for children.
- To foster social cohesion by encouraging a collective approach to cultural activity as opposed to what is regarded as excessive individualism amongst artists of the western tradition.

The partisan and politicized nature of the art world in the 1980s led to the perception that art centres either *belonged* to the “people’s camp” or to the “apartheid camp”. State funded centres — such as Katlehong and Mofolo — tended to be grouped, fairly or unfairly, under the latter.

The notion of a “people’s camp” is derived from the (Dionysian) longing for a lost unity — for a synthesis of the personality and the collective — in its protest against the (Apollonian) alienation of apartheid-capitalism. This notion is rooted, historically, in the ethos of Romanticism. The Romantics proclaimed the gospel of the “the people” as an organically developed, homogenous “community”. Robert Thornton and Mamphela Ramphele critiqued this quest for “community”:

The Black Consciousness movement of the 1970s popularized the use of the word “communities” to refer to wide socio-political groups like “black community” (which included all those classified as African, Coloured and Indian) or, even more loosely, “the community” to describe residential entities such as townships (themselves the product of earlier administrative decisions rather than joint action of the residents themselves). This usage was fully in keeping with the trends in the rest of Africa at the time. The assumption was often made that a community of purpose always existed and that people representing a “community” would act for the common good. This was believed to be particularly so of communities which had suffered oppression, or which had been economically, socially or culturally deprived (Biko 1987). In fact, however, many projects have failed in both urban and rural areas as a result of the assumption that communities did in fact exist. The community of wealth, of purpose or of responsibility that was meant to drive the project and ensure its access to resources was simply not there (1988:35).

As a term of reference in South Africa, “community” tends to refer to an *ethnic majority* rather than to ethnic minorities such as the Afrikaners. The latter prefer the term *volk*. Thornton and Ramphele (1988:39) argue that communities are “made, enacted and believed in”. So, too, is the concept of “the people”. Both are determined by social and political forces, or by historical and cultural factors that are not necessarily of their own making. The Romantic fallacy rests on the assumption that “communities” or “the people” evolve *naturally* to produce bonded social clusters within a larger society. Fischer adds:

This Romantic concept of the people seen as a kind of essence outside and beyond class divisions and possessed of a collectively creative “folk soul” has gone on causing confusion right up to the present day, and many of us frequently use the word “the people” without a clear idea of what we mean (1981:62).



Despite the diverse meanings which can be attributed to the above terms, one thing is certain — we generally assume that “communities” and “the people” ought to exist as the legitimate goal of all political action. The question which arises is whether or not the interests of the so-called (black) community represents a *class* struggle, or the *national* struggle.

Central to the debate within the Black Consciousness Movement and the Mass Democratic Movement was the question of whose interests “the struggle” served — to what extent was the political struggle a class or a nationalist one? (Press 1990:28–31).

The crucial issue for the BCM was that of racial oppression.

The crucial issue for the MDM was that of economic exploitation.

As a class-based alliance we promote a workerist culture in favour of a socialist future for the majority of South Africans.

The *Azanian Manifesto* calls for “the development of one national culture inspired by socialist values”. We are united in our aspirations for a homogeneous socialist state.

As a multi-class alliance we promote a populist culture in favour of a democratic future for all South Africans.

The *Freedom Charter* says that “the doors of learning and culture shall be opened”. We are united through our shared aspirations for a heterogeneous democratic nation.



11. BCM and MDM speak separately. Cover illustration for *Media Development—Alternative Communication in South Africa* (1986).

These views are, as Press (1990:28–29) has pointed out, the extreme poles in the BCM/MDM. Albeit a socialist programme or a democratic project, both were forced to accept the existence of a political intersection between race and class — in South Africa economic exploitation perpetuated racial oppression.

For the MDM the issue revolved around a class perspective within a broader (national) agenda for a non-racial democracy. To this end, the MDM minimized the differences in economic interest between its affiliates and, instead, stressed the desire for “unity” among its support base. As a result, most affiliated members believed they shared the same ambition — a non-racial democracy.

While supporters of the Black Consciousness Movement and the Mass Democratic Movement shared similar aims in stimulating cultural activity, their objectives differed with regard to their respective approaches to the question of national liberation. Both encouraged artists, or “cultural workers”, to contribute to their campaigns by producing *functional* art (such as posters, poetry, dramatic sketches) which would not only propagate their own ideologies, but which could also contest the ideological mechanisms of the oppressive apartheid régime. Press again:

The reasons for the interest of these organizations in cultural projects go deeper than the desire to have at their disposal a “propaganda wing”. Their analysis of the mechanisms of oppression and exploitation in South Africa, which include an education system and a host of laws and social regulations designed to entrench beliefs in racial difference, in individualism, élitism and subservience to authority, has led them to see the importance of countering these ideological mechanisms. This means going beyond a concern to alter the material living and working conditions of the oppressed people (through campaigns for housing, electricity, better wages, political rights, and so on), and facing the need to alter the values and the social aspirations of these people. Thus, a cultural ethos must be generated which propagates values such as anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-imperialism, and which seeks to educate people into new patterns of social relationships consistent with a struggle for social equality (1991:25).



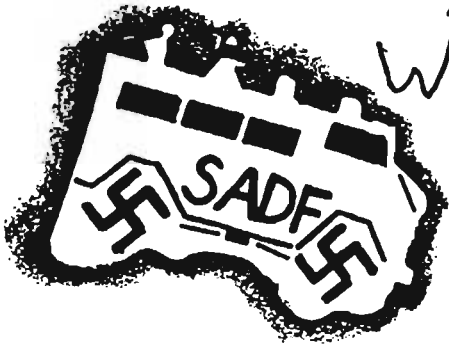
The role of “people’s culture” was thus part of an overall programme aimed at establishing “people’s power” in South Africa. The target of “people’s power” was apartheid-capitalism, and the project was to *destabilize* the existing state apparatus and render the country *ungovernable*.

The following chapter examines this (Dionysian) revolution in relation to popular political action, specifically within the Mass Democratic Movement, which sought to inspire and mobilize “the people” of South Africa during the 1980s.



RESISTANCE AND THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

Why JOIN THE ARMY
WHEN YOU CAN GET
STONED
AT HOME!



A NATION THAT
LOVES MARTYRDOM
CANNOT BE ENSLAVED!

DON'T VOTE —
END RACIST RULE
NOW

Complacent
??
ALUTA CONTINUA



1. Urban graffiti calling for boycotts, stayaways and strikes in Cape Town during the 1980s.

historical context

The period leading up to the 1980s saw the exiled ANC setting about reorganizing its internal structures while reasserting a populist profile (often in conflict with the PAC) both abroad and at “home”. To this end the entire decade was marked by ANC orchestrated campaigns — such as national boycotts, stayaways, strikes — the first of these directed at the 1981 *Republic Festival* celebrations (Odendaal 1989:129).

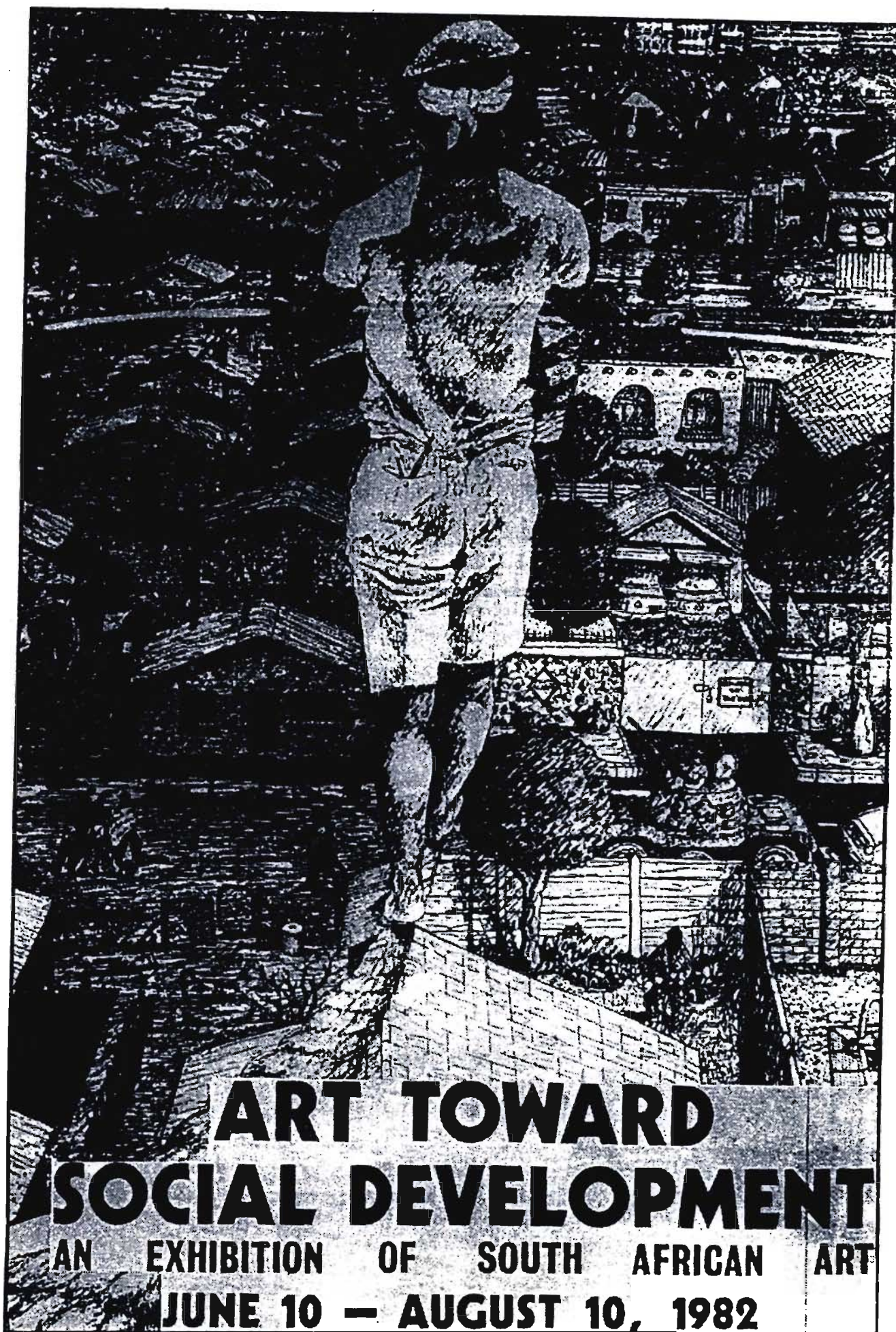
political organization

The Gaborone arts festival and exhibition in July 1982, presumptuously called *Art Toward Social Development and Change*, marked a turning point for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. The event, generally referred to as the *Culture and Resistance* festival, was, in part, a critical response to the pro-Republic celebrations held in South Africa the year before. The *Culture and Resistance* festival, organized under the auspices of the Botswana National Museum and aided by the Gaborone-based Medu Art Ensemble, drew artists into a single cultural forum beyond the borders of South Africa. This was one of the first trips undertaken by, amongst others, white South African democrats wishing to “visit” the ANC in exile.¹ Here writers, composers, musicians, poets, photographers, sculptors, printmakers and painters — and especially those involved in collective projects — were able to discuss and debate their work without fear of reprisals by the South African state-bureaucracy. Wally Serote, a Medu member and the ANC *de facto* cultural attaché, maintains:

Community-orientated organizations often work at cross purposes to each other. They need to discuss their differences to be able to work more effectively towards a common goal and we're [ANC] hoping this festival will provide the right impetus (1981:19).

Despite the laudible rhetoric about “community orientated organizations” and a “common goal”, the conference never addressed these issues in concrete terms. Instead, the entire event became a *symbolic* moment in the history of cultural resistance. This was due to the asymmetrical representation, content and structure of the conference. Graham Hayman made the following terse observations on his return from Botswana:

- The thrust of the conference was misdirected as evidenced in several points of organization: (a) each medium was dealt with separately, both in terms of subject and time. No sessions of an integrated nature were offered; (b) the delegates and speakers constituted a distorted sample in terms of contributions to the international debate on social development: no anthropologists, radical economists or political scientists. At the other end of the spectrum, there were no traditional artists, poets, praise singers or musicians present. Most of the speakers and delegates were drawn from the arena of individual *rather than collective action*.
- [T]here was also confusion about the concepts of “community” and “common culture”. As the symposium progressed, increasing use was made of these terms though with little idea of how this culture was to be brought into being. The two concepts of community and culture were not defined, intergrated strategies of resistance not developed nor were the problems of overcoming the existing class divisions and cultural responses dealt with.
- If structural change is to be effected a comprehensive strategy of resistance must span a wider range of social practices: trade unions, teachers, sports administrators, cultural workers and the like. There would obviously have to be a significant shift away from the limitations of individual artistic vision, art-as-culture and claims of universality for art (1982:33–34).



2. Poster for the art exhibition at the Culture and Resistance festival in Gaborone (1982).

Hayman's succinct report exposes several other unresolved issues which, both during and after the conference, failed to effect any real development and change. These included the lack of focus and inadequate debate around cultural production and reception, artistic independency and co-option by the state, rural and urban art practices, race and class divisions in society, as well as the experiential differences between local and exiled artists.

Nevertheless, returning from the arts festival, delegates enthusiastically adopted terms such as "resistance art", "cultural worker", "common culture" and "culture as a site of struggle". These terms rapidly became part of a new popular discourse around culture (Kross 1982:11, Kgotsisile 1982:3).

Many delegates subsequently set about helping to reorientate "progressive" cultural organizations in South Africa — but not always with the desired or even expected effect (Press 1990:21–23). Two successful ventures were the Screen Training Project in Johannesburg and the Community Arts Project (CAP, founded 1977) in Cape Town. Lionel Davis, media co-ordinator at CAP, explained:

At the *Culture and Resistance* festival held in Botswana in 1982, it was established that cultural workers had a definite role to play in the struggle for liberation. We at CAP felt we could provide a service to the oppressed communities in relation to specific social and political campaigns by producing posters and other materials which served as a means to propagate the struggles of the communities. By implementing this, CAP became instrumental in facilitating the recent growth of poster production serving community struggles in the Western Cape . . . Now, when people come with a request, they are introduced to very simple printmaking techniques which are easy to learn, cheap to acquire and simple to manage . . . The emphasis throughout is on communication, collective effort and social relevance and not on high art or self-centred expression (1989:56-57).

Soon other organizations, following the Medu example, dedicated themselves to the deployment of art in the service of political activism and to postermaking as a kind of guerrilla activity. Art critic Ivor Powell has added:

While the posters of the mass movement were immediately aimed at creating solidarity among the oppressed and at delivering criticisms against the establishment, they also reached out beyond the borders of South Africa. One of the goals of the 1980s was to get overseas public opinion on side. Posters excelled at getting local messages across to international audiences (1991:43).

With an increasing demand for posters — based on a limited, functionalist understanding of art as "propaganda" — CAP began to redefine its role as a training and service centre in art, music and drama for local cultural workers. CAP was also one of the first independent community-based cultural organizations to offer a certified diploma course for visual artists.

The ANC, following the 1982 *Culture and Resistance* festival, set up its own Department of Arts and Culture (DAC, founded 1983).



3. Posters produced at the Community Arts Project during the 1980s.



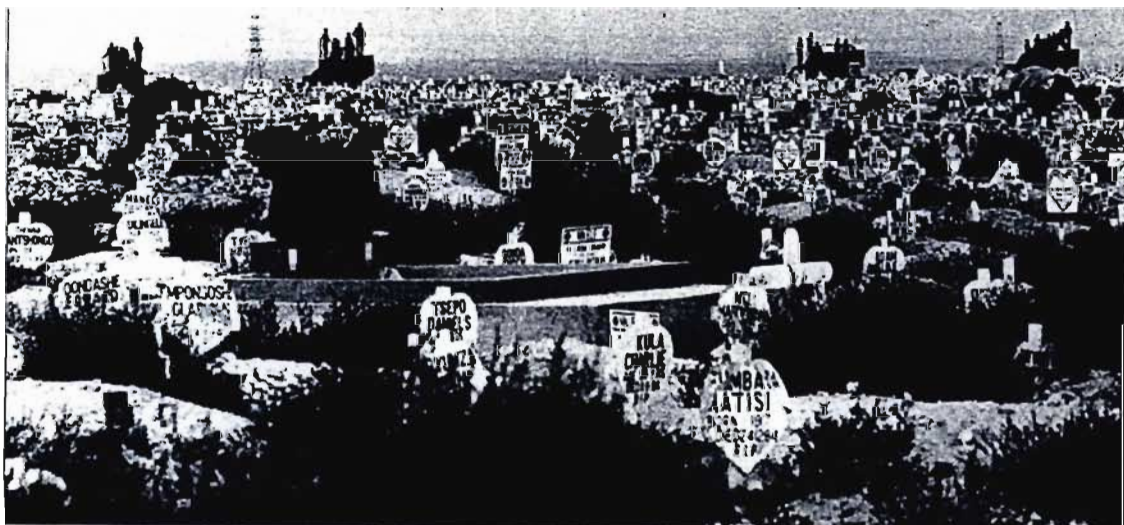
In December 1982, the Dutch and South African Artists Against Apartheid hosted the *Cultural Voice of Resistance* arts festival in Amsterdam. This event added momentum to the international anti-apartheid movement. At the same time, popular organizations at home began to reassert the legitimacy of the Congress tradition through the recovery of the *Freedom Charter*. This document included the demand for a non-racial enhancement of a common cultural life based on discovering, developing and encouraging all human creativity.²

The ANC, through the covert operations of a militant National Liberation Movement (NLM) and the populist Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), re-emerged as the political group with probably the largest degree of general support within the townships (Lodge 1983:339). This, in part, was due to developing critiques of BCM strategies. It was argued that problems associated with “class”, and not only “race”, were central to understanding the dynamics of apartheid-capitalism (Saul & Gelb 1981).

With the ascendance of the ANC and the call for a co-ordinated non-racial, national and democratic struggle to oppose the proposed “New Deal” Constitution in 1982, came the formation of the extra-parliamentary alliance — the United Democratic Front (UDF, founded 1983, disbanded 1991). The UDF and Azapo hence became the most influential vehicles inside South Africa for the traditions of the exiled ANC and the PAC respectively — though public statements by both carefully emphasized their organizational autonomy and non-alignment in an arena of legitimate, but restricted, political activity.

As the largest anti-apartheid formation ever seen inside the country, the UDF actively challenged the government’s reform initiatives aimed at reinforcing constitutionalized ethnicity. According to Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches: “The government’s decision to impose a new constitution in the name of reform without including black participation mobilized resistance in South Africa” (1989:9).

The implementation of the tricameral parliament during September 1984 marked the beginning of a “civil war” in South Africa as rioting erupted in the townships of the Transvaal. Several newspapers reported the event as the “bloodiest day” since Soweto in 1976.



4. SADF Casspirs patrol the outskirts of a cemetery during a funeral in the eastern Cape (c. 1986). Photograph by Julian Cobbing.

By 1985 the UDF and Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions, founded 1985) converged to form a massive alliance as the labour movement entered the political arena to support community organizations. The mobilization of individuals and groups — particularly those who shared similar ideological (Charterist) objectives — thus became a unifying factor among hereto dispersed political formations. In spite of this, the UDF and the National Forum continued to pursue their own separate agendas (with different strategies and principles) for the latter half of the decade.

In an era of resistance, the UDF–Cosatu alliance revived the songs, slogans and symbols from the 1950s — the era of defiance when the ANC–SACP (South African Communist Party, founded 1953, formerly the CPSA, founded 1922) alliance was most overt in its opposition to apartheid-capitalism. Together, the UDF and Cosatu ushered in a new period in South African political history — forging political and economic alliances to secure and wield power collectively. This was a strategic necessity while legitimate resistance was suppressed under the 1985 and 1986–1990 states of emergency. As a result, many activists involved in sport,

education, labour, and even the media and the church, turned to culture as an alternative arena for struggle to promote political protest on a national level. For a while cultural activity remained relatively unimpeded by the spate of repressive regulations. As a result, issue-specific exhibitions and festivals — including rallies and demonstrations — were often the only available expression of resistance:

Murals, banners, posters, T-shirts — visual expressions of resistance — have become an important part of the work of progressive organizations and trade unions in the mass democratic movement, along with other forms of cultural activity like plays, dramatic sketches, songs and poems (Williamson 1989:9).

Press, writing about the ways in which individual artists linked themselves to political organizations within the MDM (and, conversely, the ways in which these political organizations defined the role and function of artists in the struggle for liberation), adds:

Today, however, artists are linking their commitment with increasing frequency to the political analyses of the mass-based political organizations inside the country. In interviews, articles and public speeches, one artist after another explains his or her aims in political terms, insisting on the connection between the book, song, painting, play etc. and the mass struggle against the South African government (1990:20).

Since literature and art are subordinate to politics . . . writers and artists must in the first place unite on the issue of resistance.

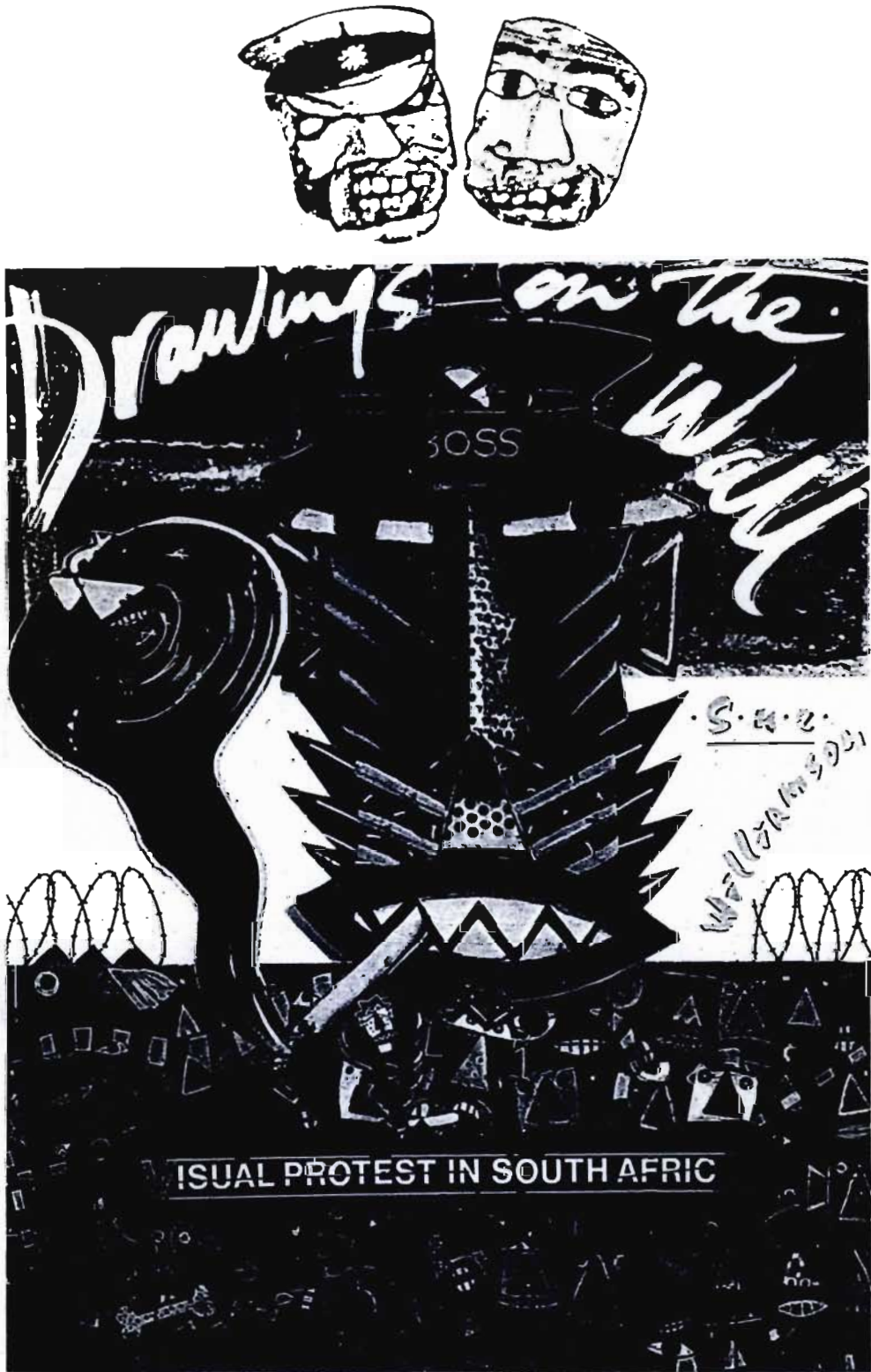
Secondly, we should unite them on the issue of democracy.

Thirdly, we should unite them on the issues peculiar to the literary and artistic world, questions of method and style in literature and art; here again, as we are for socialist realism and some people do not agree, the range of unity will be narrower still.⁵

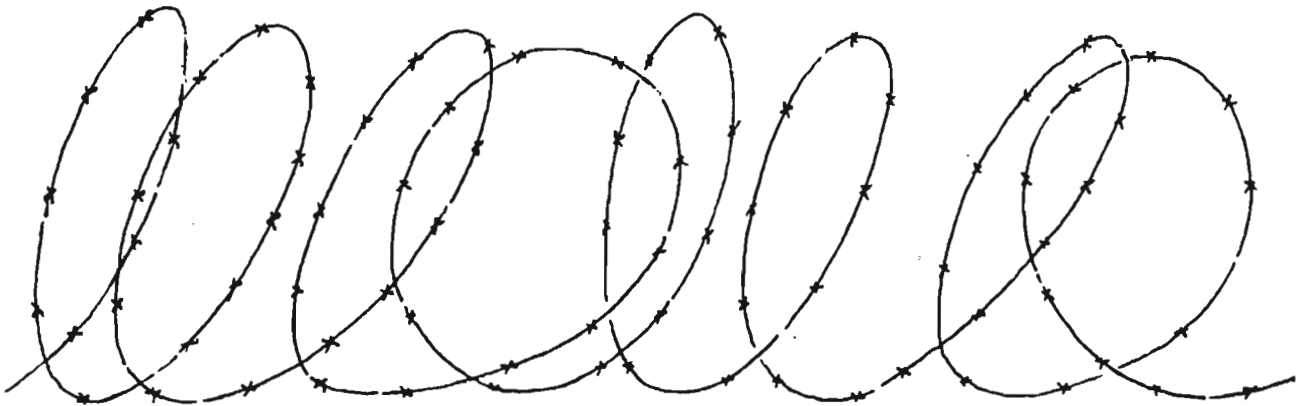
毛主席的无产阶级革命路线胜利万



5. More than 8 000 flash cards produce an enormous image of Chairman Mao at the Chinese Third National Games (1975). (Mao Tse-Tung, cited by Press 1990:11).



6. Pre-launch promotion for Sue Williamson's book, subsequently titled *Resistance Art in South Africa* (1990).



cultural events

Exemplary exhibitions during the mid-1980s included the 1985 *Art for Peace* and the banned 1986 *SA Art in Conflict*, both organized by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC, founded 1985). These two exhibitions opposed compulsory military conscription and the violence brought about by South African Defence Force troops in the townships.⁴

In response to imposed military “law and order”, the mass democratic movement adopted a (Dionysian) strategy of “ungovernability” aimed at rendering both the state-bureaucracy and apartheid-capitalism ineffectual and redundant. Their political agenda was framed in terms of “people’s power”.⁵ To this end the UDF also called upon township communities to set up street, block and area committees — as well as disciplinary courts — to assist in taking control of their own civic affairs. As discussed in Chapter 6 (society and politics), the residents of several Transvaal townships responded to this call by building “people’s parks”. For a brief period, from the end of 1985 until the beginning of 1986, the townships of Mamelodi, Alexandra, Kagiso, Oukasie, Mohlakeng and Soweto were dotted with these parks. These parks were, as Steven Sack has shown, more than symbolic playgrounds for children — they had also become “safe” spaces for cultural and political activity:

Part of the question of political power was the need to deal with problems of environmental, cultural and recreational activity in black residential areas . . . They [parks] were an attempt to redefine the townships, to provide the townships with a civic identity that celebrated and respected the imprisoned and deceased heroes of the struggle. A popular and participatory event in which the youth tested their inventiveness in transforming detritus into monuments. Here for a moment the artistically talented had an opportunity to entertain and engage township residents. [Prior to this virtually all visual imagery produced by black artists was for sale to a predominantly white and suburban audience] (1989a:1, 3. See, also, Sack 1989b).



7. Cross Roads Park, Oukasie Township, Johannesburg (c. 1985).

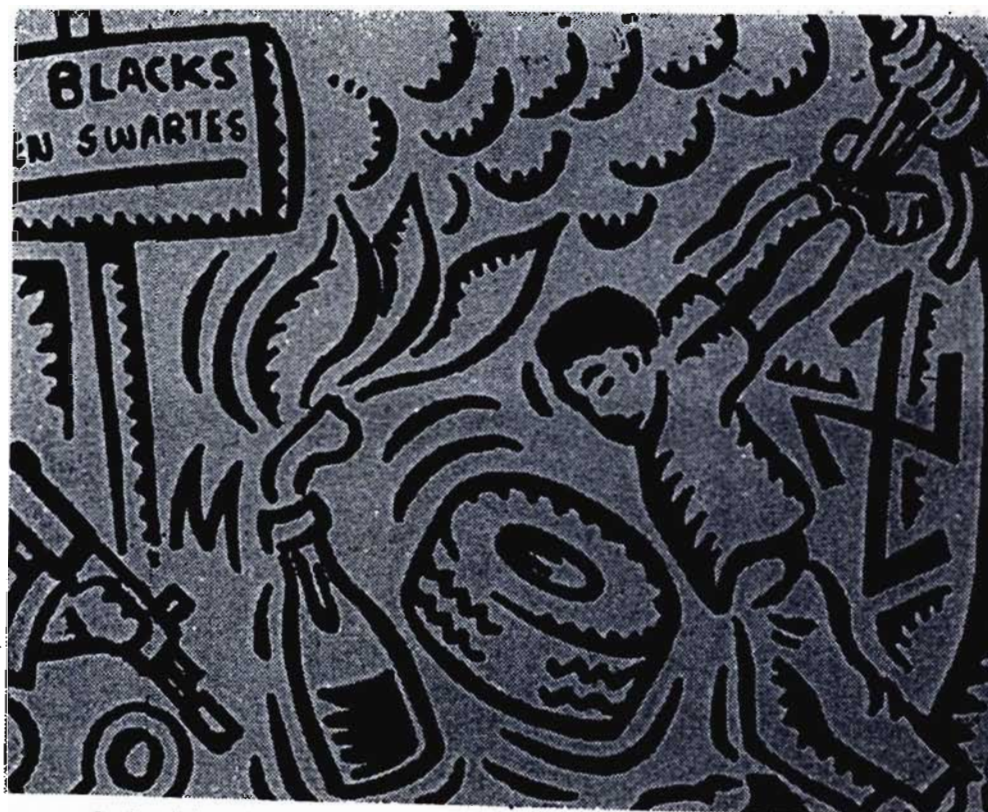
But not only had cultural activity become an important means of organizing and mobilizing people around particular issues, it had also given a “voice” to the struggle during a period when the infamous banning orders, organizational restrictions and media clampdowns prevented many from knowing what was happening inside the townships.⁶ As a result, the MDM used the concept of “people’s culture” to counter the “dis-information” tactics of the state-bureaucracy. These initiatives were joined by the UDF’s 1986 arts festival, *Breaking the Silence — a Cultural Intervention*, which resisted restrictions and repression under the existing state of emergency:

With the resurgence of mass-based organizations in South Africa, it had again become clear that culture was the possession of the “people”. We have seen this demonstrated over and over. At mass rallies and funerals, during our assemblies and on our marches, we’ve been stirred, sometimes profoundly moved, heartened and inspired by the popular culture of resistance (Menán Du Plessis, cited by Williamson 1989:9).

Odendaal gives more background to the increasing (Dionysiac) insurrection of the late 1980s:

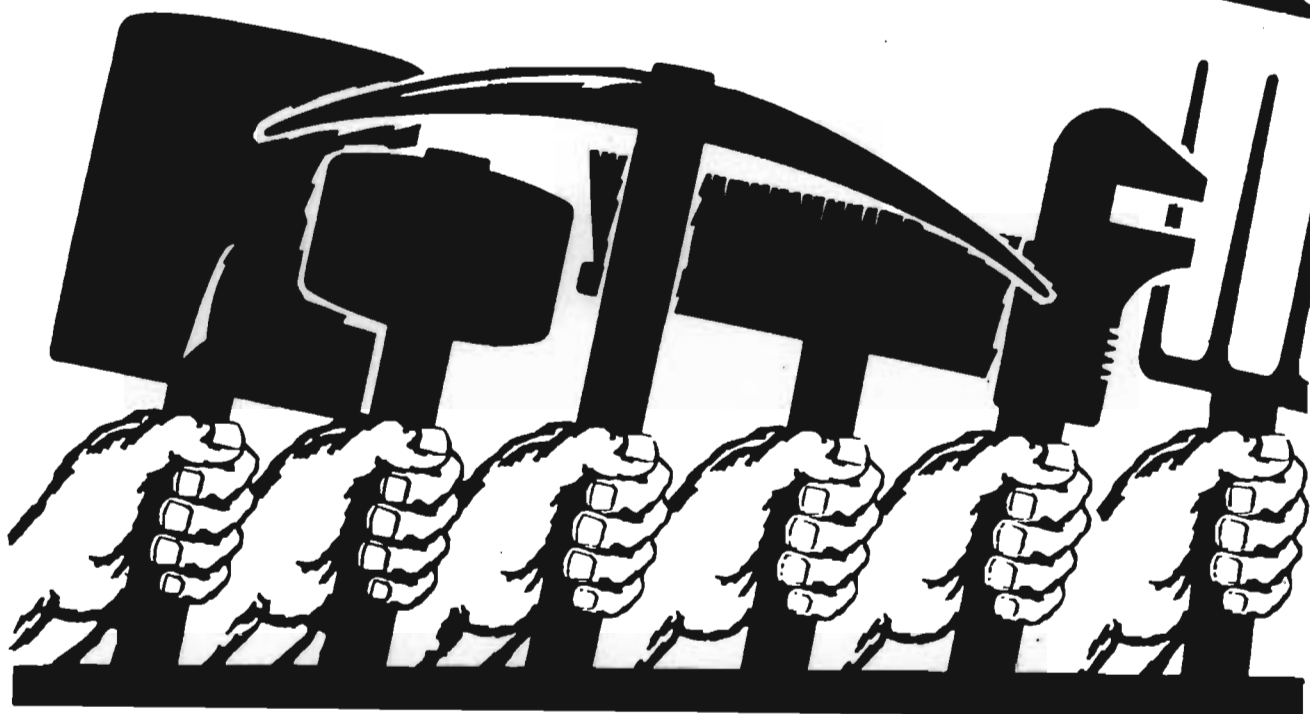
Following ANC strategy, the revolts were leading to “ungovernability” in the townships. The distinction between legal forms of politics and the underground struggle of the ANC was becoming blurred. Enthusiastic displays of support for the opposition groups occurred daily in open defiance of strict laws. Stirring *toyi-toyi* battle songs and dances — mimetic representations of armed struggle — came home to the townships from the guerilla training camps. ANC flags and slogans appeared regularly at political occasions such as anniversaries of uprisings and at the newest form of political expression, the funeral service (1989:131). [See, again, Chapter 2 (mediating drama as reality) for a case study of the funeral service as a political occasion for mass mobilisation.]

For the first time the public were shown horrific images of cruel and brutal “necklacing” rituals on SATV. The declaration of a state of emergency, as broad-cast by SATV/BC on 21 July 1985, was preceded by a news item reporting on a “necklace” murder at a funeral the previous weekend. It was one of many incidents in the country at that time. These macabre murders seemed to be executed in a Dionysiac frenzy.



8. Detail from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* pamphlet (1994).
Artwork by Richard Smith.

By 1986, Worker's Day and Soweto Day gave rise to the biggest general strike and stayaway in South African history — marking the “unofficial unbanning of the ANC by the people”. This precedent was followed by one of the most ambitious cultural initiatives of this period, the 1986 *Towards a People's Culture* arts festival in Cape Town.



9. Front cover illustration for *May Day*, an ILRIG (International Labour Research and Information Group) publication (1986).

According to an *ad hoc* organizing committee: “Our struggle enjoys a rich cultural tradition, and history has shown that cultural activity has been most intense during times of heightened resistance against apartheid. Cultural activities have served to express the frustrations, ideals and aspirations of all sectors of our community and religious groupings” (*Festival Document* 1986). Although this event was banned in terms of the Public Safety Act, the exhibition went up briefly, although official regulations decreed that the title be changed. The title changed from *Images of our Time: Towards a New Culture* to simply *Untitled*.

Within a few months another exhibition was planned, this time for the Market Galleries in Johannesburg. Convened by the Detainee's Parents Support Committee, the *Artists Against Apartheid* exhibition in 1988 protested against the unjust detention of political prisoners — but was also cut short when the organization was restricted under emergency regulations.⁷

Then, in response to the ECC's “Troops Out” campaign, the UDF's Youth Congress in Cape Town organized the *Arts and Militarism* festival on UCT campus to protest against the overt presence of security forces (police and military personnel) in the townships. These issues were also amongst those raised by artists exhibiting at the 1988 *Human Rights Festival* in Durban. The latter event was organized by the Black Sash, one of the first national women's organizations to be established in the country.

Between 1988 and 1991, Fedstaw (Federation of South African Women, founded 1954) hosted an annual *Women's Cultural Festival* in Langa (Cape) to focus on the role of women in the struggle for democracy. This was augmented by the 1990 *Images of our Lives* exhibition, organized jointly by the Visual Arts Group in Cape Town and the Artists' Alliance in Johannesburg.⁸ The necessity for these events were significant indicators of the extent to which gender issues had been marginalized within the MDM.

In spite of harassment, restrictions, detentions and bannings, 1986–1988 was a crucial period for redefining and redirecting an emergent “people’s culture” within the mass democratic movement. In 1987, exiled ANC president Oliver Tambo, announced a revised position on the “blanket boycott” while strategically adopting a “selective boycott”. This policy allowed for local artists and cultural workers to participate in international events, providing they could demonstrate their commitment to the MDM. Following this, the UDF formed a Cultural Wing to provide guidelines for local cultural workers engaged in overseas tours or festivals. In addition, Cosatu formed a National Culture Unit to encourage working class cultural activity inside trade unions. Workers adopted a more socialist-based programme which subsequently became the driving force behind a liberatory “people’s culture”. In fact, worker-culture constituted the main thrust behind the organized attack on apartheid-capitalism. According to Frank Meintjies and Mi Hlatswayo, then Publicity Secretary and National Cultural Co-ordinator for Cosatu: “Cultural workers in the labour movement believe that artists individually cannot effectively challenge the power of oppressor culture . . . Democratic structures will help us to co-ordinate, promote and develop our culture” (1989:4–5).

Through Dionysian politics we identify ourselves with the collective yearning for an integrated society. In the realm of Dionysus we feel united by our common culture and speak with the collective voice of the empowered. We are the *hol polloi* and speak with one voice. We, the people, are many. Dionysus is Lusios the Liberator who smashes the old to make way for the new.

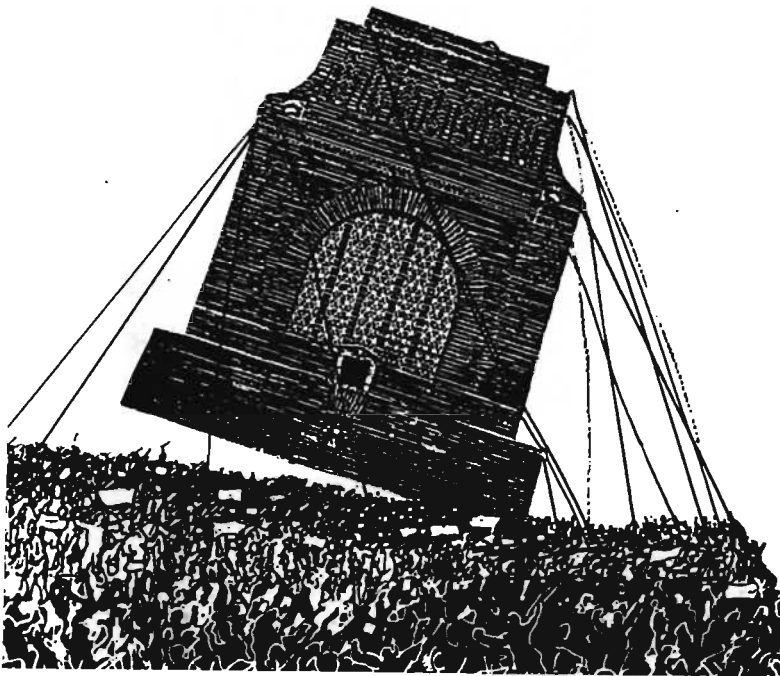
Thus resistance within the MDM was organized on three fronts: the armed struggle of the liberation movement, the popular struggle of the democratic movement, and the political-economic struggle of the trade union movement. Each of these used culture as a “weapon of struggle” to revolt against racist minority rule and the exploitative labour system.



10. Front cover illustration for *Critical Arts* (1985).

According to an anonymous voice of the collective in Cosatu's *Cultural Worker*:

As workers we are determined to play an active role in reflecting our lives and our struggles and our aspirations. More and more we are using poetry, plays, songs, not only to strengthen our struggles, but also to put forward the workers' own view of how we see the world . . .



11. Illustration for the Wits University History Workshop (1992).

Resistance to apartheid was also supported by repeated calls, usually voiced from abroad, for the formation of a national cultural organization with regional structures composed of discipline-based arts and crafts affiliates. To this end the Dutch anti-apartheid movement organized an arts festival and a conference in Amsterdam during December 1987. This event, simply known as the *CASA (Culture in Another South Africa)* festival, was to make a significant contribution to redefining and redirecting cultural activity in South Africa.⁹ Like the 1982 *Culture and Resistance* festival in Gaborone, the *CASA* festival came in response to the Department of Arts and Culture's call to unite the mass democratic movement inside South Africa, the frontline states and the world community — and for all of these to act together in isolating South African "apartheid culture". The delegates resolved:

That apartheid South Africa be totally isolated and that cultural workers and academics not be allowed to enter the country, save and except in those instances where such movement is considered to be in furtherance of the national democratic struggle . . . That South African artists, individually or collectively, who seek to travel and work abroad should consult with the Mass Democratic Movement and the National Liberation Movement (*Resolutions* 1987).

It follows that artists were not as "free" as they believed themselves to be. Their "freedom of expression", as already shown in Chapter 10 (resistance and black consciousness), was curtailed by the political organizations to which they had pledged their solidarity. As Press has shown:

The essence of the relationship between the political movement (the UDF, its affiliates and their external "ally", the ANC) and the cultural work taking place under the banner of "people's culture" is that of control by the former over the latter (1990:39).

Press continues (1990:39), making a salient point, that there was nothing wrong *per se* with a party or organization determining the content and style of art, at least not when that art was produced for a specific cultural strategy, such as the UDF's Charter-based "people's culture". But serious problems arose when artists, who chose not to situate themselves within this framework, become marginalized — or were even rejected.

The “selective boycott” was now endorsed by the Mass Democratic Movement. Furthermore, resulting from the academic, sports and cultural boycotts — as well as political and economic sanctions against South Africa — thousands of people emigrated and hundreds of corporations disinvested. The future for the majority left behind looked bleak.

Thereafter, in September 1988, the *Culture in South Africa* symposium set out to assess the ideological implications and methodological implementations of the “selective boycott”. Held in Athens and sponsored by the UN’s Special Committee Against Apartheid — under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture — the symposium stated that the new selective policy recognized that activities and contracts which had the intent and effect of expressing opposition to apartheid, or enriching resistance culture and furthering the liberation struggle, should not fall within the scope of the cultural boycott. Furthermore, delegates called for the strengthening of structures for future consultation inside South Africa so as to ensure broad-based support and monitoring of the boycott. To this end the symposium recommended the establishment of a “cultural resistance desk”.

As a result, the UDF’s Cultural Wing formalized a national Cultural Desk, based in the Transvaal, to serve this function on behalf of the Mass Democratic Movement in other regions. However, democratically elected regional representation never existed.

During the following years the Desk enrolled itself as the central agency through which cultural events had to be sanctioned. Obtaining “clearance” or “permission” from the Cultural Desk became a prerequisite for local cultural workers intent on exhibiting or performing abroad. The Desk thus constructed notions of relevance, legitimacy and credibility. Its primary tactics were isolationist and protectionist.

It was against this background, with all its attendant ideological implications, that protracted arrangements took place for the 1990 *Zabalaza* (“freedom” in Zulu) festival in London. *Zabalaza*, following the 1982 *Culture and Resistance* festival in Gaborone and the 1987 *Culture in Another South Africa* festival in Amsterdam, was perceived within the MDM as the third most significant cultural event of that era. Andries Oliphant (1990), general editor of Cosaw publications (including *Staffrider* magazine), said at home after his return from the *Zabalaza* festival: “This kind of training needs to be continued on a regular basis inside the country. What has been important was the experience of coming into contact with other cultures”. Some cultural workers nevertheless questioned the rationale behind the event, especially since a similar celebration of resistance culture — at less expense and greater benefit — could have taken place in South Africa.¹⁰



12. Dubani Tiki Phungula, *Leaping to People's Culture* (not dated), silkscreen. Exhibited in association with the *Zabalaza* festival (1990).



13. Illustration for exhibition flyer, "Let it be done before dawn", a component of the *Building a National Culture* festival (1989).

Already a few months before, in December 1989, the Community Arts Project had hosted an important arts festival, *Building a National Culture*, which aimed to provide opportunities for the exchange of skills and ideas with other cultural organizations. This marked the inclusion of training workshops as key components at festivals (such as that seen at the 1990 *Zabalaza* festival). This was the first arts festival of its kind inside the country since the banings of progressive cultural events in 1986. Importantly, the festival drew together both UDF-affiliated activists as well as non-aligned cultural theorists and practitioners.

For almost two years following this festival, regular cultural debates at CAP provided an open forum to discuss changing policies and strategies for a unitary and democratic South African "national culture".

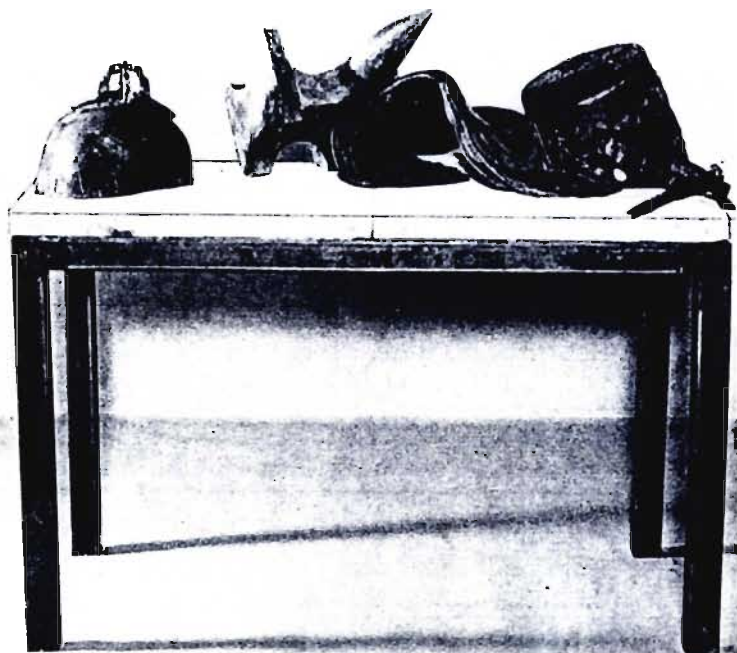
In addition, a major source of inspiration between early 1990 amid late 1991 was to be found in Albie Sachs' essay, *Preparing Ourselves for Freedom*, which raised vibrant controversy far beyond the ANC seminar for which it was intended. Within days of its publication in the local press, the art scene ran amok in responding — culminating in panel discussions and seminars around the country.¹¹ But as Rhoda Rosen (1991) smartly showed, Sachs' contribution was ambiguous (if not even confused) in the sense that he slid back and forth between marxist and liberal theories of art while blurring ANC cultural policy with personal anecdotes — making it impossible for others to distinguish between his "official" and his "private" persona.

Central to the debate on Sachs' paper was the issue of agency; who controls cultural organizations, how is artistic production determined and what forms of political intervention were legitimate in the cultural arena. In response, cultural theorists and practitioners were accused of having compromised cultural workers by de-emphasising the art of protest. "People's culture", or so some feared, had been made redundant as liberal democrats displaced revolutionary socialists.

While socialists argued that culture was ultimately a "weapon of struggle" — a spear for advancing and a shield for defending organized political action — liberals claimed that cultural formations should offer a space for progressive and affirmative cultural initiatives which embrace diverse aspects of human experiences in all their subtlety and diversity. Creative affirmation, some hoped, would render culture a self-determining site of struggle and not merely an instrument in service of political action. This interpretation promoted a dialectical view of culture, one which represented the prevailing pluralism and complexities of artistic creativity and purpose (see De Kok & Press 1990).

cultural organization and art centres

The Cultural Desk was generally perceived to be an autocratic and bureaucratic “watch-dog” for the MDM. Although it claimed to represent the interests of all cultural workers, the identity and affiliation of those individuals assuming this responsibility was never publicly declared, nor were their actions accounted for afterwards (Vinassa, 1992:29). Despite this, the Desk’s power and authority was pervasive, affecting almost all spheres of cultural production and distribution inside the country — as well as abroad.



14. Guy du Toit, *Drum, bell, anvil, saddle* (1991), sandstone, steel and bronze.

But artists, writers and composers, directors and producers, critics and even funders were soon dissatisfied with the Desk’s unruly interference, its censorious behaviour, and its lack of accountability to the people it claimed to represent. Furthermore, its delaying tactics and vague threats of punitive “action” alienated cultural workers to such an extent that many withdrew their support and refused to participate in events regulated by the Cultural Desk.¹² However, according to an ANC spokesperson for the Cultural Desk, all artists allowed to visit South Africa would be expected to hold workshops or training programmes. They would have to contribute — in money or skills — to community projects and give non-profit, benefit performances to develop local talent. It was not possible to ascertain what that money was used for and what results were achieved.¹³ However, it was obvious that the Desk would remain as long as the boycott continued. But — after bannings, restrictions and clampdowns had been lifted — many began to question the prolonged existence of both the Cultural Desk and the cultural boycott.

The Cultural Desk was eventually called to disband in May 1990 at a national consultative conference on regional cultural organizations in Johannesburg. Here representatives were told to relinquish responsibilities and to defer all matters to the recently formed National Interim Cultural Co-ordinating Committee (NICCC) founded around the 1990 *National Arts Festival*. The deadline was set for December that year so as to coincide with the formation of a National Cultural Congress. Such a formation was, in fact, prompted by the Department of Arts and Culture after the exiled ANC returned to South Africa in 1990. The DAC publicly supported this initiative and claimed that the Congress should “act as a midwife for the creation of a genuinely representative organization” (Masekela 1990). This new Congress, it was hoped, would become an independent, non-sectarian forum for all cultural workers — representing cultural organizations from the then seven main geographical regions — Western Cape, Border, Eastern Cape, Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Northern Cape.

The journalist Heather Robertson, cites cultural administrator Omar Badsha: "Affiliate organizations will be allowed complete autonomy [while] the role of the federation will be to foster a national culture by pooling resources, directing education and skills into areas that have not had resources and mobilizing artists to confront para-statal organizations such as the arts councils" (*South* 1990.10.18).¹⁴

Furthermore, such a Congress was to adopt a federal structure. It was also to assist in monitoring the return of exiled artists and performers. However, hampered by lack of consultation and poor co-ordination, such a formation was not established. But, as many suspected, this initiative merely represented the interests of a minority grouping of cultural commissars who wanted to launch a federation of South African cultural organizations to secure future positions of power for themselves.

At the same time, exiled musicians Hugh Masekela and Abdullah Ibrahim called for the cessation of the international and national cultural boycott. Junaid Ahmed, later to become General Secretary of Cosaw, and Mike van Graan, then still Director of CAP, added fuel to the already heated debate by issuing a discussion document at the *National Consultative Conference* in Durban during December 1990. Their paper called for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the "selective boycott", and concluded that:

The challenge to us is to provide leadership and to assert our right to be heard and taken seriously, not because others fear what we may do to them through the cultural boycott, but because of the validity of our ideas, the quality of the aesthetic work and our political maturity (Ahmed & Van Graan 1990).

By now cultural workers (and artists alike), were deeply divided over the issue of the "selective" boycott. But this split was not new. In one of several lengthy newspaper articles, Charlotte Bauer and Ivor Powell summed up the messy state of affairs in the mid-1980s: "The cultural boycott of South Africa is a little like the United Nations without interpreters: the contestants are not even talking the same language" (1986:14-15). Even the ANC seemed confused — and their utterances on the matter were often incoherent. On the one hand the Department of Arts and Culture seemed reluctant to do anything about the chaos it had helped to create; while on the other its representatives seemed eager to partake in future international cultural relations and interaction. According to documents leaked to *South* newspaper,¹⁵ the ANC did not want to be caught "dragging its feet" on the issue of the cultural boycott, but wanted to assume "central stage" in determining future scenarios. It follows that the ANC was severely criticized by the PAC and Azapo for attempting to take matters into their own hands. As Strini Moodley, Publicity Secretary of Azapo, sharply put it: "No organization can [unilaterally] assume the right to determine when a cultural boycott should be brought to an end". Who, if not the UN, then had the right to decide on the fate of the boycott?

After consultations between representatives from the ANC, PAC and Azapo, the cultural boycott was reaffirmed at a symposium of the UN's Special Committee on Apartheid in Los Angeles during May 1991. A Department of Arts and Culture spokesperson indicated that the South African delegation — consisting of representatives from the ANC and PAC, as well

as several affiliated and non-aligned organizations — had decided to urge the international community to assist in intensifying the isolation of apartheid cultural structures in consultation with *the* non-partisan cultural body in South Africa (*Statement* 1991). But such an independent and representative body did not exist. At the same time, the cultural wings of the liberation movements were mandated to form a national, non-partisan cultural organization — but nothing happened afterwards because of political squabbles and the lack of unity among cultural representatives of the political parties concerned.

Culture must be a weapon . . . If we are poets, the beauty won't be determined by its rhyme or rhythm but by the way it inspires the masses by its revelation; if we are painters or sculptors we won't be producing landscapes or figures of abstraction, but we shall and can paint portraits that symbolize important aspects of our liberation struggle.¹⁶

There is no simple litmus test for identifying the progressive and the reactionary in the existing "culture of the people".¹⁷



15. Mzwakhe Mbuli, the "people's poet", a progressive or reactionary orator? (Mbuli cited by Suttner & Cronin 1985:139–40).

Although no hegemony existed among general arts practitioners and administrators, the late 1980s was marked by the proliferation of self-proclaimed "progressive", i.e. Charterist oriented, cultural organizations. Painting and sculpture did not, however, feature as prominently in organized structures as did poetry, music, dance and drama, as well as film and photography.¹⁸ This was probably due to the fact that the performing arts (in contrast with the visual arts) were perceived to have a more direct, immediate effect on its audiences. Solidarity was shattered, unity gave way to fragmentation among cultural workers and arts practitioners. The days of the MDM were over.

We discovered that our fate as workers and our needs as human beings bound us together, but language, cultural chauvinism and divisions tore us apart.¹⁹

We are torn apart — dismembered by cruel hands. Our cause was once whole, now we are shred to pieces. We are no longer bound together by our common fate.



16. Detail from *How to Commit Suicide in South Africa*. A Knockabout comic illustrated by Sue Coe and Holly Metz (1983).

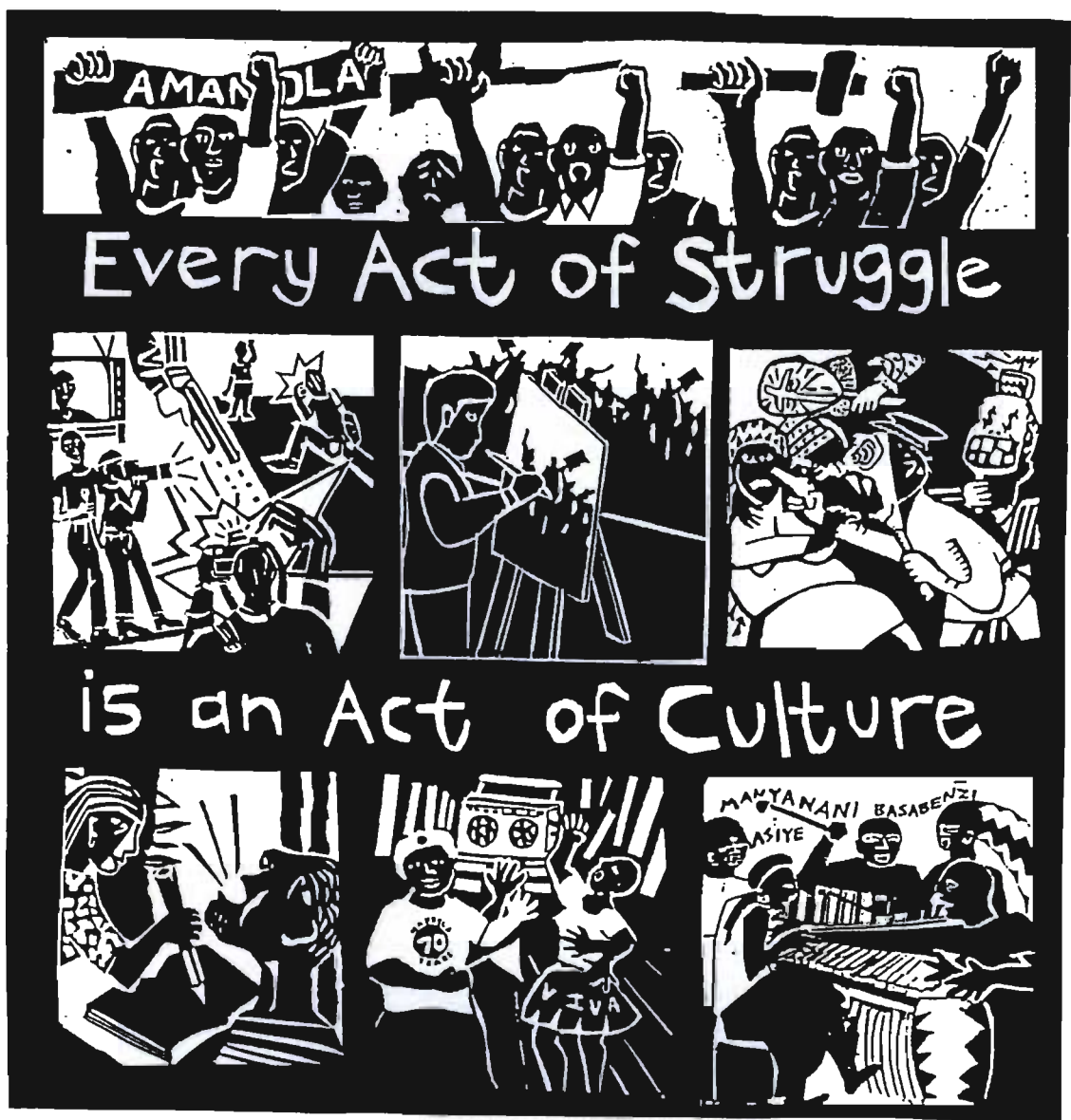
With regards the visual arts, the Western Cape witnessed the formation of the Cultural Workers Congress (CWC, founded 1988), later known as Fosaco (Federation of South African Cultural Organizations). This formation ambitiously aimed to promote and develop a “National People’s Culture: free of exploitation, racism, tribalism, sexism and which upholds the dignity of mankind” (*Manifesto* 1988). In July 1991 Fosaco initiated a *Towards a Cultural Charter* workshop at UWC to address the interests of cultural workers within a new

constitution. In a subsequent submission to Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa, c. 1992–1993), *Towards a National Cultural Policy for the Development of Arts and Culture in a Democratic South Africa*, Fosaco argued for a single arts and culture department, a government funded and independent arts foundation, the institution of progressive tax laws to encourage corporate sponsorship of the arts, and affirmative action to reverse the legacy of apartheid (*New Nation* 1992.3.13). However, despite the rhetoric, it would seem that Fosaco often initiated worthwhile projects even when its leadership lacked the support to sustain these. Perhaps their objective was to set precedents, but not to fulfil them? The emphasis appears to have been placed on the number of “projects” undertaken and the number of “communities” visited in an attempt to demonstrate the breadth of Fosaco’s alleged support. However, their anxiety about such unanimous support seems to have superceded a commitment to placing the control of “people’s culture” within the hands of those they allegedly tried to serve. Nevertheless, Fosaco was unable to fulfil even its basic objectives namely to unite writers and artists, photographers and film makers, composers and musicians, dancers and actors into one national cultural organization. Instead, it gathered around itself various regional, discipline-based affiliates such as the Visual Arts Group (VAG, founded 1987), which enjoyed considerable success in organizing exhibitions and workshops in and around Cape Town. Indeed, Fosaco would not have survived were it not for the constant support received from the Visual Arts Group. As a former UDF affiliate, Fosaco remained closely linked to the ANC — even though tensions between the two undermined projects involving other cultural institutions and organizations.

In turn, the Southern Transvaal region saw the formation of the Funda Centre (“to study” in Xhosa, founded 1984) with its African Institute for Art (AIA, founded 1985), both formerly funded by the Urban Foundation. Furthermore, the Independent Visual Arts Council (IVAC, founded 1989); the Alexandra Art Centre (founded 1985); the Thupelo Art Project (TAP, founded 1985) and the Artists’ Alliance (AA, founded 1989) were also launched in or around Johannesburg. Artists from Johannesburg tended to be more assertive, and hence more successful, than their counterparts in other regions.

At the same time, other organizations which offered arts practitioners a “base” were the Cultural Workers Organization in Grahamstown, the Imvaba Visual Arts in Port Elizabeth and the Natal Cultural Congress (including the Visual Arts Organization and the Durban Worker’s Cultural Local).

But many avoided the intrusion of partisan politics on their work and became involved with non-aligned artist’s co-operatives such as the Community Arts Workshop (CAW, founded 1983, disbanded c. 1989) in Durban, the Daljosafat Art Foundation (founded 1989) near Paarl, the Hard Ground Printmaker’s Workshop (founded 1989) and Montebello Design Centre (founded 1991) in Cape Town.²⁰ These projects have — like the Graphic Workshop in Cape Town or the Caversham Press near Pietermaritzburg — not only offered studio and/or exhibition space, but also provided equipment and/or materials otherwise inaccessible to individual artists. As donor funding became more and more difficult to obtain in the 1990s, many of these centres or projects turned to marketing their skills and talents.



17. Banner produced by the CAP mural collective for the launch of the Cultural Workers Congress (1988). Artwork by Gabbie Cheminails, Trish de Villiers, Vheki Kruger, Mario Pissarra and Stacey Stent.

But lack of funds, inadequate representation and insufficient infrastructure restricted organizations severely. As a result, most cultural organizations were unable to employ staff or to pay salaries, while only a few were able to rent facilities and provide resources for artists. Yet cultural workers often hoped their membership would secure art materials and provide opportunities for paid work — if not even job offers.²¹ Furthermore, such organizations struggled to provide professional training and community service. Leadership was most often in the hands of academics or professionals — for whom unemployment, retrenchment, wages, and even housing were seldom issues the organization needed to secure on their behalf. It followed that membership was often at odds with leadership — the former driven by pragmatic and artistic needs, the latter by ideological and bureaucratic interests.

In contrast to the aims and objectives of the 1982 *Culture and Resistance* festival, almost all of these organizations experienced difficulties in trying to mobilize artists who shunned the regulations and conditions imposed on them by political activists or art administrators. As Ivor Powell succinctly put it: “The visual arts have always resisted wholesale incorporation into the democratic struggle . . . Even at its most strident, art is almost inescapably a personal expression” (1990:4). News reporter Kathy Berman has added:

For artists in and of themselves are essentially individualistic in their creative pursuits. To create, one has to be distanced from society and convention. So a call for cultural alignment and mainstream activism is at once anathema to the nature of the arts (1992:30).

Other conflicts arose around aesthetics and politics as artists were often obliged to declare their ideological commitment by signing a "pledge" (Pissarra 1990:91). In general, the *UN Declaration of Human Rights* (as endorsed by the Congress of the People's *Freedom Charter*) was taken as a basic guideline for these signed statements.

Despite the above difficulties, these organizations and projects played a vital role since most black artists were denied access to established educational art institutions — unlike white artists who invariably received their training through an art department at either a university, college or technikon.²²

While there is good cause to acknowledge that many artists were given an (otherwise unavailable) opportunity to practice their art, and even to receive some (though limited) material and financial support from the political organizations which they endorsed, the need to do so was, often in part, motivated by simple opportunism. Statements by artists, whether to align themselves with political organizations or not, reflect their own attempts to survive under shifting political conditions and changing demands made on them. Press astutely summarizes this dilemma, and it is well worth quoting at least one more paragraph in full:

There is an evident need among many artists to seek legitimation from the political organizations within the liberation movement. This need has many possible sources. There are those artists who recognize the fact that their training has led them into an artistic *cul de sac*, far from the mainstream of progressive social initiatives in South Africa, and they turn to the most visible organizations within that mainstream to give them a new sense of direction. Many of these people are also fugitives from the ruling class social *milieu* in which they were both born and educated, and they are concerned to demonstrate in a visible way their commitment to the cause of the oppressed classes. Those who are members of the black middle class — as teachers, journalists, doctors, etc. — need to assert their links with the working class, and argue for their ability to speak to and on behalf of this class. A real problem for all these artists (and especially for those from the white community) is often their total lack of any political understanding of South African society, and of the different policies and strategies of political organizations within the liberation movement. Without such an analysis they cannot assess the validity of the political programmes of the organizations they work with, and they can demonstrate their commitment only by putting themselves unreservedly "at the service" of such organizations. A consequence of this is that the artists have no way of assessing the validity of the demands made on them by these organizations (1990:24).

We shall continue our examination of these political demands in the following chapter.

SECTION FIVE V

RECONSTRUCTION AND NATIONAL CULTURE

The destiny of most South Africans shifted course in the early 1990s when political leadership began unbanning organizations, releasing prisoners, returning exiles, and negotiating settlements for a transitional multi-party government.

CHAPTER 12 *reconstruction and an emergent national culture*

This chapter examines the process of reconstruction made visible by several enterprises initiated through departments of political parties and sectors of civil society, through parastatal and non-governmental organizations, through the reciprocation between formal institutions and marginal communities, and through the reconciliation of arts administrators and arts practitioners prepared to share resources and skills while forging a so-called “national culture”.

historical context

national art exhibitions

democratising culture

marketing art

watershed exhibitions

cultural events

art collectives

conclusion

CHAPTER 13 *constructs of nation, democracy and culture*

While many South Africans seem to share a common ambition when speaking about a *national democratic culture*, we often mean quite different things by it. We should not talk of a national democratic culture as if it is a single, or an even stable, political concept. This does not imply that our ambition cannot be defined in more specific ways, or that only one way of making sense of it must be correct and all others mistaken. On the contrary, the implication is much more complex since the different meanings of the constituent terms — *nation*, *democracy*, *culture* — need to be explored and appropriate options assessed before (if at all) we choose to negotiate policies and strategies for the implementation of a national democratic culture in a future South Africa. This chapter explores some of the problems facing both artists and cultural practitioners and, to this end, explores the following issues:

historical context

nation

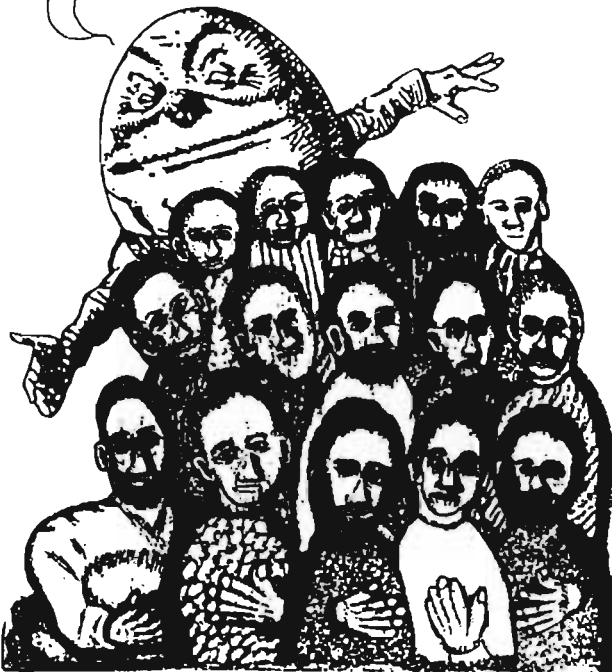
democracy

liberal, social or pluralist democracy

culture

RECONSTRUCTION AND AN EMERGENT NATIONAL CULTURE

The new nations, in order to achieve a degree of unity of purpose, need cultures which, first, will provide a measure of consensus among their diverse peoples and, second, will be capable of the constant innovation which existence in the modern world requires.¹



1. Adapted from an aquatint by John Muafangejo (1974).

historical context

As already discussed, the call to build a national culture in South Africa was an important strategy behind political organization within the Black Consciousness Movement (Chapter 10) and the Mass Democratic Movement (Chapter 11). According to the political programmes endorsed by the BCM and the MDM, the building of a new culture was commensurate with the forging of a new society — a society free of economic exploitation and political repression.

While the Azanian Manifesto called for a national *socialist* culture, the Freedom Charter called for a national *people's* culture. Out of these two calls emerged the notion a national *democratic* culture to which all South Africans (including divergent groupings of workerists and populists, socialists and nationalists, liberals and conservatives) could pledge themselves.

To this end both Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk began talking about “nation-building” in the early 1990s. As a result, the expression rapidly spread to the cultural sphere, where it quickly assumed status as the new “buzz” word. For instance, in her article *Culture at the Crossroads*, Marilyn Martin, current Director of the South African National Gallery, proposes: “In our striving towards a national culture, which contains the very process of nation-building and of national unity, the element of reconciliation of diverse and conflicting cultural viewpoints and aspirations is going to be crucial” (1991:7). The new SANG *Mission Statement* commits this art museum to the process of reconstruction since it “acknowledges the multicultural nature of South African society” while also “recognizing and supporting the building of a national culture”.² Likewise, the Johannesburg City Council, through the *Africus Biennale*, speaks of “building a cultural future” while the Department of National Education talks about “building cultural bridges”. These statements endorse the building of a common “national culture” through acts of socio-political reconciliation. But (re-)conciliation also requires considerable economic commitment — and not mere progressive rhetoric.



2. Building a national culture in South Africa. Detail from Vuyisani Mjijima, *Unification* (undated), linocut.

Socio-political reconciliation entails reconciling the Dionysian yearning for social unity and the Apollonian striving for political control. The call to build a “national culture” was not only part of an overall strategy to forge a unitary society — but, more importantly, it was to prepare for the eventuality of nation-building in a post-apartheid era. But nation-building in South Africa will inevitably entail the consolidation of national interests and the construction of a nationalist identity by the dominant or ruling social formation (a capitalist bourgeoisie). This will probably require, regrettably, the act of submerging cultural preferences and class differences in the wake of a populist nationalism. If the target of nation-building is to consolidate and construct a new “nation”, how will this goal be achieved? Ali Muzrui maintains:

Four guiding principles help to determine the planning behind social engineering [and nation-building] when the ideology is nationalistic. The principles can be formulated in terms of four imperatives: first, indigenizing what is foreign; second, idealizing what is indigenous; third, nationalizing what is sectional; and fourth, emphasizing what is African. The four principles are interrelated and often reinforce each other (1972:16. Cited by Press 1990:55).

In South Africa, as elsewhere in Africa where countries have tried to emancipate themselves from the legacy of colonialism and imperialism, the process of nation-building is an arduous task since notions of what is “foreign”, “indigenous”, “traditional”, “national” and even “African”, have been artificially constructed by past colonial experience. Press again:

The need to build such a national culture is not unique to South Africa. The colonial experience of most African countries has been one of separate (geographically and politically, as well as culturally) social groups being united under one colonial régime, and left at the moment of independence to forge for themselves a national identity that corresponds to their now interconnected economic and political situations (1990:55).

Any nation-building programme in a post-apartheid (or anti-colonial and anti-imperialist) era will have to accept this historical legacy namely that the country’s borders determine the geographical boundaries and physical location of the “nation”. For the ANC-UDF-SACP alliance, this product of history was never denied — South Africa should be united as one nation. Within the Mass Democratic Movement, the first efforts to develop a unitary social entity were implemented through trade unions, sports bodies and, of course, cultural organizations. The foremost moves toward bridging gaps between disparate groupings were initiated from within the MDM shortly before the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990. In this regard, the process of building a national democratic culture may be traced back to 1989–1990 when the liberal arts establishment and progressive cultural organizations entered a period of “selective engagement”. The new term referred to the (at first) cautious and (later) self-conscious co-operation between key individuals and institutions in the cultural arena — particularly those which had been located within rival formations, such as between the so-called “enemy camp” and “the people’s camp”. This process of engagement sought to turn old enemies into new allies — with well considered advantages (inspirational, technical and financial) for both sides.³

Make not the imperfect an enemy of the good.⁴



Contributing toward this process were, *inter alia*, those workshops and festivals initiated through the *Konka Cultural Alliance* (1989–1990), the *Progressive Arts Project* (c.1989–1991) and the *People’s Youth Arts Festival* (1990–1992). These short-lived projects were to bridge the gap between an era of resistance and an era of reconstruction.

The adoption of the “selective strategy” followed years of suspicion and antagonism about access to centralized resources, formal facilities and funding mechanisms — particularly after corporate sponsorship was solicited for national “showcase” exhibitions between 1982 and 1986.

3.

national art exhibitions



4. Exhibit from the final Cape Town Triennial. Günther Herbst, *Sacred and Profane Love* (1991), oil on canvas.

With the emergence of the national art exhibition in South Africa came the “competition piece” (*Weekly Mail* 1986.12.12). Since art competitions had considerable influence on mainstream artistic trends, it followed that the organizing structures and procedures — as well as the political *bona fides* of those involved — were often sharply criticized. It was argued that these prestigious national art competitions upheld (male-orientated) values and interests by promoting (professional) standards seldom achieved without formal (tertiary) training. At that time, most of the participants — both artists and judges — came from state-subsidized institutions or were, at least, located within the arts establishment (Vergunst 1986). However, the organizers of Standard Bank’s *National Arts Festival*; Rembrandt van Rijn’s *Cape Town Triennial*; AA Life/First National Bank’s *Vita Art Now*; and Volkskas Bank’s *Atelier Art Awards* all contributed — in varying degrees during the latter half of the decade — to changing the processes of “selection” and “representation” in the visual arts. In addition, the *National Arts Festival* also shifted its emphasis to include “development” and “training” programmes. Alan Crump, chairperson of the arts festival planning committee, added:

The committee is constantly encouraged to consider the opinions of all whom it believes can make a meaningful contribution to the following year’s Festival. Inevitably there are conflicting ideas and sympathies . . . What is crucial is that the “final mix” must reflect the various cultures, contemporary thought and innovative works being produced in the country at that particular time. The Committee is also more than aware of the acute changes taking place in South Africa, as these changes make an immediate impression on the cultural fabric of our society (1990:19).



5. Logo design for the Mayibuye Centre, University of the Western Cape.

The 1990 *National Arts Festival* in Grahamstown also marked the ANC's return to culture in South Africa. It was here that Barbara Masekela, Secretary of the Department of Arts and Culture, made the first public pronouncement on culture since the ANC was unbanned in February earlier that year (see Masekela 1990a:38–40). Shortly after her speech, Masekela (1990b) went on to criticize the Festival for being *too* eurocentric and challenged the organizers to implement more change: "It is one thing to espouse democratic ideals at this late stage, but what we want to see is concrete action . . . Strong action will be taken in the future if the pace of change is not fast enough". Hereafter, significant terms such as "politically acceptable" changed to "politically correct". Wally Serote (1992) later insisted that "The major objective of the DAC is to contribute to the development of a democratic consciousness, the creation of a culture of tolerance, which will turn the nation away from the violence and direct it towards a new national identity . . .". In its efforts to create conditions conducive to democratic cultural practice, the DAC launched four commissions to investigate the strategies needed to achieve their objectives — including a *Commission on Museums, Monuments and National Symbols (or Heraldry)*. These commissions contained proposals for the general democratization of culture in South Africa.

For Charles Malan (1992), head of the Cultural Studies Unit at the Human Sciences Research Council, the process of democratizing culture involves a radical revision of the existing *status quo*:

Nothing less than a comprehensive process of socio-cultural reconstruction is needed if the marginalized sections of the community are to be empowered.

Indeed, the concentration of cultural facilities in white dominated metropolises have always tended to draw funding and skills away from where the majority live.⁵ In this regard, the recently established *Mayibuye Centre* and the newly housed *Museum Africa* have accommodated diverse cultural activities and have provided vast resources for formal and non-formal community-orientated education programmes.



marketing art

6. Interior of the new Museum Africa under construction. Photograph by TJ Lemon (c. 1993).

The city of Johannesburg, with its proposed *Africus Biennale*, was poised to become the self-proclaimed *cultural centre* of South Africa. Indeed, commentators somewhat arrogantly suggested that the city would become the *cultural capital* for the entire continent (Sorrell 1992:27). These claims were not only presumptuous, but unrealistic. Nevertheless, the enlightened appointment of a Director of Culture for the Johannesburg-Soweto metropole was the *first* appointment of this kind in the country. The Johannesburg City Council — since the Democratic Party assumed leadership of key portfolios — was the most supportive civic council in South Africa to become involved in the promotion and development of culture. The new Director, Christopher Till, facilitated negotiations between arts practitioners, cultural workers, community leaders, political activists and urban planners — as well as a wide range of bureaucrats and administrators. The City Council engaged in upgrading the Newtown Market precinct, a project which included the new Museum Africa (re-established 1994), the Newtown Gallery and the Market Galleries (established 1977).⁶

But the innovative and divergent art produced and sold in the cities — including work by artists on the fashionable studio-gallery routes — should also be seen in relation to the creative art forms manufactured and distributed through numerous informal markets located in rural communities surrounding the major metropolises (Sack 1988:9, 24). New styles and methods were assimilated into mainstream artmaking practices as so-called “ethnic art” and “township art” entered the more commercially viable city centres (Younge 1988a). The presence of an “Other” was to have a profound influence on the urban sense of “Self” — as well as on the art market. These effects were not only aesthetic, but also financial.

Commercial dealers promoting indigenous art, both locally and abroad, started to take a renewed interest in contemporary “black” art. But, as art historian Anitra Nettleton (1992:22) pointed out, many from remote rural areas in the Northern Transvaal did not even know they were “artists”. This point was endorsed by Thabiso Leshoal (1989:21):

The present wave of success and recognition for black artists in white galleries has caused alarm among some artists and academics. An increasing number believe attention from commercial galleries could, in the long run, prove detrimental to the development of African art.⁷



7. Sidney Holo, *Township Life* (c. 1986), linocut.

Art galleries — as too agricultural shows, church bazaars, curio stalls and tourist shops — all contributed to the white patronage of urban black “art” since the 1930s.⁸ With the advent of the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923, and particularly the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950, black residents were forced to live in townships on the outskirts of the white metropolises. Notably, references to “township art” gained currency in the 1950s and have been highly problematic ever since. Frieda Harmsen, writing for the Department of Information in the early 1970s, claimed:

An interesting art form has emerged from the Bantu townships. Previously the South African Bantu have not expressed themselves through the medium of the visual arts to any great extent. The Zulus made beadwork. The Ndebele painted their huts. The rest of Bantu art was tourist art with little aesthetic value (1972:35).

Such a bigoted view failed to acknowledge that artistic traditions in Africa do not comply with European cultural conventions. Despite her gross generalizations and oversimplifications, Harmsen’s conclusion makes for interesting reading:

Both urban and rural Bantu art are sure to develop now that the Bantu have recognized the potential in art and are given the opportunity to train. With their innate extrovert emotionalism they should, with some guidance, produce an art of genuine importance (1972:37).

The latter point of view — that white professionals needed to teach black amateurs — was endorsed by many scholars and practitioners of art. This view, however, usually lacked a critical analysis of specific class and cultural circumstances. Instead, many art historians tended to look for stylistic characteristics, even categorizing such art as if it constituted a homogenous grouping. For instance, during the 1960s Berman claimed that:

“Township Art” began to assume the character of a school . . . For a while, “Township Art” could be referred to as a distinctive category of drawing and painting. There were obvious, common characteristics in the works — subject matter devoted to illustration of the daily township scene; a naïve, often awkward, realism of style, an appealing candour of descriptive detail; a humanistic orientation, which placed the emphasis at all times on the portrayal of people, their activities and their appearance (1983:18, 63).

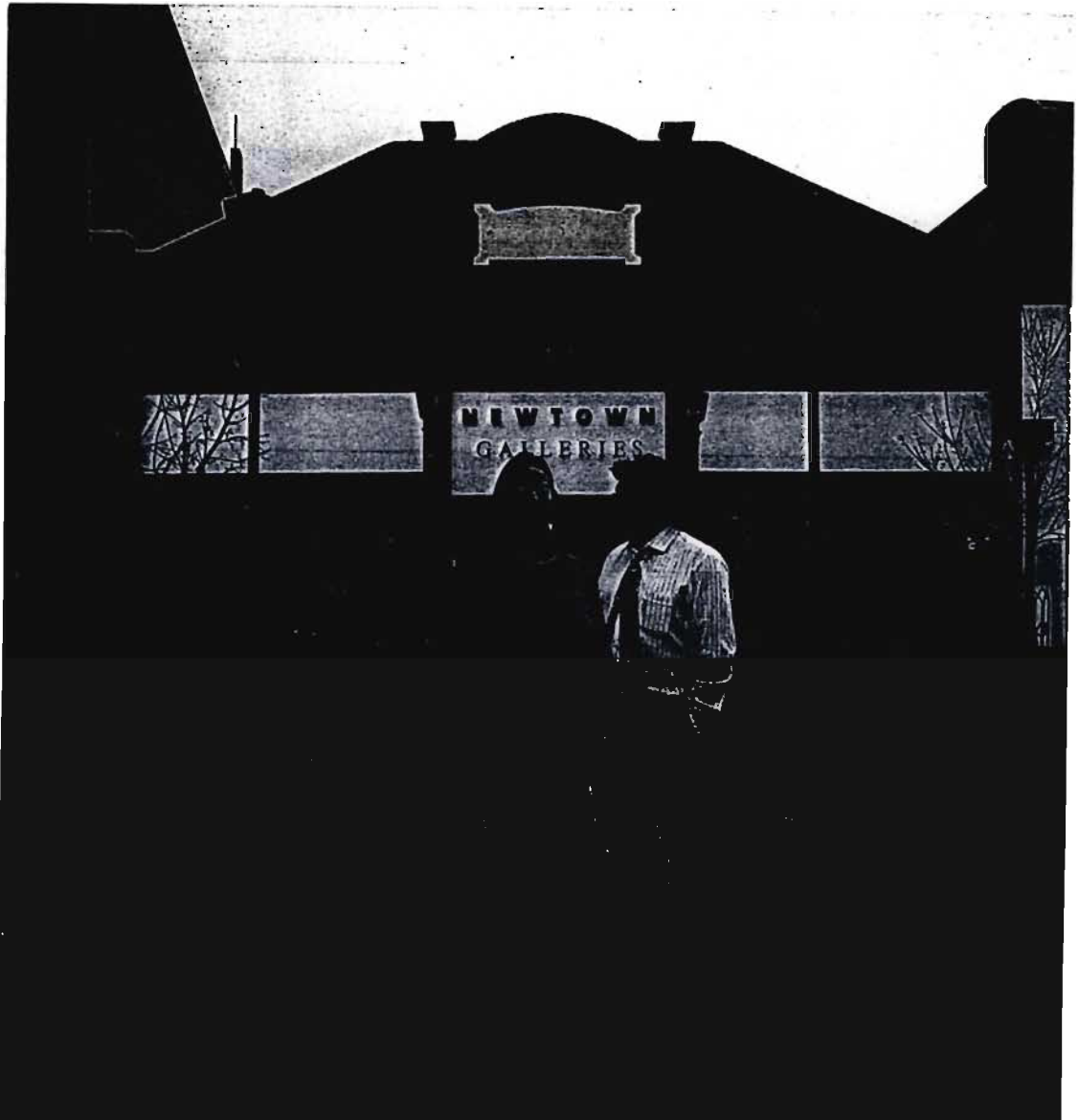
According to playwright Matsemela Manaka:

Even though this art is referred to as self-pity art, it reflects conditions of life in the townships. Because the artists lived in the townships and their art was a portrayal of the joys and agonies of township life, they were labelled “township artists”. This is a reflection of the racist arrogance of the white South African experience. The art which is expressive of the experiences of white people in town, city or suburb is not called “town art” or “city art” or “suburban art” (1987:15).

The above question assumes that so-called “township art” was a recognizable category that could be distinguished from other identifiable types of art in South Africa. The answer presumes that categories were correct, even accurate, as fixed terms of reference. However, the function of such terms in defining social relations and material conditions, or their application in framing and mediating group values or judgements, were not questioned. Instead, qualifying factors for “township art” alluded to particular artistic contents and social contexts. Manaka appeared to be saying that other factors, namely race (but not class), were also at stake when qualifying categories of South African art. He saw “township art” as a descriptive term — unlike Gavin Younge who, more succinctly, viewed it as a political term. For him “township art” was an offensive term to some artists and stylistically indefensible (Younge 1988a:8; Younge 1988b:59–66).

While Harmsen and Berman stressed social content, Manaka and Younge emphasized social context as the determining factors of so-called “township art”. This unfortunate term, after being severely contested on the late 1980s, fell into disuse with the advent of cultural (re-)conciliation.

The period of reconstruction, as discussed here, has been characterized by attempts to include marginalized groupings and to redress imbalances between the so-called “centre” and “the periphery”. To this end, commercial art dealers and galleries have been instrumental in bridging the gap — or, more accurately, in decrying the schism between mainstream (white, urban, male, heterosexual) and the marginal (black, rural, women, homosexual). Both dealers and galleries were, of course, well aware of the fact that these displaced and dispersed minorities represented new opportunities for appropriation and commodification.



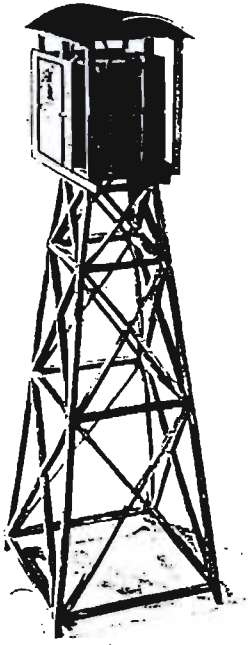
8. Mary Slack and Ricky Burnett outside the Newtown Gallery, Johannesburg (1993). Photograph by Ronnie Levitan.

Longstanding private galleries — run by dealers such as Everad Read, Linda Givon-Goodman, Ferdinand Haengi, Natalie Knight, Karen McKerron, Jo Thorpe, Ester Roussow and Ricky Burnett — filled their walls and floors with an *art-mix* not assembled before inside the country.

These galleries were joined by the likes of Fig (Fringe Innovation Gallery, established 1989), Newtown Gallery (founded 1991) and ICA (Institute for Contemporary Art, established 1992) in Johannesburg, the Ikhaya (“home” in Zulu) Museum in Soweto as well as the Cornucopia (established 1989, closed c.1991) and the SAAA’s Artsstrip (established 1992) in Cape Town. In addition, several universities established their own galleries on campus — of which the most notable have been at Unisa, Wits and UCT.

Most of the above actively contributed to the arduous process of reconstruction by engaging in democratic (consultative and accountable) procedures *viz.* research, acquisition, collection and exhibition.

watershed exhibitions



Works shown on the *art from south africa* exhibition at the Museum for Modern Art, Oxford.

9. Gavin Young, *Narrap* (1986), bronze.

10. Chicken Man, *GONE FISHING* (undated), mixed media.

11. Unknown Artist, *Wire Windmill* (undated), wire and paint.

The process of democratizing the visual arts was also assisted by some well documented exhibitions — with concomitant publications — which attempted to reveal (or rather revive) artistic traditions and cultural continuities in South Africa. The most notable exhibitions of the 1980s were the *Tributaries* (1984) curated by Rickey Burnett, *The Neglected Tradition* (1988) curated by Steven Sack and the *Images in Wood* (1989) curated by Elizabeth Rankin. The latter were both shown at the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

The 1990s began with the *Art from South Africa* exhibition of contemporary art organized by the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, and curated by David Elliot. The MOMA exhibition was presented in association with the ANC's *Zabalaza* festival at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) in London during mid-1990. Following the imposition of the cultural boycott in the late 1960s, this was one of the first “politically correct” exhibitions to travel abroad since the 1970s. Most of the works were drawn from art museums or obtained through cultural organizations and, two years later, exhibited in part at the South African National Gallery (see Martin 1992:4–5). The exhibition mixed paintings and sculptures with beadwork and wire toys, juxtaposing individual exhibits with collective projects, while also combining so-called “eurocentric” art conventions with “afrocentric” craft traditions (Elliot 1990). As a result, the urban/rural, mainstream/periphery, and art/artefact dichotomies were, at last, placed under critical pressure. It would appear that this process of re-appraisal started when maverick art dealer Rickey Burnett curated the 1984 BMW sponsored *Tributaries* exhibition. Kathy Berman, in relation to this new trend, responded:

Today such terms as transitional, which emerged in attempts to describe such synthesizing cultural activities, have hopefully been eradicated from our aesthetic lexicons — as much as the traditional black/white, Western/African, and Euro-/Afrocentric diads have as well (1992:17).



12. Pro-Africanist political cartoon (untitled and undated).

Following the *Tributaries and Art from South Africa* exhibitions, the issues of acculturation and commodification came under closer scrutiny (compared to the perfunctory treatment these issues received after the 1979 State of Art conference and the 1982 Culture and Resistance festival). During this period several other related issues, such as cultural conservation and policy formulation, were also closely scrutinized.

The turning point in this regard can be traced back to June 1988 when a significant precedent was set at a cultural conservation conference in Cape Town namely *Changing Context and Challenges*. Here museologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, architects and historians from state-subsidized institutions — as well as a few representatives from non-governmental organizations — expressed their dismay over the moral, theoretical and practical implications for cultural conservation brought about by the “New Deal” constitution (Vergunst 1988a:36-37). Most of the delegates rejected cultural separation on the basis of race, colour or community and agreed to adhere to democratic principles for the conservation of a unified “national culture”. These delegates questioned “whose interests and which values” were being promoted in current cultural conservation policies and practices (Landman 1988). It was also suggested that future processes and mechanisms for the foundation of a national cultural consciousness could be guided by Charterist principles (Tomaselli & Ramgobin 1988:27). The conference resolved that political reconstruction could only be achieved through a representative process of consultation and accountability which favoured of all sectors of society. To this end it was decided that consultative meetings should take place throughout the country in an attempt to reconcile disparate cultural formations the aim of which would be the submission of negotiated guidelines for an alternative cultural policy in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Despite the considerable effort put into this project, the subsequent consultations and recommendations did not produce a new policy document. But the process of selective engagement (or “talks about talks”) did set a precedent for successive workshops and conferences aimed at formulating future cultural policy in the 1990s. In this regard the early



13. Negotiations for a new cultural policy were part of international and national negotiations for democracy in South Africa. "We must talk to one another". Cartoon by F Esterhuysen. Courtesy of the Transvaler (1990.2.19).

1990s gave rise to three separate, but interdependent initiatives in policy formulation:

The first was initiated by Fosaco in July 1991 at the Towards a Cultural Charter workshop at UWC. These proposals were submitted to Codesa in 1992. Fosaco's recommendations were debated later at a poorly attended conference at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town during October 1992 under the somewhat presumptuous title People's Commission to Democratize the Arts in South Africa. According to Omar Badsha (1992), then National General Secretary of Fosaco:

We feel that unless an active role is taken in tackling the inequalities resulting from apartheid's culture and educational policies, the interests of especially black artists in urban and rural areas will continue to be marginalized and the arts will remain the preserve of a minority.

Fosaco, then virtually without funds to take this initiative forward, was subsumed by Cosaw's involvement in policy formulation and the formation of a new cultural alliance. A second initiative, often attacked by detractors from Fosaco, was launched in September 1992 by the Arts for All campaign in Johannesburg. The campaign, initiated by Cosaw in April of that year, aimed to put the arts on the agenda during the process of transformation and reconstruction. According to Njabulo Ndebele (1992), chairperson of the steering committee:

We want to work towards the formation of a national arts policy and to facilitate the formation of national organizations in different art disciplines. We need to define a space for the arts in the establishment of a new society, and determine the best mechanisms for the state's involvement in the arts.

Months of preparations, including fundraising (from the Department of National Education), culminated in a National Arts Policy Plenary (NAPP) in Johannesburg during December 1992. The plenary was attended by nearly 1 000 delegates, including cultural workers and representatives of so-called "progressive" and "establishment" cultural bodies.

It would appear that NAPP was indeed the biggest meeting of its kind ever held in South Africa. Mike van Graan, the then national projects co-ordinator of Cosaw, explained the plenary's two primary aims:

The first, is to get the arts community to formulate policies, strategies and funding mechanisms to protect and promote the arts in future. Secondly, to initiate a process that leads to the establishment of national and regional networks that can lobby for the implementation of the recommendations of the working groups that will be established at the plenary. This is the first time in the history of the country that the arts community — as a significant sector of civil society — will come together to decide what is in its best interests and to plan how it will formulate strategies to promote these interests in negotiations with a future government. The meeting is unique in that it crosses disciplines, regions, ideological orientation . . . (1992:12).

NAPP also launched the National Arts Initiative (NAI, later known as the NAC, National Arts Coalition) to fulfil a Statement of Intent adopted at the plenary. Hereby various working groups were mandated to fulfil a grand programme of action before a follow-up meeting in December 1993. The fulfillment of this programme was, for Mark Gevisser, not an easy task:

NAI should be prepared to be dogged, from now on, by the tensions that did come to the fore in the plenary; the age-old tensions between art as a weapon of the struggle and art as an independent form of expression; between art as a professional industry and art as a means of community mobilization. Not least is the tension between NAPP and the African National Congress. Once more, this had to do with definitions of culture. NAPP deliberately excluded political organizations, because, as NAI General Secretary Van Graan puts it, "it is important to establish an independent lobby of artists within civil society" (1992:32).



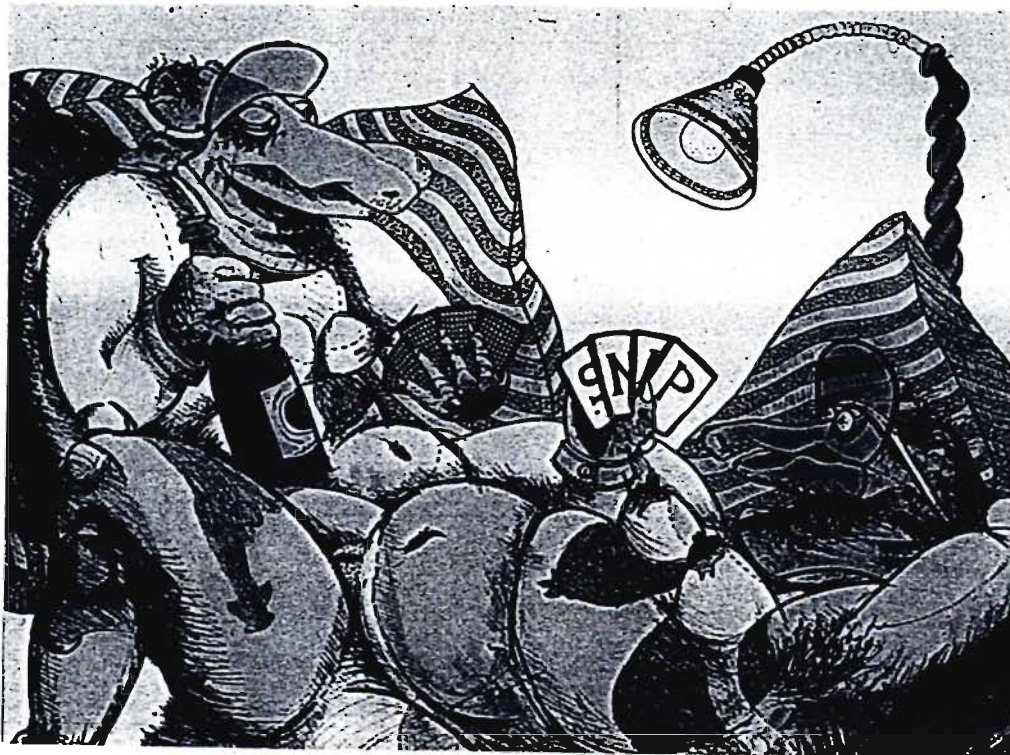
14. "Soort soek Soort" (Like seek Like). Michelle Raubenheimer, *The Strip* (c.1985), lithograph and silkscreen.

So, in its turn, the Department of Arts and Culture initiated the *Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa* in May 1992. This was the third initiative and shares many basic Charterist principles endorsed by both Fosaco and the NAPP-NAI initiatives. For instance; “to redress the imbalances inherent in our society, in terms of race, class and gender. In particular our rich and diverse artistic traditions in the fine arts, literature and music must be nurtured and promoted, as must alternative and under-represented traditions” (*Statement 1992*). This initiative was taken a step further (possibly to counter the exclusion of political parties at the NAPP plenary) when the DAC convened a *Culture and Development Conference (CDC)* in Johannesburg during April 1993.⁹

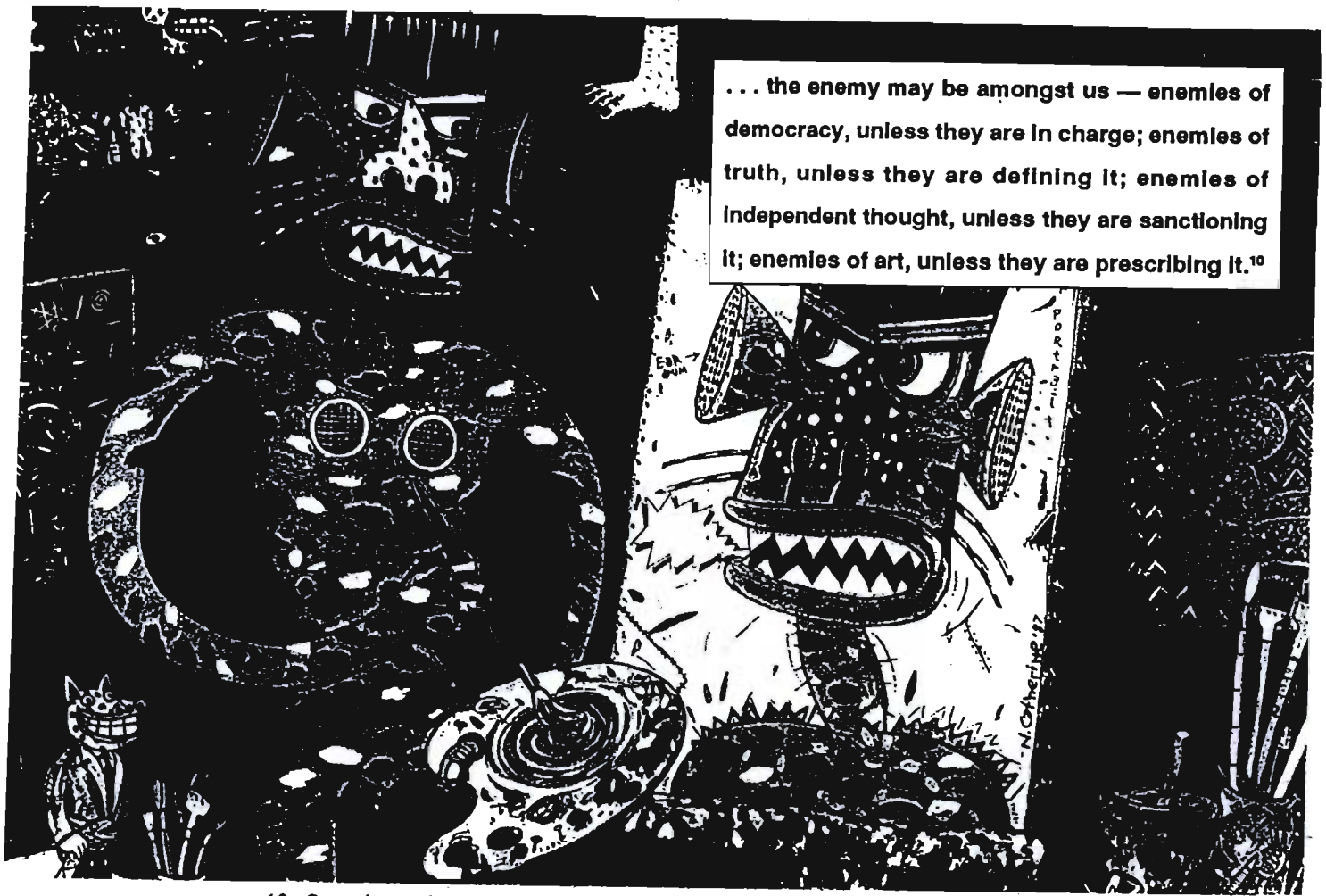
The main aim of the CDC was to present a draft policy for consultation and ratification by the broadest possible spectrum of cultural practitioners, organizations and artistic disciplines. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Instead, representation and endorsement of the conference resolutions were limited to ANC members and supporters. Even the launch of a Foundation for Arts and Culture was pushed through without proper discussion — or even an appropriate election — though this failed to yield any consequential changes in either cultural conservation or policy formulation pertaining specifically to the visual arts. Despite this, the DAC seemed to resist the possibility of an independent and non-sectarian initiative:

At its best, the CDC committed the ANC to an active role in supporting culture once it comes to power; at its worst, CDC attempted to commit arts workers to an active role in the service of an election campaign (Gevisser 1993:24).

It is interesting to note, firstly, that the DAC’s intention to form an autonomous and non-aligned Cultural Workers Congress has been eclipsed by the formation of a partisan Foundation and, secondly, that this Foundation has not declared its relationship to the existing Foundation for the Creative Arts (see Chapter 7).



15. "Snap". Michelle Raubenheimer, *The Strip* (c.1985), lithograph and silkscreen.



16. Cover image for *Art — The Independent Review* (1987). Artwork by Norman Catherine.

The outcome of these three initiatives — Fosaco's *People's Commission to Democratize the Arts in South Africa*, NAPP's *National Arts Initiative* and the ANC's *Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa* — would, or so it was thought, determine future cultural development in South Africa. The post-conference (CDC) debate on SATV's *Agenda* in April 1993, however, already signalled a decisive turning point in cultural affairs at this level — particularly when Mewa Ramgobin (ANC) vilified Njabulo Nbebele (NAI). Mike van Graan responded tersely in a public letter to Wally Serote and Mewa Ramgobin:

If the content and style of Ramgobin's imput and his antagonism towards the NAI represented the ANC's view on the arts, it signifies what many feared, but hoped was not the case: that the ANC is threatened by independence in the arts and in fact, seeks to control and manipulate the arts in ways not too dissimilar to our past rulers . . . One can only conclude, then, that it is a matter of "as long as the ANC is doing it, it is permissible but it is criminal to do it without the ANC". Which makes one come to see that "the enemy" may no longer be "them": rather, the enemy may be amongst us — enemies of democracy, unless they are in charge; enemies of truth, unless they are defining it; enemies of independent thought, unless they are sanctioning it; enemies of art, unless they are prescribing it (1993:15).

But by April 1994, following the national elections for an interim government of national unity, the issue of which political organization would most likely determine the future of culture in South Africa still remained an open, and indeed, pertinent question.

One cannot approach art as one can politics, not because artistic creation is a religious rite or something mystical . . . but because it has its own laws of development, and above all because in artistic creation an enormous role is played by subconscious processes — slower, more idle and less subjected to management and guidance, just because they are subconscious.¹¹

We believe that the supreme task of art in our epoch is to take part actively and consciously in the preparation of the revolution. But the artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very nerves its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his art.¹²



17. Norman Catherine, *The Artist in His Studio* (1990), oil on canvas.

Press correctly maintains that artists should explore their lives imaginatively and creatively, and in doing so they may transform the prevailing aesthetic consciousness (1990:41–47):

Precisely because art is directed at the psychological mobilization of people, it must be able to work with the many different variables that affect the individual's understanding of his or her life — and to do so it requires an aesthetic vocabulary more wide-ranging than that of a univocal political discourse.

This raises a further aspect of the inadequacy of the demands made by political organizations such as the UDF on art. Not only do these demands assume that people will respond immediately and predictably to what is “relevant”; they assume, equally, that all that is relevant to people, all they want and need to see depicted in art, are their own familiar experiences of suffering and resistance.



18. Thupelo art workshop in progress at the old Africana Museum (1988).

In the meantime, artists have continued to produce new work which, personally and politically, remained an individual and independent form of expression. The socio-political exhibitions of the late 1980s were also replaced by politically “correct” socio-ecological orientated exhibitions in the early 1990s for instance issue-specific exhibitions focusing on Militarism/Detention were later superseded by Safe Sex/Aids Awareness exhibitions. While many artists chose to work alone, an increasing number later occupied or rented studio space in old factories or disused warehouses — such as at the old Roodehek Studios (c. 1986) in Cape Town or in the former Bag Factory (since c. 1990) in Johannesburg.

But there are many who have not been able to afford the privilege of a private studio or commercial gallery — least of all the costs of basic art materials. The Thupelo Art Project has, each year since 1985, provided venues and materials for many black artists through its regional and national arts workshops. It is hoped that similar projects will prove to become more and more popular for both black *and* white artists in future.¹³

Finally, despite the future policies, strategies and mechanisms required for cultural development in a “new South Africa”, artists *will* inevitably continue to produce without prescription. Ultimately, artists produce on their own terms.

This study has attempted to show how three different constructs of “culture” — apartheid culture (Chapters 7 & 8), people’s culture (Chapters 9, 10 & 11), and national culture (Chapter 12) — have each, respectively, served to promote the political objectives underlying reform, resistance and reconstruction in South Africa since the late 1970s. To this end partisan politics have, albeit during the struggle for power in the 1980s or the transference of power in the 1990s, played a major role in manufacturing consent (or producing propaganda) through various cultural initiatives. But propaganda cannot accommodate contradictions, cannot reconcile conflict, and cannot allow dissent amongst its subjects.

While cultural production, distribution and reception *can* serve political ends, artists have continuously shown that they *will* work without prescription. If the visual arts — or any other manifestation of cultural activity is to flourish in South Africa — then all arts practitioners should be encouraged to produce work independently. Neither cultural administrators nor political bureaucrats have the right to enforce allegiance from arts practitioners.

We may be reminded of what the Afrikaans author NP van Wyk Louw wrote in 1939. As an acclaimed writer and poet, with strong sympathies for Afrikaner nationalism, he warned fellow artists of the dangers inherent in official managerial control of culture to further political ends. In his short essay, entitled *Kultuurleiers sonder Kultuur* (Cultural leaders without culture), Van Wyk Louw anxiously writes about the abuse of culture as a “mere tool” in the hands of political leaders:

Will the effort to strengthen a culture by intensive organization not lead to the decay of culture as a living force? A people (or its leaders) can come to regard culture as something completed, a final achievement, a number of established traditions, truths and recognized artworks — something that can be conveyed to and imposed on others, just like that. It’s a mistake that’s easily made, because it is exactly such a ready-made culture (*klaarkultuur*) that is organizable . . . Cultural organizations can never shed their rigidity — and that is why they will always clash with growing and developing cultural life (1952).¹⁴



19. NP van Wyk Louw.

I believe that artists constitute a significant sector of *civil* society rather than *political* society, and should therefore be permitted to challenge *all* ideologies, political parties and state-bureaucracies. To this end artists must be enabled, and not disabled, by party-political interests and practices — especially if they are to produce work of value in a society as diverse as ours. To this end I advocate a pluralist democratic culture in preference to a national democratic culture. We shall explore this matter in the Conclusion.

CONSTRUCTS OF NATION, DEMOCRACY AND CULTURE

This study has been premised on Nietzsche's claim that we cannot understand the "tremendous opposition" underlying both art and life without an insight into the Apollonian and Dionysian duality. I have used the Nietzschean dialectic for the analysis of some specific contradictions between and within culture and nature — or, more particularly, for an analysis of the tensions between and within civil order and chthonian discord. As stated in the introduction, dualities may be regarded as symbolic or mythopoetic relationships which demonstrate the dialectic between order and chaos. To this end, the Apollonic and Dionysiac sensibilities represent the intelligible, determinate and mensurable as opposed to the fantastic, vague and shapeless (Fraenkel 1935:25).

Artists require no freedom of expression as their art will be determined by the Party and made intelligible to the people.¹

Art expresses the dark and vague moods of the individual, the social group, the class and the nation.²



1. Mao Tse-Tung and Leon Trotsky unwittingly express opposing views on artists and their art in Apollonian and Dionysian terms. (Mao cited by Chipp 1968:312; Trotsky cited by Siegel 1970:30).

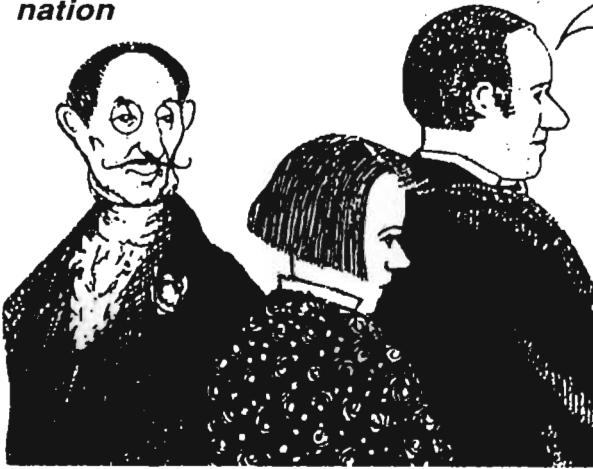
Throughout this study I have endeavoured to show that several dualities are reinforced by artists and perpetuated through their art: The first two sections (Chapters 1–6) show that traces of the pagan Apollonian-Dionysian dialectic pervades modern art and culture, society and politics in the western world. The myths of Apollo and Dionysus — which form and shape these sensibilities unconsciously — provide several analogies and metaphors for (re-)interpreting modern re-enactments of autocracy and anarchy, repression and resistance, reform and revolt. The last three sections (Chapters 7–12) show, furthermore, that many South African artists were conscripted to render service on behalf of political parties/organisations during the 1970s and 1980s. Their art became a "weapon" or "tool" for the propagation of overt political ideologies in the struggle toward either ethnic (homogeneous) nationalism or social (heterogeneous) democracy in South Africa.



2. Illustration from "The miracle has begun", a national election campaign advertisement for the Business Election Fund (1994).

But, in the context of an emergent national democratic culture, many of us — arts administrators and arts practitioners included — have not yet grasped the implications underlying current constructs of "nation", "democracy" and "culture". These constructs will be considered more closely. While many of us apparently share a common ambition when speaking about a *national democratic culture*, we often mean quite different things by it. We cannot therefore talk of a national democratic culture as if it is a single, or an even stable, political concept. This does not imply that our ambition cannot be defined in more specific ways, or that only one way of making sense of it must be correct and all others mistaken. On the contrary, the implication is much more complex; that is, different meanings of the constituent terms — *nation*, *democracy*, *culture* — need to be explored and appropriate options assessed before (if at all) we choose to negotiate policies and strategies for the implementation of a national democratic culture in a future South Africa.

nation



The concept of 'the nation' is one of the most influential yet one of the most obscure notions in the history of political thought. For what is a 'nation' as distinct from a people living under the laws of a particular State? Does a common religion make a nation? Surely not; for the Africans are not united in this respect. Does a common language? Surely not; for the Indians and Slavs speak many languages. Does a common history? Surely not; for the Arabs, Americans, and Jews have a variegated history.³

The diversity of meanings ascribed to the term "nation" are determined by various historical and political contexts. Attempts at defining the term are controversial — or can, at least, be contested — a nation is, first and foremost, an ideological construct. Press succinctly summarizes the historical (capitalistic) antecedents which determine the formation of "nations":

Nations come into being as part of an objective historical process. It is not coincidental that the national state should have become the predominant political entity in those regions of the world where capitalism has been most fully developed. Through capitalist economic processes, amongst which industrialisation and technological modernisation are the most significant, fragmented social groups are brought together in systematic contact . . . This objective process, then, is generated by economic factors and the social changes they necessitate. The various political groups contending for power in the country articulate this process in terms of their own interests, and try to create a vision of the nation "in their own image" — that is, in terms of their own ideological perspective (1990:53–54).

While Press argues that nations are formed by *objective* historical processes, Benedict Anderson proposes a counter-argument whereby he claims that nations are the products of *subjective* readings of history. Anderson argues — and I agree — that so-called "nations", like "ethnic groups", are constructs of our imagination and not physical entities with a concrete, material existence in the social world.⁴ John Sharp, in *South African Keywords* (1988), goes on to explain the terms behind the ideas:

Both "ethnic groups" and "nations" differ, in this respect, from "states". States do have a practical existence: a state is the territory enclosed by a series of border posts; it is parliament, the law courts, the police and army, and the bureaucracy which controls and administers the lives of the inhabitants of the territory in question. By contrast, both "ethnic groups" and "nations" are ideas in people's minds. They may be ideas which only some people in a given situation hold, or they may be shared by many (1988:80).

Johan Degenaar, in his lucid, succinct article on *The myth of the South African nation* (1991), discusses several seminal ideas underlying the term "nation". He provides several definitions

The organized community within which a government claims obedience as of right of all citizens, has traditionally been known as a state: sometimes they are termed *nation-states*. However, the term is a misleading one, for there is no exact correspondence between state and nation; there are states with more than one nation (Britain), nations with more than one state (Germany), states without substantial national identity (Chad) and nations with no definite state at all (the Palestinian Arabs).⁵



of this notion *as the congruence of communal culture and state power*. However, in the prevailing political context the term “nation” seems to have been conflated and polarized, compelling us to choose between homogeneous mono-ethnic *nation-states* on the one hand, or a heterogeneous multi-cultural *state-nations* on the other.

mono-ethnic nationalism

Ethnicists define “nation” as a group of people who share a common ancestry, a common inheritance, a common culture and a common language. In this instance the term “nation”, derived from the word *natio*, refers to all those associated by virtue of *birth*. The metaphor of birth produces a sense of (religious) primordialism i.e. the assumption that humans are *national* animals. This inevitably leads to the idea of organic development — such as in the “growth of a nation”. Both Afrikaner nationalism (AVU) and Zulu nationalism (IFP) subscribe to similar notions of national identity in terms of shared birthrights. They also subscribe to the myth of “one nation, one culture” and, because they believe in their own sovereignty, prefer federalism as a political option (Erwin 1987:90). Here an “ethnic group” (or “ethnic community”) is framed in terms of historical antecedents, a symbolic or actual geographical centre, and shared cultural emblems such as race, religion and language (Vergunst 1990). Although ethnic groups may be differentiated from one another, they should not be regarded as a monolithic social formation.

multi-cultural nationalism

In contrast to the above, multi-culturalists define a “nation” as a group of people who share the same territory, abide by the same law and enjoy the same civil rights — irrespective of their “ethnic” commonness or difference. In this regard the term “nation” refers to all those associated by virtue of a *constitution*. A constitution ensures *civil* rights (rather than birthrights) among its citizens. Historically, a constitution is the product of (philosophical) liberalism i.e. the assumption that humans are *rational* animals. This has led, inevitably, to the idea of infrastructural development such as “nation building”. Politically, liberals within the Nationalist Party and the Democratic Party, even the democrats of the ANC and the SACP, subscribe to similar ideas regarding nationhood. They differ, however, on the issue of cultural diversity and the transcendence of ethnicity.

While ethnicists consciously pursue the acquisition and maintenance of (state) power through the mobilization of (ethnic) culture, multi-culturalists depoliticize (ethnic) self-determination in their pursuit of (state) power. While the former conceptualize the problem of nationhood in terms of ethnicity and give priority to the concept of a nation-state, the latter emphasize the role of the state in nation-building and introduce the notion of a state-nation. Degenaar questions the possibility of forming a mono-ethnic nation-state and the simultaneous formation of a multi-cultural state-nation:

Simultaneity of state-nation and nation-state building is only possible in cases where the dominant ethnic group, by means of state-power, imposes its view on other ethnic groups. The crucial question, however, is whether this domination by the dominant ethnic group is acceptable on democratic terms and what the status of other ethnic groups is in society. The notion of simultaneity easily collapses into a form of Jacobinism according to which the dominant group decides on behalf of other groups what the 'common' culture is and uses state-power to impose it (1992:7-8).

In short, the criteria behind a mono-ethnic nation-state and a multi-cultural state-nation are:

<i>mono-ethnic nation-state</i>	<i>multi-cultural state-nation</i>
It lays claim to a common ancestry	It lays claim to a shared territory
It proclaims a common inheritance	It proclaims a shared legal system
It recognizes common birthrights	It recognizes shared civil rights
It assumes humans are <i>national</i> animals	It assumes humans are <i>rational</i> animals
It advocates the "growth of a nation"	It advocates "nation building"
It emphasizes ethnicity	It depoliticizes ethnicity
It produces mono-ethnic nationalism	It produces multi-cultural nationalism
It fosters a homogeneous nation-state	It fosters a heterogeneous state-nation

Both ethnicists and multi-culturalists subscribe to the ideology of nationalism. As is already known, "nationalism" is a political ideal which emerged during the French Revolution in 1789, following the decline of the absolutist state and the rise of capitalist states. The sovereignty of the king in a monarchy (rule by one) was replaced by the sovereignty of the people in a democracy (rule by many). But nationalism and democracy are not always politically compatible i.e. nationalism tends to foster a homogeneous culture, while democracy attempts to foster the heterogeneous culture of its citizens.

Nationalism, however, is outmoded and incapable of dealing with the complexities of modern, industrial, technological and international societies. Given the local limitations of nationalism (with its ethnocentric and afrocentric emphasis — see chapters 9-10) and the problems of nation-building (with its emphasis on a common or dominant culture — see chapters 11-12), I agree with Degenaar that we should concern ourselves with the creation of a democratic society — or at least, with the formation of a democratic-state rather than a nation-state. So, let us look at the concept of "democracy".

Since democracy may be formulated in different ways, appropriate interpretations need to be negotiated so as to constitute a viable model for a democratic future in South Africa.

But to agree on democracy as an *end* to apartheid is not enough, we should also reach agreement on the *means* whereby particular democratic principles are to be implemented.



3. "Towards a Just Peace", an anti-apartheid poster used by the End Conscription Campaign (c.1985).

democracy



The term “democracy” has become an ambiguous term, with different meanings — even apparently opposite meanings — for various people (Macpherson 1969:1–2). These conflicting meanings are inevitable given the diverse political aspirations of the various groupings using the term. As André du Toit, in his article on *The meaning of democracy* (1993), points out:

Supporters of the ANC and the NP, the SACP and the DP all claim to favour democracy, but they cannot all have the same things in mind . . . It is not enough that we all agree on the goal of a democratic South Africa. Having agreed on that, we are still faced with hard and basic choices. We must not only choose *for* democracy; we will also have to choose *between* democracies (1993:3, 6).

Political policies and strategies in the early 1990s, often involving leadership of the above political parties, seem to reduce our choices to two generalized forms of democracy; that is, between *liberal* (or representative) democracy and *social* (or popular) democracy. This oversimplification, however, obscures the contribution to be made by a *classic* (or participative) democracy, a *pluralist* (or multi-cultural) democracy, a *constitutionalist* (or protective) democracy, a *capitalist* (or competitive) democracy, and so-called *Third World* (or decentralized) democracies. Several of these options can be combined to form complex models for instance, Western democracies may not only be representative, protective and competitive, but also modernist and elitist — as in the United States of America (Du Toit 1993:3).

As is also known, the derivation of the term “democracy” can be traced back 2 500 years to the ancient city state or *polis* of Athens. The word itself comes from the Greek *demos* (“people”) and *kratos* (“power” or “rule”). Taken together, democracy means “power to the people” or “rule by the people”. Thus popular slogans such as “Amandla Awethu” or familiar credos like “The People Shall Govern” can, by extension, be taken as contemporary variations of the term “democracy”.

In theory, democracy is an attractive political option for *ideal* government. Ideally, “democracy” allows for regular, fair and open elections whereby competing political parties can form a representative and an accountable government based on evolving constitutional rules which protect the rights of citizens so that each may realize their humanity to the fullest.

In practice, however, democracy is a less attractive option for *real* government, even though it is probably “the least bad” of all available political options (Churchill. Cited by Du Toit 1993:5). Du Toit goes on to examine the real (or concrete), rather than ideal (or abstract), implications underpinning democracy: who are the people; how shall they govern; what may they rule; and which will they choose — democracy as a means or as an end?



Who are 'the people'?

Du Toit's first question concerns *citizenship criteria*. In practice, everyone is not necessarily included among "the people" who rule and/or vote. Historically, democracies have excluded heathens, slaves, criminals, lunatics and the illiterate — as well as women and children. In South Africa today, despite general agreement in "democracy" as the model for a future government, substantial differences occur between Nationalist and Socialist parties, as well as between the Africanist and Charterist traditions. Here arts practitioners and cultural workers need to be vigilant regarding their own conditions of empowerment and enfranchisement through a Bill of Rights i.e. who will decide on future arts policies and strategies.

How should the people govern?

The second question proposed by Du Toit concerns *structural procedures*. Since citizens are politically and morally bound by 'popular' decisions in all democracies, various procedural infrastructures need to be considered so as to ensure that — in both process and content — a fair and just democracy is applied. To this end, binding decisions can be reached in a variety of ways: *unanimously*, by a relative *majority*, through *consensus*, or with a *mandate*. Since unanimous decisions are seldom achieved by opposing political parties, the majority, consensus and mandate options need to be taken seriously. But these different procedures involve different principles — resulting in strong, centralized bureaucratic bodies on the one hand, or loose, self-governing civic bodies on the other. (Note that extra-parliamentary politics in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s was based on mandated decision-making procedures.) Here artists and curators need to be mindful of the consequences facing cultural bodies and institutions i.e. how will organizations, projects, galleries and museums function in the future — according to majoritarian, consensus or mandatory principles?

What is to be ruled?

The third question concerns itself with *political jurisdiction*. Participation in political decision-making can either secure group rights or protect individual liberties. But problems arise when the interests or values of the former are at odds with the latter. It is therefore important to define the boundaries which separate the "public" from the "private", or to distinguish between political influence in common affairs and political interference in personal matters. But, again, where do group rights end and individual liberties begin? Where do national interests begin and regional matters end. Here artists, art teachers and art historians need to be aware of the extent to which political parties may determine popular interests and values i.e. what will a new government do about culture, education, censorship (morality) etc.?

Which ends or means?

Fourthly, a question concerning *ultimate goals*. Democracy can be justified as a *means* for achieving security, welfare and liberty. Alternatively, democracy can be seen as being morally just and good as an *end* in itself — irrespective of the costs or loss of benefits to some citizens. Here academics and museologists need to be mindful of their individual and institutional obligations in relation to democratic principles i.e. which will dominate, professional autonomy (including the freedom to dissent) or partisan politics?

This raises an important issue namely; the right to oppose the will of the majority. “Democratic citizens do not only incur civic *obligations* by participating in the political process, they also have a *right* to dissent from public and official policy” (Du Toit 1993:6). Du Toit’s critique of obligations versus rights can be summarized as follows:

- Decisions taken by a majority are the least democratic because all citizens have to *adhere* to policies — including those decisions which may not fulfil the interests of minorities. This procedure may result in a “tyrannical” form of democracy. Note that Azapo and the PAC favour the majoritarian principle.
- Decisions taken by means of a consensus are, compared to the majoritarian option, more democratic because citizens have the right to *veto* policy — but success in obtaining a shared consensus will tend to prevent dissent. This procedure may result in a “totalitarian” form of democracy. Note that the NP and the DP favour the principle of consensus.
- Decisions taken with a mandate are, relative to the majoritarian and consensus options, still more democratic because citizens can *restrain* leadership which fails to fulfil its mandate — but leadership can in turn deny that local or grassroots initiatives have been properly mandated. This procedure may result in a “coercive” democracy. Note that the ANC favours the mandate principle.

Thus each of the above decision-making procedures can become *undemocratic* in practice. While all three options claim to govern by *consent*, each may stifle *dissent* if it is in the interests of the ruling class or the dominant party to do so. It follows that collective obligations will then prevail over individual rights.



liberal, social or pluralist democracy?

While a *liberal* democracy protects individual liberties, it fails to accommodate the needs of minorities or so-called “communities”. Although a *social* democracy secures group rights, it in turn fails to embrace the need for individualism. Degenaar proposes that we take a third (and complementary) option seriously: that is, a *pluralist* democracy. The above three options can be summarized as follows:

liberal democracy

It protects individual liberties

It (may) fail to accommodate minority interests

It favours constitutionalism (not nationalism)

social democracy

It secures group rights

It (may) fail to accommodate individual interests

It favours populism (not nationalism)

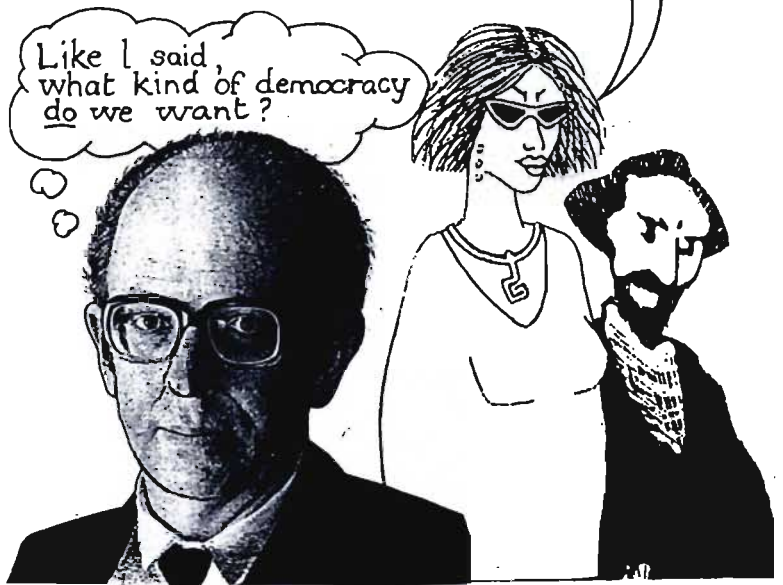
pluralist democracy

It secures and protects multi-cultural rights

It reconciles conflicting interests and values

It endorses a constitution and a Bill of Rights

Modern liberalism exalts individualism and condemns social orders as oppressive.⁵



A pluralist democracy embraces the need to protect and secure both individual liberties and group rights in an evolving constitution. A pluralist democracy thus complements both liberal and social democracies. Furthermore, disputes around material interests and social values are inevitable because of the plurality of power relations at play in South African politics. A pluralist democracy aims at the (re-)conciliation of conflicting interests and values through negotiation, bargaining and compromise. Most importantly, democratic pluralism can help settle conflicts by allowing a multi-party or coalition government to rule. To this end all parties will have to commit themselves to a common culture of tolerance. Democratic pluralism is conducive to the fostering of a culture of tolerance which allows (dialectically) for commonness and difference.

The important point is that a democratic culture cannot be assumed. It has to be created on all levels in society; the areas of the family, education, sport, art, religion, economy and politics.⁷

Degenaar's argument can be restated as follows; a fair and just (democratic) constitution is not enough. What we need is a fair and just (democratic) culture — with its own value infrastructure — to endorse the country's constitution.

Let us now look at the concept of "culture".



culture

Like “nation” and “democracy”, the term “culture” also has several meanings. While we may define culture as *the composite web of meanings produced by a community*, we cannot assume culture to be a fully-bounded, self-enclosed whole. According to Coetzee (Cited by Degenaar 1992:7), cultural discourse in South Africa hinges on several stereotypical assumptions. I refer to these as follows:

- one nation, one culture,
- one for all, all for one,
- one is one, two is two.

These three assumptions are problematic because they characterize “culture” in terms of ethnicity or nationalism. Here Degenaar’s critique is instructive because he argues for the transcendence of ethnicity and nationalism. He presents four concepts with which to explore the term “culture”: common culture, modernization culture; socialist culture and democratic culture.

common culture

The concept of “common” culture is based on the transcendence of competing “ethnic” cultures. See chapter 9 (resistance and ethnic nationalism). But problems arise with its lack of clarity about the *form* of common culture, the extent to which commonness is linked to dominance, and the validity of its claim to be *democratic* and not *imperialistic* in its imposition of “communal” interests and values:

The liberal tradition succeeds in giving content to the common culture, for example, common constitution, economic interdependence, shared religious beliefs and a common consumer culture. But the tendency is to underestimate the role of communal cultures in divided societies, and to believe that the problem of ethnic minorities is solved in terms of assimilation into the majority culture on the basis of a constitution which protects individual rights. The myth of a constitutional nation does not, however, solve the problem of conflict between cultures in the same society. Competition on certain issues between communal cultures can be destructive of the ideal of a constitutional nation, a state-nation or a civic-state (Coetzee. Cited by Degenaar 1992:8).

one nation, one culture

This implies that a nation has only one culture, and that each culture in effect forms a different nation.

one for all, all for one

This implies that every human being is part of a culture, and only part of one. It assumes that some (if not all) of what is socially produced and consumed by individuals belongs to a culture.

one is one, two is two

This implies that cultural ‘wholes’ contain positive (pure and uncontaminated) qualities because they are self-enclosed and self-contained “own affairs” cultures. It assumes that differences within a culture are secondary to differences between cultures.

Note that in its singular sense a culture is universal, whereas in its plural sense cultures are particular. It should remain clear, however, that universals are only expressed in terms of particulars. The crucial commonality of all human nature is particularism.

modernization culture

The concept of “modernization” culture is based on the negation of “ethnic” cultures in favour of a common loyalty to a shared culture which converges with state-power. Again, problems arise when the state has to identify itself with one culture and impose it on society as a whole. Since the functioning of modern society is dependent upon industrialization, it necessitates a unitary, centralized political system for its own economic development. Modernization promotes the assimilation or elimination of ethnic cultures. However, while claiming to build an egalitarian and homogeneous culture, modernization culture is most often impersonal and anonymous:

The process of modernisation and development are caught up in the dialectics of their own dynamics; combating ethnic loyalty on the one hand and stimulating ethnic consciousness on the other. Consequently, whatever the level of development of the state, ethnic conflicts need to be viewed as parts of an ongoing process which have to be coped with and managed, but cannot be resolved once and for all except through the total assimilation or elimination of a particular group (Rhadnis. Cited by Degenaar 1992:9).

socialist culture

The concept of a “socialist” culture is based on the eradication of capitalist power relations and class conflict. A socialist reconstruction is brought about by an ascendent (black) working class and strives toward establishing a common loyalty to an egalitarian (classless and non-racist) society. See Chapter 10 (resistance and black consciousness). Problems arise if local cultural characteristics have to be fashioned to form a national cultural character, or if cultural diversity has to be standardized to form an identifiable totality, or a “core” culture.

democratic culture

The concept of “democratic” culture is based on the depoliticization of “ethnic” cultures and the empowerment or enfranchisement of all citizens. See Chapters 11 (resistance and the mass democratic movement) and 12 (reconstruction and an emergent national culture). A democratic (pluralist) culture challenges the absolutist claim underlying nationalist notions of “nation” as the congruence of (ethnic) culture and (state) power. Pluralism relativizes cultural diversity, promotes civic association and endorses constitutional justice:

Nationalism has to abdicate in favour of constitutionalism and the concept of nation has to make way for the concept of civic society . . . This entails that the highest loyalty of the citizen is not owed to the nation but to justice. In this manner political responsibility is distributed over the whole of society which includes, along with the state, all the associations in which individuals are involved. The task of the state is not defined by the popular will, the *volonté generale*, the common feeling of nationhood, but by the constitution formulated by representatives of all groups (Degenaar 1992:12).

Briefly, the term “culture” can be conceptualized in four different ways, each option raises its own set of questions:

common culture

- Is this culture based on common values or dominant interests?
- Is this culture based on Indigenous values or Imperialist interests?
- Is this culture based on constitutional values or nationalist interests?

modernisation culture

- Is this culture egalitarian and homogeneous?
- Is this culture Impersonal and anonymous?
- Is this culture assimilationist or eliminationist?

socialist culture

- Is this a workerist or populist culture?
- Is this a classless and non-racist culture?
- Is this a standardized “core” culture?

democratic culture

- Is this culture able to depoliticize ethnicity and relativize cultural diversity?
- Is this culture able to safeguard constitutional justice (In preference to the will of people)?
- Is this culture able to promote a civic-state (rather than a nation-state)?

If we choose to take “democratic culture” seriously, then I believe, we should consider the role and function of “civil society” in an equally serious manner. Let us conclude this subsection with a few rudimentary remarks about *civic associations* as the organs or formations of *civil society*.



4. A generic image of empowerment through civic associations (c. 1980).



Civic associations have played a significant role in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. In the 1980s they functioned under the umbrella of the UDF. The United Democratic Front, following the unbanning of the ANC, was disbanded in late 1991 as activists became more involved in party politics. As a result, the development of a vibrant civil society has been marginalized in deference to political society. Degenaar, in an unpublished paper on *Art and Society in a Changing South Africa* (1993), argues that an effective democracy still requires a strong state, a strong civil sector, and a strong economy if it is to obtain a pluralist character:

Civil society, as distinguished from political society, is a term used to refer to formations relatively independent of the state and described as “the voluntary organized complex of community life”. This is where we as ordinary citizens operate every day and where cultures in their rich diversity manifest themselves. Formations in civil society enable citizens to live meaningful lives without direct involvement in politics in the narrow sense of the term. The quest for democracy is not only the task of politicians but of all citizens as they become involved in these voluntary formations. Without a strong and vibrant civil society political democracy can easily become a facade for authoritarian rule. All these formations are important, whether it be churches, universities [including art museums], civic associations, social movements, trade unions, sports and arts organisations. Building a democratic culture in these spheres need not wait till after the inauguration of a new political or constitutional order. We are free to do it now (Degenaar 1994:12).

Negotiations around preferences and differences are never stable, nor are negotiated political arrangements ever permanent. I believe that artists constitute a significant sector of civil society and should therefore organize themselves into autonomous arts associations or independent cultural organizations — such as the South African Association of Arts and the National Arts Coalition. To this end, arts practitioners and cultural workers must be enabled (and not disempowered) by party-political interests and practices — especially if they are to produce art or promote a culture of value to a society as diverse as ours. But, first, we will have to develop a liberating vocabulary and an imaginative conceptual framework with which to assess and transform outmoded assumptions, paradigms and methodologies (Degenaar 1993). To this end I advocate a *pluralist democratic culture* in preference to a *national democratic culture* for the social transformation of South African society.

CONCLUSION



1. After a bronze head of Apollo from the early Hellenistic period.
After a marble head of Dionysus from the late Hellenistic period.

This study has focused on the recurrent manifestations of two distinct, yet inseparable, creative sensibilities of the human psyche. As we have seen, these forces are historically associated with the ancient Græco-Roman mystery cults of Apollo and Dionysus. The adoption of the Apollonian-Dionysian duality has, as my overarching frame of reference or paradigm case, served to demonstrate that:

- The Apollonic sensibility induces political *order* through official acts of reform while the Dionysiac sensibility induces a sense of social *unity* through popular acts of resistance.
- The Apollonic sensibility promotes an autocratic dictatorship through acts of reform measured against collectivized anarchy while the Dionysiac sensibility promotes a sense of unity and communal power through acts of resistance pitted against a centralized and authoritarian government.
- The Apollonic sensibility is reformative in so far as it strives to rehabilitate declining social structures and waning political order while the Dionysiac sensibility is revolutionary in that the objective behind popular struggles is the overthrow of political régimes perceived to be unjust or corrupt.

In chapter 2 (mediating reality as drama), I examined how *events become stories*. Stories, in turn, may also help us understand events. I have therefore adopted the myths of Apollo and Dionysus in order to examine whether these narratives (stories) could propose alternative concepts and images with which to explore the processes (events) of social transformation in South Africa. Likewise, in an unpublished paper entitled *Social Transformation through Mythology* (1994), Zelda Knight suggests that mythology constructs a specific framework for understanding transformative processes, activities and behaviours. For her, mythology — and in particular the myth of Osiris and Isis — can help to guide our present social interactions:

[W]ithin the specific context of social transformation, mythology warns and informs us that there is a need for destruction or fragmentation and the dismantling of certain social

structures and systems within the society before there can be a renewal, a reconstruction and a building up of new social systems. This process is most markedly evident in South Africa, with the violent breaking down and deconstruction of the system of apartheid, followed by the process of attempting to draw together, unite and integrate the society, as evident in the national programmes and policies such as the 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' (1994:3).

Attempts to "unite and integrate" society should not, however, involve the negation of individual differences and collective preferences. I believe that, as potentially empowered members of a civil society, we should strive to reconcile our political (Apollonian) differences with our social (Dionysian) preferences. If we wish to move beyond these dualistic sensibilities, we will have to engage, both individually and collectively, in processes of socio-political reconstruction. These processes are, to a large extent, outlined in the ANC's *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP, launched 1994), which envisions a democracy based on political equality, social justice and economic development. While the RDP prioritizes housing, electricity, running water, jobs and education for all, it also includes several arts and culture policies that aim to:

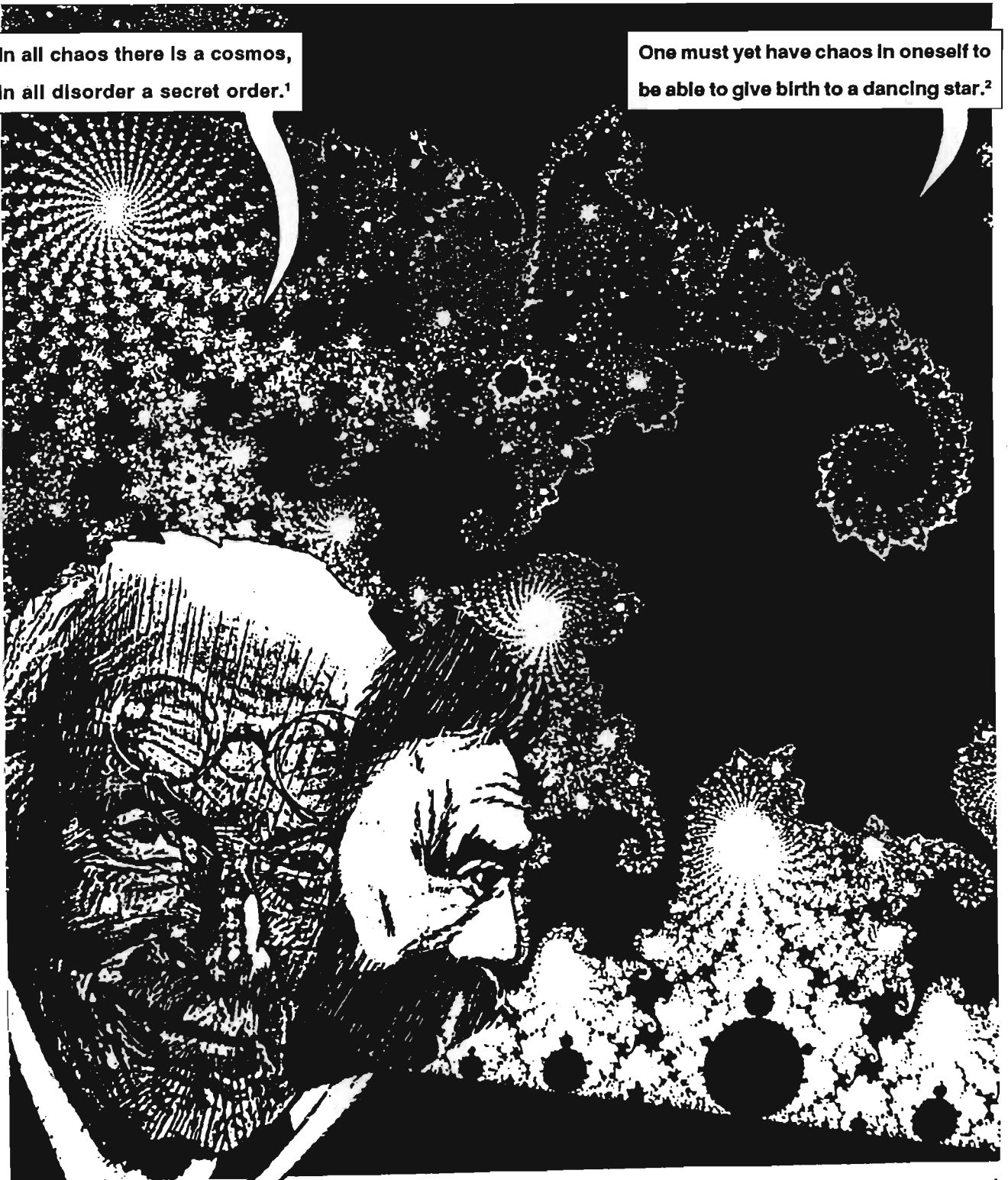
- affirm and promote the rich and diverse expression of South African culture — all people must be guaranteed the right to practise their culture, language, beliefs and customs, as well as enjoy freedom of expression and creativity free from interference;
- promote the development of a unifying national culture, representing the aspirations of all South Africa's people (this cannot be imposed, but requires the educating of people in principles of non-racialism, non-sexism, human rights and democracy);
- ensure that resources and facilities for both the production and appreciation of arts and culture are made available and accessible to all (priority must be given to those people and communities previously denied access to these resources);
- conserve, promote and revitalize our national cultural heritage so that it is accessible to all communities (historical and cultural collections, resources and sites must fully reflect the many components of our cultural heritage, and, in particular, neglected and suppressed aspects of our people's culture);
- place arts education firmly within the national educational curricula, as well as in non-formal educational structures;
- link culture firmly to areas of national priority, such as health, housing, tourism, etc., to ensure that culture is entrenched as a fundamental concept of development;
- establish and implement a language policy that encourages and supports, financially and otherwise, the utilization all the languages of South Africa;
- co-operate with educational bodies and the media in eradicating illiteracy, and promoting a reading and learning culture.

I propose that — over and above the policies outlined here — such a developmental programme should also favour difference *and* preference, the multiple *and* the single, the temporal *and* the stable, the complex *and* the simple. In other words, a democratic culture needs to be pluralistic (synthesis).

What, in effect, does this mean for artists? How can we, as members of civil society, contribute imaginatively and creatively toward the forging of a democratic culture in South Africa? I propose that we return to the Nietzschean concept of *tragic art* as discussed in chapter 4 (philosophy and aesthetics). If we follow Nietzsche, we may propose that the Apollonian and Dionysian duality, or at least their respective traces of order and chaos, may be reconciled in order to help reconstitute an affirmative art which transforms our cultural imagination. To this end, Nietzsche claims that the production of art is an imaginative and creative act which enables us to *fashion form from chaos*, or to *transform chaos into order*.

In all chaos there is a cosmos,
in all disorder a secret order.¹

One must yet have chaos in oneself to
be able to give birth to a dancing star.²

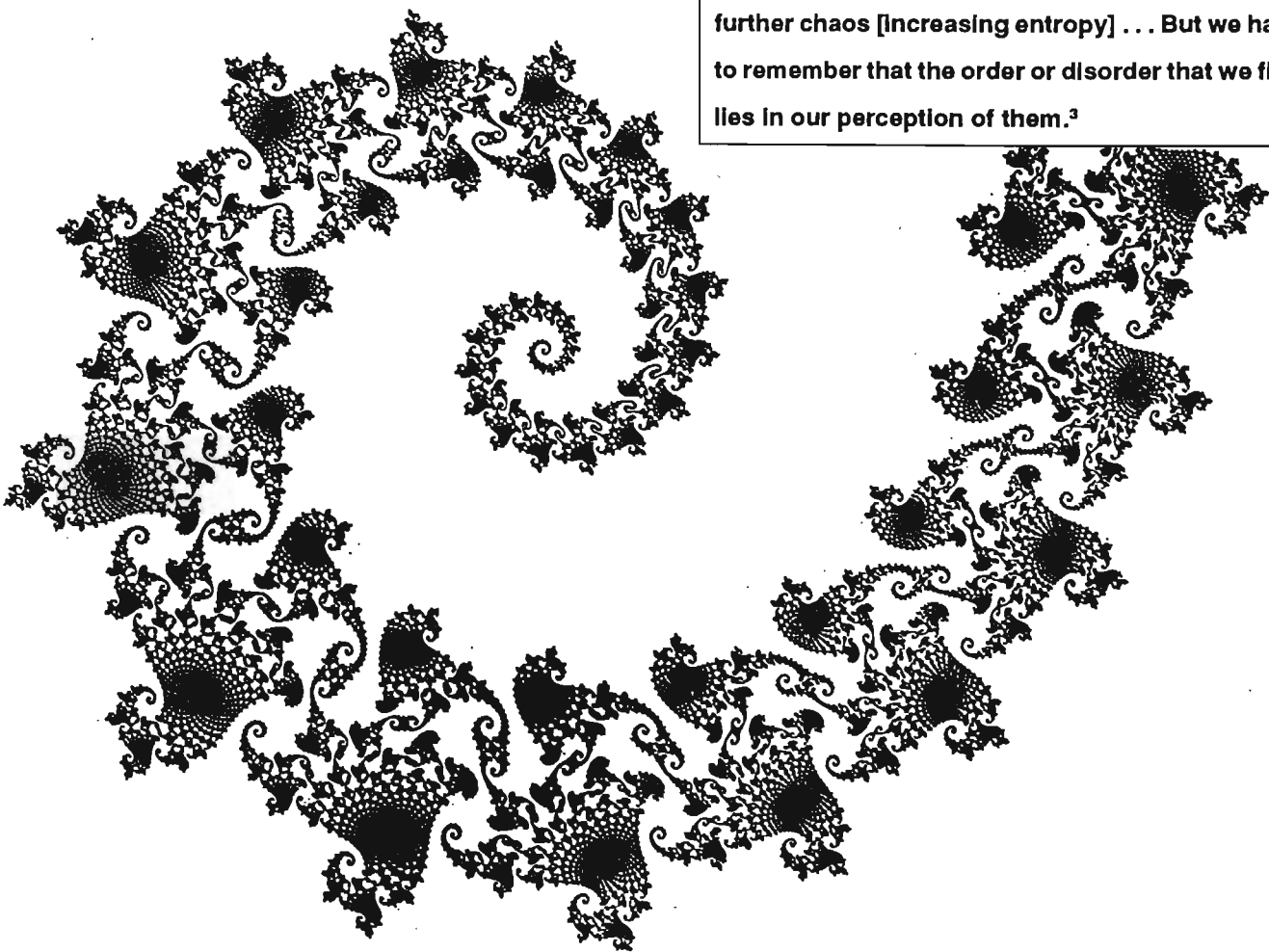


2. Carl Jung with Nietzschean mask. The background computer graphic illustrates the effects of chaos theory. Dietmar Saupe (c. 1986). (Jung cited by Jacobi 1974:285; quotation by Nietzsche from *Thus spoke Zarathustra*).

Following the emergence of *Chaos Theory* in the 1970s, Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers question the deterministic, asymmetric and hierarchical relations between order (*cosmos*) and disorder (*chaos*) in classical science. Their book, *Order out of Chaos* (1984), sets out to demonstrate processes involving randomness, irreversibility or fluctuations (1984:xxvii). The authors question the relation between disorder and order: "How can structure arise from disorder? We know now that nonequilibrium, the flow of matter and energy, may be a source of order . . . *Nonequilibrium brings 'order out of chaos'*" (1984:xxix, 287).

As noted before in the introduction, the cosmogonies of contemporary physics and ancient creation myths often concur. Today, the scientific and the mythopoetic offer similar insights into the order/chaos duality: ordered and chaotic states are relative, their causes and effects are relational, and their relationships are dynamic. We can therefore also add that the ordering processes underlying chaos are not immediately obvious, hence they fall short of the easily recognizable patterns which we associate with ordered states. Dualistic conceptions are thus determined by our ability to distinguish the fluctuations (or the repeated and irregular variations) of order and chaos in our world. Dualistic conceptions do not posit "truth claims" about reality, but invite us to (re-)interpret the world anew.

Yet in real life it appears that every orderly situation, every cosmos, needs a chaos out of which it can develop and then has to lead on to a further chaos [increasing entropy] . . . But we have to remember that the order or disorder that we find lies in our perception of them.³



3. Fractal spiral. While order can induce chaos, chaos may also induce order.

Reality, or the noumenal world into which we are born, is “a formless chaos of which one cannot even speak in the first place” (Jameson 1972:33). To this end, myth (as language) enables us to reconstruct, rearrange and reorganize the ‘chaotic’ phenomena of our own existence into a comprehensible order. As discussed in chapter 1 (defining reality through language), myths structure our experiences of reality by making sense of, or by giving meaning to, the world in which we live. Yet, as Jung and Levi-Strauss have shown, this ordering process is not necessarily a conscious activity: “Both Jung and Levi-Strauss assert meaning-giving as the essential human function, and they both use mythology to illustrate how this function operates unconsciously within the psyche” (Gras 1981:478). Furthermore, the late English historian Arnold Toynbee adds: “Religion is man’s attempt to order consciousness of reality and to put himself in harmony with the patterns he discerns. Myths of creation, found in all religions, are fundamental to this explanatory process, providing a logical basis for men’s guesswork about the world” (1972:344).



4. God the Son (Logos) creating celestial order out of chaos. Manuscript miniature from the French *Bible Moralisée* (c. 1450).

So, let us return to the ‘beginning’, to chaos and cosmos in ancient creation myths. According to Hebrew tradition, God fashioned cosmos out of chaos. When God began to create heaven and earth, he found nothing around him but Tohu and Bohu — Chaos and Emptiness.⁴ The Book of Genesis in the Hebrew *Pentateuch* (Books of Law) commences with these familiar lines: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Now the earth was unformed and void . . .”.

In *The Sacred Scriptures in Hebrew and English* (1844), the latter verse, namely Genesis 1:2, reads: “But the earth was without form and a confused mass . . .”. The authors translate this formless mass of matter, existing in a state of confused commixture, as ‘chaotic’.

Likewise, a medieval transposition of the creation starts as follows: “In the chaos of confused beginnings and the everlasting darkness of floating objects you imposed wonderful forms on the wondering elements . . .”. Numerous other Jewish and Christian translators, transposers or commentators of Genesis 1:2 refer to a state of chaos before the creation of cosmos (Campbell 1988:114; Frye 1983:188; Graves & Patal 1964:25).

Can any understand the spreadings of the Clouds
the noise of his Tabernacle

15

Also by watering he weariseth the thick cloud
He scattereth the bright cloud also it is turned
of his compass



Of Behemoth he saith, He is the chief of the ways of God
Of Leviathan he saith, He is King over all the Children of Pride

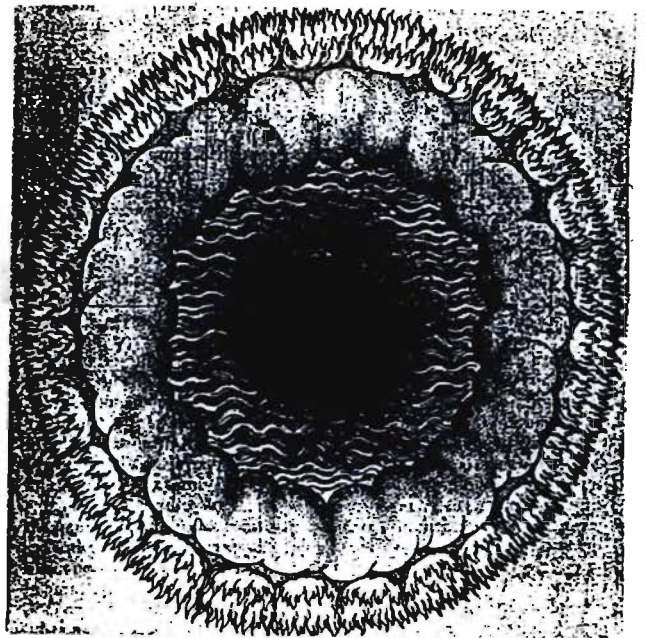
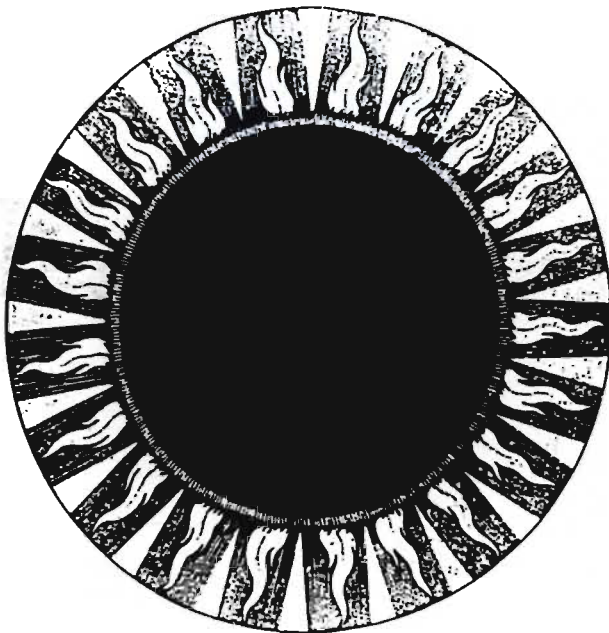
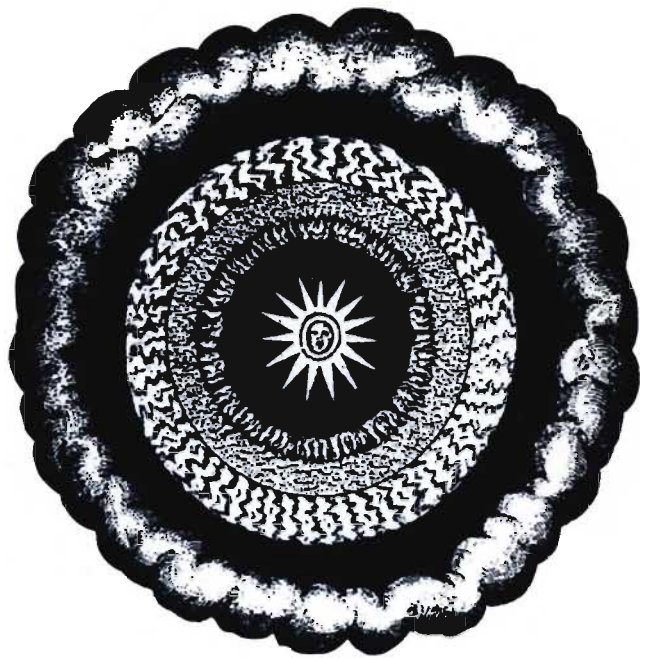
Behold now Behemoth which I made with thee

W. Blake invent. & sculp.

London Published as the Act directs March 8. 1825 by Will Blake N^o 3 Fountain Court Strand

Proof

5. Leviathan (Tohu) and Behemoth (Bohu).⁵ William Blake, *The Book of Job* (1825), engraving, plate 15: "Behold now Behemoth".



6. The emergence of order from chaos. The English Hermetic philosopher, Robert Fludd (1574–1637) wrote an elaborate treatise on creation in an attempt to reconcile religious beliefs with occult science.

The concept of chaos in creation mythology is most often the central mythopoeic metaphor for a primordial formless state devoid of distinguishable qualities. In *Clementine Recognitions* the Græcian Orpheus declares: “Chaos first existed, eternal, vast, uncreate — it was neither darkness nor light, nor moist nor dry, nor hot nor cold, [and neither Apollonian or Dionysian], but all things intermingled” (Gaskell 1981:145).⁶

As already mentioned in the introduction, the term chaos is applied with similar intent by both scholars of religion and science. According to Fritjof Capra, in his *Tao of Physics* (1975), the parallel conceptions of chaos between ancient eastern mysticism and modern western



7. "Chaos". The zodiacal symbols, imposed on the night sky in an attempt to give order to the universe, are thwarted by chaotic forces. A Dutch eighteenth-century engraving after a drawing by Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1591–1675).

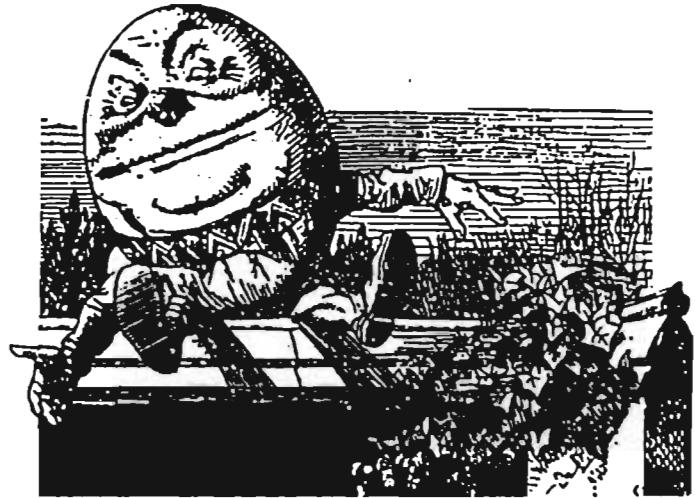
physics are founded upon paradoxes of formless disorder and ordered formations. In the *Ch'ten*, a commentary on the *I Ching* (Book of Changes), chaos is a state in which everything is present together, but not yet separate; existing so undifferentially that nothing can be manifest in particular . . . it is pure entropy (Maclagan 1977:14). For the Austrian atomic physicist, Ludwig Boltzmann,⁷ entropy is a measure of disorder that, somewhat paradoxically, has the probability of forming an orderly structured state. We do need, as Nietzsche proclaimed, chaos to create order. For him the ambition of a creative life is the structuring of chaos: "To become the master of the chaos one is; to compel one's chaos to become form . . . that is the grand ambition here" (1967:238).

If the above comments suffice as concluding remarks about dualistic conceptions underlying mythopoeic and scientific modes of understanding order and chaos, then I shall conclude this study by way of an analogy. Let us recall the unfortunate fate which befell Humpty Dumpty.

This popular nursery rhyme poses a philosophical riddle. Humpty is an egg which falls and breaks apart, the broken form cannot be made whole again, unity cannot be restored.

What does this mean for us in terms of this study? Are the words a mere *non-sense*, or do they mask the concepts and images of ancient creation myths? Can this nursery rhyme suggest different ways through which to explore the world? I believe so. But first, one last exposition on language and reality.

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.



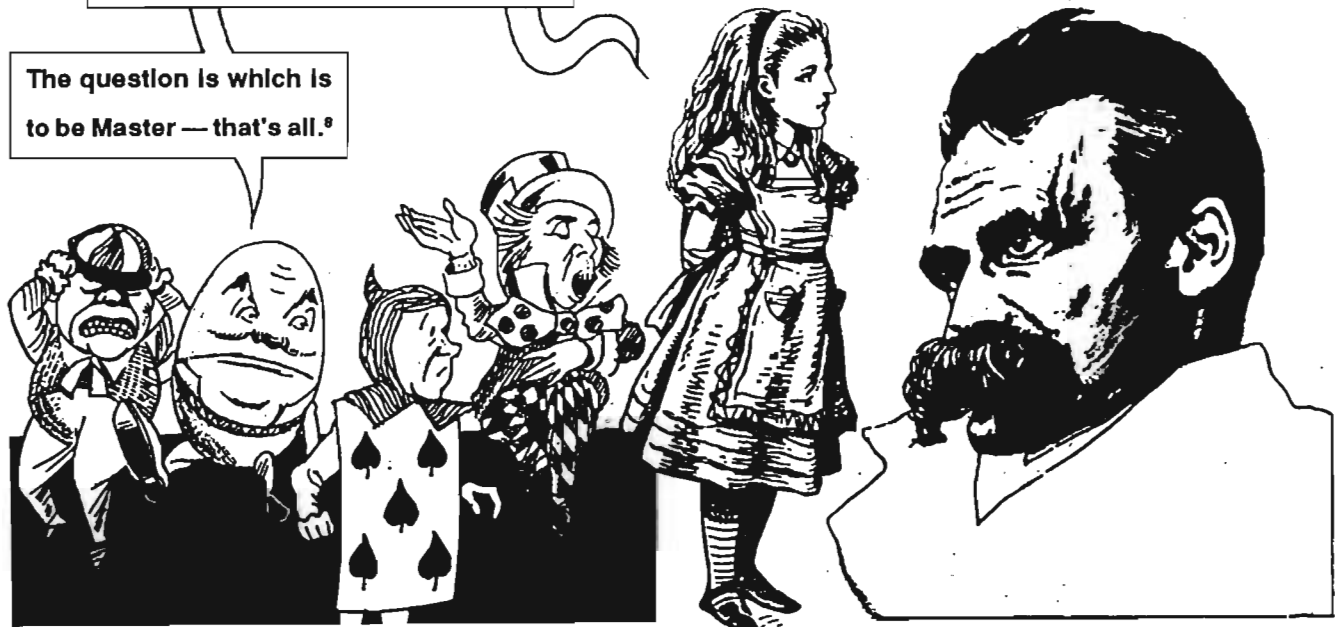
8. An illustration by John Tenniel for Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871).

When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.

Every philosophy also conceals a philosophy; every opinion is a hiding place, every word also a mask.⁹

The question is whether you can make words mean so many different things.

The question is which is to be Master — that's all.⁹



9. Alice and friends from *Through the Looking Glass*, in conversation with Friedrich Nietzsche.

As we have seen, Nietzsche views the ambiguity and paradox of philosophy, even the language used to articulate thought, as appropriate for rediscovering how to make sense of reality anew.



10. Johan Degenaar (1986b:34–35).

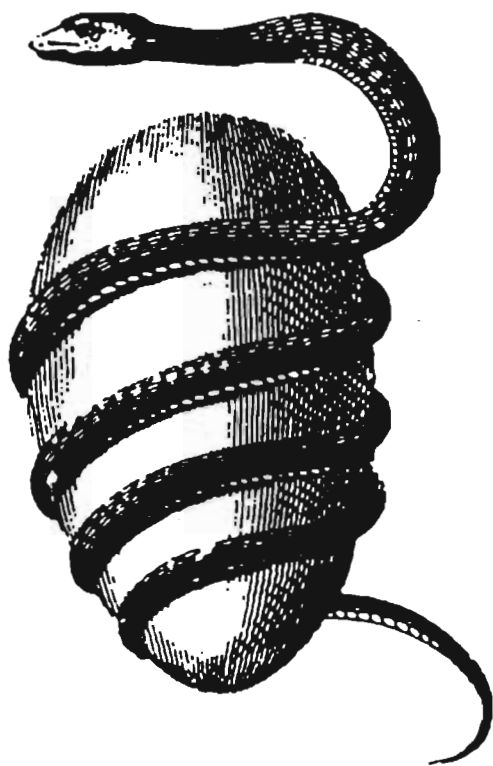
According to Nietzsche: "A philosophical mythology lies hidden in language". This means that language already reflects a pre-understanding of the world, and that there are certain primary [Master] concepts or images which direct our thinking in a way more fundamental than one is usually willing to admit. Philosophy can discover this and suggest new images in terms of which to explore the world in a different way. There is no pure (non-mythological) language or final myth [master-narrative] with which to know the world in an absolute way. Instead of assuming that there is an 'essence' to Nietzsche's thinking one should rather accept his invitation to explore the various metaphors introduced by him (e.g. Zarathustra, Dionysus, eternal return, will to power, *Urbmensch*, etc., etc.).¹⁰



11. Apollo and Dionysus.

Finally, let us now reconsider the metaphors which I introduced at the outset of this study. The youthful and masculine Apollo who is associated with emperors, kings and solar hierophanies; the aged Dionysus, in contrast, who is associated with animals, agriculture and the cultivation of the vine. As we have seen, Apollo is the embodiment of idealized, civilized *culture* — he personifies civilized *order* whereas Dionysus embodies the continual, unpredictable manifestations and transformations of *nature* — he personifies primal *chaos*. For Nietzsche the duality between Apollo and Dionysus is a symbol of the "extreme opposition" which we traditionally perceived between order and chaos.

Historically, the Apollonian-Dionysian duality is a pagan dialectic which focuses on the supposed contradictions, both between and within, culture and nature, civil order and chthonian discord. Apollo represents the "intelligible, determinate, mensurable", Dionysus the "fantastic, vague, shapeless" (Fraenkel 1935:25). Dialectically, this demonstrates the tension between and within cosmos and chaos, order and disorder.



12. The Egg of the World entwined with a spiral serpent. Illustration from J Bryant, *Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1774).

In another Greek myth (of the North-Wind cult) the Goddess of All Things, Eurynome, rises naked from Chaos to divide the sky from the sea, stirs the waves and the wind, and is impregnated by a great serpent — whereby she lays the World Egg which the serpent coils about and hatches. It is out of the cracked egg that all existing opposites emerge (Maclagan 1977:16).

The body of Dionysus, like Osiris in Egypt, is cut to pieces (Cirlot 1978:xxxix). Through this ritual sacrifice the severed parts are reconstituted to wholeness again — *unity is restored through the Bacchanalian sacrifices*. The dismembered Dionysus is made whole again.¹¹ And so, like Orpheus, he returns to the world of the living.

In the Orphic Mysteries the creator of the world is Eros (also known as Phanes-Dionysus), an androgynous god born of the Cosmic Egg:

When Time and wailing Need split the ancient egg, outstepped Love the first born, fire in his eyes, wearing both sexes, glorious Eros [Phanes-Dionysus], father of immortal Night, whom Zeus swallowed and brought back (Maclagan 1977:16).

According to the Orphic Mysteries, Chaos initiates the involution of spirit from which all form arises through the evolution of matter.¹² In Egyptian cosmogony, Ptah fashions the *Egg of the World*, like a potter, out of clay. For this reason Ptah, also known as Osiris and Dionysus,¹³ is held to be the creator of all the arts.¹⁴ One must, as Nietzsche states, *have chaos to create form . . .*



13. Ptah fashioning the Egg of the World. Illustration from *Studies in Egyptian Mythology* (1904).

Herein lies a clue to the philosophical riddle of Humpty Dumpty. Humpty the Egg is also the *Cosmic Egg* or *Egg of the World*. The 'truths' behind Humpty Dumpty are well-worn metaphors for the origin of the universe that is, or once was, one whole.

The analogy between Humpty Dumpty and the Cosmic Egg is based on a metaphorical conception of the universe as a *unitary whole*. In this popular verse, Humpty (Dionysus) is broken (or dispersed) and no power on earth, not even the King's (Apollonian) army, can put him together again. In occult creation myths, the One becomes the Many, singularity becomes multiplicity. The "breaking" apart of Humpty Dumpty symbolizes the process of "making a singular into a plural".¹⁶ Or, as Edgar Wind says:

One descends to the Many, this act of creation is imagined as a sacrificial agony, as if the One were cut to pieces and scattered. Creation is conceived in this way as a cosmogonic death, by which the concentrated power of one deity is offered up and dispersed: but the descent and diffusion of the divine power are followed by its resurrection, when the Many are "recollected" into the One.¹⁷

The One and the Many now constitute each other. Following Plutarch we can say that "Apollo the One" and "Dionysus the Many" are both singular and plural at the same time, the duality is reconciled. Politically speaking, we can say that "the state" is "the people" and "the people" are "the state". These are now welded together to form a unitary, pluralistic whole. I believe this act of reconciliation is the challenge facing a future democratic South Africa.

The Book of the Dead says:

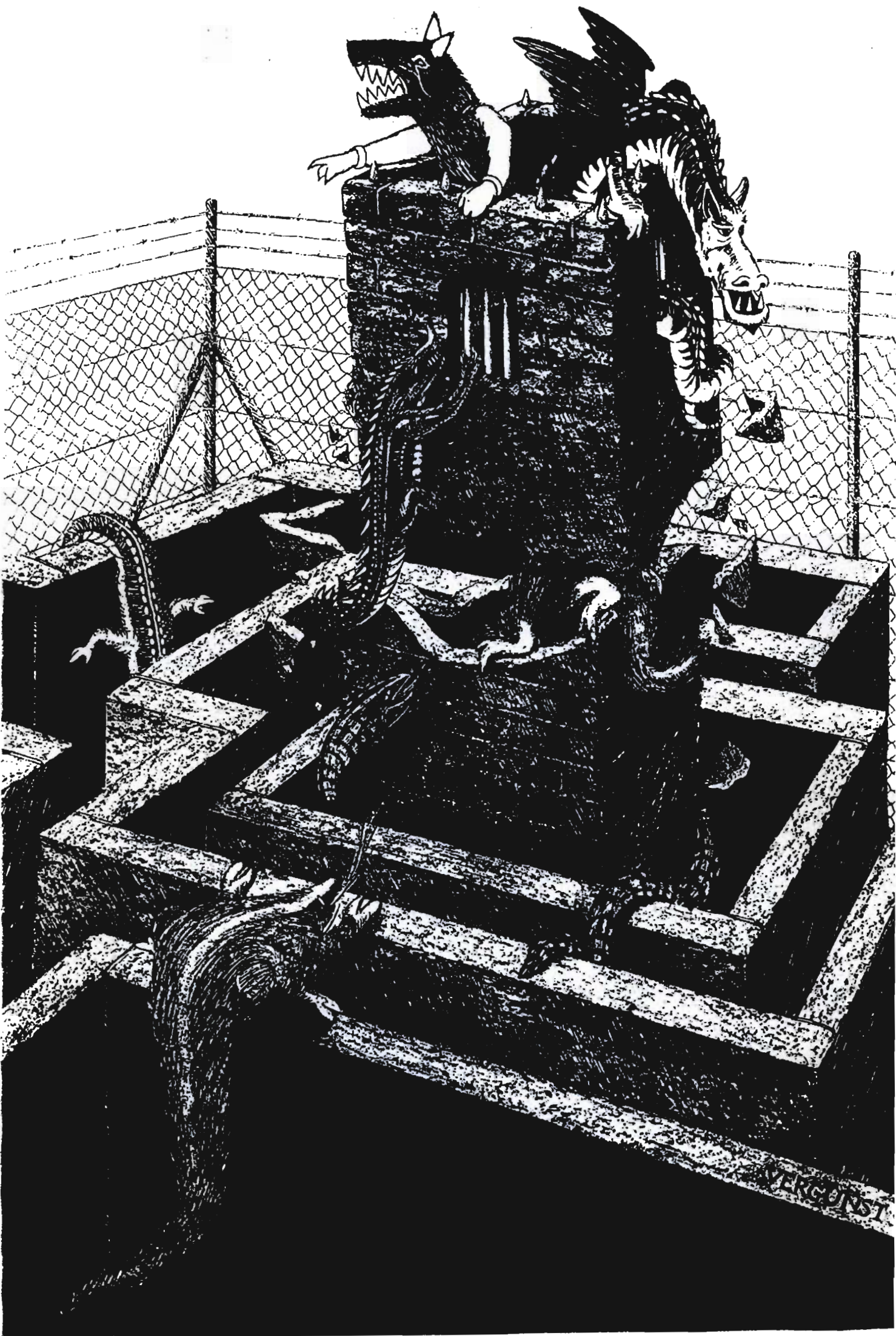
"I, Osiris, rise out of the egg in the hidden land".¹⁵



14. Humpty Dumpty (quotation from the *Book of the Dead*).



15. Adapted from an aquatint by John Muafangejo (1974).



AUTHOR'S NOTES

I have followed, as far as possible, the Harvard style for references in the text. I have observed Oxford rules for spelling.

Following common usage the spelling of Dionysus and Apollo is taken from the Roman rather than the Greek *Dionysus* and *Apollon*.

Whenever necessary, dates are given as BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era), not the Christian orientated BC and AD.

All quotes, unless indented, are given double quotation marks. Quotes within indented quotations are indicated by double quotation marks.

Double quotation marks are used for colloquial expressions (i.e. "people's culture"), single quotation marks for problematic terms (i.e. 'truth').

Several authors have referred to both genders as "man". I have ignored these generic references within quotes as I do not feel that they imply an explicit sexist or chauvinist dogma.

Particular historical periods and movements (i.e. Renaissance, Neo-classicism, Post-modernism) are indicated by the use of capital letters. For consistency, I have taken the liberty to change the initial letter to upper case in quotations whenever authors have not done so.

I use the term "duality" in a *soft* sense i.e. signifying the potentiality for flux between opposing forces. I avoid "dualism", unless where necessary (e.g. Cartesian dualism) because it has a *hard* meaning and does not convey a sense of dynamic relationships between opposites.

REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION *the apollonian-dionysian duality as frame of reference*

1. Current experiments now show that a significant variety of events are intrinsically uncertain and unpredictable. These events or processes are liable to change or to be put off course by a quite small disturbance of order; a minute disturbance can cause a radical change in the eventual outcome of a process. The resultant patterns become increasingly complex, and as this complexity moves beyond the horizons of predictability, they fall into patterns of uncorrelated behaviour. *It would seem that patterns of disorder may still be ordered, but their behaviour becomes too complex for us to comprehend them as being orderly.* It follows that so-called ordered and disordered behavioural patterns are not manifestations of absolute or objective states, but the result of *what we perceive to be cosmos and chaos.* I shall return perceptions of order and disorder in the conclusion.

2. The Greek goddess Leto (also known as Latona) gave birth to twins — Apollo and Artemis. Artemis, like Dionysus, is intimately associated with nature (especially wild animals) and fertility rites.

3. The Greek goddess Semele is most often taken to be the mother of Dionysus. In an early Orphic myth from Asia Minor, Dionysus is first born of Persephone, but after his death (sacrifice) at the hands of the Titans he is born again (resurrected) as the son of Semele.

Orphism was a mystic Greek cult which can be traced back to the legendary pre-Homeric (sixth century BCE) Orpheus of Phryia and Thracia in Asia Minor. Orpheus was regarded as the founder of the Orphic Mysteries — from whence the cult derived its name — and a devout follower of Dionysus. The tearing in pieces (dismemberment) of Orpheus by the Thracian Mænads is closely connected with the ritual rending of Dionysus. For further details, see Paul Harvey (1990:298–299).

4. For detailed iconographic references pertaining to Apollo, see Van de Waal (1980:60–64).

5. For detailed iconographic references regarding Dionysus, see Van de Waal (1980:107–111).

6. Mithras, the Persian sun-god, is the pre-Christian *Sol Invictus* or the *Never-Vanquished Sun*. See Erwin Panofsky (1983:301–302).

7. See Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:603).

8. See Von Hugel, *Mystical Elements* 2. Cited by George Gaskell (1981:55).

9. According to the doctrine of Orphism, the creator of the

world is Phanes-Dionysus. For further background to Orphic cosmogony, see David Maclagan (1977:16).

10. Juan Cirlot (1978:257, 317). This is affirmed by William Shakespeare in *A Winter's Tale* iv (iii): "... the fire rob'd god, Golden Apollo". See, also, Ivor Evans (1983:42).

11. Zagreus is a barbarian name signifying "torn to pieces". Camille Paglia writes in *Sexual Personae*: "The violent principle of Dionysian cult is *sparagmos*, which in Greek means 'a rending, tearing, mangling' and secondly 'a convulsion, spasm'" (1991:95). According to the Orphic account of the myth, Dionysus-Zagreus was dismembered and devoured by the Titans. See Paul Harvey (1990:148) and MP Nilsson (1969:246). James Frazer's exhaustive treatise on magic and religion, *The Golden Bough* (c. 1912), is now somewhat dated but still remains most informative. He provides scholarly details pertaining to rites of dismemberment in volume I, part V.

12. According to Graham Hill (1916:162): "It would be absurd to look for any exact correspondence, since the human mind does not work logically in such matters. But given like circumstances, the mythopoeic faculty will produce something of the same sort in different ages and climes".

13. Homi Bhabha uses the term "nonsense" in a Lacanian mode: "The fact that I have said that the effect of interpretation is to isolate in the subject a kernel, a *kern* to use Freud's own term, of *non-sense*, does not mean that interpretation is in itself nonsense". Jacques Lacan, *The field of the other*. Cited by Homi Bhabha (1994:123).

14. Alan Watts (1969) classifies traditional dualistic conceptions into three general types:

(i) The concept of an inner unity which binds opposites together as found in Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism i.e. yin and yang, lingam and yoni, chance and fate.

(ii) The concept of conflict between interrelated opposites as in Zoroastrian, Judaic and Hellenistic traditions i.e. light and/or darkness, good and/or evil, order and/or chaos.

(iii) The concept of separate entities divorced from each other as in Christianity. Such conceptions are permeated by an extreme, ultimate dualism i.e. heaven or hell, saved or damned, righteous or sinful.

In Christian mythology the unitary and conflictual dualities of Far and Near Eastern religions tend to disappear. Sometimes, however, traces of an oppositional unity and oppositional conflict still remain. These relations of flux and fluctuation are what I have set out to explore with specific reference to Apollo and Dionysus in Græco-Roman mythology.

15. For an illuminating revision of the myth of Apollo and Dionysus, see Camille Paglia (1991:72–139).

16. See Plutarch, *Moralia*. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:97).

17. See Plutarch, *Moralia*. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:97).

18. For an illustrated summary of legendary dragonslayers in various mythologies, see Nicolaas Vergunst (1987:10–33).

19. See Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:215).

20. According to Juan Cirlot (1978:xxxix): "[T]he process of creation — which oriental theogonies explain as both progressive multiplication and as division, since all things derive from unity — has its analogous counterpart in the related myths of the carving up of the body of Osiris in Egypt, of Prajapati in India and Dionysus in Greece".

21. Plato, in the *Ion*, describes the possession (inspiration) which seizes the worshippers of Dionysus-Bacchus: "For the epic poets . . . are seized with the Bacchic transport, and are possessed — as the Bacchantes, when possessed, draw milk and honey from the rivers, but not when in their senses". Cited by Ernst Fischer (1981:40).

22. For an (almost) equally controversial review of Paglia's book, see William Pretorius (1992:23). I do not, however, wish to enter the polemics surrounding Paglia's attack on feminism (in general) or women's studies (in particular) suffice to say that I disagree with her traditional sexist arguments namely that women are associated with the destructive forces of nature and men with the creative forces of culture: "Culture . . . was invented by men, because it is by culture that they make themselves whole" (1991:653). Her argument is based on a false sense of difference between the sexes (women are strong, men weak). As a result of this biological asymmetry, she argues, men seek revenge through compensation — they strive to overcome their acute sense of inadequacy by asserting themselves through culture (as opposed to nature). It follows, for Paglia at least, that patriarchy is a socio-political strategy for defending/protecting men from their fear of matriarchy.

While I use the nature/culture duality, the female-orientated/male-centric duality, and the matriarchal/patriarchal duality, I regard these as ideological and not as biological (or genetic) constructs.

23. Nietzsche uses the word *Rausch* to describe states of ecstatic rapture.

24. As already suggested, Apollo is associated with political order (*cosmos*). The Greek word *kosmos* was first applied to political, military and ceremonial order, and only later associated with the universe by (it would seem) Pythagoras (MacLagan 1977:20).

CHAPTER 1

defining reality through language

1. Humans distinguish themselves from all other creatures in nature because they possess, and are also possessed by, the power of words (see Ferdinand Ebner. Cited by Gadamer, 1982:181).

2. Aristotle. Cited by George Steiner (1985:55).

3. Aristotle, *Ethics*. Cited by Ben-Ami Scharfstein (1978:202).

4. Attributed to Pyrrho. Cited by Ben-Ami Scharfstein (1978:320).

5. Plato, unattributed. Augustine, in *The City of God*, adds: "I am most certain that I am, and that I know and delight in this". Cited by Oates (1948:168).

6. René Descartes, *The Search After Truth*. Cited by E S Haldane & G R T Ross (1934:224–325).

7. René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*. Cited by E S Haldane & G R T Ross (1934:221).

8. Charles Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. Cited by Charles Davy (1961:11). Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers — the authors of *Order out of Chaos* (1984) — wrote an earlier book entitled *La Nouvelle Alliance* (1979) in which they emphasize the current convergence of science and the humanities. The dichotomy between the "two cultures", they argue, is to a large extent due to the conflict between the atemporal view of classical science and the time-orientated view that prevails in a large part of the social sciences and humanities. So what has changed? According to Prigogine and Stengers: "science is rediscovering time". If we take chaos theory seriously, then we need not continue to support the thesis of "two cultures". I shall discuss the reconciliation of traditional opposites again in the Conclusion.

9. Mark Schorer, *William Blake*. Cited by Alan Watts (1963:3).

10. The implication that a human maker is a divine creator is only analogous. Likewise, it is also analogous to say that God, like man, is a poet. As we have seen, the analogy between the poet-as-maker and God-as-Creator has fascinated scholars since the seventeenth century, or at least since the ascendance of metonymic modes of thought in modern Western culture. With this in mind we can restate the following line from the poem *Paracelsus* by Robert Browning (1812-1889): "God is the perfect poet, Who in his person [Christ the Logos] acts his own creations". We could say: "Man is a poet who, like God, creates through his own actions".

This restatement retrieves the fact that we, as are the gods, poets by virtue of *our* humanity. We make the gods in *our* image — attributing to them the most sublime or terrible qualities which, though more intensely portrayed, we *ourselves* possess. Thus, following Northrop Frye, we should rather reverse the analogy and acknowledge that the conception of a Creator-God is a projection resulting from the fact that *humans make things* (1983:112).

11. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Cited by Ernst Gombrich (1977:55).

12. Immanuel Kant. Source unknown to author.

13. Immanuel Kant. Cited by R F A Hoernle (1952:121).

14. Immanuel Kant. Cited by Herschell Chipp (1968:256).

15. Ferdinand de Saussure's model of the *sign* as *signifier* and

signified is not too dissimilar to Peirce's model of the *representamen* as *meaning and object*. In relation to this study we may regard the sign or *representamen* as a physical object which has an ascribed meaning. It is neither the object nor the meaning alone, but the two together. It is both signifier and signified. Peirce, however, introduces the maker or interpreter (as the "signifying subjectivity") into his model of semiosis.

Let us summarize the main terminology of Structuralism, particularly the linguistic terms introduced by Saussure in relation to our broader study of iconographic signification:

(i) Structure is seen as a set of relationships which precondition all understanding and knowledge, including our Interpretation of iconography. To interpret the meaning of an icon or image requires a study of the underlying sign-system or *codes* involved.

(ii) The sign-system can be regarded as a set of interrelated *signs*. A sign consists of two constituent components: a *signifier* as the visible component and a *signified* as the conceptual component. An image is seen to be constituted as a sign or set of signs where a signifier is the abstract idea and a signified the material object. Since the signified is not identical to reality, iconographic signification can be considered as a self-enclosed system.

(iii) Artistic signification is regarded as an arbitrary sign-system where the relationship between signifier and signified is conventional. Similarly the relationship between how an image (as a sign or set of signs) represents what an image-maker observes (as reality) is also a matter of convention.

(iv) The meaning of a sign is not inherent but invested according to the sign's position in a set of relationships. This position is characterized by virtue of its difference to other signs which may either be present or absent. Certain absent signs co-determine the meaning of those signs that are present.

(v) A distinction is made between grammar or *langue* and speech or *parole*. *Langue* refers to general laws governing a sign-system behind an image whereas *parole* refers to the particular manifestations of articulated signs within an image.

(vi) Language consists of *synchronic* and *diachronic* relations in a sign-system. The synchronic refers to the structural dimension and the diachronic to the historical dimension of an image.

(vii) A distinction is made between the *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic* dimensions of a sign. Within the paradigmatic dimension, seen as relationships on a horizontal axis, the sign's meaning is due to its position within a sequence or pattern of signs that are present in the image. Within the syntagmatic dimension, seen as relationships on a vertical axis, the sign's meaning results from its association with other signs that may be absent. The syntagm refers to the combination of signs whereas paradigm refers to an array of signs possible for selection.

16. It is perhaps appropriate to mention here that the notion of meaning in visual sign-systems is, similarly, a consequence of social production, and not in some way residual in the art object itself. In other words, meaning is not intrinsic to art, but attributed to the artefact through human interaction.

17. Roland Barthes also stresses the similarities and differences between language as *primary* signification and myth as *secondary* signification. In both language and myth, as first-order and second-order semiotic systems respectively, he found the tripartite signifying model described above, namely the signifier and the signified bound together in the sign. Within the latter Barthes goes on to propose that a sign should be called a *signification*, a signifier called the *form* and the signified called the *concept*. This postulation rests on the process of signification which we traditionally understand as *denotation* and *connotation*. Denotative meanings are explicit, direct and literal whereas connotative meanings are implicit, associative or metaphoric. Barthes' analysis of *semiosis* takes us into the presence of covert operations involving signification in myths.

18. George Steiner (1985:31, 36).

19. Jacques Derrida. Cited by Graham Norris (1984:). See also Timothy Yates.

20. Whereas Structuralism denies that language copies reality, Barthes and Derrida deny that literature copies language. This dismantles Saussure's distinction between spoken and written language, as well as Culler's distinction between literary and critical language. The former privileges speech over writing, the latter literature over criticism.

CHAPTER 2 mediating reality as drama

1. Aristotle. Cited by Phyllis Hartnoll (1971:7). A drama is not the real action but a representation of a (f)act. Restated we can concur with the now-familiar statement by Korzybski; *a map is not the territory*.

2. Aristotle, in his *Poetics* 9, compares the dramatist with the poet. The Greek word *poietes* means "maker".

3. "The turn of drama came in the winter and early spring at celebrations for Dionysus, also called Bacchus, whose main home in Athens — his temple and his theatre — lay below the Acropolis at its south-eastern corner. For us a theatre is far from being a holy ground and the conception of it as the precinct of a god is strange indeed. But no Greek questioned it; among all their deities none was more suited for this function than Dionysus. He was far more than the god of wine. He was a god of fertility and growth whose animal incarnations were the bull and the goat; his symbols were the luxuriantly growing ivy and the phallus. His ritual — a favourite subject with the vase-painters — was mostly performed by women: through the dance and wine it could lead to a state of ecstasy which brought joy to the worshippers and a sense of possession by the god. But the Greeks' conception of him also has its grim and gruesome side. Dark stories were told such as that dramatized by Euripides in his *Bacchae* — legends of the fate of those who resisted the god, torn to pieces on the mountains by his frenzied women devotees. Here was a deity whose realm was passion rather than intellect, joy and horror rather than reason,

- one to whom both tragedy and comedy could belong and although for the fifth-century Athenian the wild orgies in the hills were no more than a tale, and Dionysus was now accepted into the company of the Olympians, there was still a spirit about his cult which set him apart from the other gods and must have given his festivals an atmosphere of their own." (Baldry 1971:19-20).
4. For a concise description of the developments in both Greek and Roman theatre, see Phyllis Hartnoll (1987:7-31).
 5. For further discussion on this matter, see Roman Jakobson and Edmund Leach (Terence Hawkes 1985:164, 166).
 6. See George Steiner (1985:12).
 7. As Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf have shown, the language people learn and use determines how they will perceive reality. Whorf proposes a *relational* view of reality where different languages (or world-views) are imposed to produce different known worlds.
 8. See Stuart Hall (1984:67).
 9. An action, according to Maurice Mandelbaum (1956:210), only becomes the subject for historians if it has "societal significance". It is perhaps more accurate to say that social acts become significant when historians ascribe value to them.
 10. Zou Kota. *Cape Times* (1985.3.22: 2).
 11. "Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the incident which occurred on 21 March, 1985 at Uitenhage", (also known as the "Kannemeyer Report"). Presented to the State President on 4 June 1985.
 12. William Shakespeare, *A Winter's Tale*. For further information on the Oracles of Apollo, consult H W Parke (1985).
 13. Captain Goosen obtained the first order from chief magistrate M H Steyn for the Eastern Cape and the second from district magistrate M J Groenewald in Uitenhage on the evening before the ill fated march. It is probable that the mourners were thus unaware of the latter edict the next morning when they assembled at Maduna Square.
 14. Antigone, *The Theban Plays*. Cited by Robert Thornton (1988:1).
 15. Antigone, *The Theban Plays*. Cited by Robert Thornton (1988:21).
 16. Affidavits collected by the Progressive Federal Party's Repression Monitoring Committee. The PFP was then the official opposition in Parliament.
 17. Jim Fouché. This quote comes from an interview with Fouché, entitled: "Why I gave the order to open fire — officer". *The Argus* (1985.3.30).
 18. This statement was made in parliament by Minister Louis le Grange on 21 March 1985. These allegations (about the crowd attacking the blockade) seem to have been fabricated by the police after the incident but rejected later by the Commission. The Commission, however, did accept the police report about petrol bombs on the basis of two bottle necks found among the debris after the shooting. However, despite scrupulous attempts by the police to collect all trace evidence of "stones, sticks and other missiles", no glass shards belonging to these bottles were found and not one witness testified to having seen any attempt to ignite or to throw a petrol bomb. Furthermore, no stones were found in or near the Casspirs, nor could any missile have "bounced off" (as Fouché initially claimed) and fallen back eighteen metres from where the armoured vehicles had been parked across the road. Errol Moorcroft, PFP Albany District, also showed that the nearest blood stains on the road were more than thirty metres from where Pentz and Fouché claimed they had set up the roadblock. In spite of this, the Commission still accepted an amended police statement which claimed that the crowd were only ten metres from the Casspirs and not (as Fouché had testified before) surrounding the police. Given the scanty and inconsistent evidence put forward by the police, the Commission's findings (and the subsequent official view) is naive in the extreme. For a more detailed assessment of these 'facts' see Thornton (1988:8-9).
 19. See the Kannemeyer Report. It is worth noting that the Government, without calling attention to the fact, paid compensation to the families of the dead and injured victims two years later.
 20. Symbolically, the conflict between Apollo and Marsyas represents the conflict between our higher, sunlit and reasonable Apollonic sensibility and our passionate, dark and unreasoning Dionysiac sensibility; or between an urban culture that transcends our animality and the rustic and instinctive world (see Freedberg 1984:54). The origin of the legend probably lies in the opposition between two advancing cultures; the contest between the lyre (stolen from Orpheus by Apollo) and the flute probably symbolizes the conflict between the established Thracian civilization and the ascendant Graecian civilization. Historically, the discovery of wind instruments (blowing through a reed) precedes the invention of a string instrument.
 21. Discord, literally, means "severance of hearts" (from the Latin word *discordia*).
 22. Kevin Brand arrived in the Eastern Cape soon after the event and spent six months teaching at a local art centre in Grahamstown (from July to December 1985).
 23. The figures are made from polystyrene moulds covered with brown craft paper, overlaid with paint and sealed with resin.
 24. The original Afrikaans text reads: "Jy is nie alleen die polisie-man met die moordwapen nie, maar ook aan diens in 'n lykshuis. Wie anders as die staatspatoloog doen 'n lykskouing?" *Die Beeld* (1988.12.19).
 25. Kevin Brand. Cited by Sue Williamson (1989:25).

25. Kevin Brand. Cited by Sue Williamson (1989:25).

26. See review by Neville Dubow. *Weekly Mail* (1988.6.17). The title of his review, "Need an artist be shot to feel pain", evokes Plato's question; how much knowledge does the poet need to paint in words his pictures of human life? Plato, *The Republic*. Cited by Francis Cornfield (1966:315, 324–325).

CHAPTER 3 mythology and history

1. Herodotus' assertion regarding the origins of Dionysian worship is no longer maintained, as later historians claim that Greek religion and philosophy developed out of the ancient civilizations of Asia Minor. It is also argued that the Egyptians of the Hellenistic period based their myths on those of the Greeks, and then asserted that their myths were the origin of Greek religion and philosophy. For further background, see Frederick Copleston (1962:30–31).

For further evidence of the Thracian origin of Dionysus see LR Farnell (1909:85).

2. Heraclitus. Cited by Carl Jung (1967:143).

3. Secret rites were referred to as the Mysteries (from the Greek verb *myo* meaning to "keep one's mouth shut").

4. Plutarch, *Moralia*. Cited by Edgar Wind (1980:135).

5. Grabbe, *Don Juan and Faust*. Cited by Edgar Wind (1969:140). While this clearly refers to the god Dionysus, the act of tearing to pieces, or rending limb from limb, is best known in relation to the god Osiris. According to Egyptian cosmogony, Osiris was torn to pieces and his dismembered body scattered across the land until Isis sought out and pieced him together again — except for one piece, the phallus. His death-rebirth symbolized an act of sacrifice and is closely associated with Dionysian destruction-recreation. See Cirlot (1978:xxxix).

6. Marsilio Ficino. Cited by Edgar Wind (1980:62). Dionysius the Areopagite was a Neo-Platonic philosopher of the fifth century CE. The name given to him describes a Bacchic approach to God through the negation of the intellect.

7. Milton, *Paradise Lost* vii(l): 23.

8. Swinburne, *Hymn to Proserpine*.

9. Marsilio Ficino, *Platonis Opera* (1548, a translation after Plato's *Phaedo*); also Giovanni Francesco Pic Della Mirandola, *Opera* (1601). Cited by Edgar Wind (1980:277). The revival of ancient pagan mysteries in humanist philosophy and art during the Renaissance reaffirmed the esoteric texts of both Cabbalism and Orphism, as well as Hermetic and Neo-Platonic texts.

10. Juan Cirlot suggests: "Wine is an ambivalent symbol like the god Dionysus. On the one hand wine, and red wine in

particular, symbolizes blood and sacrifice; on the other, it symbolizes youth and eternal life" (1978:374). According to James Frazer:

The epithet *Bromios* bestowed on Dionysus, and his identification with the Thracian and Phrygian deity Sabazius, have been adduced as evidence that Dionysus was a god of beer or other cereal intoxicants before he became a god of wine (1933:2).

11. The Roman emperors later took control of the Guilds and systematically exploited the peculiar power of music. They controlled all the music at the great festivals — both sacred and secular — and subsequently influenced the music of the early Christian Church. For further information, see Mendl (1957:21–23).

12. Plato, *Republic* 4. Cited by Edgar Wind (1969:107).

13. James Frazer (1933:17–18) gives a detailed account of Dionysus' association with the goat (and bull):

Hence when his [Dionysus] worshippers rent in pieces a live goat and devoured it raw, they must have believed that they were eating the body and blood of the god . . . When we consider the practice of portraying the god as a bull or with some of the features of the animal, the belief that he appeared in bull form to his worshippers at the sacred rites, and the legend that in bull form he had been torn in pieces, we cannot doubt that in rending and devouring a live bull at his festivals the worshippers of Dionysus believed themselves to be killing the god, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood.

Consider also Anthony Burgess (1972:84–85) and Andrew Burn (1975:125).

14. Mircea Eliade, *Tratado de historia de las religiones* (1954). Cited by Juan Cirlot (1978:317).

15. See Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor (1987:121) for a thorough background to the myths of the Great Cosmic/Earth Mother. According to Paglia: "Dæmonic archetypes of woman, filling world mythology, represent the uncontrollable nearness to nature. Their tradition passes nearly unbroken from prehistoric idols through literature and art to modern movies" (1991:13). She adds, furthermore, that while "the woman was at the centre of early symbolism, real women were powerless". (1991:42).

16. Mircea Eliade, *Tratado de historia de las religiones* (1954). Cited by Juan Cirlot (1978:360)

17. Camille Paglia (1991:25).

18. It has been pointed out that a truly sinister and malignant image of the devil did not appear in Christian iconography until the early fourteenth century. See Taylor (1954:121).

19. Heraclitus. Cited by Alan Watts (1969:47–48).

CHAPTER 4 philosophy and aesthetics

1. Discussions with Johan Degenaar have contributed significantly towards my interest in the philosophy of aesthetics, and I am particularly indebted — in my reconstruction of the Apollonian and Dionysian duality — to his lecture-essay on a Nietzschean view of art presented at the University of Cape Town's 1986 Summer School.
2. Sigmund Freud's advances in early twentieth century psychology revised the legacy of the Enlightenment namely that reason was the highest faculty humans possessed. Instead, he posited that we are also possessed by instinctual drives and irrational behaviour. These can give rise to feelings and actions which negate (or suppress) reason. It is not, however, within the scope of this study to expand further on Freudian psychology.
3. Friedrich von Schlegel. Cited by August Wiedmann (1979:7).
4. Arthur Schopenhauer (1962:27).
5. Friedrich von Schlegel. Cited by August Wiedmann (1979:7).
6. Giorgio de Chirico. Cited by August Wiedmann (1979:17).
7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*. Cited by Aniela Jaffe (1972:255).
8. Herlo van Rensburg (1991:12). First inserted quotation from Jean Granier, Nietzsche's Conception of Chaos in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, edited by Allison (New York, 1977:137). Second inserted quotation from Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art* (New York, 1979:96).
9. Aristotle, *Poetics*. Aristotle's aesthetic doctrine, as developed in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, is based on a common Greek belief that art is a form of imitation. Unlike Plato (c. 427–347 BCE), Aristotle considered the arts to be neither deceitful nor harmful, but on the contrary, considered their emotive power to be useful to effect *catharsis*. For Aristotle, tragedy improves the soul's well-being by tempering the elements of pity and fear in its composition. See Herbert Read (1936:39). Furthermore, I propose that Aristotle may be associated with Dionysian chaos (*catharsis*), while Plato with Apollonian form (*ideas*).
10. Plato, *The Symposium*.
11. Friedrich Nietzsche (1967:140, 143).
12. Johan Degenaar paraphrases Friedrich Nietzsche: "Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, and Apollo finally the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of tragedy and of all art is attained" (1986a:4).

CHAPTER 5 art and culture

1. The Dionysian-Apollonian duality, I suggest, may be a *psycho-neurological* disposition.
2. Estelle Marais. Notes from an unpublished address given at the opening of a Masters' (FA) student exhibition at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (1987:1, 2). For further information regarding Marais' speech, see Nicolaas Vergunst (1987) and Marais (1989:6).
3. Jean Ingres. Cited by Peter and Linda Murray (1976:231).
4. Eugene Delacroix. Cited by Peter and Linda Murray (1976:231).
5. See Peter and Linda Murray (1976:396). The English painter, Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), in his *Discourses*, made similar emphatic pronouncements on line versus colour. In his *Discourses* (1769–1790), which he presented at intervals during this period, Reynolds delivered a most lucid exposition of the Academic position on the 'Rules of Art'.
6. Charles Lebrun. Cited by Peter and Linda Murray (1976:396).
7. Eugene Delacroix. Cited by Rene Huyghe (1963:233).
8. Plutarch. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:97). While Flechter emphasizes the "spirit of the time" (*zeitgeist*) behind Expressionism, he understates the democratization inherent in Impressionist subject matter in favour of its formal inquiries. Ernst Fischer (1959:71–75), on the other hand, juxtaposes both Expressionism and Impressionism with Academic or Salon painting — he sees the latter as being more readily disposed to an Apollonian sensibility.
9. Paul Flechter. Cited by Donald Gordon (1966:377).
10. Robert Philippe (1980:228).
11. Herlo van Rensburg. Abstract for a paper presented at *The Communication of World Visions*, seventh annual conference of the South African Association of Art Historians, 1991.
12. Reinhhold Grimm. Cited by Herlo van Rensburg (1991:11).
13. Camille Paglia (1991:3).
14. Penny Siopis. Notes given by the artist to the South African National Gallery after the acquisition of this painting (1989:1–2).
15. Walter Benjamin. Cited by Penny Siopis (1989:4).

CHAPTER 6 society and politics

1. Jackson Hlungwani. Cited by Theo Schneider (1989:58).
2. Lionel Abrahams (1989:14, 15).
3. Ernst Fischer (1981:41). I have substituted the term *shaman* for Fischer's use of *sorcerer*.
4. Plutarch. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:97).
5. Plato, *Republic*. Cited by Edgar Wind (1969:107).
6. Mani (c. 216–276), a Persian prophet, combines elements of Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity into a religious doctrine based on an assumed primordial conflict between light and darkness, goodness and evil.
7. See Sefako Nyako (1986).
8. Steven Sack. From a discussion on "people's parks" at the Community Arts Project in Cape Town, 8 November 1989.
9. See Sefako Nyako (1986).
10. UDF National Launch pamphlet (1983:2).
11. Oscar Mpetha. Cited in UDF National Launch pamphlet (1983:1).
12. Cultural production in South Africa has been subordinated to suit different political agendas within and between dominant and oppositional groupings. This will be discussed further in Section Four. See also Nicolaas Vergunst (1991:144).
13. Charles Parsons (1972:16).

CHAPTER 7 reform and apartheid-capitalism

1. The economic boom in South Africa during the 1960s exceeded that of every other capitalist country in the world — except Japan. See Cosatu, *Political Economy: South Africa in Crisis* (1987:37).
2. This decline was caused by a worsening world recession, increasing foreign disinvestment, spreading urban unemployment and escalating local inflation, as well as the severe shortage of skilled labour required to process raw materials.
3. The working class in South Africa remained a divided front until black Africans were;
 - (i) allowed to form registered unions,
 - (ii) permitted to do jobs formerly reserved for whites only,
 - (iii) granted the legal right to strike,
 - (iv) and were given access to an industrial court.

Between 1978 and 1981, following the Wiehahn Commission (which focused on labour laws governing the rights of black

workers) and the Riekert Commission (which focused on influx control laws), the government was compelled to redress the rights of black workers.

4. For a detailed account of both the 1961 Sharpville crisis and the 1976 Soweto uprising, see Tom Lodge (1983:201–230 and 321–362 respectively).
5. PW Botha assured the white electorate at the 1982 NP Natal Congress that (black) Africans would not be part of the new constitutional dispensation. Instead, their rights would be exercised through the bantustans — or self-governing homelands. The exception would be Soweto (South Western Township) and "possibly one other area" where special arrangements could be made (*Sunday Express* 1982.8.22). See Mare (1983:77).
6. See Erwin Panofsky (1983:301–303).
7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Cited by Camille Paglia (1991:215).
8. The Cultural Promotion Act (Act 34 of 1983) provided for the preservation, development, fostering and extension of culture in the Republic and with other countries, and for the establishment of regional councils for cultural affairs. Accordingly, regional councils were to interpret national cultural policy, take cognisance of regional cultural manifestations, determine trends and priorities, and recommend the granting of *ad hoc* subsidies (Government Gazette 1984:64). But regional councils for the promotion of the visual arts were not successfully instituted due to the lack of support from within the arts establishment in particular, as well as the broader arts community in general.
9. White "own affairs" institutions and projects received considerably more financial support from government than they would have as "general affairs".
10. In response to urgent appeals and deputations, the then recently appointed Minister of National Education, Gerrit Viljoen, convened a decisive meeting in Pretoria during early 1981 (of leading representatives from the arts establishment). The Minister identified himself with the need for far-reaching reforms in legislation and procedures governing national art affairs. The SA Association of Arts recorded this meeting as "the most important development in the history of South African art" (Berman 1983:374). A few weeks later, at the opening of the *Republic Festival Art Exhibition* in May 1981, the said Minister announced the appointment of a presidential commission of enquiry (Eichbaum 1983:3).
11. After examining the *Schutte Report*, the Minister of National Education submitted an official response in parliament which concluded that:

The government believes that the essential steps of ordering and promoting the arts should be undertaken by the artistic community itself. The various arts bodies should combine to form an umbrella body or bodies. In this way, they would be able to serve the interests of the arts from within a truly independent body or bodies. Such an

umbrella body, deriving its authority from the artistic community [even though such a homogeneous grouping has never existed], would be able to negotiate with the State as a completely autonomous and representative body (*White Paper* 1986:6).

It is well worth noting that the eventual Schutte Report was criticized for its serious inaccuracies and incomplete data.

12. It should be noted that the National Party did not see fit to establish an independent Ministry for Art and Culture. Instead, artistic and/or cultural affairs (including museums, exhibitions and publications) were regulated by the Department of National Education. After the elections in 1994, the new government established a Ministry for Art, Culture, Science and Technology. This came as a surprise since the African National Congress had always called for a single department of arts and culture.

13. The Foundation for the Creative Arts' annual subsidy was reduced to about R200 000 in 1993. Although the FCA continued to fund projects, it was unable to pay administrative costs (salaries and equipment) for projects requiring this assistance.

14. The era of dependency on funding agencies, like Kagiso Trust, came to an end following the withdrawal of foreign funds for so-called "progressive" projects. In the main, international funds not earmarked for eastern Europe, were prioritized for *development* rather than *cultural* projects in southern Africa. Since early 1992, regional cultural representatives have investigated various possibilities for the establishment of an alternative funding structure inside the country (*New Nation* 1992.3.6).

15. The Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation spent R800 000 on the 1991 *Triennial* alone (this sum included the costs of insurance, transportation, publication and publicity, as well as the R25 000 prize money awarded to the competition's 'winner'). This amount exceeded any other single donation received for the promotion of the visual arts inside the country.

CHAPTER 8

reform and the arts establishment

1. The conference was severely criticized for the conspicuous absence of black delegates. As a result, the white delegates were described by Omar Badsha as the "Renoir and Riesling set" (personal conversation).

2. A nation-wide call by students to boycott the 20th anniversary celebrations (under the slogan "unity in diversity — hypocrisy") was followed by divisive demonstrations on several campuses, leading to the burning of the old South African national flag at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (*Cape Times* 1981.5.27). The SATV/BC network depoliticized such acts of protest — including bomb blasts in public places — and refused to acknowledge any connection between nation-wide demonstrations and the *Republic Festival*. The issue of *whose independence* was

being celebrated was not debated on television or the radio, and no single opponent of the celebration was given an opportunity to voice their opinion (*The Argus* 1981.6.6). This characterized an era during which the broadcast and print media were effectively prevented from reporting on anti-apartheid events.

3. It should be noted that the UN resolutions on the isolation of South Africa were first introduced in 1947 when diplomatic and cultural links with India were discontinued.

4. Professor ANP Pelzer stated at the Broederbond's 50th anniversary in 1968 that: "The FAK was the creation of the Afrikaner Broederbond and the intimate relationship between the two organizations has progressed in an undiminished way since". Cited by Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom (1980:417).

5. The FAK enjoyed wide and long-standing support from numerous cultural and religious bodies — including youth and women's organizations such as the Voortrekker Beweging, Federasie van Rapportryers, Junior Rapportryers, Afrikaanse Studentebond, Dames Aktueel and Jong Dames Dinamiek. Note that the number of organizations affiliated to the FAK differ considerably: from 200 (Adam & Gillomee) to 2 000 (Wilkins & Strydom). See also *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (1970:442).

CHAPTER 9

resistance and ethnic nationalism

1. This is peculiarly similar to the statement: "The time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices — submit or fight. That time has come to the people of South Africa" (*Umkhonto Manifesto* 1961).

2. There was, however, no consensus of opinion regarding the geographical location, economic independence and political autonomy of a unified Afrikaner Volkstaat.

3. Pieter Mulder has asserted that this alliance would probably look similar to the tripartite formation of the ANC, Cosatu and the South African Communist Party of the 1980s.

4. The Freedom Alliance was formed by traditional rivals (Afrikaners and Zulus) to counter growing support for the ANC amongst the masses. The racist and nationalist antagonisms between these two factions were superseded by their shared fear of a "common enemy".

5. G M Buthelezi, Jabulani Stadium address. Cited by Sandra Klopper (1989:3).

6. S M E Bengu. Cited by Mare and Hamilton (1987:75).

7. See Sandra Klopper (1992).

CHAPTER 10 *resistance and black consciousness*

1. The Fifties People. *Drum*.
2. See Raymond Suttner & Jeremy Cronin (1985).
3. This was the first Black Consciousness organization to be established after the 1977 national clampdowns proclaimed by the apartheid régime in the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising.
4. Although the proposed name for a post-colonial South Africa was *Azania*, its progeny seems to have alluded the PAC. (The name was favoured by early cartographers for part of eastern Africa and was originally derived from an Arabic expression.) Tom Lodge has added: "But whatever the inspiration for the name, the underlying motive for its adoption was a serious and important one — the desire to create an alternative cultural identity for black South Africans. Unfortunately for the PAC, this effort never really developed beyond the stage of symbolic gesture" (1983:310).
5. The extreme example of this prophesized utopia was the *négritude* movement of the Francophone colonies which, according to Karen Press, produced "a myth of an African cultural past of blissful purity and goodness" (1990:56).
6. Karen Press (1990:56).
7. *New Era*. Cited by Press (1990:29).
8. Naledi Writers Unit. Cited by Press (1990:31–32).
9. Reference to "the people" assumed that the majority of South Africans were unanimous in their support for a democratic future and constituted a homogeneous grouping opposed to apartheid.
10. See also Thumida Maistry (1991), Elizabeth Rankin (1993), Steven Sack (1988) and Nicolaas Vergunst (1988, 1989).

CHAPTER 11 *resistance and the mass democratic movement*

1. Subsequently, trips were organized so that businessmen, sports administrators, academics and Afrikaans writers could exchange views with the exiled ANC.
2. See Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin (1985).
3. Mao Tse-Tung, *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. Cited by Karen Press (1990:11).
4. The End Conscription Campaign (ECC) produced an anonymous book, *Out of Step: War resistance in South Africa*, which is most helpful.
5. The expression "people's power" gained currency in South Africa during the mid-1980s with the emergence of civic organizations in the townships. It was a strategic term used within many organizations operating under the umbrella of the UDF. The notion of "people's culture", as already explained in Chapter 10, was an integral component of "people's power" (see again Karen Press 1990:26–27).
6. Against this background the NP's President's Council, at the request of PW Botha, ironically recommended the establishment of a R8 million national cultural centre "to promote intergroup relations" and "to foster among inhabitants pride in their country" (*The Argus* 1985.9.12). Fortunately, this project never materialized. Even the NP's propaganda mouthpiece, *Die Burger*, condemned this project as "Disneyland vir SA kultuur" (1986.2.21).
7. Mention should also be made of political prisoners — such as the "Upington 25" who produced artworks during prolonged periods of incarceration while awaiting trial in 1989 for the alleged murder of a municipal policeman, or *kitskonstabel*.
8. The exhibition went to New York as part of the 1990 *Women's Caucus for Art* conference on the theme Shifting Power.
9. See Willem Campschreur and Joost Divendal (1986).
10. Junaid Ahmed, spokesperson for the UDF's Cultural Desk, explained how the *Zabalaza* festival was planned long before 2 February 1990 — prior to the unbanning of the ANC. He added that cultural workers from Nicaragua and Cuba, who conducted some of the training programmes, would not have been allowed into South Africa at that time (*South* 1990.5.23).
11. See Nicolaas Vergunst (1990).
12. The censorious antics of the UDF's Cultural Desk was not unlike the NP's Department of Foreign Affairs which erratically refused to issue passports to political opponents of the apartheid government (see Press 1990:39). As a result, the Desk's officials were soon likened to the cultural commissars of the Stalinist régime.
13. See Ian Gray (1991:3).
14. Since this essay focuses on the promotion of the *visual* arts, the complex debate around official *performing* arts structures will not be addressed here.
15. See Marilyn Martin.
16. Mzwakhe Mbuli, *Culture must be a weapon*. Cited by Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin (1985:139–140).
17. Karen Press (1990:34).
18. Cultural organizations emerged because existing youth, student, woman and civic organizations were unable to provide for the practical needs of cultural workers. It is, however, not within the scope of this study to discuss the role and

contribution of, for instance, the Congress of South African Writers (Cosaw, founded 1987), South African Musicians Alliance (Sama, founded 1987), the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (Fawo, founded 1988), the South African Photographers Collective (Afrapix, founded 1982, disbanded 1990), and the Performing Arts and Allied Workers Equity. There is also no space to discuss the enormous contribution made by the recently established Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture in South Africa which now houses the vast collection of historical and cultural resources inherited from IDAF (International Defence & Aid Fund for Southern Africa) at the University of the Western Cape. For a more detailed summary of cultural organizations, see Thumida Maistry (1991) and Nicolaas Vergunst (1988).

19. Aris Sitas, *Black Mamba Rising*. Cited by Karen Press (1990:36).

20. Other projects included the Montebello Design Centre, the Mofolo and Zichelele Ihlombe art centres in Soweto and on the outskirts of Germiston as well as the Ulwazi and Imball ("flower") children's arts projects in Langa and Johannesburg.

21. Perhaps the most serious study undertaken in this area was *Resistance Cultural Formations in South Africa* by Thumida Maistry, initiated and sponsored by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) at UWC. "Resistance", however, is arguably an inappropriate term to have used for defining these organizations as the extensive survey includes mainstream institutions.

22. In spite of the despised Bantu Education Act of 1953 (and subsequent amendments), a few formal institutions offered practical training for black artists — these included the Ndaleri Training College and UNISA (University of South Africa), as well as Fort Hare University. For almost thirty years the Polly Street Art Centre-Jubilee Social Centre (founded 1949, disbanded 1966) and the Rorkes Drift Art Centre (founded 1962) - followed later by the Johannesburg Art Foundation (founded 1964) and the Ruth Prowse Art School (founded 1971) in Woodstock — were among the few centres and projects to provide opportunities for non-formal art training among black artists. For further information, see Esmé Berman (1983), Steven Sack (1988) and Nicolaas Vergunst (1988).

CHAPTER 12 **reconstruction and an emergent national culture**

1. Floyd Fallers. Quoted by Ali Mazrui, *Cultural Engineering and Nation-Building in East Africa*. Cited by Karen Press (1990:53).

2. Herein lies a contradiction i.e. *multi-culturalism* versus *cultural homogeneity*. We shall return to this matter in the Conclusion when we examine the meaning (or rather meanings) ascribed to terms such as "nation", "democracy" and "culture".

3. While state-employed administrators and arts practitioners felt the need to find themselves a new political "home", some political activists within the MDM saw this as a chance to become cultural "house-parents". See Vergunst (1989:23).

4. Comment made by an unidentified representative of the Performing Arts Councils at the Konka workshop. See Vergunst (1989:23).

5. Michell (1990) also prompts some interesting, though overtly cynical, questions about the squandering of funds by the UDF's Cultural Desk during the 1980s.

6. The Waterfront precinct in Cape Town, although a phenomenally popular tourist destination, falls extremely short in cultural capital compared with that offered by downtown Johannesburg. For this reason (not to mention the inadequate marketing and inappropriate choice of venue) the *ad hoc* 1992 *Cape Town Arts Festival* at the Waterfront proved to be a dismal commercial failure.

7. An assessment of this issue (re: black art, white markets) appears in two articles by Ivor Powell (1993a:33–35, 1993b:33–35).

8. Though, of course, cultural interaction linked to economic exchange between various groups preceded this date by several centuries.

9. Gordon Metz, who was one of the organizers behind the 1982 *Culture and Resistance* festival in Gaborone, was principally involved in convening the 1993 *Culture and Development* conference. It would seem that the term "resistance" was eclipsed by "development".

10. Mike van Graan (1993:15).

11. Trotsky. Cited by Karen Press (1990:6).

12. Trotsky. Cited by Karen Press (1990:45).

13. At the same time, or at least from 1987 onwards, artists from South Africa participated in the Pachipamwe ("we work well together" in Shona) workshops in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Here artists from Namibia and Angola, from Chile and Peru, and from Denmark and Czechoslovakia came together to share resources and skills. Significantly, these artists opted to work together in spite of their ideological differences. The first Pachipamwe workshop in South Africa was held in December 1993.

14. The interpolation of local art into South African political discourse during the late-1930s requires more detailed and historical attention than the broad generalizations offered here. Today, fifty years on, we should examine the similarities — and not only the differences — between the cultural agendas of the NP and the ANC with regard to notions of nation-building (*nasie-bou*). We may learn some lessons here. For some more discussion around this matter, see Vergunst (1988b).

CHAPTER 13

constructs of nation, democracy and culture

1. Hershel Chipp (1968:312).
2. Paul Siegel (1970:30).
3. RS Peters (1975:138).
4. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Cited by John Sharp (1988).
5. Peter Calvert (c. 1982:6).
6. Paglia (1991:2–3). This is a paraphrased reference to the following quotation: "Modern liberalism suffers unresolved contradictions. It exalts individualism and freedom and, on its radical wing, condemns social orders as oppressive. On the other hand, it expects government to provide materially for all, a feat manageable only by an expansion of authority and a swollen bureaucracy".
7. Johan Degenaar (1992:11).

CONCLUSION

beyond the apollonian-dionysian duality

1. Carl Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*. Cited by Jolande Jacobi (1974:285).
2. Friedrich Nietzsche (1969:129). A hundred years after Nietzsche, scientists like Fritjof Capra describe something similar about "the dancing universe; the ceaseless flow of energy going through an infinite variety of patterns" (1975).
3. Hugh Shearman (1990:346).
4. The Hebraic tradition does not assign to any goddess the role of Creatrix. There is only one Creator — a Father God. Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, in *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (1964), comment on how the strictly monotheistic editors of the cosmogony underlying Genesis 1:2 could assign no part in the creation to anyone but this Father God, and therefore omitted all pre-existing elements or beings which might be regarded as divine. Abstractions such as Chaos and Emptiness, or the Deep and the Void, would not have tempted patriarchal worshippers, and so these replaced the ancient matriarchal deities of Tohu (or Leviathan) and Bohu (or Behemoth).

In the Biblical accounts of Creation — including references found elsewhere beside the Hebraic Genesis — the Creator subdues the sea, or separates the Upper Waters from the Lower Waters. Water, or the Deep, is personified by the Prophets Job and Isaiah as Leviathan-Rahab or the Great Dragon. These references recall ancient Near Eastern

cosmogonies wherein Creators such as Jehovah, Baal, El or Marduk must first struggle against water, or the Being of the Deep. While this struggle is common to Judæan, Canaanite, Assyrian, Sumerian and Babylonian myths of creation, the longest of these is known as the *Enuma Elish* epic which seems to have been written early in the second millennium BCE. Although only summarized here, the Babylonian narrative reveals even more of the original deities of Tohu and Bohu than is evident in the Judaic version of 5 BCE:

In the beginning, when all was dark and formless, two primal creatures of the great waters arose; namely Tiamat the Mother-Spirit of Chaos; and Apsu the Begetter-Father of the Void. The union of these two gods spawned a brood of Inchaote monsters — serpents and dragons. After several ages had passed a younger generation of gods arose. One of these, Ea, killed his father Apsu. Tiamat thereupon married her own son Kingu and, in a draconian demonstration of fury and vengeance, gave birth to another menagerie of monsters which resulted in a rebellious reign of chaos in the still formless world. But Ea's son Marduk, who would become Lord of the Universe, then sought to slay his mother. Armed with lightening bolts, mounted on a storm and carried by the winds, he shot an arrow between Tiamat's open jaws, straight down into her heart. He then cleft her inner parts and felled her body in two: from the one half he fashioned the heavenly firmament and from the other the earthly mass.

5. Blake's engraving of Leviathan and Behemoth is part of a series entitled *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (of which the above is the fifteenth plate in a set of twenty-two). These works are derived from the artist's own symbolic vision, as well as being replete with his knowledge of the esoteric traditions of the Jewish Cabbala, Neo-Platonism and Christian mystical theology (Raine 1974:186). The Prophet Job (26:12) describes how God subdues Leviathan-Rahab: "By his power he stilled the Sea; by his understanding he smote Rahab".

According to Graves and Patai the Hebrew monsters, Tehomot and Behemoth, may be identified with the Babylonian Tohu and Bohu:

What "Tohu" and "Bohu" originally meant is disputed. But add the suffix *m* to Tohu (*thw*) and it becomes Tehom (*thwm*), the Biblical name for a primitive sea-monster. Tehom, in the plural, becomes Tehomot (*thwmwt*). With the same suffixes, Bohu becomes Behom and Behomot (*bhwmwt*), a variant form of Job's Behemoth, the dry land counterpart of the sea-monster Leviathan. Leviathan cannot be easily distinguished from Rahab, Tannin, Nahash or any other mythical creatures that personify water. The story underlying Genesis 1:2 may therefore be that the world in its primeval state consisted of a sea-monster Tohu and a land-monster Bohu. If so, Tohu's identity with Tehomot, and Bohu's with Behemoth, has been suppressed for doctrinal reasons — Tohu and Bohu being now read as unpersonified states of emptiness or chaos; and God being made responsible for the subsequent creation of Tehomot (or Leviathan) and Behemoth (1964:31).

The Hebrew term for chaos (*tohu wa-bohu*) was derived from Mesopotamian cosmogony during their period of exile in Babylon before the fourth century BCE.

6. Gaskell, in his *Dictionary of all Scriptures and Myths* (1981), adds "Chaos, or the Deep: A symbol of primordial formless matter. Matter in its primal state, devoid of qualities, involution of Spirit not having as yet taken place" (1981:145).
7. Boltzmann was a contemporary of Friedrich Nietzsche.
8. Lewis Carroll (1928:125).
9. Nietzsche. Cited by Johan Degenaar (1986a:23).
10. Johan Degenaar (1986b:34–35).
11. MP Nilsson explains that "The story of the Titans' treatment of Zagreus may be regarded as an aetiological myth designed to explain the central rite in the Dionysiac orgies, the dismemberment and devouring of the deity incarnated as an animal; but in Orphism this is inseparably connected with the myth of creation of mankind out of the Titans' ashes" (1921:246). By extending the metaphor, the Thracians believed that human life is the result of Dionysus' death (or sacrifice).
12. George Gaskell ((1981:243).
13. Alan Watts (1969:109).
14. Alan Watts (1969:109). See, also, David Maclagan (1977:92).
15. From the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. Cited by George Gaskell (1981:242).
16. Plato, *Meno*. Cited by Edgar Wind (1980:133).
17. Edgar Wind (1980:133).

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