

the need for co-ordinated regional information as a necessary part of regional co-operation in a Southern Africa freed of apartheid. Similarly, Ansu Datta provides a useful contribution on regional co-operation, emphasizing the need for co-ordinated action between governments, non-governmental organizations, and ordinary people in the region. The last two actors, it is argued, provide a back-up to inter-state co-operation in which governments are the key actors.

While it is true that Nordic assistance to SADCC states has been a major component of development assistance since 1980, Hans Abrahamson informs us in his chapter that such aid now needs to be reorientated. Apart from the physical development of roads, railways, ports, and so on, there is a need to channel resources to support networks such as forwarding services, insurance services, national and regional carriers and shipping services. This is indeed vital if investments made during the 1980s in the physical development of transport, communication and related facilities are to be made full use of by SADCC (now SADC) states.

In his chapter Tom Østergaard clearly reveals the contradictions of Nordic/SADCC co-operation. All aid programmes are not altruistic and such aid creates and reinforces the dependence of the recipient on the donor. The Norsad fund is used as an illustration of this anomaly. The desire of donor states to influence policy in the recipient state and the interest of the latter to preserve some form of autonomy in the allocation and consumption of donor resources have caused conflicts between Nordic and SADCC states, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Finally, although the authors hesitated to make precise predictions on the nature of regional co-operation after apartheid is wholly abolished, they do offer some opinions. One is that post-apartheid South Africa will have severe internal problems as it moves away from apartheid rule which could result in internal instability in that country, a factor that might undermine future regional co-operation. But, on the other hand, the authors seem to believe that the advent of a democratic South Africa would enhance economic possibilities in Southern Africa, and indeed Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

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The Black Insider By D. Marechera. Harare, Baobab, 1990, 128 pp., ISBN 0-949229-16-4, Z\$16.00.

The Black Insider (1990), together with *Cemetery of Mind* (1992), is one of Marechera's posthumously published novels (he died in 1987) and appears after the much-celebrated *House of Hunger* (1978), the often overlooked *Black Sunlight* (1980) and the controversial *Mindblast* (1984). Its publication is due to the tireless efforts and dedication of Flora Veit-Wild. *The Black Insider* is in all respects an unusual novel, one which relentlessly interrogates the nature of the novel itself, very much in the post-modernist sense.

Any reader expecting to find a conventional plot and developed characters in a recognizable social setting is in for a rude shock. In this novel

Marechera portrays the nightmarish world of a small band of artists marooned in an old and decaying Faculty of Arts building. Outside a war is raging, the causes of which have long been forgotten. Bombs explode and paratroopers descend as part of an ongoing madness brought about by the 'civilization' of the twentieth century.

Pitted against the encircling gloom is the author-narrator who is penniless and Black and exiled from his African home. He is a beleaguered artist forced by the circumstances of his colonial background and the inhospitality of his British hosts to question in a radical way those systems and habits of thought which have created a world in which homelessness and vulnerability are the norm. For the narrator, history has become a cycle of genocide and he cites the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the Soweto massacres and the mass killing of the Jews as evidence of a periodic, collective madness indicative of twentieth-century civilization.

As is the case in all of Marechera's works, the role of the artist in *The Black Insider* is a special one. The author-narrator, together with other characters such as Liz, Cicero and Otolith, is waging a war against the so-called traditions and heritages which have fostered regimented thinking and loyalty towards systems which maim the originality and spontaneity of the individual. He laments, 'You can't even hide in yourself because your thoughts think themselves in the words you have been taught to read and write' (p. 35). To him even the language people use is part of a conspiracy to rob citizens of their originality and sanity. The narrator's vision of Africa is that it is a continent nursing bitter memories of colonialism: 'a continent of wounds which no longer knows what it is to be whole and healthy — a country disfigured by scars and broken teeth and smashed testicles' (p. 79) as a result of the introduction and proliferation of schools and churches and universities. The narrator is equally scathing about the pre-colonial past and its bitter legacies of violence.

In terms of thematic concerns, *The Black Insider* is umbilically related to Marechera's novel *Black Sunlight*. Both texts are meant to disorient our thinking and subvert conventional ways of looking at reality. In the same way as the anarchist revolutionaries of *Black Sunlight*, the insider of *The Black Insider* is in fact an outsider marginalized by forces bent on authoritarianism and the ultimate destruction of humanity. A notable difference between the two novels, however, is that *Black Sunlight* is more tightly constructed than *The Black Insider*. In the latter novel Marechera is more daring, mixing artistic genres such as dramatic sketches, documentaries, poetry, parody and creative writing to create a novel in which nothing is predictable and nothing is stable. What holds the narrative itself together, however, is the formidable intellectual and imaginative capabilities of the author-narrator himself. The reader's imagination is fired by the author-narrator's almost encyclopaedic knowledge of world literature although the ordinary reader is also discomfited by the fact that the novel is full of literary allusions. It is an ambitious novel whose iconoclasm enhances our ability to question those realities and thoughts which we often take for granted — especially in a Third World context such as ours.