

CLASS AND APARTHEID

THE CASE OF AFRIKAANS LITERATURE

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I This paper¹ is the result of collective work and represents a preliminary reflection on our discipline. We react and agitate unashamedly from within an explicit political and social framework. We use or misuse, as it were, 'the expertise of the literary intellectual' (Lentricchia, 1985:6), to work for social change in the sphere of culture, and more specifically, Afrikaans literature. We know, as you do, what role culture can play in the many processes of social change (and how those social changes may influence the nature of culture). If there is a role for literary intellectuals, it is to take seriously the central code of our academic activity - interpretation - but then with a definite aim:

the activity of interpretation ... does not passively 'see' ..., but constructs a point of view in its engagement with textual events, and in so constructing produces an image of history as social struggle ... This sort of interpretation ... will above all else attempt to displace traditional interpretations which cover up the political work of culture. An active self-conscious work of interpretation will show the political work that the canonized 'great books' have done and continue to do (Lentricchia, 1985: 11).

But in this paper we also need to go further, because we define ourselves in the first instance in terms of our current social struggle. It is indeed our responsibility to undermine not only the dominant ideas, the dominant social and political system, but also to focus on the marginalized position of the exploited and oppressed and to side with the struggle for fundamental social, political and economic change. Consequently we shall reflect on the pursuit of national unity, the potential for a representative national culture and a South African literature.

II

The Afrikaans language and the Afrikaans literature, like culture in general, are terrains of struggle, because political and cultural dominance presuppose power and its dialectical opposite, resistance. Language organizes and legitimizes the social practices of domination. At the same time it is also the terrain where the demands and aspirations of the oppressed are articulated and substantiated. Antonio Gramsci (quoted by Cronin, 1986: 52) remarks:

Whenever the question of language flares up in one form or another, this means that a whole series of other questions are in the process of being raised: the formation and expansion of a leading class, the reorganisation of a cultural hegemony, the need to establish a closer relation between the intellectuals and the masses.

This is true of Afrikaans as well. The language of the Afrikaner-nationalist and

the Afrikaner-bourgeoisie is at the same time the language of the 'voiceless' slave and the black worker; also that of the Afrikaner non-nationalist.

Afrikaans literature, in spite of the notion of an organic whole, is all but an undivided phenomenon. Fissures and ruptures are evident. We need to expose the insular literary tradition in the South African context, cultivated by a narrowly defined nationalism. Similarly, the anxiously guarded boundaries of the tradition and its underlying class nature will have to be identified. Our text is not only the Afrikaans literary canon but history. Our text is as widely defined as the continuing South African organic crisis, that profound struggle when political, social and economic structures are undermined and adapted.

From this perspective it is obvious that language, literature and literary production are cultural weapons which could be utilized in the social struggle not just to subvert and destroy totalitarianism and despotism but, more importantly, to build democratic alternatives. This does not, however, presuppose a vulgar and unsophisticated anti-intellectualism.

Afrikaans literary production is still in the late eighties in the stranglehold of the aesthetic and the evaluative. Commodification is linked to the evaluative and aesthetic: the product is valuable or worthwhile only in its isolation. In a sense it is a brand of hedonism - the enjoyment of and pleasure in the autonomous object. Satisfying the imagination, creativity and originality are the characteristics of the private, independent product, seemingly without history and social context (see Lentricchia, 1985: 19). We recognise in Afrikaans literary discourse a 'disabling strategy', similar to that described by Vaughan (1984: 19) in the case of South African Departments of English.

It is perfectly clear that special conditions of literary production and reception obtain in South Africa, and that these conditions are not temporary or freakish, but are expressive of the larger realities of our social formation. And yet the approach of 'practical criticism' ... is a peculiarly disabling strategy for encountering these conditions. 'Practical criticism' works closely in harmony with the concept of a universal aesthetic order, and suggests an ethos of tradition, permanence by fundamental questions of social, political and cultural practice.

For the rest of the article we would address those 'larger realities' - the organic crisis - and the position of Afrikaans and Afrikaans literature, thereafter we shall attempt to redefine and reinterpret our literary practice in the context of a majority government within a national, democratic unitary state.

III

We are living in an interregnum, with the old dying and the new struggling to be born. Underlying it is a crisis revolving around the formation of a balance of new political powers capable of changing the wider social organisation. Incidents of organic and relatively permanent structural change are daily manifested. The practice, the position and the nature of culture are crucially linked to these developments. Here culture - literature and language - undergo the same spasms of crisis.

Gramsci (1978: 178) characterises the organic crisis within the state thus:

A crisis occurs, sometimes lasting for decades. This exceptional duration means that incurable structural contradictions have revealed themselves (reached maturity), and that, despite this, the political forces which are struggling to conserve and defend the existing structure itself, are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts (since no social formation will ever admit that it has been superseded) form the terrain of the 'conjunctural', and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise. These forces seek to demonstrate that the necessary and sufficient conditions already exist to make possible, and hence imperative, the accomplishment of certain historical tasks ... (The demonstration in the new reality, if the forces of opposition triumph; in the immediate, it is developed in a series of ideological, religious, philosophical, political and juridical polemics, whose concreteness can be estimated by the extent to which they are convincing, and shift the previously existing disposition of social forces.)

Wary of ahistorical and generalised conclusions, it is commonplace to suggest that a similar process is afoot in the South African context since the 1973 Durban strikes, but especially after the 1976 revolt. It is a continuing crisis. Frank Meintjies (1987: 23) of COSATU recently said that:

CosatU's resolution on political policy notes that South Africa is going through its severest economic crisis ever with millions unemployed, retrenched and without any jobs and with no social security or benefits, the cost of which is measured in the loss of lives through poverty and starvation and massive degradation and demoralisation of the workers and all oppressed people of South Africa.

After the enforced silent black resistance in the mid-sixties and the unchallenged repressive control of Verwoerd and Vorster, the 1976 insurrection represents the most profound sign of the massive, populist rejection of apartheid. The response of government and capital to the insurrection is characterized by adaptations to the apartheid structures and new forms of sophisticated co-optation and repression. A total strategy was activated to counter the so-called total onslaught. Social scientists seem to agree that fundamental structural changes have taken place in the past decade. The state is caught between the necessity for real structural change, continued control, right-wing claims and the insistence of the black South African majority on the handing over of power (viz Swilling, 1987: 409-421; and Saul & Gelb, 1986).

Afrikaans literary academics and Afrikaans literature have also reacted to this wider crisis. Many articles and books were published after 1976 with the cardinal questions: Is there a future for Afrikaans? Will Afrikaans survive? Will the Afrikaner survive? These questions are obviously not isolated. Also from within Afrikaans literature, there is a response to the present conjuncture: contemporary Afrikaans literature is a literature of crisis. Some writers are anxiously trying to understand the crisis; others escape into the modern, modernism and post-modernism. The critics intensify and defend the aesthetic-

formalistic approach to the (literary) text; and negate its political and social significance.

Since the invention of the Afrikaans literature tradition and the empowerment of the Afrikaans language (since 1875 and the first years after the beginning of the century respectively) the relationship between writer, critic, state and nation was generally harmonious. The strong nationalist plea of DF Malan in 1908 comes to mind:

Verhef di Afrikaanse taal tot skryftaal, maak haar di draagster van onse kultuur, van onse geskiedenis, onse nasionale ideale en verhef daarmee ook di volk, wat haar praat ... Di Afrikaanse Taalbeweging is niks minder nie dan 'n ontwaking by onse volk tot 'n gevoel van eie waarde en tot di ropping om 'n waardiger plaas in te neem in di wêreldbeskawing' (quoted in Adam and Giliomee, 1981: 85).

This relationship should be questioned precisely because the Afrikaner writer, the Afrikaner literary critic, contributed to this political (and cultural) hegemony.

There were courageous signs of revolt in the sixties. Afrikaner hegemony sensed at the beginning of that decade this dissidence. In 1963 the Publication and Entertainment Act was promulgated introducing censorship. The Hertzog prize was restricted to those holding dear the aspirations of the Afrikaner: 'Hierdie pryse word slegs toegeken aan Suid-Afrikaanse burgers wat beslis simpatiek staan teenoor die aspirasies van die Afrikaanse volk.'⁴ This clause was only introduced in 1961 as no such prerequisite existed in the original 'Akte van Overmaking'.⁵ Furthermore, Prof G Cronjé (1969: 1-6), a prominent member of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, expressed a strong preference for the subservience of the Akademie to the needs of the Afrikaner nation: 'Die Afrikaanse kuns is deel van die Afrikaanse kultuur en wanneer Afrikaanse kuns ontdaan is van die Afrikaanse lewensbeskouing, kan daardie kuns nie meer Afrikaans wees nie, ook al is dit afkomstig van persone wat in naam Afrikaans is'.⁶ 'Dissidents' would not be tolerated:

En indien daar wel 'n teenstelling of botsing tussen artistieke norme en beskouinge en nasionale norme en beskouinge na vore kom ... dan moet so 'n teenstelling of botsing as 'n gevaarlike verskynsel beskou word en as sodanig die hoof gebied word.⁷

Insurrection by the Afrikaner writer and critic (in some exceptional cases) have always been closely linked to the Afrikaner *volk* - an oedipal dissension. In the seventies especially the novelists, and in the eighties, to a lesser degree the dramatists, became more contentious, resulting, in some quarters, in the severing of links with the organized Afrikaner culture. However, the prominence given to the survival of an exclusive *volk* thwarted any connection with, and vision of, a broader South Africa.

As a response to the broader organic crisis, Afrikaans literature tended more and more towards post-modernism. Afrikaans writers have become sophisticated and over decades, the allegiance to Europe and America - the literary connection, writing within the foreign text - has been established. This post-modernism might still sometimes shock the controllers of cultural hegemony but

the texts are becoming more introspective: text upon text upon text. This 'schizophrenic' post-modernism (Jameson, 1983: 118) is indicative of the withdrawal from all accountability towards a South Africa in crisis. The crisis is exploited but not profoundly confronted.

Nadine Gordimer (1988: 220-221), reacting as a white writer, perceptively states that revolt can no longer be focused on the white order. There exists a broader world which deserves not only revolt but also the intention and demonstration of real transformation and reconstruction. She writes:

The white writer has to make the decision whether to remain responsible to the dying white order - and even as dissident, if he goes further than that position, he remains *negatively* within the white order - or to declare himself positively as answerable to the order struggling to be born. And to declare himself for the latter is only the beginning; as it is for whites in a less specialized position, only more so. He has to try to find a way to reconcile the irreconcilable within himself, establish his relation to the culture of a new kind of posited community, nonracial but somehow conceived with and led by blacks (original italics).

The Afrikaner literary critic and writer, but especially the former, taught us that literature should be beautiful and aesthetic. Van Wyk Louw introduced us to the aristocratic ideal, the aristocracy of art, the sanctity of the individual and the adoration of beauty. The cultural product was explained as having no political function or historical place existing in an apparent ahistorical universe of aesthetic values.

To illustrate the manner in which Afrikaans literature has canonised literary products we shall attempt a partisan, hermeneutic deconstruction of a sample of Afrikaans literary criticism, an acceptable and representative example from Kannemeyer's (1978: 407) discussion of *Raka* in his *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur*:

As epiese gedig is *Raka* een van die grootste prestasies van die Afrikaanse letterkunde. Wat 'n mens hier veral tref, die dramatiese gang van die gebeure, die sterk teenstelling tussen Koki en *Raka* wat hiertoe bydra, die reeks adjektiewe en werkwoorde wat gesamentlik help om die teenstelling redelikheid en suiwerheid, dierlike geweld en vernietigingswellus deur die taal heen op te bou en die funksionele beeldspraak wat feitlik altyd die sfeer van oerwoud en primitiewe mens eerbiedig en sinvol in die konteks van die gedig betrek. Deur die uitbuiting van wat die Afrikaanse woord in 'n gegewe situasie kan sê en suggereer, bereik Van Wyk Louw met hierdie gedig 'n hoogtepunt wat hy later alleen in die fassinierende taalspel van *Tristia* in dieselfde mate sal ewenaar.⁸

The following words and concepts are codes: 'epiese gedig', 'Afrikaans letterkunde', 'dramatiese gang', 'teenstelling', 'reeks adjektiewe en werkwoorde', 'deur die taal heen op te bou', 'funksionele beeldspraak', 'in die konteks van die gedig', 'uitbuiting van ... die Afrikaanse woord', 'sê en suggereer', '*Tristia*'.⁹ These concepts mark a text of a specific nature within

specific contexts, construed in a specific way, utilizing language in such a way as to make it part of a tradition.

The following words could also be quoted: 'grootste prestasies', 'tref, sterk', 'reeks wat gesamentlik help', 'deur die taal heen', 'funksioneel', 'eerbiedig en sinvol', 'hoogtepunt', 'fassinerende taalspel'.¹⁰ These clearly signify that the text is good, beautiful and aesthetic. It complies with the demands of Afrikaans (and the 'accepted' universal) literary aesthetics. Together, the adjectives and verbs reminded us of the norm inculcated with Afrikaans literary criticism, namely 'the amount and diversity of material integrated'.

The following phrases are also of interest: 'die teenstelling redelikheid en suiwerheid, 'dierlike geweld en vernietigingswellus, 'beeldspraak wat ... primitiewe mens eerbiedig'.¹¹ These words indicate an inherent moral tenor. It fits into the canon of Afrikaans literature: a specific kind of text as it exists within a Western tradition. We have here then a text within Afrikaans literature: an aesthetically satisfying and ideologically acceptable text. Or in capitalist terms: a good product, an enjoyable commodity. All texts which are to be accommodated within Afrikaans literature, should more or less have these qualities. An ideological corpus of texts has been created which is exclusive: an isolated, pure and unique culture.

This aestheticizing of Afrikaans literature is a consequence of the security, the relative permanence and the relative freedom which Afrikaners enjoyed. In the process, Afrikaans literature became isolated from the rest of the country in its perceptions on the dragging crisis and cultural discourses.

The establishment and development of Afrikaans literature is attributable to an underlying and supportive political economy. This impressive literary system of production has, due to the protection of the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971: 141-48), developed into a complex phenomenon within an essentially monopoly capitalist set-up. The Afrikaans publishing world is dominated by Nasionale Media and Perskor whose interests in the perpetuation of this system is undisputed. The institutions promoting a dominant, exclusive position, the committees prescribing literary works and the official status of Afrikaans could flourish only because the Afrikaner had sole political authority. But it is precisely this economic base which has forced the organic crisis to adapt for the sake of temporary economic stability. The demands of radical trade unions, the development of an alternative politico-economic culture within the broader democratic movement, endanger its unimpeded existence.

The current organic crisis will only be resolved if the demands of the majority are satisfactorily addressed. And this presupposes timeous and fundamental adaptations and changes in all spheres and of all forces in the country. Literary critics and academics with vested interests in cultural activities cannot merely react casually or defensively to the struggles taking place. To quote Stuart Hall on Gramsci (quoted in Saul & Gelb, 1986: 57):

these efforts cannot be merely defensive. They will (have to) be *formative*: a new balance of forces, the emergence of new elements, the attempt to put together a new 'historical bloc,' new political configurations and philosophies, a profound restructuring of the state and the ideological discourse which construct the

crisis and represent it as it is 'lived' as a practical reality; new programmes and policies, pointing to a new result, a new sort of settlement' - 'within certain limits.' These do not 'emerge': they have to be constructed. Political and ideological work is required to disarticulate old formations and to rework their elements into new configurations (original italics).

Once again: Afrikaans literary activity is not excluded from this process. Continued existence and dignity is not dependent on the extinction of the white order but hinges as its only possibility on reconciliation with the emergent order. We shall have to be critical of the cult of an inherited past, develop new paradigms and models for rewriting the text, models which could assist in situating Afrikaans literature within a broader historical reality. This essay should be seen as a political intervention in a historical process. Consequently, we are obliged to explore the possibility of coexistence in a broader South Africa.

IV

But before we discuss literature in particular, it is important to establish which social and political alternatives will satisfy the majority of South Africans. We, as literary people, will also have to take this into account because those elements, expressed on a macro-political level, will also resound on the cultural - and thus in language and literature:

The current moment of struggle - the interfacing of different values - would be reflective of features which lend themselves to a pronounced cultural discontinuity - the politics of resistance and cultural interfacing throw up revolutionary breaks in the chain of continued cultural domination. This cultural discontinuity is a reflection of the historical processes of national liberation. In the current conjuncture the revolutionary imperatives which have driven these discontinuities are intensely and deeply embedded in the consciousness of the oppressed so as to make it irreversible (Tomaselli & Ramgobin, 1988: 12 - 13).

The common demands of the majority of populist organisations such as the ANC, UDF, PAC, NF and AZAPO poses majority rule as a non-negotiable prerequisite. This right to majority rule, in the case of the ANC and UDF, a non-racial majority rule, will only have political-geographical viability in a unitary state within the boundaries of the former Union of South Africa. It also implies the creation of a strong central government with, as Swilling (1987: 431) puts it: 'a willingness to use state power in an interventionist manner to redress political and economic inequalities'. What this means, in effect, is a change in the balance of power at all levels of our society.

On the cultural terrain, the development of national unity across the boundaries of language and descent, is the most crucial project of national democracy. The cultural and educational struggles represent some of the most important facets of the current national democratic struggle for liberation. It is no coincidence that Father Smangaliso Mhkatshwa said at the inception of the National Educational Crisis Committee in 1986 that 'education and other structures of society, whether economic, political or social structures as a whole, are completely

intertwined and therefore it is almost ridiculous to wage a struggle for democratic education and ignore the forces that are at work in the society' (as quoted in Kruss, 1987: 16).

These political developments obviously do not imply capitulation. Rather, it stresses the importance of an attempt to activate a new perspective on this country and national unity and to take part in the cultivation of a South African democracy. 'In doing this, however, it is not a question of abandoning our roots, our own languages and cultures,' says the poet Jeremy Cronin (1985: 17). He continues by saying, 'Certainly we need to purge these of all forms of racism and sexism and chauvinism, but our cultures need to be developed and used to draw our people together in the struggle to eradicate apartheid and all forms of oppression and exploitation.'

Afrikaans may lose its official status in a changing South Africa while being protected under, for example, the Freedom Charter: 'All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own culture and customs.' (Other manifestos, e.g. the Azanian People's Manifesto, proclaims a similar policy for the protection of the multilingual nature of the country.) Similarly, the Afrikaans cultural products will be evaluated within a broader context. This would imply a profound re-evaluation of Afrikaans and Afrikaans literature in terms of a developing national culture. Gerwel (1988: 11-12) recently suggested that the development of an 'alternative' Afrikaans will have to take note of die wyses en vorme waarop taal bestaande magsverhoudings reproduceer. Die vernuwing sal daarom ook 'n vormlike en strukturele vernuwing moet wees ... Ons sal ook 'n duidelike historiese begrip moet hê van die wyse waarop Afrikaans as gebruiksmiddel en kultuuritem ingespan is in die etniese mobilisering van die Afrikaner, wat weer die grondslag is vir hierdie stelsel van apartheid waarteen ons dit het.¹²

It is, however, the creation of and the struggle for a democratic alternative, including language, which will be crucial for nurturing another kind of Afrikaans. To continue with Gerwel (1988: 12):

Daar sal gekyk word na die demokratiese inslag van alternatiewe Afrikaans, in die aanbieding, gees en inhoud daarvan. Daardie demokratisering sal lê in die aanbieding van 'n verruimde wêreld in teenstelling met die vernouende en afgebakende wêreld wat skool-Afrikaans [ook: universiteits-Afrikaans] tot dusver gebied het. Die vertrekpunt hiervoor is die aanvaarding dat daar 'n wêreld in Afrikaans is wat buite die leefwêreld van apartheid lê. Dit is daardie verruimde wêreld wat ... neerslag moet vind.¹³

Our involvement with Afrikaans literature and the way in which we introduce our students to it, is entirely within the context of the transformation of the South African society. Because we know that the Afrikaner is currently the ruler of this country, also as a consequence of the manner through which culture aided the creation of his hegemony, we realise the value of culture in the process of change, this time around not only for the purposes of promoting Afrikaans culture.

The fundamental point of departure in Afrikaans literature is the civilising

nature we assume literature has. However for most people in this country, Afrikaans literature signifies exploitation and barbarism. Literature does not consist of value-free ideas but is part of social life. It is inevitable that literary people will have to be very discriminating: we cannot simply continue to produce without researching and understanding the circumstances of a text's origin. It is through renewed inquiry and research that the nature of this literature, our response and attachment to it, may be demystified in a way conducive to the development of a future national literature.

We need, as is the case with People's History and People's Education, to rewrite the Afrikaans literary text:

All literary works ... are 'rewritten', if only unconsciously, by the societies which read them; indeed there is no reading of a work which is not also a 'rewriting'. No work, and no current evaluation of it, can simply be extended to new groups of people without being changed, perhaps almost unrecognizably, in the process; and this is one reason why what counts as literature is a notably unstable affair (Eagleton, 1983:12).

This consciousness of the literary text as artefact, as a cultural object, has given the reader and interpreter of the text more influence than in the past whereas the reader/critic tended previously to accept the sanctity of texts as a consumer. He/she now has the scope to rewrite and produce the text in terms of class, struggle, revolution.

How should one go about studying the text? Fredric Jameson (1981: 229) gives a valuable clue:

the decipherment by historical materialism of the cultural monuments and traces of the past ... must come to terms with the certainty that all the works of class history as they have survived and been transmitted to people, the various museums, canons and 'traditions' of our own time, are all in one way or another profoundly ideological, have all had a vested interest in and a functional relationship to social formations based on violence and exploitation; and that, finally, the restoration of the meaning of the greatest cultural monuments cannot be separated from a passionate and partisan assessment of everything that is oppressive in them and that knows complicity with privilege and class domination, stained with the guilt not merely of culture in particular but of History itself as one long nightmare (our italics).

From this it is possible to infer a possible methodology for the re-interpretation and rewriting of texts from the past in terms of transformation. If we are not able to reinterpret these texts on which we depend for our livelihood, we have arrived at a point where we have ceased to be relevant.

Deciphering past texts in terms of historical materialism means taking into account the infrastructure, the relations of production and means of production: the *plaisroman* and the *bywonnerroman* in terms of the historical context of the processes of production to which they referred. (When we talk about infrastructure, we are not pontificating dogmatically that infrastructure determines superstructure. It is a continuing problem within the Marxist perspective on literature

how to avoid relating the material directly in a causal relationship with the structures of the ideal while not denying the affinity.)

Class has played an undefined role in Afrikaans literature thus far. It has always been viewed within a master-servant relationship, but in more or less all cases, characterisation in the older Afrikaans novel is projected in a hierarchical relationship. Try and recall *Die meulenaar*, *Somer*, and even the modernistic *Uitdraai* and *Toorberg*. We have always looked at works from an exclusively white-black perspective and the writers did not take class into consideration although they might have written about it without a realization of its universality.

When inquiring into literature in terms of class, we need to take into account, ideology, the meaning of ideology, the false conscious, and ultimately the social formations founded on exploitation and the attempts in Afrikaans literature to justify apartheid (read: exploitation).

At this point in history there is much uncertainty. In the context of a changing South Africa we will have to go back to the literary monuments of the past to ascertain to what extent, and which texts, were intertexts of class and exploitation. While rewriting the texts of the past, we have to be partisan against any form of ideology which could have stood for exploitation, elitism and domination.

Contra-ideological and contra-capitalistic concepts are not even accommodated in the Afrikaans lexicon. In this respect Afrikaans has developed in an unbalanced way and a revolutionary language will have to be created through which revolutionary concepts could be comprehended. To do this we need a revolutionary cultural theory more than mere Marxist analyses of texts, as such analyses fail to effect a decisive break with bourgeois ideology. Such a criticism, far from staking out a new theoretical space which may make a practical difference has merely suggested new answers to the same object.

How then do we have to proceed? Revolutionary literary criticism will have to undermine the dominant concepts of culture. By creating a miniscule, separate culture, other cultural expressions became invisible, having been dominated into obscurity. The Afrikaans literary critic has created a tradition, defined a canon, which is meaningful only to Afrikaner intellectuals and its aesthetes, while other forms of cultural expression have been diverted beyond the invisible boundaries of Afrikaans literature. This resulted in the suppression of other cultural forms, as Jameson and Kavanagh (1984: 5) put it 'in ways designed precisely to make its political and ideological significance invisible'. We need to link such cultural practices with other forms of social activity. Similarly our 'cultural analyses' will have to be politically directed. Eagleton (1981: 98) suggests that

it would deconstruct the received hierarchies of 'literature' and transvaluate received judgments and assumptions; engage with the language and 'unconscious' of literary texts, to reveal their role in the ideological construction of the subject; and mobilize such texts, if necessary by hermeneutic 'violence', in a struggle to transform those subjects within a wider political context.

Ultimately, we maintain that separate literary canons will not be able to survive in their separateness within a united, democratic, non-racial South Africa. The

debate about Afrikaans is not isolated, but one which is looking for direction in the developing South African society. The debate about a national South African literature is therefore not mere intellectual wind, but based on the need to develop the potential the country has towards national unity. This is obviously not a literary criterion, but essentially political: the struggle for a national culture and a democratic South Africa is a necessity and a prerequisite for unity in this divided country.

Notes

1. This is a translation of a paper delivered at the bi-annual congress of the Afrikaanse Letterkundevereniging (September 1988) at the Potchefstroom University for CHE, Potchefstroom.
2. Conjunction 'is more closely linked to immediate politics, to "tactics and agitation", while "organic crisis" supposes a profound crisis which might even have a duration of several decades and during which the defence and conservation of the old order is in conflict with the formation of new forces' (see Gramsci, 1978: 177-79).
3. Elevate the Afrikaans language to a written language, make her the bearer of our culture, of our history, our national ideals and so elevate also the people who speak it ... The Afrikaans Language Movement is nothing more than an awakening among our people to a feeling of own value and to the calling to take up a more dignified position in world civilization.
4. These prizes are only awarded to South African citizens who are definitely sympathetic towards the aspirations of the Afrikaans people.
5. Act of Transfer.
6. Afrikaans art is part of Afrikaans culture, and when Afrikaans art is divested of the Afrikaans view of life that art cannot be Afrikaans anymore, even though it may originate from people who are Afrikaans in name.
7. And if it happens that a contradiction or clash between artistic norms and views and national norms and views takes place ... then such a contradiction or clash must be seen as a dangerous phenomenon and should be countered as such.
8. As epic poem *Raka* is one of the greatest achievements of Afrikaans literature. What strikes one here, the dramatic sequence of events, the forceful opposition between Koki and Raka which supports this, the adjectives and verbs which together help to build up through language the opposition between reason and purity, animalistic violence and lust for destruction, and the functional imagery which almost always honours the atmosphere of the jungle and the primitive and involves it meaningfully within the context of the poem. Through the exploitation of what the Afrikaans word can say and suggest in a given situation, Van Wyk Louw attains with this poem a peak which he will later equal to a certain extent in the fascinating language game of *Tristia*.
9. 'Afrikaans literature', 'dramatic sequence of events', 'epic poem', 'opposition', 'adjectives and verbs', 'build up through the language', 'functional imagery', 'within the context of the poem', 'exploitation of the Afrikaans word', 'say and suggest.'
10. 'greatest achievements', 'strikes', 'which together help to build up', 'through the language', 'functional', 'meaningfully', 'peak', 'fascinating language game.'
11. 'the opposition between reason and purity', 'animalistic violence and lust for destruction', 'imagery which ... honours the atmosphere of the jungle and the primitive.'
12. The ways and forms in which language reproduces power relationships. The renewal will therefore also have to be a formal and structural renewal ... We will also have to have a clear historical idea of the way in which Afrikaans has been used as means and as a cultural item in the ethnic mobilisation of the Afrikaner, which is again the basis for this system of apartheid against which we have it.
13. One will have to look at the democratic impact of alternative Afrikaans, in its presentation, spirit and content. That democratisation will lie in the presentation of a widened world, in opposition to the narrow and separate world that school Afrikaans (also university Afrikaans) has thus far offered. The point of departure for this is the acceptance of a world in Afrikaans which lies outside the world of apartheid. It is that enlarged world which has to be reflected.

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