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SAMENESS and DIFFERENCE: Problems and Potentials in South African Civil Society

South African Philosophical Studies, I

Edited by
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword <i>David Chidester</i>	v
Introduction <i>James R. Cochrane and Bastienne Klein</i>	1
Chapter I. Religion in Civil Society: Surveying the South African Case <i>James R. Cochrane</i>	15
<i>PART I. PROBLEMATISING SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY</i>	
Chapter II. Race, Space and Civil Society <i>Don Foster</i>	57
Chapter III. Discourses of Difference and Sameness <i>Robin Petersen</i>	79
Chapter IV. Redefining Public Space, Women's Organizations, Gender Consciousness and Civil Society <i>Amanda Gouws and Shireen Hassim</i>	123
Chapter V. Tensions in Legal and Religious Values in the 1996 Constitution <i>Ebrahim Moosa</i>	157
<i>PART II. EXPLORING NORMATIVE CLAIMS AND INTERESTS</i>	
Chapter VI. Ethical Creativity <i>Martin Prozesky</i>	179
Chapter VII. Values in the Workplace <i>Bernard Lategan</i>	193
Chapter VIII. Lamenting Tragedy from "The Other Side" <i>Denise Ackermann</i>	213
Chapter IX. Beyond Patronage <i>Chirevo Kwenda</i>	243
Chapter X. The <i>Oikos</i> in a Global Economic Era: A South African Comment <i>Russel Botman</i>	269

Chapter XI. Between Two Gods: The Literary and Socio-historical Contexts of Biblical Values <i>Gerald West</i>	281
Contributors	305
Index	307

FOREWORD

David Chidester

After the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, while we were still dancing in the streets, celebrating our liberation from apartheid and rejoicing in our freedom from the most virulent system of entrenched differences in the world, we were almost immediately re-colonized by global market forces beyond our control. Having been divided by apartheid, we were suddenly homogenized under the sign of globalization.

In reflecting on that re-colonization by the global market, South African President Thabo Mbeki has used explicitly religious language—metaphorical, but also critical—in wrestling with this new terrain on which the struggle continues. In a speech delivered in September 1998, for example, President Mbeki adamantly rejected the incorporation of South Africa into the global religion of the market. "We must be at the forefront," he urged, "of challenging the notion of 'the market' as the modern god, a supernatural phenomenon to whose dictates everything human must bow in a spirit of powerlessness." At a conference organized by the editors of this volume in early 1999, President Mbeki elaborated on the religious terms of engagement through which the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and U.S. President Bill Clinton had urged him to recite what he referred to as the "new catechism"—democracy, human rights, market economy, free trade, relaxed exchange controls, and open boundaries for the flow of global capital—as a "prayer of hope for the future that will only produce enormous poverty." In this recognition, Thabo Mbeki indicated that the economic, social, and political challenges facing South Africa require playing the only game in town while maintaining human integrity. His religious language—the god of the market, the new catechism, the prayer of hope for the future—suggested that he was also aware that these challenges raised profound questions about what it means to be human in a human society.

By the end of the twentieth century, according to many commentators, globalization had produced vast changes in the organization of the world economy. As a general term, globalization represented significant shifts—from production to consumption, from industry to information, from national interests to the interests of transnational corporations, and so on—all of which culminated in the emergence of the victorious, notorious "new world order." From this global perspective, human beings had also changed, becoming consumers of information in an economy of knowledge, goods and services driven by global market forces. The challenge of being human in the world, therefore, had increasingly become synthesized, standardized and homogenized within the terms and conditions of a global market economy.

Is that a true story? From a variety of perspectives, this story of globalization has been challenged. Postmodernists, postcolonialists, material feminists, religious Marxists, and many others have tried to develop alternative terms for gaining critical leverage against this pervasive narrative of globalization. At the same time, on the ground, people all over the world have been involved in local initiatives in fashioning alternative accounts of the world, thereby enacting creative interventions in the face of globalization. Often, these interventions have been explicitly religious, whether seeking to recover the indigenous integrity of a local religion or to produce a local, mixed, or hybrid version of a global religion. In these religious initiatives, people are not merely consumers of religious signs, symbols and images; they are also acting as producers of knowledge. At the local level, therefore, religion can represent a diverse array of resources and strategies for producing alternative meanings for being human.

In this volume, the authors undertake a radical recovery of the term "religion" as both a critical and creative entry into the challenges posed by local transitions and globalizing forces at the beginning of the 21st century. In the process of dealing with these enormous challenges, they enter the field of possibilities signaled by civil society, not in the abstract, but in and through the reality of race and space, discourse and practice, gender and women's organizations, law and values, patronage and reciprocity, and other features of a changing South African landscape. In different ways, the authors think through the theory and practice of civil society for a new South Africa. Simultaneously global and local, their deliberations contribute to an ongoing conversation about the potential and limits of civil society that is currently taking place not only in South Africa, but also in other transitional societies all over the world. On the strength of this book, we must hope and trust that those conversations will continue.

During 2000, the Republic of South Africa formally adopted a new national motto—"Diverse peoples unite!"—that appeared to resolve the question of sameness and difference at the level of public relations. This book engages the complex, shifting dilemma of sameness and difference at a more profound level that goes to the heart of the production of human identity, meaning and power in public life. Without pretending to resolve the question of sameness and difference, this book seeks to make a significant contribution to helping us think through exactly what is at stake. In a transitional South Africa and a transitional world, we need to be clear about what is at stake.

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INTRODUCTION

James R. Cochrane and Bastienne Klein

Sameness—Difference: These are among the most common words in the lexicon of post-colonial, post-modern, and post-feminist theories. They have arisen from the dynamics of the twentieth century to give expression to a renewed interest in the local, the particular, the Other. They help define the present intellectual landscape.

In South Africa, the terms of sameness and difference have long been of particular importance. Our past policies under the name of apartheid (the word itself representing an apotheosis of difference), and our present initiatives under the theme of nation-building, resonate with themes of sameness and difference. The experience which accompanies these themes is that of profound pain, suffering, struggle and hope. The theoretical and practical questions of sameness and difference, therefore, could not be more pertinent for us. Yet not only for us.

The collapse of the communist experiments in Eastern Europe, the rising hegemony of neo-liberal economics, the world-wide spread of influential information technologies and entertainment media, and the image of a global village in which we all look the same in some ways, and yet all appear different to each other in other ways—all of this has changed also the world we inhabit irrevocably. It has changed the ethos of the world we inhabit.

The "sameness" of the grand social visions of the twentieth century, whether of the left, the center or the right, are aimed either at common denominator societies or at the imposition of one scheme of things upon everyone. The notion of the human being as possessing a universal "essence," which could be read into and out of every society, governed the social sciences and the popular imagination of liberal democracies. We are much more aware now, if we were not before, that this supposedly universal human being is in fact an ideological metaphor for a particular human being: the one who feels, thinks and acts as if he (usually) is the measure of all other human beings by virtue of his or her education, affluence, sophistication and, as is all too often the case, the color of skin. This is the cultural, theoretical and political construct of those who possess power and wealth. As this construct has been exposed for all to see, so too the anthropology that underlies it has been undermined. There is no such thing, as "man" in general, Foucault has reminded us, only particular men and women. And children.

The vision of the "universal man" had its point. It was not mere ideology, that is, mystification. It stood against the terrible wars of Europe which were driven by differences, even among those who claimed the same sacred authority. It projected a world free of the hate, enmity, violence and destruction that difference has the potential to wreak. At the same time it was an ideology, a projection of the self-image of the bourgeois man (not much the woman). This projection carried with it, both in its defence and in those who attacked it, a desire for control of the wilful, irrational, mad world we inhabit. That desire, in turn, took the form of a grand analysis of society and grand schemes for repairing and directing society.

Unfortunately for such visions, schemes and theories, the differences that mark human beings have been neither watered down nor have they withered away in the face of appeals either to Reason or History. They have simmered along under the hegemony of harmony to break forth again and again against the predictions of the earlier social science theories which sought to set them aside.¹ In consequence, we are forced again into a new appreciation of difference.²

The current attention we pay to identities and particularities, to micro-social realities rather than (or at least in parallel to) macro-social "grand narratives"—another characteristic term in the

contemporary social analytical lexicon—is therefore unsurprising. The earlier sweeping historical schemes which marked the twentieth century have proven fragile, both practically and theoretically. As this fragility has altered previous certainties; so too an industry of books and journal essays has tried to unpack what is happening to us in this "post-modern," "post-colonial" period.

About the only consensus we can determine in the breakdown of the certainties that governed the grand narratives of the past, is that no one quite knows where we are going, or how we will get there. Doom and gloom, euphoria and cheer, alternate with each other, interplay with each other, as we contemplate our various particular presents and future hopes. This, one may say, is with few exceptions not the beginning of a century with high hope, as might have been the case for many at the turn of the previous century. Even those who might be expected to be crowing of their triumph have grown fearful. This is perhaps most poignantly and elegantly evident in the seminal essay titled "The Capitalist Threat," by George Soros,³ doyen of the speculators who have given rise to the term "financial capital" as a mark of our time.

The "sameness" envisaged by the grand narratives of history of the past was predicated in large measure on either of two pictures. One was of the contented bourgeois, nuclear family in a busy commercial and industrial megalopolis or in a romantic rural town. The other was of a courageous worker marching in solidarity with other workers the world over. Each projected a particular view of the "true" nature of the human being. Between these two great anthropologies of the age crept the remaining people of the earth, waiting to be drawn into one or other side of the equation, mostly seen to be backward in their politics or in their economies. "Progress" was the ideology of the era. All that was at stake was who would define the character of the progressive realization of human aspirations, and who would thus lead the masses into a better world. Such was the stuff of the social sciences, at least until these odd certainties began to crumble in the wake of the complexity of human life and the methodological weakness of the scientific paradigms that were in place.

Until then, the "sameness" which human beings were supposed to represent reigned supreme, and "difference" was either the bastion of conservatism or the refuge of elites. Indeed, difference was precisely the philosophical, theological and practical basis of that tragic, terrible experiment which gave the world the word "apartheid." It stressed the particular, the black particular, and separated it out from every other particular—except one: the need for white unity as a sameness which would entrench a hold on the political economy of South Africa, was strong, regardless of the ethnic origins of "whites."⁴ Thus it was white South Africans who arrived at a forced compromise between the British and the Boers in the formation of the ironically named "Union of South Africa"—ironic, because it was a racially defined white unity in the face of a threat defined as "the Native problem." The "natives" themselves were drawn into this dispensation by means of an opposing construction, an ethnically defined politics of division, predicated upon a need for their labor but not for them.

That is our heritage. We have now arrived at the point where the construction of a new nation, a democratic society, is the crucial task of our time. A new irony has arisen. We badly need to find a broader national "sameness" in attacking this legacy of the degenerative and damaging framework of difference which was apartheid. Precisely at this time, the world around is rediscovering difference and trumpeting its cause.

We have come to the point of establishing our first truly democratic nation just when the old hegemonies which defined the nineteenth and twentieth century are breaking up, and the ideological wallpaper that was plastered over deep social differences in myriad parts of the world

is being torn down, to reveal . . . what: A monster? The source of new local vitalities? The return of ancient reactionary traditions? The recovery of much-needed resources in tradition and context for regenerating value and virtue? The rise of hydra-headed enthusiasms against the spiritual barrenness of Enlightenment rationalities? The reinsertion of deep-rooted local wisdoms?

These questions of sameness and difference permeate our own attempt in South Africa to find new arrangements in living with each other in a whole, healed and just world. We enter this task aware of our location in a wider world: Africa in the first instance, the international community generally in the second. Many wonder where the resources to carry out the task will be found. As elsewhere in the last decade and a half, some have suggested that our hopes lie not in the political realm of large-scale conglomerations of power, nor in the economic realm of equally large-scale conglomerates of industry, commerce and finance, but in the intimate spheres, the human lifeworld arenas, of civil society. The concept of civil society has also been reborn in the changes of the last fifteen years.

The rise of the notion of civil society in the nineteen eighties and nineties was marked by the plethora of research and publications that entered public debate in the academy, in the world of politicians and social engineers, and among activists in countries whose old systems of rule by oligarchies, dictators and political elites had crumbled or were crumbling. South Africa too has had its debates on the importance of civil society.

The particular character of the South African debate has been dominated by one question in particular: Will the profound mix of civil society organizations which played such a key role in challenging the apartheid state in its last twenty years gain in strength, or will it be weakened by the establishment of a more representative government seeking a centrally led program of reconstruction? The question has a material basis as well. Sympathetic governments, churches, trades unions and the like externally funded much of the work of civil society organizations against apartheid. Would this funding continue (it has in fact been drastically cut back or redirected to the new state)? And if not, would the new state take over some of that responsibility in making available some funds with no strings attached? In short, would the new state see a stronger civil society as a key partner or see it as a competitor?

Hermien Kotze, writing in a publication on the possibilities of creating "action space" in contemporary society,⁵ presents a fairly widespread view among non-governmental organizations that the answer to this question is not encouraging for civil society. The jury is still out. At the same time, citizens—which for the first time now also means all black South Africans—are simply going ahead in many places in organizing themselves. In this sense, a civil society movement which is dependent neither on the state nor on external funds generally is putting down roots here and there. How strong it will become depends on many things; not least, perhaps, on the extent to which religious bodies and institutions recognize their own responsibilities at the grassroots level for encouraging and strengthening the capacities necessary for the exercise of citizenship and thus for the growth of civil society.

The question of civil society has not escaped religious thinkers either. Though not a great deal has been written about civil society by theologians and religious analysts as yet, at least one book attempted to capture the debate. This was a collection of essays on *Religion and the Reconstruction of Civil Society*,⁶ arising from the founding congress of the South African Academy of Religion in 1994, the year in which South Africa's first democratic elections were held. Twenty-one essays by a good representation of religious academics make up the collection. They examine aspects of religious plurality, religion and reconstruction, civil society and

theology, civil society and sacred texts. Very few of them, however, problematize the concept of civil society as such, either generally or in relation to religion. The first essay in this present book, by James Cochrane, attempts to do both, thus setting the scene for those that follow.

Equally notable about the earlier collection from 1994 is the fact that only two of the essays are by black South Africans. This in itself points to an issue raised by the first chapter in this volume, namely, the contested character of the concept of civil society in relation to Africa's experience of the "civilizing" mission of the colonial powers. It also raises the question about the extent to which the idea of civil society finds purchase in South Africa. Whose concern is it? And why? The point cannot be lost on the reader of this volume that it too suffers from a lack of representivity in this respect. It is an important issue, especially in South Africa where academic discourse has for so long been dominated by the concepts, theoretical frameworks and agendas of Westerners and Northerners. This volume in itself, by virtue of its own weakness in this respect, raises the issue once again. It is one, which currently challenges the very foundations of the academic and intellectual enterprise in South Africa.⁷

No *apologia* can be made for that fact. All that can be said is that a small, diverse group of thinkers gathered to debate the resources we might have in South Africa for the development or reconstruction of civil society in a time of transition, some five to six years after the establishment of a constitutional democracy, as part of the entrenching of the democratic vision this new social agreement proclaims. Initially the group was formed at the University of Natal, and some contributors to this volume are from that institution. Subsequently, others were drawn in from the three Western Cape universities, namely, the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of the Western Cape, and Stellenbosch University.

The colloquia were held over nine months, more or less on a monthly basis. The papers presented here are the result. These were busy people, all with innumerable energies sapping demands made upon them by others, both locally and nationally, in government and out, to respond to the needs of building the institutions and sharpening the processes which would allow our new democracy to succeed. That they managed to continue their participation in the colloquium and produce a final draft of their papers is a miracle, for which we wish here to express our warm gratitude.

This small group could easily, and with profit, have been expanded in numerous ways. Indeed, a number of interested people whom we had approached finally had to withdraw as a result of other demands upon them. The final group is a talented collection of individuals, all of whom are known widely and respected in their particular fields. They represent, obviously, only a selection of perspectives and wisdom on the possibilities of civil society in South Africa. The book, similarly contains only a small collection of the many possible contributions that might have been made, and these contributions touch on only a handful of the many themes that one might explore with respect to a complex set of theoretical and practical issues to do with civil society, religion and philosophy.

This is, then, an eclectic work. It is produced by people from different disciplines and traditions who focused on whatever particular research interests had been driving them which might illuminate the overarching question. This is both its strength and its weakness. It does not offer a definitive response to the question of what resources might be available to us, and by what frameworks of thinking and ethical claims civil society might be grown and entrenched. It can only be a stimulus to that question, a probing of what at first glance may seem an odd assemblage of ideas and disciplines.

It is precisely this disparate set of thoughts, based on a range of experiences and disciplines which are not always aware of each other, which challenges the idea of any grand image of sameness to bind the new nation. It is also this eccentricity which underlines the need to pay attention to differences, be they expressed in political, economic, religious, cultural, psychological or other form. In fact, the gradual clarification of the overall theme of this project arose as members of the colloquium began to realize that difference marked our own meeting in the way in which we defined issues and the focus of our enquiries. Yet we met because we were interested in collaboration, in moving towards some kind of sameness that would bind and heal a deeply damaged and divided society. A logic to our deliberations emerged organically.

After James Cochrane's opening essay, the remaining material was organized into two sections. Part I dealt with the "structuring and restructuring of civil society," incorporating a series of reflections arising from the South African experience on the possible meaning of civil society, and the potential resources philosophy and religion may have to offer in the building of civil society. In the process of these reflections, the concept of civil society itself is again problematized from a variety of points of view.

Where else to begin but around the question of race and racism? This is a quintessentially South African problem. Don Foster, a social psychologist, responds to this question by unpacking the relationships between race and the construction of space in society. Unless we deal with the way in which spatial arrangements in our country have expressed racist configurations of place, we will not even begin to deal with the reality of the bifurcated state produced by colonial politics.⁸ The racial division between urban and rural, between "white" suburb and "black" township, is both a geographical concretization of a distinction between the sphere of freedom and the sphere of subjugation, and a material and discursive barrier to the construction of a civil society. In this respect, Foster "spatializes" values in regard to both racism and androcentrism, defining the relevant spaces to be international, national, urban, local or immediate, and psychological. Paying attention to these spatialized contexts of value-formation, Foster undercuts idealized notions of civil society. These preliminary descriptions offer him the opportunity to redefine the contexts within which the hope for civil society must take root if it is to be capable of dealing with differences—such as those of race and gender—in ways which are theoretically adequate and practically efficacious.

The discursive aspects of identity and difference around racial designations of the self and the other form the focus of the essay by Robin Petersen. The terms by which racialized categories of identity have been constructed in the colonial and apartheid past have their parallels in counter-categorical claims, one of which—"non-racialism"—has found its way into our new constitution. Petersen unpacks the complex and painful history of the struggle around these issues by paying attention to the language that has been used by proponents and opponents of one or other view of race and racism. What does "blackness," or "African-ness," or "non-racialism," for example, mean in our new context? How are these terms to be understood historically? What do they reveal about our political, material and cultural differences? What do they offer in arriving at some common South African identity? These questions take us to core issues of the valuing and valuation of human beings, and thus to the question of what potential there may be for finding new descriptions of difference and sameness which are constructive rather than destructive to the building of a new society.

The Constitution we have put in place, perhaps more than any existing constitution in the world, pays attention to other categories of difference than race. Gender, of course, is one of these, and gender struggles have been almost as much a part of our recent history as any other,

both among black and white South Africans. Consequently, the new political dispensation in South Africa has seen a particularly strong consciousness of gender constructions of sameness and difference, both in discourse and in political and economic systems. The negotiations which brought about the settlement for democracy in South Africa and ended the formal period of apartheid rule were themselves constructed with the issue very much in mind. Every participating stakeholder in those negotiations was required to bring a team of people in which at least half had to be women. This is probably unprecedented in world politics.

It is entirely appropriate, therefore, to ask just how deeply rooted is this shift and, how far it has gone in the years since those negotiations took place. This is the task undertaken by Amanda Gouws and Shireen Hassim in their contribution to this volume. They pay particular attention to feminist perspectives on civil society and women as political agents, to changes within the women's movement in South Africa, and to the question of whether or not that movement has been "demobilized" through the incorporation of women into government and other sectors of society where their solidarity is more difficult to embody.

Gouws and Hassim work with a different theoretical conception of civil society than that which Cochrane champions in his introductory essay, and this is worth noting here. They define civil society in such a way as to implicate the concept irrevocably within a tradition which separates the public from the private, which regards the public sphere as that of a gendered, male civil society, and the private sphere as the gendered, female realm of personal life. It is not hard to see why this view of civil society helps to unpack the points they make about the role of women in the public sphere, in particular, the historical exclusion of women from the public sphere. The alternative view on civil society which Cochrane presents does not adopt the distinction between public and private in the first place, a distinction which without doubt is linked to a particular historical conception of civil society in the male, bourgeois world of the industrial revolution. These theoretical distinctions within this one volume offer to the reader, therefore, additional resources for exploring the potential of the concept of civil society itself, particularly in relation to the history of Africa and South Africa.

The final chapter in Part I takes up the issue of the relationship between what is basically a liberal democratic constitution by which political life in South Africa is now governed, and those sets of values we may deem "religious." There is no necessary harmony between religious values and those values which the Constitution proclaims and defends. The tension generated by an instrument which is supposed to represent a general, plural, secular public set of values, and the corporate foundations of value found through membership and belief in a particular religious tradition, can be the basis for much conflict or at least for a practical distancing of local communities from public claims. This suggests that there is a great deal of potential in this tension for undermining that consensual framework of values upon which civil society rests. Equally, it suggests that an understanding of civil society which incorporates such differences and takes seriously their enriching possibilities might be vital.

Thus it is that Ebrahim Moosa takes up the tensions between legal and religious values in relation to the new South African constitution. In so doing, he opens up the more general question of the relationship between law and religion under "modern" conditions, and between religion and the state as a result. His essay is an attempt to rethink the place of religion and of religious normative claims in relation to the secular assumptions which govern the making of public policy. Not surprisingly, he locates his argument also at the level of metaphysics and the nature of "rights." This turn to the legal parameters of any conception of civil society echoes a theme begun in Foster's essay at the beginning of Part I, and leads us into the next set of themes.

Part II demonstrates the eclectic character of this volume. Here a number of specific investigations into very particular aspects of civil society, each tries to uncover and unpack insights and make suggestions which may enrich our search for a whole and healthy society. Accordingly, we speak of these essays as "exploring normative claims and interests" which arise from reflections on, or may contribute to an understanding of, civil society.

The first of these, Martin Prozesky's pursuit of "ethical creativity," takes up the potential of a process philosophy view of the world to make a contribution to the common good. Civil society, in this view, is defined by a search for the common good. Prozesky approaches the matter first by looking at the global situation of religion in respect of politics and economy, through which he suggests the need for an ethic of creative co-operation as opposed to aggressive competition. The idea of well-being must be extended to be fully inclusive of all inhabitants of the earth, or of our local contexts for that matter, if it is to have ethical force. It should become a moral rule by which we might test the truthfulness of our claims and by which we might act.

What would this look like in practice? Bernard Lategan's contribution on "values in the workplace" gives one view. In effect, he provides us with a framework for exploring and testing values in concrete locations. In his case, this location is the workplace, where the key questions of power and interests intersect with other values. How discourse about civil society is to be made accessible and public to those who participate in it is one matter he raises. Can the values embedded in particular discourses which normally do not integrate well or interact easily with each other, such as those of the academy, of the believing community, and of the market place, be treated together, brought up against one another? What kind of possibilities for social transformation does this offer? These are the issues Lategan explores, testing what is possible in the domain of the workplace, concretely in the context of mining corporations. In order to make sense of the issues, he turns to a comprehensive theory of needs and "satisfiers" found in the work of Max-Neef.

At this point, the discussion of this volume shifts in an entirely other direction. We move from the direction of general ethical frameworks to particular contexts of struggle. The first is brought into focus by the issue of how we might heal a society which has been broken by its past.

Denise Ackermann's discussion of the idea of lament deals with key questions of brokenness and hope, suffering and healing, which must be addressed in a society as hurt and damaged as is South Africa. She seeks to go beyond the language of our famous "Truth and Reconciliation Commission," arguing that confession and whatever forgiveness may be given, however necessary, is too shallow to bear the burden of the past. Too many people have been hurt too deeply, and this hurt has social significance in both the short term and the long run. Our capacity to recognize this hurt and give it a means of public expression, without diminishing it, without converting it immediately into some demand for reconciliation, is Ackermann's interest. Public lament is central to healing. It is central also to the hope for a civil society because it forces us to stand in awe of what has been done to people, what we perhaps have done to people, and to absorb this in its fullness. It thus forces our conversion and not simply our confession.

Another kind of history of suffering is revealed in the way in which "civil" behavior was defined by the colonial projects of European societies. It is a commonplace by now that the "civilization" which colonial traders, missionaries, functionaries, militaries and settlers thought they were offering Africans was inherently flawed in multiple ways. "What haven't we given them?," is a common refrain of white settlers even today. It is taken for granted that what has

been given excuses what was taken away, even if one acknowledges the guilt of the latter. "We" gave "them" the Bible, education, industry, technology, modern governance, and so on. Without it, "they" would be in even more dire straits. If that is the legacy of "civil" society, how do we recover an African sense of a civil society? This is the analysis offered by Chirevo Kwenda who explores, from an African point of view, the dichotomy of the practices of giving and receiving as they have played themselves out historically in African societies and in the colonial projects of European societies. Through this analysis he wishes to redeem the notion of "receiving," something colonists and settlers have found it difficult to do. An ethic of respect lies at the heart of his investigation of difference in the African context. Without it, he sees little prospect for civil society.

The penultimate essay takes us momentarily beyond Africa. Russel Botman is interested in the concept of the *oikos*, the Greek word that lies behind the English derivations from it of economy (*oikonomia*), ecology (*oikologie*) and ecumenical (*oikoumene*), meaning the "household." It is the "global economic era," the phenomena some have termed "globalization," which provides the foreground of a search for an ethical basis of value by which the resources for attacking poverty and domination may be determined. Botman's concern about the contemporary hegemonies of markets (and we would add, state bureaucracies) is widely shared, of course. What he does in this essay is to state them in South African perspective, and in the process to link them to the potential of the African understanding of the human being captured in the notion of *ubuntu*, meaning "being human by virtue of other human beings."

The final essay in this work takes a further turn, this time towards sacred texts. Gerald West is well aware of the fact that the great majority of South Africans are religious, and that a great deal of their religious thinking is based on one or another sacred text. This is true even where African cultural traditions which are more oral in nature have been incorporated into, or even have shaped, the reading of sacred texts. It is also true where those texts cannot be read because people are illiterate, the reading is done there by other people, and has been so for many long decades. At every level, human beings are involved in interpreting not only the texts they read or hear, but their lives in relation to those texts. Very often, these texts are resources for constructing worlds of survival, worlds of sustenance, worlds of transformation even, probably with far more impact than the religious institutions which might be home to those texts. The "reading" of texts is therefore a crucial instrument of engagement in society. It may well be a resource for empowering people, and thus building the foundation of civil society, in ways not often recognized. Interpretation, he argues, is a site of struggle. West sets out to demonstrate this.

West's work rests on extensive practical engagement with local communities, many of them poor, in South Africa, and for that reason, it leaves us at the end of this volume with perhaps the most crucial challenge of all, if we are to build a civil society in South Africa. It provides us, too, with a link to the question raised by Moosa at the end of Part I, about the place of religion and of religious normative claims under the conditions of a modern "secular society".

How do we bring into relationship with each other, in a pluralistic democratic society, the values of ordinary people with particular normative foundations captured in "sacred texts," and the values of "legal texts" such as the national Constitution which are intrinsically structured so as to represent a general rather than a particular public? How do we link difference and sameness so that they provide for a constructive engagement in the public sphere rather than a destructive rejection of the public sphere? And finally, how do we do all of this in such a way that we take seriously the rights of every person and all persons to the benefits and promises of that

citizenship without which any civil society must founder or be betrayed? These are some of questions which, in the end, remain for the reader as well.

NOTES

1. One good example of this may be found in the theories of secularization which dominated numerous studies from the nineteen fifties to the seventies, all of which foresaw the gradual disappearance of religion as a major social factor. This "prediction" has foundered on the rocks of new waves of religious sensibility which have had as much social impact as at any time in human history. See, for example, José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

2. As Stephen Toulmin has persuasively argued in *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (NY: The Free Press, 1990), while our appreciation for difference may be new in relation to the project of modernity, it is not new historically. He traces multiple roots for an understanding of difference in the humanist Renaissance, and finds there a host of themes which we now recapitulate under "post-modernism."

3. George Soros, "The Capitalist Threat," *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1997, which thesis he has subsequently questioned.

4. One of the permanent contradictions of apartheid policy was that blacks were seen to be separate "ethnic" entities, such as Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Tswana, etc., but whites were seen to a single "race" even though they might speak wholly different languages (English, Afrikaans, German, Latvian, Portuguese, Greek, Lebanese, etc.) and come from wholly different national and cultural backgrounds. The most obvious indicator of the purely ideological foundations of difference instituted by apartheid can be seen in the treatment of Japanese residents—given the status of "honorary whites," because of their importance for trade with Japan—and Chinese settlers, always classified as "non-white."

5. Conrad Barberton, Michael Blake and Hermien Kotze (eds.), *Creating Action Space: The Challenge of Poverty and Democracy in South Africa* (Cape Town: IDASA, 1998).

6. J. W. de Gruchy and S. Martin (eds), *Religion and the Reconstruction of Civil Society* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1995).

7. One indication of this is the recent establishment of the African Renaissance Institute by black academics and intellectuals. Though it is not exclusive, its leadership and its agenda have a different foundation and direction from that which has been "the norm" in South Africa in the twentieth century.

8. This notion comes from the work of Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996). Foster touches on Mamdani's work; Cochrane deals with it as well in chapter one.

CHAPTER I

RELIGION IN CIVIL SOCIETY: READINGS FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE

JAMES R. COCHRANE

The issue we are to consider is the question of what cultural and religious resources there may be for the construction of civil society, assuming that civil society is necessary to the transformation of society as a whole. I shall draw out some of the parameters which I believe must shape our consideration of a civil culture by focusing on the narrower notion of religion, taking it for granted at the moment that religion is a subset of the *concept* of culture.¹ The South African experience, partially unique but also generalizable in many important respects, will guide my analysis.

The first section focuses on the ambiguity of the notions of religion—in its plural, contested nature—and civil society. The discussion is contextualized in South Africa to enable us concretely to locate the idea of civil society in relation to religion.

Section two extends the argument by unpacking relevant theories of civil society and relating them to the characteristic political product of colonialism in Africa: a bifurcated state and a divided society.

The third section considers some frameworks for the operationalization of civil society—the strategies which may guide religious and cultural institutions and movements to strengthen civil society over and against the forces of markets and bureaucracies.

Finally, we will explore some general, and generalizable, notions about religion and civil society, arising from our theoretical reflection on the South African case.

CONCEPTUALIZING RELIGION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Ambiguous Terms, Ambiguous Reality

Perhaps inevitably, our experience of religion in society is ambiguous. In South Africa this ambiguity was expressed most clearly in the recent past in the contrast between two kinds of Christianity. Though we are likely to discover similar ambiguities in other religious traditions, the case of Christianity is particularly illuminating.

Christian thought and tradition was used by the apartheid government morally to justify its policies and defend its integrity. Yet against this same government, we saw a Christian denunciation of its policies and practices, and a corresponding theological defence of liberation struggles against its regime. The case for both positions, of course, was established on the basis of the same collection of scriptural texts and general tradition. The contradictions entailed in this particular conflict are not merely theoretical, as is most powerfully and poignantly stated in the now famous *Kairos Document*: "There we sit in the same Church while outside Christian policemen and soldiers are beating up and killing Christian children or torturing Christian prisoners to death while yet other Christians stand by and weakly plead for peace."²

This division within one religious tradition is paradigmatic. The point is particularly pertinent for Christianity in South Africa, linked as it was to white domination through colonization and apartheid, but in less obvious forms it pertains to other religious traditions as well.

It is a kind of reality that is still with us in South Africa. Indeed, to some extent even the facade of moral justification for the practices of apartheid still remains, as in the submissions by the National Party, of the previous government, to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.³ It made apologies for "honest mistakes." It argued that the apartheid was "well-intentioned," designed as a positive program for the social good, and that it was carried out by people with integrity and faith. The architects of apartheid defended their work through a "discourse of innocence" about the massive gross violations of the human rights of people caused by their policies and agents, violations which they regarded as unfortunate errors or the result of actions by misguided underlings. Other than that, the National Party felt there was nothing by which to apologize, and its leaders by and large saw no need to take direct responsibility for the horrors of the past. Though this kind of response was not overtly couched in religious language, it drew on the Christian nationalist tradition from which most apartheid leaders emerged.⁴

Equally, past opponents of the apartheid regime also continue to appeal to the theological foundations they developed in the struggle against apartheid as they seek to find new relevance in a transformed political landscape. With the easily definable target of the apartheid system gone, however, their focus has become a lot more diffuse, with lessened general impact. The fact that a common enemy no longer exists does not mean key matters are all resolved, of course; one thinks in particular of the way in which racism and economic inequality continue to bedevil the society. Thus the sentiments of the anti-apartheid liberation struggle and the theology which supported it continues, even as its representatives battle to give it new form and content.

But the ambiguity of religion in society and the contradictions of religious discourse lie beyond a simple contrast of positions between historic opponents in a political and economic struggle. It lies too in claims about life which are regarded as valid. An obvious current example in the Christian milieu in South Africa may be found in the positions of the Roman Catholic Church and the South African Council of Churches on the recently passed Bill on the Termination of Pregnancy. These two bodies were bosom companions during the nineteen eighties in opposing apartheid. On the issue of abortion they represented to the relevant Parliamentary Committee positions which were diametrically opposed.

At an even deeper level the ambiguity of religion lies in differing understandings of the nature of religious experience, its proper location, and its modality. These understandings, in turn, do not arrive *de novo*, but out of historical, cultural and personal experiences which are both synchronic and diachronic, and themselves filled with conflictual dynamics. Thus we must expect to find what Paul Ricoeur calls a "conflict of interpretations" even where the underlying text or overtly proclaimed world-view or tradition is held strongly in common.

Similar comments may be made about the concept of "civil society." Deep ambiguities exist here too. For some, the term is synonymous with the project of modern liberalism in the Enlightenment tradition. Then it appears to be merely another expression of the ideology of individualism and the privatization of lifeworld interests; a concept which describes those forms of life which are adjunct to the political economy, denoting the realm of the intimate or, at most, a sphere of voluntary action through which the pain and suffering caused by the political economy might be ameliorated. For others, it describes a plural mix of institutions and practices which attempt to hold off the invasive forces of state and economy and to claim some counter-balance to them, whether this be in a market or a centrally planned economy. A third view, strong in the African context, sees civil society as a project of colonization and of the "civilizing" mission of the representatives of the imperial powers.⁵

Other ambiguities, such as the way in which society is shaped according to particular historical and cultural gender constructs, point to cross-cutting categories of experience and ontology. These, in turn, produce alternative epistemologies which would affect how we might understand the rise of the concept of civil society or its contemporary profile.

Consider the issue of gender. Even where there may be a relatively high level of political agreement on one thing (for example, in South Africa, a joint struggle against apartheid), one finds deep-rooted differences between men and women about the conception of liberation. These differences are expressed in the way in which oppression is analyzed, in the foci of action, and in the kind of alliances that may be formed. So, for example, many women speak of the triple oppression they suffer in South Africa: as black, as poor, and as women. Here they point to patriarchal structures and practices they endure as part of the general problem of oppression, and in doing so, they may well come up against men, with whom they otherwise struggle against apartheid, who wish to reassert patriarchy by appeal to cultural traditions. In short, "civil society" is contested not only theoretically, but also practically, in relation to contrasting understandings of the real.

To return to the example of religion, which I take to be a sub-category of civil society under modern conditions such as those that pertain in contemporary South Africa,⁶ we see there too that the ambiguities in religious experience produce contrasting understandings of the real. One of these contrasts is that between the faith of "ordinary" believers and the formal (theological) orthodoxies which they are assumed to accept and honor. There are good grounds to believe, however, that such orthodoxies are brought into question by "ordinary" believers in their daily living.⁷ They are often seen as representative of a particular *epistémé*, and of its structures and dynamics of power, which is experienced by "ordinary" believers as restrictive or even oppressive.

A male theologian is thus likely to challenge a political order such as apartheid on the basis of classical orthodox theology (e.g. Calvinism) without questioning the epistemological and ontological foundations of that orthodoxy. Precisely at this point, a feminist or African woman's theology may well deconstruct fundamental presumptions about those same epistemological and ontological foundations.⁸ These kinds of boundaries, fluid or rigid, also map the space of religion in civil society. They mark out places that people occupy, from which they challenge others or defend themselves.

Again, the ambiguity of religion is exposed and—this is the wider point—so should the notion of civil society be exposed. What we emphasize here is one vital point: That any consideration of religion and/or civil society is only as adequate as its contextual grounding in the mapping of actual spaces, places and people.

A Hermeneutic of Suspicion

Both the terms of our investigation—religion and civil society—are thus contested concepts. When one refines this point still further and asks not about religion in general, but about a specific religion, then one must add to our judgement a deeper hermeneutic of suspicion. Once again the example of Christianity in South Africa helps to unpack what this might mean.

The formal title given to educational policy under the apartheid government was "Christian National Education." It points to the overarching ideology of the state at the time. Resistance to this policy and ideology fed the black youth revolt of 1976, generally known as the "Soweto uprising," beginning with an angry response to the attempt by the state to impose the

"oppressor's language" of Afrikaans on students in black schools as a medium of instruction.⁹ Leaders of this generation of young black people are now in government. One should not be surprised, therefore, that many well placed people today are highly suspicious of the role of Christianity, and perhaps of religion in general, in a modern, open, democratic South Africa.¹⁰ Add to this the negative aspects of the longer history of the churches in southern Africa, particularly as regards the place of missions in conquest and colonization, and the suspicion turns, in some cases, into a determined rejection of Christianity in public life.

Thus a recent analysis of the representation of Christianity in parliament has shown that those who appeal overtly to their Christian faith in the political debates of the house, particularly those from conservative traditions who did not resist apartheid, are often the subject of mockery or barely disguised contempt.¹¹ Christianity, perhaps even religion in general, is perceived by many as having little constructive contribution to make to political debate. When it does enter into the debate, it often appears either as naïve, narrow or ignorant—or all three of these things simultaneously—with the result that many judge it best to ignore it entirely if one wants to make intelligent policy.

A good example lies perhaps in the strongly conservative African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), whose members have struggled to be taken seriously as they speak, respond and interject in debate with a variety of Christian claims, texts and aphorisms.¹² The use of particular confessional language may contribute to this, appearing archaic or unintelligible to others. At least equally problematic for others, however, is the ideological narrowness of the religious position presented, a narrowness that appears retrogressive and reactionary where a liberal, pluralist constitution has been put in place, as in South Africa. It is for this reason, for example, that President Thabo Mbeki, in his reply to his inaugural presidential debate, launched a strong attack on the ACDP. Exclusivist, sectarian and intellectually bigoted, in his view, the ACDP represents a position, and a theology Mbeki sees as inimical to the task of reconstruction.¹³

The problem of a fit between religious language and the language of the public square is not confined to conservative positions. Those Christians who stood, in "prophetic" mode, against the apartheid state have also had difficulty finding solid purchase with the new governing leadership, or making an impact on public policy. The issue here is rather that of well-worn clichés which had great pertinence as slogans in the struggle against apartheid which are still retained as if, for all practical purposes, little has changed in South Africa. These clichés, such as the central notion of prophecy as a fundamental critique of the state,¹⁴ either appear as largely anachronistic, or have not been given any adequate new content. Thus a basic hostility to the state—any state—continues within the prophetic paradigm, to the extent that old comrades in the struggle against apartheid who have accepted the tasks of new post-apartheid state as part of their commitment to help reconstruct society, are readily vilified as "sell-outs."

A good example would be Reverend Frank Chikane, once director of the Institute for Contextual Theology and secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches, both "prophetically" aligned against apartheid, and now Director General of the President's Office and Secretary to Cabinet. Among the most prominent religious leaders of the past, he finds himself now regarded by many previous compatriots as having betrayed all he stood for then by involving himself so closely with government, because this government has not yet brought about a transformation of all the ills inherited from colonialism and apartheid.

Chikane's own reply to this accusation is instructive. He argues that "it was important to me that the collective who worked together to end Apartheid, would work together to reconstruct

South Africa" but that "many religious communities backed off at this point, and in so doing missed the opportunity to be part of the remodelling of society." He notes that religious vision always transcends political vision, and that this produces a prophetic capacity which remains vital. But he adds that he believes this government, within its many constraints and limits, "wants to deal with the realities in which we live," and that the challenge to the churches is to find a strategic relationship to the state defined by "the context of the struggle to reconstruct the kind of society we want."¹⁵

Neither of these expressions of religion—reactionary or prophetic—demonstrates any comprehensive power to inspire the remaking of polity and society in contemporary South Africa. Together they illustrate the ongoing ambiguities of religion in society, particularly where that society is pluralist and not constrained by the authority of one particular tradition or sub-tradition (as in some contemporary theocracies such as Iran).¹⁶ These ambiguities are highlighted in a constitutional democracy, such as South Africa now is, where freedom of religion also means that no particular religion may govern the public sphere.

Patterns of Privatization

The clear constitutional separation of religion (or church) and state reinforces the existing critique of Christianity, by displacing its impact through the now familiar process of separating out the spheres of public action around politics and economics. Religion, in the main, must now bow out of political and economic life, or accept, at the least, that it is secondary. Religion is reduced to but one source of values among many others, restricted to a rather narrow location of action within a much broader range of civil society institutions and movements. Politics is then defined primarily in terms of state power, exercised through bureaucracies; economics is defined largely in terms of the regulation of markets, themselves usually defined as "private."

Thus, notwithstanding the honored participation of many Christians in resistance to apartheid, the general perception among decision makers in polity and economy in South Africa grows that religion should play no key role in public policy. Some exception—and it is a significant exception to which we will return—is made when it comes to the task of regenerating the values and virtues among citizens without which neither polity nor economy can function well. In this particular sense, the trend is toward the privatization of religion at the level of public discourse. The roots of political and economic life in civil society are attenuated in the process, one may argue. This is because political and economic life, philosophically speaking, is imbued with the historical effects of the religious consciousness of the societies out of which they arise.¹⁷

One might imagine that the presence of clerics or committed religious members on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, headed by the irrepressible Archbishop Desmond Tutu, may suggest something else. But in fact there has been a significant number of influential voices expressing displeasure, even deep distrust, of the *modus operandi* of the TRC. Its legal and juridical meaning, it is argued, was too often replaced by a religious discourse drawn to a large extent from the vocabulary of the Christian tradition. This discourse, critics feel, has undercut the capacity of victims to seek redress or reparation, while it privileged (through religious notions of confession and forgiveness) those who bear greatest responsibility for the grave injustices and violations of apartheid, namely, perpetrators and major beneficiaries. Moreover, the language and idiom of the TRC carries with it the danger of re-establishing a particular theology—that of

Christianity—as hegemonic in public life,¹⁸ and thus may threaten precisely that plurality upon which a vigorous civil society depends.

Amorphous Publicity

The emerging pattern in public life of a separation of the secular and the religious may also be seen in our new policy making forums. Where prayers are said—which happens surprisingly frequently even in the National Assembly—these are now usually stripped of any confessional or traditional religious character (the Speaker of the House will ask for silence and "meditation" rather than prayer), or carried out as integrated acts of multi-faith contributions. Thus, for example, a traditional *imbongi* or praise singer was joined with a Jewish rabbi, a Hindu leader, a Catholic priest, and a Muslim Imam to lead the Presidential inauguration ceremony in 1999.

In this, of course, South Africa merely follows a pattern established in liberal democracies elsewhere in the world. The pattern suggests that religion, from the point of view of the state and the economic leaders, will be understood primarily as a private affair, that is, as proper to the public realm only when the particular practices or beliefs of a particular religion conflict with or are threatened by public law and public interest. Even if it plays a ceremonial role in public life, as in South Africa, this role is limited to a political desire to acknowledge the plurality of ostensibly private interests and constituencies that make up religious or faith communities within society. The political interest lies in the aim of incorporating in public rituals the sacred spaces of all people of faith, and those of none, in the national pantheon.

This is in fact pertinent to the rise, and importance, of the recent debate on civil society. Let us take sport as a very different example to make the point clear. Sport, in the form of clubs and associations, like religion is also usually understood to be part of civil society. It may be regulated by the state in certain respects, for example, as in South Africa, where sporting clubs and associations cannot offend the constitutional requirement that racial discrimination is illegal. Still, sport is generally understood as a private affair, even when it becomes a major business.¹⁹ This is true even when one speaks colloquially of sport as a "national religion," as many would describe rugby for white South Africans or soccer for black South Africans. As a ritual of national significance, however, the state does take a direct interest in the nature of the ritual, both drawing on the popularity of sport to get its own messages across in suitable ways,²⁰ and pushing for a clear commitment to representivity in fully integrated teams in sports whose codes were previously dominated by whites.²¹

What this tells us is that civil society, broadly understood, is continually impacted by the interests and forces of both the state and the market. The logic of the relation, moreover, is governed less by the self-understanding of organizations and movements within civil society, than it is by the largely instrumental imperatives of governance and profitability.

Simultaneously, the need for a strong, healthy and "independent" civil society has also become apparent, even to many political and economic leaders. As we know, the renewed interest in civil society is occasioned partly because of challenges presented by the collapse of centralized government and economic management in Eastern Europe, partly because of the rise of critical movements against oppressive regimes in various parts of the two-thirds world, and partly because of the collapse of a center of values in established capitalist countries such as France and the USA.

In each case, along with a renewed interest in civil society has come a revitalized interest in the significance of popular religious experience at the local level. Whatever the reasons, policy

specialists, sociologists and political scientists over a surprisingly wide spectrum, both in the North and the South, have begun to reconsider their understanding of civil society.

Disclaimers on Secularization

We shall come back to this. But first let us return to the South African case from another angle. Many people argue that Africa generally, South Africa included, does not face a crisis of religion or a mood of secularization. On the contrary, it is argued that religion is deeply rooted and largely holistic, certainly among such groupings as the African Initiated Churches²² but also among those who practice African traditional religion.²³ Further, Islamic understandings of the sacred and the secular prevent any dualism between them, and the Islamic perspective has significant political presence in South Africa. The same may be said of Judaism and Hinduism, the other major religious groupings in the country.

In all these cases there can be no separation in principle of religion and civil life, nor indeed between religion and political society or religion and economic society.²⁴ From such perspectives, one may even say that civil society *is* religious society. This claim, however, means that concept of civil society really disappears, because what counts then is not being a civilian or citizen, but a faithful member of a traditional community.

One is forced to ask, therefore, whether the question of a link between religion and civil society is a fruitful one to pursue in the light of two major modalities of religion in civil society. In the one modality, the link between religion and civil society is *broken* either by a suspect history or a privatized theology, both alternatives being characteristic of forms of Christianity in South Africa. Where this happens, it would be insufficient simply to seek to regenerate civil society on the assumption that the suspect history or truncated theology may be ignored. This would be to leave religion, at least, in civil society, without any critical impulse directed at itself or its social milieu. Rather, it is a critique of society as a whole that is needed. If we like, we may say that it is the dominant *epistémé* which is viewed as the problem, not the lack or weakness of civil society. A radical politics and a univocal view of history—a return to, or reinvention of, grand historical schemes which seek to reconstruct all of society simultaneously—are the necessary implications of such a position. Such a vision would anticipate the disappearance of religion and an incorporation of civil society into a political economic project.

In the other modality, the *question* of a link between religion and civil society—implying as it does a dualist rather than a holistic view of society—does not make sense. Here we are speaking of a view of religion and society in general in which all of reality is assumed *a priori* to be one. Religion is viewed not as a sector or separate sphere of society, but in terms of a sacred reality which permeates all of society. Then distinctions between political, economic and civil life are simply inappropriate, misplaced. Usually, such a religious position finds concrete expression only in another kind of univocal history, this time on the side of the conservation of a particular tradition as dominant, and of the subjugation (whether flexibly or harshly) of other traditions. A theocracy would be the ultimate ideal of such a vision, requiring no civil society.

All of this depends to some extent, however, on how one understands civil society. One need not conceive of civil society only in terms of modern bourgeois society or its notion of civilization, where it is usually understood to be a privatized sphere alongside, but subservient to the institutions of state and economy. Neither, for that matter, are the alternatives of an assimilated civil society, as happened in the Soviet Union, for example, or an absent civil society, as happens in full-scale theocracies, necessary.

One needs to ask, therefore, "*which* version of civil society and *which* account of citizenship" provides us with the necessary insight and tools to rethink the place of religion in public life.²⁵ There are good grounds for believing that the notion of civil society may be a fruitful one for re-imagining the place of religion in our context without the burdens of a particular philosophy carried by Western individualism or Marxian communism, just as there are grounds for questioning standard assumptions about secularization or the possibilities of traditional world-views.

One may note, as one example, that there are no *a priori* reasons why the churches in South Africa, or other religious groupings for that matter, cannot transform the role they played in the past in resisting apartheid, into one that builds democracy. There may well be reasons why it is *difficult* to affect a transformation from a culture of resistance, where it existed, to a practice of democratic engagement. Equally, there are sound sociological grounds for seeing religious institutions as *intrinsically* conservative even when they break that habit—temporarily—in a time of crisis. Not least among the factors that would constrain a move from resistance to social construction, is an institutional desire to focus on sharpening and reinforcing particular religious identities, such as happens with denominational confessionalism, to protect them against the invasion of a non-religious secular order.²⁶

Nevertheless, a reconceptualization of religious institutions in the broadest sense²⁷ as an expression of civil society should enable us to think through alternative ways of engagement. It should also, for the same reasons, be possible to find concrete expressions of a positive engagement by religious institutions in the task of democratization. In order to make the shift, one would have to take seriously the task of deprivatizing religion where it is privatized, the context of a plurality of religions, the contested nature of religion (even within one religious tradition), and the centrality of civil society as an independent location of public life apart from, but engaged in, the affairs of state and economy in an open democracy.

Disestablished Religion, Plural Contexts

As long ago as 1970 Archbishop Hurley, a leading anti-apartheid cleric of the Roman Catholic Church, in an address to the South African Institute for Race Relations, noted that any sense of an "established" church could no longer be sustained.²⁸ "Christianity," therefore, "will no longer seek to influence society directly through its political institutions, nor even perhaps through cultural and educational institutions. It will address its message to the conscience of people."²⁹ Hurley here expresses what has become standard practice in a secular society. As he notes, it is also the case that there can no longer be a religion that may be regarded as "established" in South Africa, as perhaps was once the case with either the Dutch Reformed Church or the Anglican Church in South African history.

Is it adequate, however, to assume that the Church disestablished may only carry out the function of conscientization, as Hurley seems to suggest here? We may also ask whether his view that religion should not be directly involved in major public institutions will easily be heard by religious authorities. To accept this would mean, especially in an overtly plural context, giving up any ideas of religious imperialism, religious privilege and religious hegemony in public discourse. While this may be the position maintained by the national constitution, it may not reflect the desires of particular religious communities or institutions.

Hurley's sense of religion in public life under conditions of democracy and pluralism may not be easy to translate into practice. It assumes some universal core of values underlying the

public conscience to which particular traditions may appeal. What would it mean, however, to address oneself to the conscience of the people in the face of plural sets of values propagated by the agents of multiple organs and institutions of the state, the economy and civil society, including religions? If it is to mean more than preaching to one's own, what language and what institutional frameworks will allow this to happen with effect? What necessary and possible interpretative activity will stand the tests of plurality, democracy and deprivatization while proving itself able to contribute insightfully and with effect to the shaping and developing of public life? Similar questions pertain to cultural traditions. In either case, they represent new challenges.

These are the kinds of issues we face in considering what cultural and religious roots there may be for the construction of civil society. As indicated, the notion of civil society is problematized along with our view on religion and religious experience. We should note, too, that both the nature and place of religion and of civil society are contested, not only in intellectual debate but also in political struggle, whether around the question of the allocation of resources, the making and application of laws and regulations, the status and role of associations and movements, the right to particular practices and traditions which may conflict with constitutional norms, the right to public facilities and platforms, the development of policy, and so on.

PROBLEMATIZING THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Contesting the Concept of Civil Society

The idea of civil society is not new. The notion of a *koinonia politika*, a community of the city, goes back at least as far as Aristotle. As one would expect, Aristotle's notion is teleological, that is, it assumes that one engages as a citizen in the life of the *polis* for a particular end, namely, the common good. The common good, in turn, is not an abstract idea but a practical project. Civil society, therefore, must be understood as a sphere of free and responsible action. As George McLean³⁰ puts it, civil society expresses "what is characteristically human as an exercise of freedom by individuals and groups in originating responsible action."

Cohen and Arato, in their seminal study of *Civil Society and Political Theory*,³¹ also wish to recover this normative dimension to civil society, against what they regard to be the destructive tendencies of administrative bureaucratization and market mechanisms in an advanced capitalist environment.³² They do so in order to rescue those notions and practices which will undergird the politics of social solidarity and social justice. In turn, they believe that this will strengthen autonomy in the face of the administrative power of the modern state and the faceless machinations of corporations and syndicates in the market economies of the world.

In their language, they are interested in finding a practical foundation and concrete historical locus for "patterns of normative integration and open-ended communication characteristic of civil society" which may challenge the strategic and instrumental criteria of bureaucracies and markets, for the sake of democracy. They go further, to claim that political society and economic society must be rooted *in* civil society if they are to be democratic spheres of existence. In this model, "political society" refers to the mediating framework of interactions between government and all other social actors, where state represents the formal, over-arching institution of governance. "Economic society" similarly refers to the equivalent mediating framework of interactions between all potential actors in society and economic institutions, where markets are

the most common institutions of exchange. In this view, "civil society" then includes "structures of socialization, association, and organized forms of communication of the lifeworld to the extent that these are institutionalized or are in the process of being institutionalized."³³

Two aspects of this definition bear emphasis. First, civil society, Cohen and Arato argue, must have a material basis in structures, organizations and institutions—including social movements—if it is to play any significant role in mediating normative aspects of democratic life to the institutions of state and economy. Second, civil society is integrally linked to the notion of the lifeworld, and it is here that we may locate cultural and religious traditions.

System, Lifeworld and Civil Society

"Lifeworlds" refer to the taken-for-granted substratum of ideas and practices which are held in, developed through, and communicated by culture, religion, education and the like. Lifeworlds are thus linguistically mediated (in written and spoken language, myths, legends, images, symbols, ritual drama and so on). Their primary social processes are communicative, and their goal generally is communicative competence (in a tradition, a community, a society, etc.).

The notion of lifeworld upon which I depend here derives from the critical theory of modern society developed by Jürgen Habermas, as does Cohen and Arato's rethinking of civil society. It includes as recognition that we are enveloped in an ongoing, shifting dynamic in which lifeworlds are either seeking to contest or harmonize with system (economic and state) imperatives.

Over and against lifeworld interests stand "system imperatives." They express the human need to control, transform, and organize, our relationship to nature, and our relationships with each other, in producing and distributing the goods necessary for life. They are rooted under modern conditions in the state and in markets. The system imperatives, therefore, are expressed through the steering media of power and money, respectively.

These imperatives have a logic of their own, primarily strategic and instrumental in their nature. This kind of logic tends to exclude, if it does not appear hostile to, lifeworld concerns, which are normative and emancipatory rather than instrumental and strategic. To that extent, system imperatives intrude on lifeworlds, shape lifeworlds in their own image. In Habermas's language, system imperatives, expressed primarily through state bureaucracies and markets, increasingly "colonize" the spheres of the lifeworld. A good example may be seen in the way in which religion, and in fact anything in the lifeworld, becomes a marketable commodity in itself, a part of the economic system.

Paradoxically, political and economic systems, even as they might confront, alter and even destroy lifeworlds, rest precisely upon lifeworld interests, and rise and fall in accordance with their capacity to draw upon, or locate themselves in relation to, lifeworld interests. Four examples of what this may mean may be offered.

First, the political economic system which apartheid represented in South Africa is easily understood as linked to the lifeworld interests of a particular, racially defined (white) oligarchy. It suppressed, subjugated and ultimately seriously damaged the interests of black South Africans in multiple ways. The "Soweto 1976" revolt of black youth began as a direct challenge to the cultural (lifeworld) imposition of Afrikaans in schools. It grew rapidly, panicking the state, as all kinds of symbols, images, myths, narratives and ideologies of the white oligarchy were challenged and then simply set aside, fuelling a situation in which the system imperatives governed by apartheid could no longer be sustained. In the process, a new language of symbols,

images, myths and so on gained ascendancy. Ironically, the language Habermas uses to describe the imperatives of power and money is echoed in the way the black students of that time spontaneously described the apartheid state and economy: "the system." The "system" was their enemy.

The challenge to the "system" remains part of the discourse of post-apartheid politics of reconstruction. It is still a lifeworld of one kind or another that often drives this challenge. A second example, therefore, and a key challenge in establishing a society which incorporates all legitimate claims to conserve and represent particular lifeworlds, is the current battle to find a way to meet the interests of traditional African chiefs who organized along hereditary and patronage lines, in the context of a democratic constitution which is organized according to citizenship rights. Linked to this example is the question of patriarchy, itself deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions of the lifeworld. The gendered structure of the state, of the market and of key institutions in civil society is thus also a potent field of struggle and contestation, driven in this case by the counter-hegemonic ideas and actions which arise from the lifeworld experiences of women.

A third, more general example, of the complex relation between system imperatives and lifeworld interests may be found in the shift, over the second half of the twentieth century, in development theory. From a highly instrumental view of development after World War II, based on direct aid from government to government (a purely macro-economic perspective), we have arrived at a more particular, local, "people-centered" or "human capabilities" view of development.³⁴ This shift occurred in part because it became increasingly clear to development practitioners and other interested parties that policies which ignore or do not take seriously local lifeworld interests and institutions among those these policies are meant to serve, do not work very well and may even be counter-productive.³⁵

A great deal more respect has to be given to what one might call "local knowledges" or "local wisdom," which incorporate technical, practical and normative concerns, than was assumed in earlier understandings of development.³⁶ Again, the issue of gender comes to the fore as more and more development practitioners discover that women may be the key to any successful development strategy, and that this means taking seriously their lifeworld and the constraints placed upon it by inhibiting, if not destructive, forces of political and economic society.

It is thus vital to pay attention to the nature of the mediation that takes place between system imperatives and lifeworld interests. At a formal level, this mediation takes the form of regulating processes between system and lifeworld which give rise to constitutions, judicial processes, contracts, bargaining forums and the like—that is, to law. Such mediation may be relatively successful, in which case we have a relatively stable society. They may be relatively disjunctive, in which case significant conflictual relationships predominate and society is relatively unstable. One may therefore make this generalization: *The capacity of civil society to represent the interests of lifeworlds in a democratic society is crucial to the health of that society.*

In turn, whether we speak of civil, political or economic society, the task of mediating system imperatives and lifeworld interests requires a good measure of communicative competence if we are to establish a stable, open and democratic society.³⁷ Thus an adequate concept of civil society would have to include two key characteristics.

First, civil society must refer primarily to the lifeworlds of people, in particular, to the way in which representatives of specific lifeworld interests express their interests in public. Here the taken-for-granted substratum of behavior, thought and action by which people identify and direct

themselves as persons moves from the background into the foreground, into the public sphere. If this happens in such a way as to keep open respect for the lifeworld interests of others, one's own lifeworld is necessarily modified or altered in interaction with the lifeworld interests of other.³⁸ Such concrete forms of interaction might range from the sphere of the family to the sphere of broad social movements. They are the foundation upon which people produce a variety of social institutions which make up civil society. In this sense, civil society arises from the activity of particular persons engaging with other persons, who then formalize their interaction by establishing a club, a group, a congregation, a task team, a movement, and so on. These, in turn, enter either directly or indirectly into the public sphere, as social entities. In sum, Cohen and Arato note, "both independent action and institutionalization are necessary for the reproduction of civil society."³⁹

Second, civil society must engage with those agents who represent the imperatives of power and money, through discourses or communicative practices which produce or contribute to the production of appropriate regulatory mechanisms in society. This second characteristic forces us to accept a notion of civil society which sees its associational, organizational or institutional embodiments as *directly implicated* in politics and economics. Here civil society works by entering into the negotiation of adequate regulatory patterns for society which establish the limits and the responsibilities of those who embody the system imperatives governed by money and power, primarily business and the state.

A weak civil society will obviously be unable to carry out this function well. A strong civil society will likely find itself in a permanently ambiguous position vis-a-vis the state and business. This is because it will have to confront and challenge interests governed more by the logic of profitability and efficiency on the one hand, or bureaucracy and control on the other hand, than by the needs of the lifeworld. At the same time, as noted previously, there are good reasons to believe that both politics and economics benefit from a strong civil society under democratic conditions.

If this framework is a persuasive, practically possible view of civil society, it suggests that the *normative* claims associated with lifeworld interests must enter into the discursive practices by which society is regulated. The projection of particular, tradition-rich norms is always likely to produce tension, if not conflict, with the strategic and instrumental values which drive the interests of power and money. In this tension, or conflict, because of the relative weight of resources behind the interests of power and money, it is not difficult for lifeworld interests to be minimized or marginalized in decisions made about power and money. This is true even if such decisions affect lifeworld interests deeply. This marginalization will inevitably include ideological discourses which justify it. It will also inevitably produce a reaction, in the form of a wide variety of "arts of resistance," some overt, some coded, some hidden.⁴⁰

The obvious, one may even say paradigmatic justification of the marginalization of religion from political and economic life, is found in a popular colloquialism: "Keep religion out of politics and politics out of religion." This is an apt expression of the ideology which modern "secular" representatives of power and money are likely to adopt. In fact, it is another way of saying that religion should be privatized, excluded from the public realm, to become the separate, and separated, business of those particular institutions whose lifeworld interests involve the preservation of religious traditions they espouse. By definition, such institutions should refrain from engagement in or with those who represent the steering imperatives of power and money. If, however, religious organizations are a paradigmatic case of an institution of civil

society,⁴¹ then civil society as a whole should follow the same logic. It too is privatized, according to this logic. Whence comes this logic, and is it necessary?

The Privatization of Civil Society

McLean⁴² traces the development of the notion of civil society as a privatized sphere to the sources that one might expect in the rise of modernity, namely, the 17th and 18th century epistemologies of Locke and Hume. It is not necessary to traverse the history of this concept in detail, but certain claims and trajectories are worth recalling.

Locke believed a common foundation of knowledge was necessary in order to extend political decision making beyond the aristocracy to a broader citizenry. This knowledge would have to be inscribed in the mind through sensible reflection. Hume argued further that matters of fact alone should count in making decisions in the public sphere, adjudicated through formal argument. In short, fact rather than tradition, formal argument rather than normative claims, have precedence. Persons, in this view, should be treated as another kind of fact, not as embodying particular histories or communally determined values and virtues. Persons here are understood as individuals who function on the basis of external utilitarian relations founded on self-interest. They are "single entities wrapped in self-interests."⁴³ Society, accordingly, would be regulated along instrumental lines through a "system of rights and of justice to protect each one's field of self-interested choices." Citizens in this perspective appear as atomized entities with no histories or traditions, only minds and sensible experiences upon which their minds reflect. Whatever normative claims or values they might entertain, these should be "absent from the construction of the public order." By implication, religion should be absent from the public sphere.

What then becomes of civil society? It is no more than a private, interior sphere as a matter not of reason, but of feeling, affectivity and emotion. At most, therefore, civil society would have the function of attending to the hurts, pains and feelings of those negatively affected by political and economic decisions. It would be a safety net. This is exactly how Adam Smith saw it. Markets, to him, were the key to the good life, supported by a benign state. Yet they did have the potential to hurt people. Still, neither markets nor the state should take responsibility for the damage done to people by market forces, or the dislocation and unemployment which these forces generated. This is to be the task of civil society.

From Locke to Smith, it becomes clear that civil society is "privatized." It is split off from political and economic society to act behind the scenes, so to speak, in order to rescue people. The political economy itself would not come under question. One may see how many churches and other religious bodies might adapt to this model, finding a role in the "first aid" and "nursing" of the emotionally, psychologically and physically wounded of society.⁴⁴ Here too one might ground a critique of religious bodies who accept this definition of their role in a modern society. It would become a critique of Christian philanthropy and pastoral care which takes the private sphere or the sphere of welfare to be its prime focus—a sadly reduced, perhaps even abdicated, responsibility for lifeworlds in the first place, and the health of the body politic in the second.⁴⁵

Contra such theories, Habermas's critical theory of society would suggest that a subservient or privatized civil society is a long-term, perhaps even medium-term, recipe for social instability. It enhances the tendencies of the interests of money and power to colonize lifeworlds. In the process, it is likely to degrade democratic culture. Oligarchs, plutocrats and other kinds of elites may not be disturbed by this, but others should be.

As indicated previously, Cohen and Arato, informed by Habermas, believe that an adequate notion of civil society links it, indirectly, to the spheres of the state and of business. It is less an independent sphere than a base for engaging in matters of state and business on behalf of lifeworld interests. Civil society would thus participate in political society: Parliamentary committees are a good example; campaigns by religious bodies another. It would also engage with economic society: NEDLAC⁴⁶ is an example, a forum in which unions and business associations, themselves organs of civil society, engage on matters of state and economy.

Civil society, on this understanding, is anything but privatized. Religious institutions and agencies are a part of civil society, expressing particular lifeworld interests. On this model, they should not be relegated to the private sphere any more than other sectors of civil society should. That religious groups might take up their interests in ways which separate them from the wider society, or which attempt to impose upon the wider society their own norms and values, as is characteristic of many fundamentalist, exclusivist or imperialist forms of religion, is not the point. Under modern conditions, they would at some point have to be publicly accountable, at least in the sense of being able to give good and defensible reasons for the position they take in the face of counter-claims or challenges.⁴⁷ In short, religious bodies would need to be both ready to persuade, the easiest part of the equation, and, in principle, to be persuaded, perhaps the more difficult part.

Individual versus Communal: Problematizing the Antipathy

This leads us to a final point regarding the critique of the modernist paradigm of privatization. It concerns claims for universally definable guarantors of value, as expressed in particular in the writings of John Rawls.⁴⁸

Rawls suggests that *particular* sets of values, as captured in an all-encompassing religious vision of life, for example, should not enter into the public domain directly. A pluralist public domain must be established on the basis of a minimum set of rules to which all could assent. This could not be tied to the norms or claims of any particular tradition. Instead, an undifferentiated field of tolerance must override all differences which constitute the Other. Were we to accept such a proposal, McLean suggests, then we would have a situation in which "The denizens of this domain, having deposited their basically identifying sense of meaning and commitment behind a veil of ignorance, remain denatured clones whose age, religion, race and sex must not be considered in the public domain."⁴⁹

In this sense Rawls represents a wholly decontextualised ethic based on some assumed individual rationality located in a context-free ego. In passing, we may note that the idea of human rights as inhering in the individual belongs to this paradigm as well. It may be contrasted with African philosophies which emphasize the rights of communities or communal entities to which individual rights may be related. It may also be contrasted with the way in which many religious communities emphasize responsibilities as much as they do rights. In each case, the status of contemporary rights discourse is brought into question.⁵⁰

In the Rawlsian view, the other must in principle be treated the same as oneself, a universal essence. It thus displaces or hides the manifold concrete ways in which the other is actually experienced as alien and alienated in oneself.⁵¹ Moreover, it jettisons any anthropology which may take otherness as in fact constitutive of the self.⁵² The net effect of Rawls's anthropology is that the other is seen as an extension of the self (a European, Northern, affluent self?), and its

practical implication is that the self which, through conquest and domination, comes to dominate the other is also understood to be definitive of the other.

The universal ethic Rawls champions then, because it decontextualizes any particular self, removes from ethical consideration all material differences in power. Such an ethic inevitably hides particular interests. It sets out to establish an abstract, rule-governed basis upon which all are equal. But it thereby ends up denying the real differences that divide us, particularly in respect of race, class and gender.

Contra Rawls, we need to recognize the importance of understanding and grasping differentiation as constitutive of our social life. This applies to civil society as much as anything else. Without such an understanding, we miss the way in which our location in communal entities, from the family onwards, not only defines the self as self. We also miss the potential our particular identities, differentiated from others, has to offer positive resources which may be harnessed to develop and reconstitute a common life.

Some Implications for Civil Society and Religion

The above considerations suggest, first, that civil society is wrongly understood if conceptualized as part of the private realm. Indeed, the distinction between the public and the private which such a view implies is itself suspect, rooted as it is in a typical Cartesian dualism of the interior and exterior life. Second, a revised view of public discourse accepts that normative ethical considerations should enter into the public exercise of decision-making. Third, such normative discourses strengthen the freedom offered by the public sphere when they happen as reasoned arguments based on the experience and shared traditions of particular peoples.

What would this mean for religious bodies? First, I would suggest, particular religious bodies would engage in the public realm in one of three ways: Through the associational forms of organization they already represent or might construct, through participation in social movements (coalition building, for example), and through public communication. Second, religious bodies do so on the strength of, and through a strong presentation of, their particular identities, to which their norms are usually linked. They would make normative claims to defend lifeworlds against that which threatens their freedom, and to contribute to defining the kinds of freedom this implies. Third, if the discourse ethics argued for above are taken as given, then the way in which religious bodies might enter with effect into public discourse is by giving good reasons for their arguments,⁵³ such good reasons including those drawn from experience and from the wisdom of the traditions they represent.⁵⁴

One may adopt a communicative rationality which allows and encourages normative claims in public discourse, but still demand that they meet the criteria of procedural rights which Rawls outlines. This would be to claim again that all normative perspectives allowed into civil social discourse be mediated by a minimum set of rules to which all would assent. This remains a minimal basis for a discourse ethic, however, because it really only requires that one hear out the normative claims of the other in order to maximize the free participation of everyone, but nothing more. The basic idea would still be to find a minimal consensus through controlled procedures. It would weaken, not strengthen, civil society, because a reliance on procedures alone to make decisions (e.g. a vote or consensus mechanism) works against mutual explorations of the possible range of normative bases for collaborative, coalitional or other associational action in society.

A minimum agreement is better than none, and perhaps more "realistic" pragmatically in many situations. But if the health of the body politic is a key consideration for the long run, or even the medium term, then a richer discourse ethic may be worth aiming at. It would at least develop democracy more deeply, and enhance the capacities of citizenship which are necessary to it.

Moreover, without those "mutual explorations of the possible range of normative bases for collaborative, coalitional or other associational action in society," there can be no broad basis for challenging the instrumental and strategic interests which guide public life under the influence of the imperatives of power and money. There would also be few resources to provide the moral foundations of society.

RELIGION IN CIVIL SOCIETY REVISITED

If this observation is valid, as I believe it is in respect of the ascendancy of the "forces of globalization,"⁵⁵ it needs to be explained how civil society could effectively inject normative claims into public discourse, particularly in relation to political and economic society. Again, I take religion as a paradigmatic instance, upon which we may construct a more general claim. Religion is also a limit case, because it represents a strong form of identity, belonging and programmatic activity in civil society. The question is: How might a religious body, committed to a particular identity and vision of reality which might well stand against the guiding values of existing political and economic society, intervene in political and economic society with credibility and potency?

Frameworks for the Operationalization of Civil Society

John Coleman,⁵⁶ in his study on the successful practices of six major religiously based groups in civil society in the USA, makes the provocative suggestion that the process of deprivatizing faith nurtures and feeds into revitalized citizenship. In all six cases he shows that the faith-based engagement in society of these groups engenders skills and qualities, both personal and communicative, that also lie at the base of good citizenship. Addressing power, as such, is not the key to their effectiveness. None of the groups, some of them large and with international impact,⁵⁷ address "power," that is, the state, or "money," that is, business, directly. They address an independent public.

This independent public, the prime constituency of religious leaders and groups, is the locus of their defense of lifeworlds. It is the base from which they articulate normative possibilities for society and confront the negative impact of strategic and instrumental reason. As Vaclav Havel apparently once noted, nothing instructs the authorities better than pressure from below.

Civil society, then, is where the "pressure from below" originates. This pressure may grow in a number of ways, some through overt political action, some through ordinary beliefs and practices. On the one hand, the South African experience suggests that the role of activists is vital to a strong civil society. On the other hand, activists often function as a relatively small avant-garde elite who do not necessarily represent the way in which most people live their lives, nor find ready anchorage in the daily rituals of belonging, identity, habit and action of "ordinary people."

That such anchorage is equally vital may be best illustrated by referring to a much publicized, and to some extent successful, campaign launched in the late nineteen eighties by

church leaders against the martial law crackdown of the state and the implementation of its "National Security Management System" (NSMS).⁵⁸ This was the "Standing for the Truth" Campaign. High profile national meetings were held, and powerful statements were made by major church leaders, some of international repute, people such as Archbishop Tutu, Allan Boesak of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Frank Chikane of the South African Council of Churches. Regional action groups were initiated, though with mixed success. Pamphlets, posters and other forms of publicity and publication were produced and disseminated. Denominational synods, assemblies and the like took notice in resolutions and statements. And the government certainly paid close attention to these developments, at least initially.

Yet the campaign, full of discursive force at the level of public media, nevertheless almost wholly failed to take root at the level of congregations, in the lives of ordinary parishioners and congregants. Once this became clear to the state, it too appeared less concerned, even if the effects that individuals such as Tutu were having on international perceptions of its policies and practices were worrisome.

We may suggest, therefore, that the mobilization of civil society that such a campaign represents, even under conditions where the majority of the population are likely to acknowledge it as in their interests, does not have the force it might have if it is not directly connected to the mundane lifeworld interests of ordinary people. The activist strengths of such a campaign cannot be underestimated: They are not insignificant. But they would in all likelihood be far greater were they to be embedded in the symbolic, interpretative and ritual richness of what I have called "ordinary" concerns.

Another example that might demonstrate this best by way of contrast, is that of the testimony given to the TRC by the Zion Christian Church, the largest of the AICs. This is a church that was seen by anti-apartheid activists as, at best, passive in the face of oppression, at worst, party to the undermining of the kind of consciousness required for resistance to oppression. Yet the ZCC's own understanding of their long, relative "silence" in the face of oppression is different.

They claim to have put in place an institution capable of retaining, in the face of colonial and settler conquest and of the suppression of African identity and aspirations, those memories and practices, and that dignity and moral leadership, which may now be made available to the rest of society—in particular to other Africans. Their claim is underscored by the widespread awareness among contemporary leaders, including President Mbeki, of the degradation or even destruction of the moral fibre of the nation so necessary to the building of a healthy citizenry and a functioning democracy.

The ZCC represents, in the light of more recent interpretations of domination, a kind of cultural and historical resistance to the imperatives of the state and the market. It is not overtly political, nor is it a zone of pure freedom. An organization such as the ZCC is not without its contradictions of all kinds either. Yet it does represent something more than mere accommodation to the dominant system and hegemonic epistémé of colonization and apartheid, more than mere assimilation into the 'ruling ideas of the ruling class.' Its *modus operandi* may have been categorized as apolitical and thus basically reactionary, but its current self-assessment, and a more nuanced view among social scientists of the way in which terrains of domination and resistance are constructed suggests that such a view is inadequate. Equally important for my argument, the ZCC is surprisingly successful, in and through its religious claims, at capturing the significance of the pain and the hopes of ordinary people, in ways which do indeed create space and retain dignity in the midst of oppression. It signals something of the capacity of religious

communities, through normative claims embedded in traditions, to shape civil society in ways yet to be fully appreciated.

It underscores the ways in which ordinary people may be seen less as victims and more as agents of their situation, however constrained, of alternative ways of negotiating space and time which might support their being.⁵⁹ Perhaps survival is the only teleological goal of many people who join such movements. But survival is already more than victimhood. In this, and many other myriad ways, the forces of domination are seen to be less absolute than might be claimed in certain theories of oppression and domination. In this, and many other myriad ways, the religious and cultural roots of identity and belonging, of coping with suffering and of anticipating that for which one hopes, may enter into civil society more strongly than we might suspect.

This is not to romanticize the local, the partial, the constrained, the ambiguous force of such phenomena, for the imperatives of the systems of money and power are strong and penetrate deeply into daily life. It is, however, to question an over-determined view of such imperatives, and to challenge any underestimation of the capacities of human being and human becoming which rest in ordinary people.

There is one critical lacuna in this argument still requiring attention. This is the question of how activist engagements in civil society might articulate with the less obvious ways of being present in society represented by the case of the ZCC. The evidence, in South Africa at least, suggests that such articulation is difficult to achieve, and seldom evident.

Contrasting evidence may be given once again, this time in regard to the current role of evangelical and Pentecostal Christians who were largely absent from the apartheid struggle, if they were not public supporters of the apartheid regime. They are now using their rhetorical and charismatic strengths, drawing on the basic biblical texts upon which most Christians depend, to mobilize large numbers of ordinary people behind local engagements in social reconstruction activities. This is not seen by them as political activity in any strict sense. It is seen as a necessary missionary and evangelical response to the healing of people and of society. But they do appear to be aware that such activity builds that personal virtue and commitment that is needed to drive civil society organs and movements.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, one church at the forefront of this thrust, the Rhema Church and its leader, Ray McAuley, finds great resonance for their local activities among government leadership, including both Presidents Mandela and Mbeki. Why?

Whatever other reasons there might be, two seem obvious, both given substance in challenges to religious bodies that have been made by Mandela and Mbeki, among others. The first may be stated thus: "Put your money where your mouth is"; that is, let us see that your good words are matched by a capacity to mobilize significant community support on the ground. The second may be stated in the form of the question: "Whom do you represent?"; that is, is there a significant constituency of South Africans that place their trust directly in you?

On both counts, the evangelical and Pentecostal churches show signs of easily outdoing the ecumenical churches who stood against apartheid. Perhaps this is because they are more flexible as institutions, move more quickly, and appeal more directly to those less learned in biblical and theological scholarship and doctrine. Perhaps it is because they are better equipped to deal with the interests of "ordinary" people interests in terms they understand, and thus more effective in representing their lifeworlds.⁶⁰

The point is well expressed by Coleman in his analysis. Citizenship, he argues, must be theorized in terms of "everyday and tangibly accessible life" in which "values such as trust,

openness, responsibility, love and solidarity ... replace the cynicism of the narrow ideals of a manipulative or passive citizenship sponsored by the state or elite experts."

To this judgement must be added a qualifier, already signalled in the first part of this essay, and which may be summarized as follows. Religion is most often, if not always, expressed in competing, even conflictual forms, within the same general tradition, and in the same measure that political contexts are conflictual and governed by a struggle over resources—and values. This condition, by now fairly widely accepted as a sociological judgement on religion in society, must be taken as a pre-condition for any theory of religion in civil society. It cautions us against too simplistic an resolution of what is a complex, finally irresolvable aporia: The tensions between conservation and innovation, between the dynamics of preservation and of change, between tradition and criticism, between the constraints of actuality and the lure of new possibility.

An effective engagement from within civil society with political and economic society begins with an acceptance of this aporia, and the working out of strategic combinations of each pole, according to the conditions of a particular time and place. Just as resistance may be seen in a range of "arts," so too might we say that engagement in social transformation requires a range of "arts."

If this is true, then there is no blueprint for religious engagement in society, by any standard. There are no foundational rules or guaranteed processes. There is no fixed, systematic set of strategies or tactics to employ which guarantees desired results. There are many concrete social boundaries, some flexible, some rigid, between the poles of the aporia of tradition and criticism, or conservation and innovation. At the same time—and this is a very important simultaneity—there are many frameworks of experience and understanding, whereby we may determine which practices and what processes are more likely to enable one to enter and intervene effectively in the public realm, to build civil society, and to shape political and economic society. Some of these have been pointed out in the course of this essay, and others may be found in many of the references it makes to other works.

In the end, whether or not religion, or religious institutions and movements, offer the best or even a good base for the construction of civil society and the reconstruction of society remains an ambiguous question. The question is capable of being answered only in practice, in relation to particular contexts, and in accordance with the conditions of particular locations and times.

NOTES

1. My notion of culture here is a broad one, encompassing religious, aesthetic, political and economic arrangements, practices and behaviors which may describe the particularity of a specific group of people. A culture may be permeated by religious symbols, ideas and practices, but it will be broader than those.

2. *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church* (Johannesburg: Institute for Contextual Theology, 1986, [Revised 2nd edition]), 2. The document arose at the time of the integration of political and military means of control in South Africa in defense of apartheid, commonly known as the "National Security Management System," and after a state of emergency had been declared in many part of the country as resistance to apartheid grew.

3. The National Party was the ruling party of the apartheid state. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was an organ of the new constitution which met from 1997-1999 to

hear submissions about the years of apartheid from 1960 onwards, as part of an attempt to create the framework for a new society.

4. Thus, at one stage of the South African transition to an open, democratic society, a strong possibility existed that the National Party would change its name to something like the Christian Democratic Party (primarily in order to avoid the image problems raised by its past). In fact, it decided instead to take the name "New National Party." This in itself indicates a conviction that the past could be regarded positively, that apartheid really was not that bad and had its own benefits. Among other things, what makes such an ideology possible is the belief that past policies and practices were legitimate responses to attacks on the state by "terrorists" and "communists."

5. A recent study that raises pertinent questions in respect of an African experience of "civil society" in the "civilization" of Africa is Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996).

6. The assumption lying behind this use of the term "modern" is that political society is dominated by the state, economic society by market forces and agencies, and that both are by and large immune from religious control. This is usually overtly acknowledged in a constitutional separation of church and state, or more generally, religion and state.

7. My own research into four years of bible study discourses recorded by a group who lived in an informal shack settlement points to the complex range of issues which surround this claim, and provides evidence to support it; see Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

8. Feminist and African women's theological critiques of patriarchy, for example, touch at the heart of some of the conceptual schemes and linguistic frameworks which shape so much of the history of theology—its creeds, its doctrines, its proclamations, its symbols, and so on—and the cultures in which this theology is embedded.

9. Afrikaans is a uniquely South African language developed out of the Dutch spoken by early settlers, which was both simplified grammatically and enriched by many other indigenous and slave languages. It was formalized only in the early part of the twentieth century. It was seen as the language of apartheid, the term itself being Afrikaans in origin.

10. Two articles analyzing this kind of suspicion, by M. Prozesky, "Methodological Issues Arising from the Experience of Religion as Oppressive," and J. Moulder, "Why Feminist Theology Encourages Unbelief," may be found in J. Mouton, A. G. van Aarde, and W. S. Vorster (eds.), *Paradigms and Progress in Theology* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1988).

11. The study covered recent speeches of representatives of the conservative African Christian Democratic Party—the one party claiming overt Christian sanction for its politics, of the majority African National Congress, and of one or two other parties. See *Representing Christianity in the South African Parliament*, 1997, at <http://www.ricsa.org.za/commiss/chrisparl/parlmen.htm>.

12. The African Christian Democratic Party, for instance, is the only elected body in parliament to have refused to sign the new Constitution of South Africa on the grounds that it does not presume the sovereignty of the Christian God. At the same time, one must add, the actual practice of politics means that the ACDP does engage pragmatically in ordinary political work within parliament, notwithstanding its rejection of the founding document.

13. In fact, Mbeki referred to ACDP thinking as a "theology of death," because of their support for capital punishment, their exclusivist Christianity, their intolerance of others in many

cases, and narrow moralisms which frequently exhibit a vindictive rather than a forgiving faith in his view. See Mbeki's reply to the debate on his inaugural Presidential speech at <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/1999/tm0630.html>

14. The Hebrew Bible tradition of prophecy is invoked in this instance, particularly those strands which emphasize that the leaders of the people have betrayed the covenant with God, and because their regime does not represent God's project in the world. This made great sense in respect of apartheid, and while it retains pertinence in respect of the issue of poverty, for example, in our contemporary society, simply to continue to condemn the new state in principle seems misplaced.

15. This reply is contained in an address made to the Multi-Event 1999 on Religion and Public Life, Cape Town, February 1999, which may be found at http://www.ricsa.org.za/confer/me99/procs/pro_chik.htm.

16. Even in Iran, however, one could easily make a good case for the ambiguity of religion, in this case of Islam. There is not doubt that the debates between liberal and conservative ("fundamentalist") Muslims in Iran are by no means over, even if the conservatives for the moment hold power.

17. Max Weber's famous thesis about the Calvinist impulses that fire the "spirit of capitalism," despite the much debated difficulties in his thesis, is but one pointer to this claim. But even without that, one need only think of the religious roots of the Scottish rationalists (Adam Smith and John Locke being among the most obvious) who are so important to western liberalism in its political and economic forms to take the point.

18. There were numerous voices critical of the particular Christian theology which dominated much of the ritual of the TRC; see James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (eds), *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Athens Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999), 67—section 5.1.2 of the TRC Faith Communities Report.

19. As we know, the shift towards "professionalism" in sports across the world in the latter half of the twentieth century has been rapid and widespread, and with it has come the penetration of the market, and of market rationality, into the "noble" codes of amateurism that previously held sway. Attempts to retain some sense of this nobility remain strongly present, perhaps signaling the contradiction that sport now represents between market and lifeworld (communal pride, belonging, etc.) interests.

20. A good example is the decision by Nelson Mandela, then president, to attend the Rugby World Cup final between South African and New Zealand, held in South Africa, wearing a rugby shirt with the number of the white (Afrikaner) captain of an almost all white team, as a message of reconciliation.

21. This push has led to proposals for state-imposed quotas at representative level, that is, provincial and national teams. The proposals function merely to pressure sporting codes at this moment, but they may be invoked if the pressure does not produce results.

22. More commonly known as "African Independent Churches," I prefer the term "African Initiated Churches," because it stresses African agency rather than identification in opposition to the colonial Other. The terms "African Initiated Churches" and "African Indigenous Churches" have also been used by scholars, all with their particular ideological justifications. The acronym, in each case, however, remains "AICs."

23. African traditional religion (ATR) is by definition holistic in that it takes for granted that traditional cultural rituals and symbolic life, always part of social and political life in African communities, is the religion.

24. At this point we will bracket a secondary discussion on whether such holistic views are rooted in an anachronistic model of society which must collapse under modern conditions.

25. John A. Coleman, "Civil Society, Citizenship and Religion," Chapter 3 of unpublished typescript, 1997.

26. The notion of the "freedom of religion" embodied in South Africa's new constitution worries many religious communities. This may be because they tend toward a fundamentalist or, in some cases, a theocratic model of the determination of society by religious tenets. It may also be because the concept of the "freedom of religion" cannot be de-linked from other human rights clauses in the constitution which may be problematic for particular religious groups. The issue of capital punishment, outlawed by the constitution, is one example; as are clauses on gender rights which support the termination of pregnancy bill. The issue of legitimate discrimination also arises; it remains possible, some argue, to challenge churches who do not ordain women via gender rights legislation, though this has not happened to date.

27. By this I mean to include not only formal organizational structures of religion, such as denominations, the Muslim Judicial Council, the Jewish Board of Deputies, and the like, but also all those associations which have been "instituted," formally or informally, to represent and act on behalf of any group of believers.

28. It should be noted that the meaning of "established" in this context derives from a British context, in which the Church of England is "established by law" as the religious guarantor of the state. Thus the monarch of the United Kingdom is also the head of the Church of England, as has been the case from Henry VIII on.

29. Denis E. Hurley, *Facing the Crisis: Selected Texts of Archbishop Denis E. Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1997), p. 107.

30. George F. McLean, "Philosophy and Civil Society: Its Nature, Its Past and Its Future," in George F. McLean (ed.) *Civil Society and Social Reconstruction* (Washington D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997), p. 13.

31. Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994).

32. One might argue that a theory designed for "advanced capitalist" society has little relevance to a "developing" nation, as South Africa, for example, would be defined by the World Bank. One has to be careful here, but I would suggest that the forces of "globalization" as they impact on South Africa and other developing countries, carry with them some of the deep dynamics that characterize advanced capitalism, including the distinctions that arise between political, economic and civil society. Cohen and Arato's analysis is particularly suited to such a view, given their definition of civil society (which follows in the text).

33. Cohen and Arato, op. cit., x.

34. David Korten's description of some of the major changes in development theory over several decades is useful; see *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 1990).

35. For similar reasons, more recent development theory has come to recognize that the gendered structure of social relations where development policies are meant to be implemented is a key part of the equation. This, in turn, has a great deal to do with lifeworld issues—

especially in the way cultural/religious traditions shape gender understandings and gendered practices.

36. My own work in relation to a local community in a shack settlement near Durban, South Africa, explores some of the elements of knowledge, power, tradition, identity and location which are implicit in "people-centered development"—see Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity*, op. cit.

37. Following Habermas, "communicative competence" here refers to the capacity of persons, in a relatively unconstrained context of discourse, to represent themselves and their interests and to persuade others of their validity claims by offering good reasons for their position. Lest Habermas be misunderstood, let me add that "good reasons" and "rationality" in this context are concepts he has broadened beyond the classic Enlightenment framework of technical or instrumental logic. A rational position, in his view, would include being able to describe why a particular normative claim or prejudice—in the Gadamerian sense of an historically efficacious tradition or residue of experience and wisdom—is both meaningful and coherent, as well as defensible in the face of other normative claims.

38. The first condition, defense of a lifeworld, is self-evident. The second, modification or alteration of a lifeworld, is not. The latter becomes self-evident only when read in the context of the necessity of communicative competence for a stable society under democratic conditions. Otherwise one will simply have alienated, isolated, subjugated or warring representatives of particular lifeworlds. One is not then talking of civil society in any meaningful sense.

39. Cohen and Arato, op. cit., p. 9.

40. An excellent view of the range of such "arts of resistance" is provided by James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1990).

41. Many religious bodies, particularly including some Christian churches, I suspect, have not yet grasped the notion that they are expressions of civil society, with the consequence that they often continue to act in naïve and isolated fashion, usually in some conviction about the mysterious automatic efficacy of their proclamations of belief for society.

42. George F. McLean, "Philosophy and Civil Society," op. cit.

43. *Ibid.*, 26.

44. This dilemma, or contradiction, is penetratingly dealt with in Bertoldt Brecht's *St Joan of the Stockyards*.

45. One would have to take into account here, as a contradiction, the tendency of religious institutions to exclusive, imperial or fundamentalist assumptions by which the communicative activity of a healthy society may also be undermined.

46. National Economic Development and Labor Council, a new body in South Africa which embodies the tripartite relationship between the state, business and labour in an attempt to work out policy positions acceptable to all. It is meant to provide a platform for labour in particular.

47. The only logical exceptions to this rule would occur when a religious group does not attempt in any way to represent itself in public life (preferring offstage activities, so to speak), or when it wholly denies all conditions of modern public life, in particular those of plurality and of the separation of spheres of authority (in which case, it would tend to a millenarian, an anti-social, or a demagogic position).

48. George F. McLean, "Philosophy and Civil Society," op. cit., 30ff.

49. *Ibid.*, 31.

50. Unfortunately, many religious communities are not entirely persuasive at this level when their claims are accompanied by a clear denial of the rights of others to autonomy and independent judgement.

51. On this issue, see Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (NY: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

52. In my view, the most important statement in philosophical ethics of this relation is found in Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

53. Once again in the sense of Habermas (see footnote 37 above).

54. Any religious body or person which took a different approach, say that of an exclusive claim to truth or the interpretation of truth, or one which rejects rational argument in principle in favor of a revelation which may not be criticized, will not match these criteria. Such bodies or persons, whom we may call "fundamentalist" or "sectarian," are likely to enter public discourse monologically, refusing any interrogation of their claims. This would, of course, no longer be a discourse ethic.

55. By the "forces of globalization" I mean here the mix of economic, political and cultural factors driven by industrialization, the rise of market economies, and the shift from industrial production to information and service economies characteristic of our time. With the demise of apartheid, and the collapse of artificial barriers set up, for example, by the sanctions campaign, by self-determined isolationist policies, and by trade barriers which created something of a South African version of the "iron curtain"—a "white laager"—South Africa has had to face these forces in new ways, very rapidly, and with a very uneven capacity to control them. Market rationality increasingly pervades all sectors of South African society as a result, including universities and even churches.

56. John A. Coleman, op. cit.

57. Habitat for Humanity is one, for example.

58. The NSMS was a policy framework instituted by the Botha regime, under the influence of the military in particular, who adopted the "low intensity conflict" (LIC) analysis and strategies developed by theorists at the US Military Academy, in Britain, and in France. Respectively, military theorists here were aiming at learning how to deal with insurgent groups in civil struggles against oppressive regimes on the basis of retrospective studies of the Vietnam, Malaysian and Algerian wars of independence. In South Africa this was called the "total national strategy." The fundamental assumption of LIC theory was that insurgent or guerrilla groups could be permanently contained if society was controlled at all levels by command structures under the authority of the military but including the state and other law enforcement agencies, if sufficient leadership among the oppressed groups could be bought out either directly or by patronage systems, and if the populace at large convinced that this had to be done to counter some enemy who was engaged in "total struggle" against the society as such. It did not succeed in South Africa because of a lack of finance in the case of the second condition, and too broad a base of resistance along racially defined lines in the case of the third condition. The first condition was met as fully as it has been anywhere.

59. For a persuasive interpretation along these lines, see Robin Petersen, "The AICs and the TRC: Resistance Redefined," in Cochrane et al, *Facing the Truth*, pp. 114-125.

60. This analysis does not gainsay the reactionary dangers in populism and "common sense" readings of public events, processes and practices, but that is not my point here.

CHAPTER II

RACE, SPACE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

DON FOSTER

This chapter argues for a shift away from how we commonly treat values. Away from the notion of values as predominantly ideas, superstructural, mental phenomena, and towards a notion of values as embodied and spatialized manifestations, evidenced in the material and discursive spaces between embodied beings. Since racism has long been an emblematic feature of the South African social order, I direct attention to this ongoing problem area, with some comment on gender relations for which this new approach would be equally pertinent. This new angle of recasting an old problem

"wishes to open up a new look at racism as "between us", as "out there" in still existing spatial arrangements, as assigning us to different "places" and "positions", as continually involving re-produced forms of surveillance and gaze between us." (Foster, 1997, p.9).

Despite South Africa's new constitution and numerous legislative measures, racism, as well as gender inequality, remains persistent in South Africa and in many other parts of the "globalized" community. If we take a fresh look at these discordant values, treating racism and androcentrism as sets of spatialized ensembles, it may offer different and newly creative means of resistance and enable alternative route maps towards the espoused value of a genuine non-sexist non-racialism.

Given that civil society participation was an active ingredient in the struggle against apartheid, it is not altogether surprising that debate about the role of, and place of, civil society in the continuing transformation of values remains a persistent and nagging question. Years after the first democratic elections and with a second, largely successful, round of national and provincial elections behind us, it is clichéd wisdom that much has been achieved. However, a great deal more remains to be done, not least in overcoming poverty, unemployment, massive economic inequalities as well as crime and violence. Despite the formal passing of apartheid, South Africa remains deeply divided between rich and poor, urban and rural, men and women and of course still between black and white. Across these fault lines, and on other issues—religion, language, violence, abortion, capital punishment, gun control among others—South Africans do not share common values. Value pluralism may not in itself be problematic if it is of the horizontal variety, different but equal. However if it is of the vertical variety involving pain, suffering, imposition, oppression, exploitation and domination then there are grounds for raising questions about value pluralism—and that itself expresses a particular value orientation. If a legitimate value is the eradication of domination and oppression then it is feasible to ask whether civil society has a contribution to make in the creation of such values.

Are there any core values in liberated South Africa? Through the past years of protracted, even painful, negotiations, through constitution making and through cycles of violence, four sets of core values—a frequently chanted mantra—have emerged as key guiding principles for policies and qualities of life. They are: non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, and nation-building. The last term is a surrogate for nationalism, if you like. This useful set of core values is regularly backed up by a further set of concepts such as "open", "transparent", "accountable" and "equitable" in reference to desired processes of democracy. The relative success of the negotiated

settlement has rendered as a value the very notion of "negotiation" in contrast to brute force, the latter a not unknown strategy of the apartheid era. The constitution in terms of the bill of rights spells out numerous values suggesting that neither the state nor any person may "unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly" against anyone on grounds including:

race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (para 9(3)).

If we add other values expressed in the constitution such as freedom of expression, assembly, demonstration, association, movement and residence, freedom of trade, occupation and profession, children's rights, property rights along with expression of good intent in terms of environment, water, health care, housing, and social security, education and access to information, linked with a range of legal and justiciable rights, then it is a heady list. The constitution is of course not without its dilemmas and tensions (some expressed in this volume) but certainly in terms of official discourse, South Africa is not lacking in terms of a carefully negotiated set of core values and principles.

Why not leave the matter of values to the state then? There are a range of reasons not least the contradictory fears of state power and state weakness. Given the historical skew of racialized production of economic power and numerous other existing inequalities, it is neither reasonable nor hopeful that the state alone can correct the heavy skewdness of the past. On the other hand, given the diversity of a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and religious population, there are worries, at least from some sectors that the state might ride roughshod, despite the best intentions of constitutional values, over particular minority values and interests. Clearly the state has a considerable role to exert in producing positive values, but if the state is insufficient, incompetent or incapable of legitimate delivery then to which alternative sector could we turn in search of positive values? Recent optimism has suggested civil society as a potential site and agent of transformation.

The main burden of this chapter however is to re-examine the single value, concerned with racialized quality, and to view it against the grain of dominant conceptualizations, as a spatial construct, opening a way for treating values as configurations of embodied relations rather than only as relations of "minds", ideas or attitudes. A shift of this sort may present different ways of treating values as well as offer differing strategies. Along the way the notion of civil society will also be treated to a spatial turn.

THEORIZING RACISM

Despite the manifest evidence that racism in South Africa, in both its segregationist and apartheid phases, predominantly took shape in the form of spatial engineering, it is surprising how little attention has been given to theorizing "race" and racism in terms of space (for some exceptions see Christopher, 1994; Goldberg, 1993; Robinson, 1996; Western, 1981). This is not altogether surprising since it is only during roughly the past decade that the notion of space, drawing on the work of cultural geographers, has received attention from social theorists (Harvey, 1989; Soja, 1989; Lefebvre, 1991; Thrift, 1996). If space has not been of primary consideration in theorizing racism, what have been the dominant forms of understanding racism?

Parallel with those other explanatory antinomies (individual-social; micro-macro; actor-structure) which have bedeviled social theories over much of the twentieth century, thinking about racism has been divided characteristically in terms of either psychological or sociological forms of understanding. Strategies to challenge racism also became bifurcated during the 1980s when two dominant but conflicting tactical lines emerged: multi-culturalism and anti-racism. The first theoretical cluster saw racism primarily in terms of psychological processes, racism as prejudice or negative attitudes, stereotyping, projection and similar constructs. The problem in this view was located predominantly in people's heads, and strategies centered around education, the correction of faulty representations of others and unlearning dominant stereotypes.

The second theoretical cluster and associated strategy, anti-racism, increasingly from the 1960s saw the problem as a structural issue, as "institutional racism", linked in some instances to the structural arrangements of capitalism itself; for example dual labor markets, or in other versions attributed to cultural institutions. Although rather over-simplified here, by the mid 1980s this general pattern of two theoretical clusters and two broad strategies was solidly in place. Despite bitter battles between the contrasting poles, by the late 1980s both forms were subjected to sharp criticism. With shifts in social theory in general due to influences such as feminism, post-structuralism and the "linguistic turn," a cluster of writers developed more nuanced approaches sensitive to class and gender variations in racial formations as well as greater complexities and specifics of the significance of racism in everyday experience. Regarding strategies, theorists such as Goldberg (1993), Gilroy (1993), West (1993a, 1993b) and Wieviorka (1995) among others advocated a new pluralism of effort, expressly ruling out the notion of a single correct line or strategy. Tactics should be revised and refined in relation to particular and changing tasks at hand, according to the pragmatic approach of Goldberg (1993). While certainly not all of one piece, the newer theories of racism have in common a constructionist and discursive stance, critical of the essentialism of earlier theories, claiming that:

identities are not fixed, nor static, but shifting and de-centered; that cultures are hybrid and in flux. It shifts attention to theoretical matters of representation, discursive constructions and rhetorical strategies in the daily reconstruction of racism (Foster, 1999, p. 334).

In South Africa, thinking about "race" and racism has following similar contours. From the 60s to the 80s the field was dominated by the fiercely contested "race-class" debate between liberals and leftists which in many ways mirrored the individual-social bifurcation of theorizing elsewhere. Into the 1990s, although to some extent theoretical work gave way to the more pragmatic fervor of political transition including an intense debate about the future role of civil society, thinking about racism in South Africa also evidenced shifts to the discursive and constructionist perspectives (Bozzoli and Delius, 1990; Levett, Kottler, Burman and Parker, 1997). There is certainly merit in such theoretical shifts, not least in that the very notions of multiple, fluid and contested identities open up a way of thinking about change. Yet, while there is a good deal of talk of "disruption", "re-writing", "re-narration" about racialized identities, and while in agreement that these are necessary parts of change, the newer discursive theories are often rather thin and silent on postulating strategies and political agencies for transforming racism. Political strategy is not necessarily one of the virtues of some versions of constructionism, particularly for those who take the "relativist" rather than the "realist" route-maps through this new terrain (Parker, 1998).

SPACE AND "RACE"

Why should we turn to space in searching for another way to "see" the continuing practices of racism? Partly since the concept of space evokes a related set of other concepts which constellate to form an assemblage of constructs largely missing from previous theories. It is sufficiently commonplace to remark that the dualisms of enlightened thinking require repair and that the return of notions such as bodies, space and time may assist in that reconstruction. In justifying a spatial conceptualization of racism it is possible to list a number of "grounds."

First it is readily apparent that many linguistic terms characteristic of racism are also spatial terms; examples include segregation, zoning, locations, distancing, exclusion, marginalization and quintessentially the term "apartheid." Discursive codes catch the core element that racialization is less in the mind and more in the realm of spatial distantiation.

Second, it is since we are embodied beings that space becomes salient. As bodies we take up space, we exist in locales, we distribute collective bodies in particular zonings (nations, classes, genders), we desire our own bodied places, and we place certain bodies in particular places for purposes of social control (prisons, exile, madhouses, status displays). It almost goes without saying that material bodies are those objects onto which are inscribed ontological status ascriptions such as "race", sex, gender and disabilities. Bodies are not mere bodies with abilities, powers and constrictions; they are always spatialized.

Third, space is salient since it denotes a point of view: it has taken some time to grasp that there is no "god's eye view". This raises epistemological questions of considerable note for the investigation of "we" and "they", identity and otherness.

Fourth, spaces, as we know from everyday experience do not remain static, which raises the question of change. Change is referenced by time, so time and space, analytically distinct, are always interrelated. It is again fairly commonplace to remark that "globalization" marks off new configurations of space-time linkages. Racialized identities are historical as much as they are geographical.

Fifth, space embraces both material discursive dimensions; zones, boundaries and exclusions may be both symbolic and physical. This provides links between the discursive turn in social theorizing without neglect of the materiality of embodied locations. Nation-states are "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983), that is, discursive constructions, as much as they are geographical bounded entities.

Sixth, a spatialized conceptualization of identities—racial, gendered, classed—in terms of "position" or "positioning" goes further than mere geographical location. For instance Harré and Gillett (1994) proposed that identities should be regarded as an integrated system of locations in four interrelated manifolds: in space (a point of view); in time trajectories; in a moral location (responsibility within spaces of mutual obligations and values); and in social spaces—positioning in a structured ordering of people in terms of status and power arrangements (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999).

Arguing for a spatialized conception of racialization is to make claim that first, "races" are bodily inscriptions, and second that racialization entails above all else, notions of boundaries and separations: spatial assignments. Categorizations and classifications (Bowker and Star, 1999) erstwhile conceived of primarily in cognitive terms, as certainly they are, are not reducible to the

realm of ideas; categorizations as boundaried structures are also heavily spatial: trees do not belong in houses. At the same time, racialization inescapably is a bodied process; it marks its imaginary myths upon particular bodies. Bodies and spaces, both of which are simultaneously material and symbolic, are inextricably intertwined in the process of racialization: these bodies "belong" in these locales, those bodies are consigned to the other spaces. Racialization is a process of evaluation, generating values; sorting and sifting wheat from chaff then inscribing those valuations upon these bodies and those spaces. Racism (as androcentrism, although it may follow different contours) as ideology is a social process of inventing values which are stamped upon, insinuated into embodied spaces.

FORMS OF RACIALIZED SPACES

It may be feasible to map different kinds of racialized space according to a grid of "levels" of analysis, ranging from international spheres to local, immediate places as well as psychological space. This is merely an analytical device allowing a description of the different spheres in which racism may be located. Boundaries between the various "levels" are not tightly stitched, yet principles of ordering space may differ across forms or levels; nevertheless racism, and androcentrism, is manifest in spatial terms at all levels.

At the international or world sphere, spatial orderings have existed for centuries between those governed by power relations of conquest, colonialism and imperialism. In these territories, often conceived of in gender terms as feminized, as "open", to be "plundered" (McClintock, 1995), were taken and their native inhabitants subordinated, "civilized," destroyed and moved. Under the spatialized spirit of imperialism, colonized people were depicted not only as far from the metropolitan center but also as distant or "backwards" in terms of a developmental scale marked off as civilization. Both spatial (core-periphery) and time (developed-developing) metaphors still dominate the discursive grid of the international sphere.

The national sphere naturalizes both space and the categorization of people into groups, linking these two—space and its people—on the one hand into a "natural" discourse of entitlements, rights, legitimation for citizens and, on the other hand, powers to exclude "others." The idea of nation often articulates closely with that of "race," for instance, the case of immigration in post-war Britain, and the notion of a two tier citizenship. In the case of both East and South Africa, Mamdani (1996,1998) has described a differentiated citizenship linked to spatial arrangements; why settlers can never become natives. While settlers have access to civic space which has technically become de-racialized, natives have ethnic or racialized spaces rooted in notions of customary or group rights, a legacy of colonial systems of differentiated or indirect governance and the demarcation of customary space and rule for native dwellers. Native identity under colonialism was defined by a purported ancestral area governed by customary law. Following independence, this distinction between civic and ethnic national identities remained, defined partially in spatialized differentiations. It is in these terms that right wing Afrikaners have made claims for group rights, beyond the individual-based rights of civil identities and for a particular Afrikaner location; for multiple reasons, a space not yet found. Clearly this two-tiered spatialized system of citizenry and identity remains an impediment to the completion of non-racialism, even in the post-colonial and post-apartheid era.

Grand apartheid formed one of the most definitive cases of the partition of racialized national space in effectively excluding through "Bantustan", "homeland" and "independent state" policies the racialized other from citizenship in the land of their birth. In the post-apartheid era,

despite official de-racialization, the spatialized legacies remain largely intact while there are also bids for the return of ancestral spaces to particular ethnic groupings—a reproduction of racialized space which confirms Mamdani's notion of a two-tiered national subjectivity. Beyond South Africa, while most nation states now are constituted as multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic, national territories still frequently carry deeply embedded assumptions of a "national", (a veiled veneer of racialized) people rightfully belonging to that space, while the distribution of places within national boundaries maintain erstwhile racial signifiers in relatively unaltered spatial relations.

Writing at a time, early in the year 2000, when so called "land invasions" in Zimbabwe summoned international media headlines, it is readily apparent that questions of land ownership and distribution, private property and informal settlements all remain as burning issues in post-colonial and post-independent Africa. In the new constitution of South Africa, property rights are entrenched:

No one may be deprived of property except in terms of law of general application, and no law may permit arbitrary deprivation of property (Clause 25, chapter 2).

While there are clear commitments from the state, marked off in the constitution, to land reforms and that such reforms are intended "to bring about equitable access to all South Africans natural resources, and property is not limited to land" (Clause 25, 4a and b), it is also clear that given the centuries of accumulation of land and property resources under colonialism and apartheid, it will take decades if not longer to transform. Ownership of land and property, as Marxist analysts have long since recognized, provides means for wealth, production and accumulation. Despite the political transformation in South Africa, the skewed ownership of land, mines, factories, buildings and housing remains heavily racialized and provides means for future wealth production. Rural and urban divisions, and their relation to poverty, provide additional indices of the racialized distribution in spatial terms.

The legacy of the Group Areas Acts and a host of further "squatter" Acts under apartheid remains potent. A series of studies on the informal settlements within Hout Bay during the post-apartheid era, has demonstrated the continued racialized depiction of spatial entitlements (Dixon, Foster, Durrheim and Wilbraham, 1994; Dixon, Reicher and Foster, 1997; Dixon and Reicher, 1997). As an example of "new racism" or "subtle racism", white residents of Hout Bay, instead of making direct reference to race, nevertheless discursively constructed the continued spatial entitlements in terms of cultural differences, territorial invasion and ecological issues. Ecologically grounded rhetoric referred to increased population overload, destruction of coastal habitats and damage to the "fragile" scenic beauty. Spatial talk, ostensibly not about "races" at all, or sharply defensive about racist allegations ("I'm not a racist, but . . ."), nevertheless post-apartheid speech manages to construct a spatialized racism of a new sort, which serves to justify spatial exclusivity and maintain broadly the status quo.

A third form or "level" worthy of consideration is that of urban and city space. For instance in both Britain and America, racialized space is most notably evident in urban areas. Crowded and decaying inner-city ghettos are home to most black persons in the West. Physical boundaries and divides such as highways, railways and parks constitute the frames and grids of spatial separations. So, too in South Africa.

Despite political transformation in South Africa, the spatial divides in urban areas have shown relatively little alteration; there are few fully racially integrated districts in most South

African cities. Most areas, whether housing, business or recreational places, remain recognizably black, white, colored or Indian in terms of the former "population registration" categories. Such ritualization of space in cities is not merely a question of continuing de facto segregation but also signifies matters of unequal resources in terms of amenities, transport, recreational and cultural facilities as well as differential subjectives in the sense of place and belonging, cities are also "mapped" in subjective, psychological terms. Inhabitants have detailed "mental maps" of city spaces, of places that belong to some people but not to others. Otherness of space is related to "othering" of people and ritualization looms large in the mental mapping of South African urban settings.

A fourth distinguishable "type" is that of local, immediate space. People live their lives, carry and present their bodies in local face-to-face interactional spaces: buildings, houses, offices, theaters, churches, pubs, beaches, playgrounds, restaurants and meeting places both public and private. Immediate spaces are ordered in more informal means than the laws which govern international, national, and urban demarcations. Interactional space tends to be governed rather by norms, historical customs, and cultural conventions as well as, importantly, but often neglected, the representational and organized rituals of bodies. In different places, bodies customarily do different things, immediate space is embodied space, and bodies are always "sexed", "gendered", "racialized" and "abled" or disabled, as well as carriers of other forms of identity such as status and class. Given that everyday life is so taken for granted, analysts tend to neglect the extent to which immediate lived spaces continue to be racialized. In South Africa, years after non-racial elections, there are relatively few interactional settings, not least those of civil society itself, which are easily and comfortably non-racial.

A final "level" may be referred to as psychological space. While this may have many meanings, one central component has to do with a sense of security, a notion of bodily integrity or vulnerability in the face of spatialized threats. There are spaces where people feel under psychological or bodily threat; unsafe areas. By contrast there are places where one feels "at home", safe, secure, comfortable or relatively invulnerable. The security sense epitomized by home territory is readily captured by descriptions of burglaries and break-ins as an experienced sense of "invasion", "threat" or feeling "sullied". This psychological sense of space has considerable import in the perpetuation of ritualization in discursively constructed notions of "swamping", being "over-run" or spatially threatened by the "other". Crime, both in experience and rhetorical constructions, readily plays on fears of spatial integrity thus lends a hand in the reconstruction of racialised distancing.

On the opposite pole, psychological space also refers to the attraction between particular bodies: loves, intimacy, friendship, closeness, companionship and, not least, sexual desire. Both forms, that is, security threats and attraction/desire, involve spaces between bodies—processes that drive us asunder in fear, loathing, revulsion or those that draw us together in warmth and desire. And both processes are far too readily susceptible to being racialised. On the attraction front while exceptions are to be found, there is scant evidence that non-racialism is the norm in post-apartheid South Africa.

If it is possible to map five sorts or "levels" of spaces within which ritualization occurs, what has this to do with civil society and transforming values? First and above all, civil society would be required to deal with the transformation of material space and, in its various manifestations, it may be ill-equipped to do so. Second, civil society is often conceived of as a structure only within particular, national, boundaries. If it is to deal with racism conceived spatially as a phenomenon at multiple, including international levels, then civil society itself will be required

to organize and act at cross-national levels. Third, if racism as a negative value, operates at multiple levels ranging from international to the subjective, and in terms of differing sets of processes ranging from formal laws to customary rituals of bodies, then civil society, if it intends to be a player in value transformations will be required to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a variety of strategies. We shall return to further questions about civil society following consideration of the dimensionality of space.

DIMENSIONS OF SPACE

Levels or types are merely the preliminary descriptive mappings. They suggest little in the way of the processes of managing, controlling, seizing, representing or historically changing systems of spaces. If racism is analyzed in spatial terms we would need to consider a number of dimensions of space: public-private, material, discursive and representational; power and control; and the nature of boundaries.

Public-Private Dimensions: There is room to consider only two aspects here. The relationship between public and private dimensions of space has shifted over the historical course of modernity, sharpening the distinction between the inner, immediate, personal, domestic and the outer, public, political and mass phenomena. It is commonplace that this dimension is profoundly genderized, but how does "race" map on to the public and private? This has been given less attention, and here only two components of potentially complex mappings are considered.

First, racism produced the effect of displacing oppressed people from the public realm, the place of the powerful. To some extent the passing of apartheid has begun to turn the centuries long current. While the political sphere has been turned substantially, but not entirely, for instance questions over the influence of the negotiated compromise on civil servants. This is perhaps the only public area in which black persons and to some extent women have come to take rightful places. In many other public spheres—arts, culture, law, media, finance, agriculture, business—and not least in civil society (arguably more public than private) itself, influence and positioning has not yet become fully non-racialised.

Second, if we are to believe some of the recent theorizing regarding "new", "subtle", "aversive" or "covert" racism (Foster, 1999), then racism as an ideological process is shifting away from the public and towards the private sphere. If so, that renders imperative new theorizing about racism. Achievement of non-racialism at a public dimension without transformation of domestic spheres, private spaces or subjectivities would constitute a failure to transcend racism. New and differing strategies would have to be sought.

Material and Discursive Dimensions: Space is inescapably both concrete and discursively re-presented. Space, while there and here, is not simply here and there; it is at least partially constituted in and through theories, narratives, maps, metaphors, pictures, linguistic tropes and rhetorical commonplaces. However, in the fashionable, and important discursive shift, the materiality of space has perhaps become elusive. Space is material in at least two ways: it poses limits and restraints, and it is productive; it enables productivity of wealth and itself constitutes a value.

Despite technological inventions which have radically transformed space-time configurations, spaces as distance, as rough terrain, as humanly inhospitable or as (since they are

bodied) barriers still impose restraints of various sorts. Despite the relatively limited distance between Robben Island and the mainland, few if any, prisoners achieved the crossing and escaped. Space in simply material terms has been widely and effectively utilized to separate, exclude and mark off racialized others. On the other hand, spaces as productive and as valuable have similarly been used to enable and reproduce wealth for one group rather than another. The South African situation is an unceasing case, with few exceptions, of the oppressed being driven off into desolate, dusty, unproductive spaces while invader-settlers seized mines and coasts and other sumptuous places, a situation little altered by the past few years. At the same time, space is named, represented, depicted, debated and argued: it is inescapably discursive and symbolic. The implications are clear: transforming racism calls for change in both material and discursive/symbolic dimensions.

Boundaries-space between space: Any question of difference, whether in terms of sexuality, gender, nationality or racialized identity, at its core has to pose the issue of boundaries. At a time theoretically when numerous epistemological challenges have posed threats to essentialism, questions of edges, borders, boundaries, of spaces between spaces appear more salient than earlier. If difference appears no longer to lie at the center or essence of persons or groups, then perhaps it has to do with the construction, maintenance, management, performance, policing, and reproduction of edges, surfaces and boundaries. A boundary in spatial terms is a marker, (a contour, a shape, a barrier) between two or more spaces. As bodily skin, a salient marker for purported "races", locates the difference between inside and outside, and the distinction between one body and another, so boundaries are the markers between "us" and "them". At one level the skin itself in terms of hue (for "race") is the boundary marker of difference.

Boundaries have a further quality; they are invariably policed or regulated in various modalities. Different types of boundaries may be managed in differing ways. A simple three-fold typology of boundaries is proposed here more as a heuristic device than exhaustive analysis. First, material boundaries, which are of two sorts—natural and humanoid—are policed in two ways. Natural boundaries such as oceans, mountains, deserts may be sufficient as natural objects to serve as barriers. The icy currents between Robben Island and Cape Town may be sufficient in themselves. Physical barriers are as varied as human inventiveness: consider the Berlin Wall, electrified fences and railway lines. Apart from their material qualities as impediments, they are also often policed through secondary means : guards, surveillance technologies and passports.

A second form of boundary may be described as social : economic class, limited education, poverty, status hierarchies, perhaps even poor health. The policing devices in this case are primarily economic, such as "market forces", political (state policies) and cultural, for instance prestige arrangements. Legal systems backed by repressive state apparatus constitute a potent means of constructing restrictive social boundaries, as evidenced by the history of apartheid.

A third type of boundary, also widely varied, may be described as discursive. Laws, signs, notices, proclamations, regulations, certificates, even passports are all examples. Language codes, speech markers and a range of non-verbal devices may constitute further markers of difference. Above these instances rise the scientific and cultural "grand narratives" which go to make up racist and patriarchal ideologies providing justification for domination and exclusion. The policing and management device in this instance is that of linguistic and cultural systems in themselves. Discourse "does things", as the linguistic turn is fond of telling us; it is not merely re-presentation. The proposition here is that exploring spatial metaphors such as boundaries may offer fruitful avenues to understand values that divide people. If racism is viewed as a

construction of edges, markers, spaces and boundaries rather than as essences, then it may open alternative ways of collapsing barriers, challenging boundary maintenance and re-connecting spatial divides. If civil society is a potential arena for the promotion of positive values it would be well to attend to spatial dimensions which recreate division, exclusion and domination.

CIVIL SOCIETY: SPACES FOR REFORMULATION

In reaction to the demise of totalitarian and oppressive regimes in both Eastern Europe and South Africa there has been a revitalization of the concept of civil society, an old idea from the 17th and 18th centuries when it was conceived in a positive way (Tester, 1992), enabling the possibility of civilized society itself—the association of free untrammelled citizenship in relations of solidarity. A long downside of the concept, via Marxism and the notion of "big government" as the only antidote to market capitalism, brought about a well-nigh disappearance of the notion of civil society until recent years.

In South Africa, a sharp exchange of ideas emerged in the transition period among both activists and intellectuals (Fine, 1992; Fitzgerald, 1990; Glaser, 1991, 1997; Mayekiso, 1992; Nzimande and Sikhosana, 1992 to cite but a few references). The debate was open, sharp and welcome. In retrospect, however, it provided little clarity on the problematic topic which

remains confused and ever mysterious despite the enormous debate that has mushroomed since the 1990s (Alexander, 1998b, p. 224).

The South African debate, while useful in giving attention to a sphere both important and neglected, raised as many problems as solutions. In hindsight, the debate raised some pointers, of three main sorts. First, from most sides the notion of civil society, as an arena beyond the state and market, was generally positively valued, by activists and intellectuals alike, undoubtedly due to the role of this sector which included unions, civics and a plethora of organizations under the umbrella of the United Democratic Front, in resisting apartheid. Second, the debate brought to the fore the notion that there was no consensus regarding the very idea of civil society: on one side it championed the policies of the African National Congress, on another it stressed the unions, elsewhere the township civic organizations, on a further angle it emphasized the liberal conception of a watchdog function against the state, in yet other stances it promoted organs of peoples' power and socialist ideals: there was no agreement on either the core, nor the principal agents of civil society; no bad thing. Third the debate brought out differences in the boundary relations (Alexander, 1998a) between civil society and other sectors. For some, the state had to be the central agent of racial and economic transformations and civil society ought to be in close alignment with the state. For others a key relationship was to be between civics and local government. For others the close boundary resonance was seen to be between civil society and grassroots organizations.

One of a number of possible responses to the problems of theorizing about civil society is to treat it in spatialized terms, that is, as a rather loose set of interrelated spaces beyond the larger scale coercive structures of state and market on one hand and the other hand, emotional spheres such as religion, personal relations and the family. An advantage of such a treatment, is to avoid the dilemmas of accounting for precisely which types of organizations (churches, trade unions, universities) constitute exactly the civil spheres. In some modes, such organizations may operate

in the spaces of civil society, in other respects fall on the margins: neither entirely in nor outside. In a recent paper, Glaser (1997) begins to treat the notion in this way, arguing that civil society is

not a thing, or instrument or collective action or deliberative form or even, strictly speaking a 'watchdog'—but rather . . . a kind of empty space . . . open to multiple uses by free and equal citizens (pp. 5-6).

In similar vein, while not taken further to theoretical stances, activists in the anti-apartheid era commonly called for using "the spaces available for struggle", a pragmatic and flexible position which was little concerned with how theorists may have wished to classify such places. It often produced innovative strategies of resistance and new alignments. This in turn is concordant with recent strategizing against racism, (Foster , 1999; Goldberg, 1993) which is opposed to overarching single-track theorizing but proposes flexible, multiple, shifting and pragmatic strategies using different positions, altering alliances and transgressive spaces for opposing dominative orders. Civil society in this view suggests an informally regulated social sphere constructed through various forms of communication and reciprocity and differing forms of solidarity via consensual rules and relatively shared values (Alexander, 1998b)—a sphere which, in itself, would be an instance of non-racialism at work: an exemplar case. In this sense civil society could be held to be a public sphere of potential solidarity and inter-subjectivity, which processes its own codes and narratives in a democratic form, is patterned by a set of particular institutions, and is visible in "distinctive sets of interactional patterns and practices such as civility, equality, criticism and respect" (Alexander, 1998a, p.7).

Treating civil society in a spatialized manner has a further merit in raising questions about boundary relationships. As a spatial phenomenon, civil society has relative autonomy of action but that depends on the nature of boundary relations with other spheres (Alexander, 1998a), that may either facilitate, or impair and intrude upon developments of a more civil life. Seen in this way, many questions arise. Does civil society work with, that is promote porous boundary relations with the state or the market economy, or does it set sharp limits to protect its sphere of relative autonomy? Where and how does it resist intrusions, or conversely seek to intrude into and influence other spheres? In this respect Alexander (1998a) suggests, civil society does not exist as such, but only to one degree or another depending on the particulars of boundary relations. In the recent past of apartheid it is clear that both the state and the market as well as the private domestic space placed limitations upon and permitted intrusions into the civil spheres in order to advance the case of racism. It should be clear enough from this history that the civil sphere is not intrinsically progressive or inevitably politically predisposed. Civil society is not immune from exclusionary systems (patriarchal, racist, capitalist) that operate ideologically in wider society and may indeed merely reproduce such values. Such certainly was the case under apartheid, and even now some organs of civil society such as professional associations can hardly be claimed to have turned the corner away from exclusionary values.

On the other hand, as Alexander (1998a) suggests, members of disadvantaged groups, maintaining dual membership, that is for instance as exploited workers and as members of a civil sphere, may use the latter space to stake claims for status. They may create voluntary organizations which demand fairness, participate in internationally linked social movements claiming rights and humane treatment, and so initiate "repairs" as well as boundary intrusions into the other spheres that are prime movers in manufacturing inequalities. Civil society in this view is no guaranteed set of institutions which act as guardians or promoters of positive values

but a space adjacent to other spaces to allow manoeuvres, to make demands, and to set about "repairs" of the hurts of heartless exclusions. Civil society is unable to be fully institutionalized as such, rather it "provides a reflexive, liberating mirror for the restrictions and abuses" of wider society (Alexander, 1998b, p. 226).

In evaluating the possibilities of civil society, there is no need to follow the pessimistic prognosis of Keith Tester (1992) who points to the logical incoherence of civil society, to nevertheless concur with Glaser (1997) and Alexander (1998a) in warning gently not to ask too much of civil society. In a careful evaluation, Glaser (1997) concludes that a number of areas of civil society in current South Africa, for example townships, white farming areas, in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal are not characterized by civility but rather by violence and intimidation. Because of the "massive legacy of inherited inequalities", the declining influence of some sectors such as the civics and NGOs and the "essential diversity and non-purposive character of civil society" (p. 25) this sphere should not be seen as a magic key or as "a privileged site of democracy building" (Glaser, 1997). In South Africa the state in its various forms ranging from national to local government will be a key agent in transforming continued racism not least since it is this sector which holds the levers regarding spatial distributions, e.g., issues ranging from land reform through informal settlements to city spaces. The state has also a key role regarding the discursive and symbolic dimensions of racialised space: naming and labelling, monuments and memories, reclaimings and dismantling discursive alienations. In these respects, the place of civil society may well be that of open, facilitative boundary relations with the state, pushing and pulling where the state falls short.

Similarly Alexander (1998a) warns not to privilege civil society in contrast to the social and moral contributions of other spheres, and opposes the "idealization of civil society that is rampant in contemporary discussions," not least since it is difficult to institutionalize structures of real civil societies in the face of considerable economic inequalities.

To spatialize the notion of civil society is to recognize that there is no core of universal values intrinsic to this sphere, that it will involve messy processes of movements to and for, pushing and pulling, boundary transgressions and retractions and inevitable conflicts that come with democratic struggles. However, it is also to claim that on the edges, and in between other spheres, it offers spaces to move, cajole, persuade, organize and to form alliances against injustice and exclusions. If to transform racism is to change real spatial distributions and arrangements of bodies, ranging from international to local spheres, and from material to discursive barriers, then the messy spaces of civil societies should come to recognize that transforming racism—as boundaries between us—will require going beyond changing hearts and minds, and also include changing spaces.

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CHAPTER III

DISCOURSES OF DIFFERENCE AND SAMENESS IN SOUTH AFRICA: RACE, RACISM AND NON-RACIALISM

ROBIN M. PETERSEN

INTRODUCTION

Let me begin by commenting on the salience of religion, a first step in a discussion of difference and sameness, a heuristic starting point for the problematic we will pursue. It is from the study of religion, and of theology in particular, that the convictions expressed in this paper have to a large extent emerged. For that reason, I will also conclude by returning at the end to the question of religion.

Religion, identity, and culture are inextricably intertwined. Not only is religion always expressed in cultural forms, it is also a powerful cultural force in shaping individual and group identities, funding symbolic and cultural expressions, and providing both legitimation for and critical subversion of dominant and minority cultural forms. Likewise, religion in turn is shaped in multiple ways by cultural forms and practices. It is impossible to conceptualize religion as standing somehow outside of culture. Furthermore, it is in the nexus of religion and culture that crucial questions of identity arise, are sustained and contested.

The philosophical and cultural turn to the postmodern has given these questions a new urgency. For, however postmodernism might be understood, it is insistent on the critical importance of the notion of "difference" (Lyotard 1984; Giroux 1992). It also has encouraged what Foucault has called the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges."

These broader philosophical and cultural trends, while having an impetus of their own, are simply the background against which the much more urgent agenda of confronting these questions in a post-apartheid South Africa arises. During the years of struggle against apartheid, the question of culture and difference, and the relationship between culture and religion, was necessarily suppressed within the contexts of liberation discourse in general and liberation theologies in particular.

This was, quite simply, because domination and oppression under apartheid were premised on difference—on its proliferation, codification, reification and rigorous application. In such a context, the struggle for the "right to be the same," or the struggle for a "non-racial democracy," of necessity had to downplay cultural and religious differences and specificity.

Since the birth of the new nation, the question of difference and identity—cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, religious—has emerged with a critical urgency. The ability of the new nation to negotiate this question at these multiple levels is one of the most crucial challenges that confront us. It is, however, not only a challenge, but also an opportunity with rich possibilities for research, reconstruction and strategic intervention. The issues of race, identity, and multi-culturalism, and the ongoing relevance of non-racialism, are therefore among the most important political, ethical, and theological challenges facing us at present.

REFLECTIONS ON NON-RACIALISM AND A NEW POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

The specific focus of this paper is an analysis of the discourse and politics of non-racialism, identity and difference in South Africa. These issues of race, identity, multi-culturalism, non-

racialism and a broadly construed "politics of difference" (Young 1990) present fundamental challenges to the construction and deepening of a democratic culture in South Africa. Carrim (1994, 1996b) has pointed out that two competing processes have emerged: The evolution of a broad, non-racial, national identity on the one hand; and the emergence of racial and ethnic identities in new forms, on the other. "Exactly how these two processes are to be reconciled is what constitutes perhaps the most important challenge for the new South Africa" (1994:1).

Democracy and fundamental human rights are now enshrined in the political fabric of the country and are protected by the Constitution and various judicial bodies created to sustain them (e.g. the Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality). While this legal framework provides the necessary starting point for the construction of a society in which these rights will flourish, the process of deepening and securing a democratic culture will require far more than these legal and constitutional frameworks. Already debates around how "difference"—racial, ethnic, gender, language, sexual preference—is to be negotiated within this context dominate much of our political discourse.

Theology and religion have been, of course, a central component, for good and ill, in the construction of social identities in the past. Given the ongoing valence of religious belief and affiliation in this context, it was and is also deemed crucial to develop an adequate theological and ethical response to these issues. Religious communities exercise important influence on the process of moral formation and leadership, making theological reflection on these issues central for the process of ongoing education for democracy within these structures.

The goals of the argument that follows are to explore the notion of non-racialism by tracing its genealogy and its continuing valence in the contemporary situation; to analyze the local and international debates on questions of identity, difference and sameness and to assess the impact that these debates have on racial discourse and the ongoing task of constructing a contextually relevant theology in South Africa; to seek to develop some new, indigenous, means of conceptualizing "sameness" and "difference," that will help deepen and entrench a culture of democracy and tolerance; and to reflect on what contribution Christian theology might make to these ongoing debates and issues.

It is a remarkable irony that Jacques Derrida—doyen of *différance* and critic of the oppressive Enlightenment politics of sameness—has consistently expressed admiration for Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) in their struggle to create a non-racial South Africa (Derrida 1983, 1987). For non-racialism is fundamentally about the "right to be the same," the struggle to create a democracy in which difference is no longer the constitutional basis of the State, where, in fact, the question of difference is fundamentally subverted. This vision of non-racialism received a no less surprising affirmation when Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the black nationalist Nation of Islam, emerged from a meeting with then President Mandela and stated that: "President Mandela's commitment to building a non-racial and non-sexist society, committed to reconciliation and restitution is to be applauded."

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine that Derrida, Farrakhan—or any theorist or activist of any stripe—could have said anything else about South Africa. For in a context where difference—multiplied, reified, extended, extrapolated and systematically insinuated—has been the basis of domination and oppression, talk of its liberating possibilities has seemed alien and alienating. To rail against the tyranny of "the same" (Levinas 1969, Lyotard 1984), or to herald the liberating possibilities of a politics of difference (Young 1990), has seemed in this context perverse and repugnant, and has been viewed with intense suspicion.² Terms such as "ethnic identity," "self-determination," "minority rights"—cherished expressions of aspirations for freedom in countries

and contexts as diverse as Quebec, the Basque Country, even the United States—have seemed almost foolish, certainly dangerous, in a context where they were conscripted to the nefarious ends of apartheid domination. And so it is not "difference," but the struggle to be "the same," to establish a state on the basis of constitutionally secured legal equality, that has been the basis of the fight against apartheid and for the construction of a new nation.

It is this struggle which provides the background to the controversial and contested notion of non-racialism. Mandela's oft repeated words have become almost a mantra for his vision of a new society: "We are seeking to build a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa." Non-racialism is thus central to his political lexicon. Moreover, the notion itself is built into the "Founding Provisions" of the Constitution of 1996. As such, it will continue to shape the vision and the politics of the nation for generations to come.

Given this, it becomes important to explore the notion, recognizing its distinctiveness, understanding its history, and examining its ongoing importance in the contemporary struggles to build a new nation (Foster 1995). Crucially, one needs to interrogate the substance that lies behind the slogan. For the bald statement of the principle of non-racialism in the Constitution masks the fact that at every point in the evolution of the notion, including its current use, it has been the site of intense contestation. There is no consistent nor uncontroversial definition of what the term might mean, and it has come under attack from a surprising array of forces.

Non-Racialism: a Genealogy of the Notion

Non-racialism, both as a concept and as a political praxis has been the site of intense contestation in South Africa, and it has been the subject of some ironic reversals. Indeed, the history of notion can only be written under the trope of irony. For while it is a term now most closely associated with the policies of the African National Congress, it did not arise there, and its adoption by the ANC was at the same time an adaptation, both of the term itself and of the policy definition of the ANC.

Accepting that many nuances and specific historical shifts are diminished and reduced by brevity, in what follows we will trace as briefly as possible the history of the idea of non-racialism.³

The ownership and meaning of the term remain highly contested. Bennie Bunsee (1997), Senior Administrative Officer for the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), claims that the origin of the term can be traced to the founding of the PAC in 1959 when Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, in his Presidential address to the first congress of the PAC, outlined what remains for the PAC the true notion of non-racialism:

The Africanists take the view that there is only one race to which we all belong, and that is the human race. In our vocabulary, therefore, the word 'race' is applied to man (sic), has no plural form. . . . (in Drew 1997: 288).

More recently, Roelf Meyer claimed in a radio interview that the formation of his new political movement will lead to the birth of the "first truly non-racial political party in South Africa."⁴ In an article on nation-building, liberal commentator James Myburgh (1997) accuses the ANC of "doublespeak" for claiming non-racialism while retaining racial discourse for the purposes of policies of racial preference in favor of black South Africans.

There is a strange agreement between the Africanism of Bunsee and the liberalism of Myburgh. Both see non-racialism as a denial of race, as its complete negation. Both seek to challenge the ANC's ownership of the notion of non-racialism, and to do so by giving it a different content. Ironically, this happens at a time when the ANC itself is questioning what the term might mean in the construction of a new nation, and in the resolution of what has historically been known as "the National Question" (van Diepen 1988; Carrim 1997).

Tracing the genealogy of the notion becomes then an important step in situating the contemporary debate within a history of use and definition. This will throw some light on these more recent struggles over ownership and meaning.

A Contested History

'Non-racialism' was, ironically, a term originally coined in opposition to the racial politics and self-definitions of the ANC. It was deployed initially (contra the claims of Bunsee) by the radical Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) against what was perceived to be the ANC position, defined as "multi-racialism." Although Alexander has argued (personal interview, 1997) that the term arose within the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) at the time of its "Black Republic" debate on the nature of the South African struggle in 1928, in fact, right through to the 1960s, the CPSA (later the SACP)⁵ continued to use the notion of "multi-racialism" (cf. Drew 1997: 275, 360).

What is clear is that the notion of non-racialism remains subsumed until much later. Equally, no significant distinction between the idea of non-racialism and the idea of multi-racialism is apparent in the Communist Party, though its opponents saw a clear difference in the ideology and practical implications of the respective ideas. Perhaps we may say, at most, that the CPSA began to develop a position best described as "incipient non-racialism" (Frederikse 1990: 17).

It seems rather that the concept itself is articulated and defended in the tradition of the NEUM, which is where we find its first sustained use and genesis, particularly in the slogan "Non-racialism, not multi-racialism" which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. Drew has outlined the difference between the NEUM, ANC and the Africanists at the time as follows:

The NEUM saw building a non-racial nation as the road to national liberation and democracy; the moderate wing of the Congress movement, along with the Communists, used a multi-racial or multi-national paradigm; Africanists saw building an African nation as a precondition for broader black unity and for the overthrow of white supremacy (1997:23,4)

This quotation highlights the point at which the language of non-racialism emerges as a counter to multi-racialism. How then was multi-racialism understood, and how was non-racialism distinguished from it?

Four Positions

Multi-racialism is used as an epithet to describe four radically different positions: (a) Apartheid *herrenvolkism*, including the mobilization of ethnic and racial discourse to support white supremacy; (b) the liberal multi-racialism of the early ANC and the Institute of Race Relations; (c) a Stalinist conflation of ethnicity and nation by the SACP; and (d) the idea of

‘national groups’ and the acceptance of racially separate political organs in the Congress Alliance.⁶

Against these notions, different groups at different times deploy the notion of "non-racialism." In each instance, a different understanding of non-racialism itself emerges. This is what we will now pursue, asking *who* used the term *against whom*, and what was at stake in this debate.

(a) Non-racialism has been primarily aimed against the use of ethnic and racial difference as the ideological basis of the apartheid state, which may be described as *Herrenvolkism*. Strong echoes of the Nazi ideology of an era just passed, particularly in respect of the complete discrediting of their policies of racial purity, are there. Later, the non-racialism of the ANC is shaped primarily against the various forms of apartheid mobilization of difference on the basis of "race." To this we will return. At an earlier stage, however, the use of the term *herrenvolkism* as a description of the policy of apartheid was particularly strong within the ranks of the NEUM and its many off-shoots, the same grouping who first used the notion of non-racialism most consistently.

The NEUM's insistence on non-racialism in their definition of struggle was driven by an argument that *any* concession to racial organizing, racial categorization, or even the language of difference, would play into the hands of apartheid *herrenvolkism* (cf. K.A Jordaan, 1954, in Drew 1997: 272). The consistent, long-standing position of the NEUM and its offshoots generated a tradition by which they consciously and vigorously distinguished themselves from other anti-apartheid groups.

(b) The picture is different when we consider Liberal multi-racialism. Liberal multi-racialism was constructed, Frederikse argues, on the premise that the fundamental problem in South Africa was one of managing "race relations." Situated within the Institute of Race Relations and later the Liberal Party, this analysis united white liberals with some of the liberal leadership of the ANC. In this early period, there was an agreement between these two forces on the need for "constructive segregation" (1990:18), best grasped ideologically as follows:

according to the 'race relations' concept South Africa was not a unitary society, but rather one of distinct races with inherently different interests stemming from their diverse cultures. Resolution of conflict between the races thus demanded a reconciliation of the immutable elements of this multi-racial society (1990: 20)

A program of action flows directly out of this analysis of the problem. Managing "race relations" is inherently linked to "multi-racialism." It was against this understanding both of the problem and the solution that the idea of non-racialism began to take shape in a new way. From this point of view, liberal diagnoses and prognoses failed adequately to grasp the nature of the "national question" and thus to provide an adequate resolution of the problem.

In fact, the liberal diagnosis was seen to be a dangerous and arrogant attempt by the privileged (white) classes to subvert the struggle for black liberation, by defining it in such a way that the end of apartheid would not necessarily mean the ending of white power. This debate would surface in a new form with the rise of Black Consciousness in the 1970s, and would continue to shape the strategy and tactics of struggle right throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.

This attack came from a number of quarters. Importantly, this included people from within the ranks of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), where a radical Africanist position had begun to

emerge in the mid to late 1940s. By the 1950s, this position had come to cause major tensions within the ANC, coming to a head in 1959 when the Africanists broke away from the ANC and formed the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) under the leadership of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. At the founding Congress of the PAC, Sobukwe elaborated this critique of multi-racialism:

Against multi-racialism we have this objection, that the history of South Africa has fostered group prejudices and antagonisms, and if we have to maintain the same group exclusiveness, parading under the term of multi-racialism, we shall be transporting to the new Afrika these very antagonisms and conflicts. . . . It is a method of safe-guarding white interests irrespective of population figures. In that sense it is a complete negation of democracy. [It] implies that there are such basic insuperable differences between the various national groups here that the best course is to keep them permanently distinctive in a kind of democratic apartheid. That to us is racialism multiplied, which probably is what the term truly connotes (in Drew 1997:288).

There are three elements to this critique of multi-racialism, all of which are important. The first is the insight that the notion of multi-racialism builds upon the assumption of racial difference. This assumption has its origins in colonial and apartheid racial politics. Accepting these categories as a starting point and then trying to oppose them is a fundamentally flawed strategy, and succeeds only in reproducing the terms of oppression in a new context.

The second insight is that the language of multi-racialism is a means of furthering white domination in a new form. If South Africa is made up of four races, each with intractable differences and interests, and the problem is managing the relations between these four races, then we end up with the scenario which became, in slightly modified form, the basis of the National Party position from the 1983 Tri-Cameral Parliament constitution, in which the structures of racial division were multiplied through multiple parliaments, all finally under white control and white veto power.

The third element to Sobukwe's critique of multi-racialism was his attack on the Congress Alliance, including the ANC, for its continued organizing along racial lines. In order to understand this more fully, it is now necessary to look at the conflation of race and nation that dominated the SACP at this time, as well as the notion "national groups" and separate racial organizing in the Congress Alliance.

(c) Another target of the non-racial ideal was multi-nationalism. An SACP understanding of the "national question" during this early period was centrally shaped by Stalin's definition of the "nation," as expressed by Jack Simons, who argued that a nation is "an aggregate or community of persons having a number of specific characteristics in common: language, territory, economy, traditions, and psychology" (1954, in Drew 1997: 275). The SACP's Lionel Forman spelled out the implications: "South Africa is not a single nation but a multi-national state" (1959, in Drew 1997:280). Consequently, "the perspective is opened up of a South Africa which is an economically integrated brotherhood of equal and autonomous nations, united in a single state, in which racial discrimination will be a crime" (ibid.: 284).

This "one state, many nations" thesis was severely attacked by the NEUM and the PAC, both of whom labeled it multi-racialism, the PAC somewhat inconsistently, as it too needed to utilize a notion of "nation" in its Africanism, as we will see. The argument for multi-nationalism became in fact a key plank in later apartheid policy, to be revived more recently by Herman

Giliomee, who makes the consistent argument that the present project of nation building is inherently flawed because South Africa is not one nation, but many nations within one state (Giliomee 1997).

(d) This brings us to the final approach attacked by non-racial theorists, and to the heart of the split between the ANC and the PAC, on the one hand, and the ANC and the NEUM and allies on the other: The decision to accept "national group" identities as an organizing principle. To understand the critique, we must outline the Congress position—later known as the "Charterist position."

In 1955, the ANC and its alliance partners adopted the famous "Freedom Charter," the document that was to shape its political direction until it came to power in 1994. Three clauses from that Charter framed the debate on racial politics in significant ways over the next forty years.

The first of these is the statement from the Preamble: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." This statement, in the developing understanding of the Congress Alliance, affirmed that nationalism could not be reduced to race. Hence African nationalism was understood in an inclusive way to incorporate "all who live in the land," thus breaking the link between nation and race (blood and descent).

From the outset, the Africanists who would go on to form the Pan-Africanist Congress vigorously contested this view, arguing that it implied equal rights to the land for both indigenous and settler populations. For the PAC, the land belonged to the Africans, and not to the white settlers. This clause signaled one of the great divides in Black politics.

The second Charter clause of significance comes likewise from the Preamble: "Only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of color, race, sex or belief." Non-racialism is not mentioned here, but it was implied—as a vision of a color-blind constitutional democracy of equal citizens under the law, with individual rights protected and secured within the framework of a liberal democracy. I argue that this is central to what the ANC meant by non-racialism: At the level of law and democracy, all would be treated as "the same."

The second clause of the body of the Charter was to become the most controversial of all in the decades which followed. It was headed: "All National Groups shall have Equal rights," and stated:

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races; All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride; All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs; The preaching and practice of national, race or color discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime; All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

It was precisely such talk of "national groups and races" that was anathema to the NEUM, the PAC, and other groups. For them it was an insufficient negation of apartheid; it operated within the terms created by apartheid itself, "national groups and races" being the language on which apartheid had been predicated. Talk of "national pride" within this context was the breeding ground of ethnic chauvinism, of potential co-option by an apartheid politics of difference. The language of "folk culture and customs" could have been taken from an apartheid textbook.

How was this position understood and defended within Congress? From my readings, primarily but not exclusively on tactical grounds, rather than out of an acceptance of the racial categories of apartheid, a temporary measure, it was hoped, that would, in time, give way to a new mode of organizing that would be truly non-racial. Thus SACP luminary Brian Bunting writes in 1957 (in Drew 1997:135):

The Congress movement is an alliance of all sections of the people in the liberatory movement. At the moment, for historical reasons, each national group is organized in its separate national organization, but there can be no doubt that with the passage of time and ever-closer co-operation in active political struggle, with the growth to political and organizational maturity of each group, the tendency will be for the barriers to break down and ultimately for full political and organizational cohesion to be brought about.

This prediction would prove to be accurate. But the NEUM and the PAC were united in their attack on this position, with the NEUM the most consistent, and their critique being perfectly expressed by Kenneth Hendrickse, once of the NEUM:

The Congress "alliance" is made up of various "racial" organizations in which people are divided according to the way they have been "racially" classified by the oppressive South African ruling class, that is, as so-called "Africans," "Coloreds," "Indians" and "whites." . . . It is multi-racialism—a gratuitous concession to apartheid—which is at the root of all other evils in Congress. . . . And it is precisely the multi-racialism of Congress which enables the "Whites only" Congress of Democrats to dominate the Congress "racial" alliance and to subordinate its struggle against oppression to the interests of "sympathetic," "White" patronage." (in Drew: 140)

In the same article, Hendrickse goes on to contrast this position with the strong view of non-racialism:

The people in South Africa will be united in non-racial, democratic, anti-apartheid political, labor, district and cultural organizations according to their level of political consciousness and understanding, not in racial organizations according to their "race" classification. Where there is any acceptance, whatsoever, of apartheid, color bar or segregation whether voluntary or enforced, there can only be division and paralyzing weakness (in Drew 1997:140-1).

Some went further to attack the very notion of "race" itself, none more forcefully than Neville Alexander. "Our position," he writes, "is determined by the scientific fact that 'race' is a non-entity. . . . The word 'non-racial' can be accepted by a racially oppressed people if it means that we reject the concept of 'race', that we deny the existence of 'races' and thus oppose all actions, practices, beliefs and policies based on the concept of 'race'" (Alexander 1985:46).

The PAC was slightly more ambiguous because they had to reconcile two somewhat contradictory tendencies: the denial of "race" and the assertion of "Africanism," where Africanism meant both an inclusive term for anyone with an "African" commitment, and a designation of the indigenous majority from whom land had been taken.

Thus Sobukwe's seminal speech begins with an assertion of non-racialism similar to Alexander's: "The Africanists take the view that there is only one race to which we all belong, and that is the human race" (in Drew 1997: 287). Sobukwe goes on, however: "In South Africa we recognize the existence of national groups which are the result of geographical origin within a certain area as well as a shared historical experience of these groups." While there is only one "race," there are socially constructed, geographically determined and historically transmitted differences between national groups: "The Europeans are a foreign minority group which has exclusive control of political, economic, social and military power," the group which has "dispossessed the African people of the land"; the "Indian foreign minority group" is to be divided into an "oppressed minority," and a "merchant class" which has become "tainted with the virus of cultural supremacy and national arrogance"; and finally, there are "Africans," the "indigenous group" which "form the majority of the population" and are "the most ruthlessly exploited."

Three things are important to note: First, "coloreds" are not mentioned in the speech, and it is not clear why. Second, Sobukwe's understanding of "national groups," while clearly a constructionist understanding, does not appear that different from the Congress position, which also saw these groups as historically constructed and open to change. Finally, the notion of African is here applied exclusively to the original indigenous inhabitants of the land. This is clearly an exclusivist understanding, in which working-class Indians, for instance, can "identify" with the "African majority," but cannot themselves be understood as African.

Sobukwe ends his speech with his now famous definition of Africanism: "We aim, politically, at a government of the Africans by the Africans for Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Africa and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African." Here, quite clearly, a new inclusive understanding of "African" emerges, one which is determined not by origin but by commitment and destiny. These exclusivist and inclusivist definitions obviously remain in tension with one another, marking PAC politics ever since.

The 1960s and 1970s: Poqo, Morogoro, Sacos, and Black Consciousness

This period is marked by the turn to armed struggle, the banning of the liberation movements, and the exigencies of exile politics. Some significant developments in racial discourse and analysis in South Africa during this period throw further light on the development of the notion of non-racialism.

Poqo, the new armed wing of the PAC, began with attacks on white farmers and civilians, a defeat for many of the more inclusivist Africanism of Sobukwe and the triumph of an exclusivist, some would say recidivist, Africanism which conflated African with black, and collapsed white into "settler" (cf. Alexander, under the pseudonym No Sizwe, 1979:116-7).

In the ANC, the experience of exile and the turn to armed struggle accelerated the vision of a non-racial organization articulated by Bunting above. The new political realities made the need for "racial" organizing moot, and Umkhonthe weSizwe, its armed wing, was from the beginning open to all "races." By 1969, however, the ANC in exile recognized at their Morogoro conference the need to open membership of the organization itself to all people (in Frederikse: 1990: 100). This decision transformed the ANC for the first time into a "nonracial" party, bringing its practice into line with its theory.⁷

In the vacuum left by State repression of the 1960s, a new movement known as the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) arose in the 1970s. It introduced a new set of terms for racial discourse and practice that was to shape the political landscape and vocabulary for the next two decades. Central to this was the use of the word "Black" as a designation for all non-whites.⁸ Influenced also by the Black Power movement in the United States, the *negritude* movements in France and Francophone Africa, and the post-colonial assertions of blackness found in the writings of Franz Fanon, the BCM embarked on a campaign to reclaim and revalue the notion of "Blackness," asserting it as revolutionary and transformative claim.

As a construct, "Black" was intended to transcend the language of tribalism, ethnicity and that of "national groups." It provided a solution to some of the ambiguities of the PAC's Africanism, and an ideological space for the unity of the oppressed that the language of class (NEUM), of Africanism (PAC) and of national groups (ANC) had failed to accomplish. Halisi (1991: 104) writes:

[Steve] Biko upheld the principle of racial nationalism, confirming the view associated with the PAC that the land belonged to African people. However, he departed from African exclusivism by including Africans, Coloreds and Indians in the designation 'Black'. Although the BCM objected to separate ethnic-based organizations, it was influenced by the idea of a multi-racial confederation of organizations, or Charterism, associated with the ANC. At least in theory, Biko resolved the PAC's objection that ANC Charterism amounted to minority control of the black movement. The BCM made *black* nationalism superior to ethnic—African, Indian or Colored—nationalisms.

The BCM reformulated the basis for an alliance of the oppressed groups and excluded whites. It was this divide which was to mark resistance politics until the time of the democratic elections. What was the argument for such a position, and how did it relate to the notion of non-racialism?

The early BC was informed by the earlier critique of "multi-racialism" and "multi-nationalism," a critique intensified at the time by the notion of "non-racial sport" advocated by the South African Council On Sport (SACOS—an NUEM influenced body) in opposition to state attempts to promote "multi-national" sport. Hence in a vein similar to the PAC, Biko argued: "We needed to inculcate into the minds of our people that they are not inferior to any person, and secondly, that we all belong to one human race" (in Frederikse 1990: 108). The disavowal of alliances with white organizations was understood to be a tactical and not a principled position, as shown by the BCM-linked South African Students Organization (SASO) manifesto: "South Africa is a country in which both black and white live and shall continue to live together." The BCM's exclusive base for organizing blacks separately is tactical, and "must not be interpreted by blacks to imply 'anti-whitism.'" (in Frederikse 1990: 109).

The BCM therefore also held to a vision of a non-racial future. Like the NEUM and the PAC they shared suspicions of the notion of "national groups," and in attempting to build principled black unity they were similar to the NEUM. But against both, they asserted that this would involve a reassertion of the importance of race in political analysis and in political organizing.

In breaking down the categorical distinctions of the oppressed groups, the BCM contributed significantly to the development of non-racialism. But as it was to discover, the nuances of a positive assertion of blackness and a tactical understanding of resistance to alliances with whites

would be hard to sustain in the heat of struggle. As Neville Alexander warned in his assessment of the BCM: "the war on 'whitey' . . . will reintroduce the cancer of racist thinking into the liberatory movement" (Alexander 1974, in Pityana et al 1991: 250). This warning echoes that of Steve Tshwete: "We . . . knew that BC could give problems in the long run, by reason of it being color politics . . . Color politics are dangerous. They are just as bad as tribal politics" (in Frederikse 1990: 161).

The 1980s: Contesting Non-racialism

In the early 1980s some significant shifts began to take place on the terrain of internal politics in South Africa. One was heralded by the re-emergence of the notion of non-racialism, now defined as the renewed possibility of forging alliances with progressive white organizations. It signaled a resurgence of the Charterist position against the newly formed National Forum Movement spearheaded by the BCM and Unity Movement organizations. "Non-racial" organizations were now seen as those which were Charterist in orientation and which sought new alliances in a broad United Democratic Front. Ironically, therefore, organizations which had previously used the notion of non-racialism against the Congress position, now found themselves attacked by this movement on the same grounds.

But this was both an adoption and an adaptation of the language of non-racialism, through which alliances might be sought (again) with progressive white organizations. Rather than the language of principled non-racial unity as argued for by Alexander, this period saw the language of non-racialism used to describe the possibilities and praxis of cross- or multi-racial alliance. In the fluid and dispersed politics of the United Democratic Front (the legal standard bearer for the Congress movement during the 1980s) many different tendencies were permitted to flourish including, particularly in Natal, the resurrection of the Natal Indian Congress (a 'racial' basis for organizing).

This, of course, was anathema to both the BC adherents, struggling to sustain a "Black" identity across "racial" lines, and to the New Unity Movement. Alexander railed against this as "the thin edge of the wedge for separatist movements and civil wars," describing it as a re-emergence of "multi-racialism (Alexander 1985: 49).

By the mid-1980s, in the politics of street struggle, a new, non-racial culture had begun to emerge, where race truly did become secondary to political commitment. As some white activists began to suffer the same fate as their black comrades, including death in detention and political assassination, signs, tenuous but significant, of a common core culture, began to be forged in the struggle. I will return to this notion of "core culture" at a later point.

By now the Freedom Charter's references to "national groups" was viewed with increasing embarrassment by many in the ANC alliance. The language of group culture and ethnicity seemed too close to the apartheid vision, too divisive and therefore dangerous. This caution notwithstanding, the broad-based movement of the United Democratic Front continued not only to tolerate but to encourage racially or ethnically based organizing as a tactical matter.

During this period, Alexander waged a lonely battle against both BCM racialism and what he saw as the co-option of the notion of non-racialism by the UDF and ANC. A quotation from his speech at the launch of the National Forum will illustrate the thrust of his critique (Alexander 1985: 45-6):

[For] most people who use this term 'non-racial' it means exactly the same thing as multi-racial. . . . The word 'non-racial' can be accepted by a racially oppressed people if it means that we reject the concept of 'race', that we deny the existence of 'races' and thus oppose all actions, practices, beliefs and policies based on the concept of 'race'. . . . Non-racialism, meaning the denial of the existence of races, leads on to *anti-racism* which goes beyond it because the term not only involves the denial of 'race' but also opposition to the capitalist structures for the perpetuation of which the ideology and theory of 'race' exist.

The 1990s

In 1992, the UDF disbanded, being subsumed under a fully non-racial ANC. "Racially-based organizing, on campuses, in schools, in local politics, and, of course, in national politics, became a thing of the past. The white activist movements, the Indian Congresses, the predominantly Colored civic and community organizations, all disbanded, being subsumed under new, "non-racial" organizations. The political and pragmatic tactical reasons for using such racially focused bodies, argued as necessary because of the physical separation of groups by apartheid, no longer existed with the demise of apartheid.

More importantly, the triumph of the notion of non-racialism required truly non-racial organizing under the banner of the ANC, where race and ethnic politics would no longer be tolerated. Non-racialism in its purest form had therefore triumphed, not only intellectually but also politically (Foster 1995). Or had it?

The debate on the ongoing valence of the notion of non-racialism is now re-emerging within the ANC. The issues of multi-culturalism, Africanism, affirmative action, ethnicity, Colored identity and the exact meaning of the term in the context of the new democracy have surfaced with surprising rapidity.⁹ Perhaps this is not surprising, for the historical analysis shows that the notion has meant and continues to mean different things to different people. In the analysis which follows, I will attempt to draw out the parameters of these differences as I interrogate them in relation to the re-emergence of a politics of difference. First, however, it is necessary to point to other existing discourses of sameness and difference.

DISCOURSES OF SAMENESS

Discourse of "Sameness": "African" as Anti-Ethnicity. When the African National Congress was founded as a direct response to the colonial settlement of the Union of South Africa in 1910 which consolidated power in white (settler) hands, its primary role was understood to be that of uniting the "African" people against this settlement. "African" in this instance quite clearly meant Black, indigenous African, and excluded Colored and Indian. It was a term located within the history of the discourse of racial difference, using the colonial distinctions.

But it also signaled the development of a new discourse of 'sameness' as, for the first time, it consciously set out to construct an anti-ethnic African nationalism. It was an assertion, therefore, that despite significant language and cultural differences—despite a history of antagonism and struggle—it was both possible and essential for "Africans" to sublimate ethnic identity to a greater common national struggle.

This view transcends what are usually held to be the primordial and intransigent bonds of ethnicity and tribe, and it gives the lie to the simplistic view that the struggle in South Africa has been primarily between Afrikaner and African nationalism, supposedly two sides of the same

dangerous coin. Afrikaner nationalism, by contrast, is ethnically defined, mobilizing around "blood and origin," or around language, culture and history; a nationalism predicated on a politics and discourse of difference. As such it is a "closed" nationalism, limited to those who share that heritage. By contrast, "African" nationalism is always already a breaking open of boundaries, a conscious and intentional crossing of those boundaries and the assertion of a "sameness" that downplays and subverts "blood and descent."

However, it is still a sameness predicated on "race," indeed, on an acceptance of sorts of the racial categories and codings of colonialism. To be an "African" is to share in this racial identity, which is distinct from European, Asian or Colored.

Discourses of "Sameness": "African" as Trans-Racial. It was the PAC who sought to reconstitute the notion of "African" as a trans-racial category, to include all those whose primary loyalty was to Africa. Thus, for Sobukwe, the only 'race' that was recognized was the 'human race', and the only distinctions that were to be made were between "African" and "settler," the latter meaning all those whose primary loyalty remained to Europe (or Asia), and not Africa.

But the subtlety of these distinctions was lost in the hurly-burly of political struggle, with some people sliding easily into a new racial coding of difference where the enemy was defined as "white" people as such. Here the tension between inclusive and exclusive definitions noted earlier reappears. However, a trans-racial inclusive understanding of "African" has emerged with renewed vigor since 1994, not only in the PAC by significant voices in the ANC. This is the basis of the argument made by the PAC's Bunsee (1997) for an "Africanist" way to a united nation, where all are understood as African, with multiple cultural diversities and languages. It is also the basis of Mbeki's powerful rhetorical plea for an inclusive Africanism in his parliamentary speech, "I am an African." Or as Bunsee (1997) puts it: "Our cultural diversity operates within the ambit of this Africanist unity for all our peoples. We are all Africans, but we do not lose our own cultural diversities and languages. On the contrary, we retain them as part of a complex mosaic that enriches all of us."

Discourses of "Sameness": "Black" as Trans-Racial Unity of the Oppressed. It is true to say that the notion of "Black" as representing the unity of the oppressed in South Africa was deployed most consistently and most assertively by the BCM. In its philosophy the notion of "blackness" functioned simultaneously as a trans-racial language of sameness which sought to efface the difference between African, *so-called* Colored¹⁰ and Indian, and as a language of difference which marked "Black" off from White. The struggle was marked out therefore between Black and White, categories defined at first glance by chromatic coding.

But it was never as simple as this. "Black consciousness" was the mobilizing image. "Blackness," it was asserted, is a state of mind, a recognition of racial oppression, an acknowledgment of the unity of the oppressed, and a commitment to struggle against that oppression. As such there are those whose pigmentation might be dark or "black" but who are not "Black" in terms of this definition, e.g. the homeland leaders and all others who had bought into ethnic and apartheid categories.

"Blackness" represented struggle, involving the remaking of consciousness and the overcoming of internalized categories of oppression. It was expected that a parallel process of "white consciousness" should take place, in which white South Africans could come to terms with their own internalized notions of superiority. Only through this process of conscientization would the groundwork be laid to engage in common struggles from a basis of equality.¹¹ As Pityana has more recently noted, for the BCM non-racialism "can never be sufficient by itself

because it leaves behind some of the inherent inequalities that this society produced. BC was therefore seeking to provide a model for the meaningful transformation of the society" (Pityana 1991).

Discourses of "Sameness": "South African". "South African" is a term of "sameness" which ties in with the quest to construct a new patriotism, a new sense of nationhood that transcends all the categories of difference. The advantage of this term lies in its trans-racial, trans-ethnic, national content. It is completely inclusive, tied as it is to the project of nation building, and symbolized in the exploits of the national sporting teams. It appears the ideal identity to mobilize as the common discourse of sameness, especially as it is also closely allied to an assertion of Africanism that is growing in importance.¹²

It is not without problems, however. First, the "South African" identity has functioned and continues to function for white South Africans as an unconscious shorthand for white South Africa, embedded in a long, deeply entrenched, history. Furthermore, the notion of "South African" identity slips all too easily into a history of "exceptionalism" which continues to separate South Africa from Africa, and to see its links to the world through the lens of colonial history. As such, it remains fundamentally Eurocentric in outlook, and is challenged as such by those who assert the need to build unity in diversity around the notion of "African."¹³

Discourses of Sameness: "Human Being". Some people insist on the primacy of their identity as "human being," and on this identity as the primary discourse of sameness, as the strongest bulwark against the exclusion and domination of the other through an assertion of the fundamental unity of the human race. There are echoes of Sobukwe here—"We recognize only one race, the human race." It is an identity which is yet overlaid by multiple other identities, however secondary.

An analogous discourse of sameness comes from religious quarters. A Christian readily states, for example, that identity is established in a faith relationship, undergirded by the claim that everyone is made in the image of God. One consequence of this assertion may be an inability to see the salience of all other identities: If the notion of the image of God in the human being is the starting point, then color will not be an issue, neither will language, or culture understood as peoples different values, norms, standards and traditions. Religion might thus provide a means whereby other identities are transcended or minimized, but it is also the vehicle whereby certain cultural and ethnic identities are solidified in discourses of difference. We will return to this ambivalence of religious discourse.

Discourses of "Sameness": Non-Racialism. Having already traced the genealogy and importance of this notion as a crucial construct in the discourse of sameness, I now turn in more detail to an analysis of its ongoing usage and importance in contemporary racial discourse.

During the period of struggle there was virtual unanimity on the use of the notion of non-racialism to express the goal of the new society, even if there was difference on whether non-racial organizing was tactically correct as a means of struggle for that society. In the post-apartheid transition, this unanimity is fracturing, even subject to questioning by many of its former proponents. Is it adequate as a definition of the goal of the new society? It is apparent, as before, that the notion is used without much clarity as to its meaning. Struggles over its meaning remain far from closed, perhaps inevitably. A definitive closure or history will escape us, but an attempt to clarify the different ways in which the notion is understood now clears the way for a more helpful debate around its continuing valence in the new society. This points to the

constructive burden of my discussion: To explore ways of holding together the dialectic of identity in difference, or the politics of non-racialism and the politics of difference.

NON-RACIALISM: ITS ONGOING VALIDITY

I begin by analyzing the notion of non-racialism and its interplay with a politics of difference in the Bill of Rights.

Non-Racialism and a Politics of Difference in the Constitution: Difference within Sameness

Non-racialism has been enshrined in the Constitution. But this has not shut down the space for a new politics of difference. One example is particularly instructive: The use of the idea of non-racialism by some (white) commentators to mount attacks against the policies of affirmative action and racial redress (Myburgh 1997). *It is important to not that the two notions are not necessarily contradictory.* But how can this claim be substantiated?

First, at the more systemic level of constitutional law, legal rights and processes, and the protection of human rights in general, the notion of non-racialism remains central. The Bill of Rights in the new South African Constitution begins with a statement on non-racial equality which echoes that of the Freedom Charter: "Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law." Its third clause is a sweeping statement of human rights which outstrips most constitutions in its scope:

The state may not *unfairly* [my emphasis] discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

This is a statement of non-racialism and the "right to be the same" that is understood to be the bedrock of the new society. But secreted in this non-racialism is the recognition of the ongoing valence of race and difference. The term "unfairly" signals that there are indeed grounds of discrimination which are considered "fair." Here a limited constitutional politics of difference becomes possible within the broad framework of non-racialism. It finds concrete expression in the second clause of the Bill of Rights on affirmative action:

Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be used.

Here then, is a recognition that equality is not something which is given simply by decree. It is something to be "achieved," something which has to take account of past (or present or future) inequalities in its attainment; something, therefore, that must take cognizance of the ongoing ways in which "race" shapes the social and economic lives of people in an unjust fashion. In this sense, non-racialism in effect is not equated with a society which is color blind, that is, one in which historically derived advantages on the basis of race are covered over and thus ignored.

Another place in which a politics of difference is inserted within the non-racial constitutional rubric is in Clause 31, concerning cultural, religious and linguistic

communities. Echoing the Freedom Charter's clause on "National groups," but substituting the terms "cultural" or "linguistic" or "religious communities," the clause is a moderate assertion of protection of the right of minorities to practice a politics of difference within the boundaries of the broader framework of constitutionally secured "sameness."¹⁴ It mandates the establishment of a Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities as one of the statutory bodies intended to support constitutional democracy. The Commission, yet to be established, is intended (a) to promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities, and (b) to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among cultural, religious and linguistic communities, *on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association*.

The italics are my own, to highlight the point I have been making: that while there is indeed space for a politics of difference within the constitution, it is only as they remain subordinated to the overall securing of the constitutional right to equality and non-discrimination, which lies at the heart of the notion of non-racialism. At the same time it is a clear example in the tradition of non-racialism that there is ample room for, in fact, the encouragement of, a politics and practice that continues to recognize both the negative and the positive legacy and possibility of difference. From this point of view, there is no contradiction between non-racialism and affirmative action as a necessary means of redress of past racial discrimination and oppression. Nor is there a contradiction between non-racialism as the assertion of legally protected equality and non-discrimination, and the positive assertion of difference in cultural, linguistic and religious forms.

Non-Racialism and the Creation of a Core Culture: Sameness within Difference

The non-racialism envisioned in the new constitution runs deeper than simple legal equality. It involves the forging of what Neville Alexander calls a "core culture," that is, a minimal national identity which transcends the many differences that constitute the country. In other words, it is about the quest for sameness within difference, the quest for means to transcend the boundaries of difference in the creative, constructive search for that which makes us "the same" even in our difference.

This core culture includes the construction and acknowledgment of a common history, a common pride, common symbols and bonds of community that break down the old walls of separation. These are not things which are simply given—they require struggle, sharing, participation, openness to the other, and a willingness to learn and to teach from all. Some success has already been achieved, particularly in the symbolically charged arena of national sport, and in the manner in which the new flag has been embraced by most. Albie Sachs, now a Judge on the Constitutional Court, describes this "thicker" version of non-racialism in this fashion (in Frederikse 1990:268):

Non-racialism is not a bland thing. It is not just an absence of racism—that's empty. In fact, the reality of developing a non-racial culture in South Africa is much richer than that. It is much more active, more dynamic. It includes language, song; it includes dance, movement; it includes laughter, a way of telling a story, a way of making a political point.

Some important questions remain around this notion of a core culture related to non-racialism. In respect of an effective accommodation of ethnic diversity, we may affirm the quest for a "core culture"; but we may also ask, who controls the process of defining this core culture, who is left out, who is invisible? The question of invisibility has two sides: the invisibility of exclusion and the invisibility of hegemonic domination. Both need to be contested and made visible if the process of defining the core culture is to help rather than hinder the effective accommodation of ethnic diversity.

These two struggles—the systematic restructuring of public life in terms of the equality enshrined in the new constitution and the symbolically charged attempts to create a new national identity, a "core culture," are two of the important sites where the notion of non-racialism retains an ongoing valence in the South African political lexicon and popular consciousness.

Non-Racialism and the History of Struggle: Comradeship Across Boundaries

The vision of a non-racial society, imaginatively and constructively utopian, arose in the context of the struggle against systematic racism. This too gives it an ongoing power. As Albert Nolan (1988:141) expresses it:

Racism has been taken to such lengths by the system that it has produced a deep thirst for its opposite: non-racialism. . . . The non-racial ideal that has developed and spread and really taken root among the people of South Africa, in opposition to the system, is an ideal of a society in which race, color or ethnicity is totally irrelevant.

Perhaps Nolan's optimism might seem hopelessly romantic, but it highlights another crucial contribution that the notion of non-racialism has made: to provide the most significant strategic paradigm for conducting the struggle against apartheid. In this perspective, it was the *system* of apartheid which was the enemy generally, not white people as such. Such a view, widely held, in large part helped pave the way for the kind of political settlement that was attained, for the birth of the new country without the descent into the predicted apocalypse. It also offered a framework for the work of reconciliation.

Non-Racialism and the Deconstruction of "Race"

Non-racialism remains important for one final reason. It is a continuing reminder that the construct of "race" is a scientific myth, a historically contingent and fluid notion which should never be valorized or reified. The language of non-racialism is a continuing critical reminder of the need to subvert any essentializing discourse on race and difference.

DISCOURSES OF DIFFERENCE: BEYOND NON-RACIALISM

Whatever the history of the concept of non-racialism, the evidence of an emerging desire for new ways of "speaking our selves" in South Africa is strong. The adequacy of the notion of non-racialism to address post-apartheid struggles about identity is being seriously questioned.

Somewhat surprisingly, the language of ethnicity, race, and cultural difference has re-emerged as a significant and highly charged issue. Equally surprisingly, the point of greatest tension has come not between Black and White, but between the Colored (or mixed-race) and the

Black communities. In a rejection of both the language of non-racialism and the language of "Blackness," many progressives in the Colored community have begun to reassert the need to create a "Colored" identity, an identity which draws on a different history, a despised and enslaved heritage, a shamefully forgotten heritage (December 1st Movement 1997).¹⁵

This new language of ethnicity and culture signifies an ironic return of those insights of the Freedom Charter which were repressed by the hegemony of the notion of non-racialism—the need to name the "national groups" and to protect and to develop their own folk cultures and traditions. The language of that ideal, however, was inadequate and has been too compromised by its use in the apartheid lexicon to be recovered so easily. What is needed is a new language of difference and sameness, situated within a constitutionally secured legal framework of equality, and oriented towards the elaboration of the edges of the core culture of commonness. This remains the most crucial political challenge. Here it is necessary to note other "discourses of difference" prevalent in contemporary debate.

Racism. The notion of racism poses multiple problems at a theoretical level. Foster, elsewhere (1995:16) and in this present volume, has noted the complexity of issue, and has helpfully summarized much of the contemporary debate around its definition, theoretical clarification, and the practical struggles against its effects. He also situates these debates within a reassertion of the importance of non-racialism.

If, for example, we claim that the notion of "race" is a scientific fallacy, its social effects and ongoing salience in the practices of racism nevertheless remain the central feature of our context. One helpful definition of racism distinguishes between *stereotyping*, common to all social formations; *prejudice*, carrying negative attributions towards the other and likewise common to all social formations; *discrimination*, meaning the power to act out our prejudices, also common to all social groups and formations; and *racism*. The last term includes stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, but crucially adds the essential feature of the ideology of White superiority. Racism then becomes those attitudes, actions and cultural manifestations flowing from the ideology of White superiority.

Multi-culturalism. In the past few years the notion of multi-culturalism has again emerged as one way of expressing a new politics of difference. The term was developed initially in Canada in an attempt to address the problem of cultural difference within Canada in a positive fashion. It quickly spread to the United States where it has taken substantial root. In South Africa, the term is contested.

Those expressing a positive view of the notion often do so in terms of the language of the celebration of difference, that is, through a desire to reassert difference in a positive manner, recognizing the pluralism embodied in the Constitution. This suggests not only a tolerance and acceptance of other cultures, but a conscious and sustained attempt to cross the boundaries of one's own culture and learn from these others. It also implied developing a positive consciousness and affirmation of one's own culture.

Caution is equally often expressed, particularly in respect of the danger of eliding the connection between "race" and "culture" in affirming multi-culturalism, to the point where it appears that the basic problem to be dealt with is simply cultural misunderstanding, and not racism.

Others simply reject the term, for a variety of reasons. These include arguments that the idea of multi-culturalism runs the serious danger of "fixing" the notion of culture too firmly; that it is

thus not fluid enough to describe adequately the boundary-crossing required in the construction of a new society; that a reification of culture might raise the prospect of continual cultural conflict; that it implicitly carries the "baggage of inequality" with it because it is always likely that a dominant culture dictates; or that it represents simply another brand of multi-racial ideology.

Despite caution and critique, it seems that this notion will continue to grow in popular and official circles as a means of affirming that we are indeed a multi-cultural nation, that there is substantial misunderstanding of the culture of others, and that the dominance of Euro- and White culture in educational resources, media representations, popular and high culture, and narratives of history and "civilization" needs to be actively contested by a multi-cultural agenda. For a significant period at least, however, the language of multi-culturalism is likely to remain supplementary to the far more difficult task of combating the ongoing power of racism, if one accepts that racism is not about misunderstanding, but about power and a hegemonic ideology of white supremacy. In short, multi-culturalism will only work within a conscious strategy to combat racism as such.

Rainbow Nation. A similar ambivalence exists with regard to the metaphor of "rainbow nation," a term popularized by Desmond Tutu and embraced by Nelson Mandela, though originally deriving from the political lexicon of Jesse Jackson in the USA. Differences in opinion are once again discernible here. Those who see it positively are usually far more ambivalent with respect to the metaphor than with the notion of multi-culturalism, perhaps because the metaphor lacks clear definition. It is interpreted in very different ways, for example: People of different identities that cannot be separated from each other; a new paradigm of humanness; and a sign of peace, of covenant, in which we are incomplete without the other.

Those who are ambivalent about the image see its emotional and constructive content as important, but feel it is ultimately an image of transition, for the short term rather than for the future. Again, this is because as a metaphor it has insufficient content; alternatively, it does not pay careful enough attention to racism; or, finally, its metaphorical content can be interpreted in ways not necessarily helpful for the construction of a new society.

The latter point is the primary theme for those who reject the metaphor. For some, it is a substitute for an analysis of the complexity of the national question; for others, rainbow colors remain too separate, running in parallel but not really mixing. Further, the metaphor also reifies and valorizes color as the basis of difference and identity in a manner which is problematic. Perhaps a far better metaphor, some feel, is that of a mosaic, where the whole cannot be understood without the complex interweaving of the parts. Neville Alexander specifically opposes the metaphor of the rainbow nation, preferring instead the idea of the "Great Garieb Nation," a river fed by many different tributaries, each contributing to the mainstream, some bringing new water, some drying up, and some being created.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS

The discussion so far has attended to the terms of debate within South African history and contemporary politics. Here I wish to move beyond description and analysis to make some proposals.

I propose to develop a theoretical argument, drawing on the work of Henry Giroux (1992), in order to provide a framework for some constructive proposals for new discourses of difference

and sameness. Before turning to Giroux, however, it is important to situate the question properly. As I have argued repeatedly, South Africa is a society in which difference has been extended, extrapolated, invented, constructed, contested and reified. The language of difference in this context is therefore multiple. These various discourses of difference were the basis of domination and its legitimation in both colonial and apartheid rule. Likewise, resistance and liberation politics have been about contesting difference and overcoming it in political practice.

If we seek a discourse of sameness in this context, the question is, between whom? On what terms, and in whose interests? In this, the notion of non-racialism has emerged as the primary metaphor for sameness, becoming embodied in the constitution as one of the founding principles of the new society.

But, to repeat, the notion of non-racialism has not been the only term of sameness, and in the post-apartheid era it is finding itself more and more displaced, both by other notions of sameness, primarily that of an inclusive notion of "African," and by those who question the salience of a language of sameness altogether.

The question, therefore, is that of how to find new ways of "speaking" our difference in such a manner that: (1) it avoids continuing to valorize the old racial categories; (2) it finds ways to grasp difference in a positive fashion that does not involve or promote chauvinism; and (3) it situates all this within an ongoing struggle against racism. The Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa's *Diversity Monitor* expresses the desire and the difficulty of this task as follows (IDASA 1996):

We have considered whether it would be possible to find new classifications with which people can identify. And how concepts such as nation-building, citizenship responsibility and non-racialism relate to the very negative practice of putting people into narrow boxes of racial classification. We have discovered how difficult it is to find new concepts and new terms and believe South Africans have no choice but to give new content to old terms.

Giroux's Proposals: Affirming and Resisting Difference

Henry Giroux (1992) has best captured the tension between what he calls difference and solidarity. He begins by supporting the importance of the affirmation of difference in challenging Western ethnocentrism and liberal humanism (205):

The notion of difference has played an important role in making visible how power is inscribed differently in and between zones of culture; how cultural borderlands raise important questions regarding relations of inequality, struggle, and history; and how differences are expressed in multiple and contradictory ways within individuals and between different groups.

But, he continues, it is also the case that the discourse of difference has contributed to "paralyzing forms of essentialism, ahistoricism, and a politics of separatism" (205). He then helpfully defines how notions of difference are used by three political groupings, which he defines as conservative, liberal and radical. For the conservative, difference is used to justify racism, sexism, and class exploitation. Liberals have a dual approach to difference. On the one hand they embrace it through notions of cultural diversity, which often hide the power of the

dominant group as the unspoken norm against which Otherness is measured (the definition of racism and the problems with multi-culturalism that I have developed above are prime examples of this problem). On the other hand they attempt to dissolve difference into the melting pot (207):

Under the rubric of equality and freedom, the liberal version of assimilation wages 'war' against particularity, lived differences, and imagined futures that challenge culture as unitary, sacred, and unchanging and identity, as unified, static, and natural.

Radicals, finally, understand difference as part of their attempt to "understand subjectivity as fractured and multiple rather than unified and static" (207).

While Giroux identifies himself with the pathos of the latter position, he raises a number of critical concerns. First, such a discourse of fractured and multiple subjectivities has the effect of erasing any viable notion of human agency. Second, it sometimes produces a "politics of assertion" that is "both essentialist and separatist." Third, it often reproduces the problem that it is attacking. And finally, it leads to forms of identity politics that "forgo the potential for creating alliances among different subordinate groups," which runs the risk of "reproducing a series of hierarchies of identities and experiences which serves to privilege their own form of oppression and struggle" (208).

These are precisely the problems we have encountered in our exploration of the notion of non-racialism. Giroux helps us to see how universal and fairly abstract terms such as non-racialism are co-opted by a conservative or liberal politics that seeks either to efface or superficially to celebrate difference in a discourse of sameness as domination. Giroux proposes a helpful way out of this impasse through which the practical problem of the discourses of sameness and difference in South Africa can be elaborated.

The elements of his proposal are as follows (Giroux 1992:209):

1. The notion of difference must be seen in relational terms that link it to a broader politics, one which deepens the possibility for reconstructing democracy;
2. Rather than merely celebrating specific forms of difference, a politics of difference must provide the basis for extending the struggle for equality and justice to broader spheres of everyday life;
3. It must be elaborated within, not against, a politics of solidarity;
4. It must be allowed to "rewrite difference" through the process of "crossing over into cultural borders" that offer narratives, languages, and experiences that "provide a resource for rethinking the relationship between the center and margins of power as well as between themselves and others;"
5. It must give voice to those excluded and silenced;
6. It must create a politics of remembrance in which different stories and narratives are heard;
7. It involves understanding how fragile identity is as it moves into "borderlands criss-crossed with a variety of languages, experiences and voices;
8. It must highlight the issue of power.

Applying these set of principles to our context, the following outlines for reconstructing the issues of sameness and difference could possibly emerge:

1. A discourse or a politics of difference must never be separated from the framework of a discourse and politics of sameness, which in our instance means from the framework secured by the notion of non-racialism and further developed and enriched by other discourses of sameness, in particular that of "African";
2. The assertion of difference must feed into the project of nation-building and the creation of a democratic human rights culture;
3. The inclusive solidarity expressed in the various discourses of sameness must be that within which affirmations of difference take place;
4. The "cultural crossing over" implied in notions such as "Rainbow Nation," "multi-culturalism," and even the creation of a "core culture" under the rubric of a rich non-racialism, must be encouraged and extended;
5. Voices historically marginalised (Black voices) and voices marginalised in the present (Colored, Indian, women, Khoisan and others) must be given priority;
6. A politics of remembrance must include recovering and reasserting the histories of peoples marginalised and excluded, symbolizing these histories and experiences in cultural, monumental and published forms. It would include too, giving special place to the history and praxis of non-racialism as the ethical and political force which shaped the struggle against the domination of difference;
7. It will recognize the fragility of identity and the way in which its threat can lead to devastating responses;
8. It must continue actively to identify, name and contest the ongoing power of racism.

Renaming Sameness and Difference

Can we find new, alternative terms to name our sameness and difference, ones which have weight and credibility? In IDASA's *Diversity Monitor* (1996), the Archbishop of Cape Town, Njongunkulu Ndungane, proposes the following set of identities: Black African, Colored African, Indian African and White African.

The use of racialized categories to express difference is problematic; but what is useful in this proposal is the notion of African as the primary term of sameness. It seems to unite a range of perspectives (ANC, PAC, and even Afrikaners), to offer a richness of sameness around which a core culture can indeed be elaborated, and to move away from "chromatic" or "anti-chromatic" ways of expressing our sameness. The Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, has shown in recent speeches just how inclusive and rich this notion can be for the creation of a national identity.

But how exactly does one insert the language of difference into the notion of being African? For the PAC this is a non-issue, for it describes itself as not having white or black members—only Africans, that is, a person who may be either indigenous or not, but who pays sole allegiance to Africa. This refusal to name difference cannot work, I believe, where it remains essential to effect redress and restitution after centuries of racial oppression and discrimination. It also has the effect of disallowing the self-assertion of identity and difference, in effect suppressing both. Moreover it acts against the need to positively grasp the rich diversity of how we are "different" in our common Africanness.

The Constitution provides a way, perhaps, to take this further. It eschews the language of race or of ethnicity, to speak of cultural, religious and linguistic difference. Perhaps these

differences, in unity, could be identified through hyphenation, linked to being African. Some options that have been proposed include: Black-African (or Native-African), Colored-African (or Mestizo-African, Garieb-African), Indian-African (or Asian-African), and Euro-African. While such new designations need to be owned by the groups that are thereby named, they point to a possible way for rethinking the language of difference in sameness that fundamentally breaks with the past and opens up new space for the future.

THEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS REFLECTION AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

It may seem strange to introduce what at first glance seems a wholly separate set of issues by invoking religion and religious reflection. Yet in South Africa, as perhaps elsewhere, in the debates around difference and sameness, theology and religious reflection have an important role to play. For identity and difference are interwoven in significant ways with religion. What follows are initial reflections that take us in the direction of some programmatic suggestions and predictions, by which we conclude this provisional study.

Black Theology/African Theology. Black theology in South Africa, as in America, arises out of, and speaks into, situations of black oppression at the hands of white racism, both individual and structural. As long as the legacy of racism remains in South Africa, Black theology will continue to speak with a loud voice. Perhaps, however, its own elision of Colored difference in the trope of blackness will undermine its optimistic vision of black solidarity. If it continues to insist on the universal notion blackness to signify "the oppressed," it runs the danger of itself becoming hegemonically coercive. Furthermore, as black power is consolidated in the public sphere—in government in particular—and grows in the private sector, the language of "blackness" will no longer so easily be equated with oppression and domination. We may then see that black theology is gradually replaced by a new form of African theology, or perhaps by a post-colonial theology. Whichever it is, however, these theologies will need to integrate anti-racist thought into the heart of their endeavors, else they will not speak to the ongoing legacy of racism.

Religious Universalism and Particularism. Here Daniel Boyarin's argument against Paul's universalist claim that "there is no longer Jew or Greek" is relevant. He attacks, in the name of Jewish difference, what he describes as Paul's Platonic universalism. A similar argument could be made against the implicit Platonism (or idealism) of the notion non-racialism. Boyarin thinks that Paul's universalist vision "seems to conduce to coercive politico-cultural systems that engage in more or less violent projects of the absorption of cultural specificities into the dominant one" (1994: 228).

Boyarin goes on to argue that "uncritical devotion to ethnic particularity has equally negative effects" (228). He poses a question which lies at the heart of the debate on difference: "How can I ethically construct a particular identity which is extremely precious to me without falling into ethnocentrism or racism of one kind or another?" (229).

His tentative solution is in the form of a dialectic that would "utilize each of these as antithesis to the other, correcting in the "Christian" system its tendencies toward a coercive universalism and in the "Jewish" system its tendencies toward contemptuous neglect for human solidarity" (229). He also argues for a "Diaspora" identity-politics as a form of resistance, both against the domination of the universal, and against the danger of the particular having power

over another. "Somewhere," he notes poignantly, "in this dialectic a synthesis must be found, one that will allow for stubborn hanging on to ethnic, cultural specificity but in a context of deeply felt and enacted human solidarity" (257).

Against this, Miroslav Volf (1995), writing out of the devastation of the former Yugoslavia, seeks to reassert the inclusive "embrace" of the Pauline vision. He holds out a different model for exploration to that of Boyarin, but it is one which is sensitive to Boyarin's critique. Volf reminds us of how easily difference and particularity leads to exclusion and, ultimately, elimination of the other.

Inter-Religious Dialogue as a Model. Within theological and religious discourse, the debate around inter-religious dialogue shares the greatest analogy to the practical question of holding together the difference of particularities in the search for common ground with "the religious other." As such, it holds out great promise for theological reflection on this issue.

In this regard, several groups in South Africa, most notably the local chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, have made major contributions to the public debate about difference and identity. Indeed, the WCRP was a key contributor to the formulation of the position of the Constitution on religion, which accepts plurality, yet acknowledges the right to differences at many levels as long as these differences do not undermine the Constitutional requirements of freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Simultaneously, the rigid separation between state and religion characteristic of the USA is not there, allowing for a much greater level of interaction and articulation between the goals of the (secular) state and that of religious communities and committed religious individuals. All of this suggests that there are fruitful resources within the field of religion and religious reflection for dealing with issues of identity and particularity, of difference and sameness. These include an acceptance of particular traditions which are declared and shared; recognizing difference while remaining conscious of patterns of domination and colonization; being willing to enter into the world of the other and honoring the multiplicity of truth experiences; discovering that each tradition is incomplete and thus owning the importance, for toleration, of ambiguity in each tradition; and finally, forging through common praxis a broader, more inclusive view of justice, non-racialism, and freedom.

NOTES

1. My thanks to the Human Sciences Research Council, who through a generous grant have made this research possible. The opinions expressed in this report are of course mine and not those of the HSRC.

2. During a seminar given by Walt Bresette, a Native American activist, at the University of Chicago in 1991, his most troubled questioner was a visiting black South African activist who virtually accused the speaker of replicating apartheid with his talk of "self-determination" and "Native homelands." The source of his suspicion is easily understood: these terms were precisely those manufactured by the apartheid state to attempt to give legitimacy to their policies.

3. A longer version of this historical recounting may be found in my report to the Human Sciences Research Council, now incorporated (since the report was completed) in the new National Research Foundation, Pretoria.

4. Meyer, previously a cabinet minister in the apartheid government, then formed the United Democratic Movement party with an ex-ANC leader who had been suspended by the ANC. He has since left the UDM.

5. The CPSA was dissolved in 1950 in face of the threat of the Suppression of Communism Act, but was reconstituted as the SACP in the same year. Lodge (1985: 87) argues that the name change also signalled a "shift in its theoretical position with regard to African nationalism."

6. The Congress Alliance in the 1950s included the ANC, the Congress of Democrats (a white group), the Natal Indian Congress (originally founded by Mahatma Gandhi), and the SACP.

7. Frederikse (1990: 210) has argued that it was only in 1985, when all races were allowed to be elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC that it finally became truly a non-racial party.

8. Of course, "Black" had been used in this inclusive way within the SACP and the ANC. The Freedom Charter, for instance, in its famous opening clause does so: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white."

9. In an article on non-racialism which I published in 1991 (Petersen 1991), I predicted that the question of difference would eventually re-emerge once the question of "sameness" had been resolved constitutionally. I had no idea at the time that this would happen so rapidly!

10. The notion of "so-called Colored," or "Colored," arose in the wake of BC and the assertion of Blackness as the signifier of sameness and difference. In BC terms, "Colored" must be understood as Black, as must Indian.

11. An interesting and important side note to this was the response of NUSAS to this initiative. Under the Presidency of Fink Haysom, NUSAS embarked on a campaign on Africanization. Haysom proclaimed "I am an African" in his presidential address, and called on whites to begin to identify themselves with Africa. Part of this process would be that of a program of "White consciousness" which would parallel that of Black consciousness (NUSAS Press Digest 1977). More recently, the need for "White consciousness" has been expressed by Pityana and Ramphela, key early BC theorists.

12. See, for example, Joe Thlohlloe, in Smith 1997.

13. It is for this reason that some groups have coined other names for the nation such as, in particular, Azania.

14. The clause includes the following provisions: (1) Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community: (a) to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and (b) to form, join an maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

15. The origins of many people classified "Colored" under apartheid, a term rather like "mestizo," may be traced to slave ancestors (particularly from Angola, Bengal and Malaysia) who bore offspring, sometimes in marriage, in "mixed race" partnerships. Indeed, many people classified "white" under apartheid, especially if their line goes back a couple of hundred years or more, have in their lineage somewhere such mixed offspring, though this is often covered up. Others come from a mix of white settler and African indigenous partnerships, and quite often they might wish to suppress the latter origin.

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CHAPTER IV
REDEFINING THE PUBLIC SPACE:
WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS, GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS
AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA
SHIREEN HASSIM and AMANDA GOUWS

INTRODUCTION

During the period 1991-1994, women's organizations in South Africa achieved an unprecedented level of organizational strength in the formation of a coalition (the Women's National Coalition) which drafted a set of formal demands (The Women's Charter), presented these to the multiparty negotiations, and won agreement on a package of institutions and mechanisms to advance gender equality. This achievement was singular in the context of South African women's organizations' relatively weak history of organizing at the national political level. For many participants in the process, as well as for feminist commentators, the Women's National Coalition represented a peak in the expression of women's collective power.¹ Since 1994, however, the Coalition has ceased to be the public center of gender politics, to be replaced by actors within and around the state. Most notable among these new points of gravity has been the Commission on Gender Equality, a statutory body established as part of the package of institutions to advance gender equality. At the same time, the policy process is generating a local-level revival of women's organizations responding to a range of policy initiatives to address women's social and economic concerns, such as the state child benefit grant, and poverty-related programs.

In this article, we attempt to understand the significance of these changes in the political landscape of gender. We are concerned with three issues. The first issue relates to the usage of notions of civil society from a feminist perspective. In particular, we are concerned with the ways in which definitions of political and civil society, as well as of democratization processes, include women as political agents. Secondly, we address changes within the women's movement which enabled the Women's National Coalition to achieve a significant presence in national politics during the 1990s. We address this issue particularly from the perspective of the emergence of a consciousness and discourse of gender within women's organizations, although we recognize that other factors, such as the transitional process itself, played an important facilitating role. In this context, however, we are particularly concerned with understanding the unique character of the women's movement in South Africa, as well as the relationship between the women's movement, national liberation movements and civil society more generally. We deal with shifting relationships within ANC-aligned women's organizations and the issue of an independent alliance of women's organizations within civil society. Finally, the article addresses the question of whether the engagement of women's organizations with the state, and the institutionalization of gender inside the state, has led to the demobilization of the movement. We argue that a simple demobilization thesis is not helpful for understanding the impact of the democratization process on the political opportunities available for women's organizations.

GENDER AND CIVIL SOCIETY: WIDENING THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Civil society has become a notoriously difficult concept to pin down in social science. Gordon White (1994: 376), highlighting the ambiguities of the term, points out that "though there is now a 'paradigm' of thought and a terrain of discussion...the term means different things to different people and often degenerates into a muddled political slogan". In South Africa, the term has acquired currency as a discourse which captured the range of organizations which were independent of both the state and the dominant national liberation movements (Glaser, 1997: 8). From this perspective, the notion of civil society functioned as political rationale in ways very similar to White's (1994: 377) account of "an idealized counter-image, an embodiment of social virtue confronting political vice: the realm of freedom versus the realm of coercion, of participation versus hierarchy, pluralism versus conformity, spontaneity versus manipulation, purity versus corruption". As White argues, this political baggage may be serviceable from the point of view of activism, but obscures a range of considerations about relations of power within civil society, and of the precise abilities of civil society to achieve the democratic and developmental ideals which accompany its rhetoric.

Extensive discussions of the notion of civil society can be found in a range of sources (Keane, 1988, White, 1994, Glaser, 1997). For the purposes of this article, we consider civil society (both theory and practice) from a feminist perspective. We utilize the very broad definition of civil society offered by White (1994: 379): "an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values". This inclusive and descriptive notion allows for the diversity of organizations that may be found within civil society. We use the term 'public sphere' in the feminist sense, to include both the political realm as well as the realm of civil society.

Even at the broadest levels of description, feminists have critiqued the conception of civil society because it is predicated on the conceptual distinction between the public and the private spheres. This distinction is seen as having an exclusionary impact for women, both in terms of the ways in which the political and civil communities are defined as well as in the practical effects it has for the participation of women in the public sphere (Hirschmann, 1998). Both types of exclusion – the constitutive and the practical – obscure women's agency as citizens, the former by limiting the definition of the political and the latter by failing to address systematic barriers to women's participation.

In a wide-ranging critique of the conceptual foundations of liberalism, Carole Pateman (1989) argues that liberal democracy is far from gender-neutral. A central assumption in liberal democratic theory is that the public sphere is peopled by equals and is characterized by 'modern' values of rationality and fairness. Pateman points out that membership of the political community is profoundly gendered and unequal. She argues that civil society is a social contract formulated as a contract among men, because women cannot participate fully as equals with men due to their subordinate position within the private sphere. One prism through which to view the gendered nature of the public sphere is that of citizenship. Formally, citizenship establishes equality within the political community, regardless of the racial, class, ethnic or gender identities of individuals. In practice, however, the public-private distinction has shaped the different ways in which men and women citizens have been incorporated into citizenship - men as workers and soldiers, women as mothers. Phillips (in Held, 1983: 98) has argued that "(these) inequalities are intrinsic to the politics, not an extraneous, additional concern", and that, although formal gender equality has been won in many political systems, these distinctions are still alive in the practice of democracies. The distinctions are particularly evident in the ways in which gendered

citizenship establishes differential access to societal resources through social policies (Lister, 1998). Women's concerns which emerge out of their direct responsibilities for household management and childcare are deemed to be "private" rather than "public" concerns; where they are addressed, as in welfare systems, they are considered to be temporary compensations for family failures rather than legitimate citizenship claims (Lister, 1998). At the very least, this marginalizes a range of women's interests² from core political discourses (Gilligan, 1982). Hirschmann (1998: 228) defines this as a "constitutive exclusion (defining civil society so as to exclude women and their concerns)".

The distinction between public and private sectors in society has also been criticized for its exclusionary impact in terms of participation in the public realm. This impact can be viewed at a number of levels. Firstly, feminists have argued that viewing the public sphere as the sphere of free equals, distinct from the inequalities of the private sphere, does not capture the reality that women's unequal position within the family establishes the boundaries of their public participation.

As Gal (1997: 34) points out, despite claiming the equality of individuals in the political realm, idealized notions of civil society can obscure the economic and other social differences that constrain political participation. Civil society is often treated as a construction of individuality in opposition to the private space of the family. Far from being distinct spheres of human activity, however, Pateman has argued that the restrictions on women's mobility and contractual powers, as well as ideological assumptions about 'appropriate' women's roles, have a direct impact on their public capabilities. Although all citizens may have the right to participate, women's private responsibilities and social stereotyping of women's public roles which arise from these make it difficult for women to participate as equals in the public sphere. Indeed, David Held argues that reproductive rights are 'the very basis of the possibility of effective participation in both civil society and the polity' (quoted in Lister, 1998:18). Although women can be seen as being hindered in terms of their political participation in the same ways as other marginal social groupings (such as rural people, poor people, etc.), reproductive responsibilities and the division of labor in society act as particular gendered constraints. The impact is to narrow the scope for women's participation in formal politics and in civil society.

A second level of understanding the ways in which women have been excluded is to examine explanations for democratization processes. Analyzing democratization debates from a gender perspective, Georgina Waylen (1994) has shown how the focus of what she terms 'orthodox' views of democratization omit women. At a constitutive level, this omission stems from a narrow view of politics as an elite-driven process. Analyses of democratization which focus purely on the high politics in effect value only male-dominated politics – women's role as political agents is downplayed because their spheres of political activity are not seen as significant. This has implications for the way democracy itself is conceived, for it is narrowly limited to "an institutional arrangement to generate and legitimate leadership" (Waylen, 1994: 332). Issues of social and economic equality are divorced from that of political equality. The outcomes of democratization are excluded from analysis. As a consequence gender concerns beyond formal equality, such as issues about the redistribution of power, are marginalized.

Waylen argues that utilizing a wider notion of politics, one which encompasses not only institutions and processes among elites but also seeks to understand the relationship between popular mobilization and democratization processes, is necessary to capture the ways in which women have been political agents. While women's presence in formal political organizations may be minimal, women's politics has nevertheless often been robust and impacted on processes

of democratization. In fact, as Waylen points out, the latitude allowed to women for 'symbolic protests' (such as silent demonstrations) by authoritarian regimes often kept alive struggles against tyranny when more direct forms of protest action were impossible.

Despite various constraints on women's political activity, women have historically succeeded in forming organizations to take up their various causes. Women's movements, defined as "those socio-political movements, composed primarily but not necessarily exclusively of female participants, that make claims on cultural and political systems on the basis of women's historically ascribed gender roles" (Alvarez, 1990: 23) constantly challenge the boundary between the public and the private. By raising issues of "private" inequalities and oppressions such as responsibilities for childcare, reproductive freedom and protection from rape, for example, women's movements redefine the landscape of politics. At the very least, the definition of the content of public discourse is re-shaped by the articulation of these concerns. For some feminists, the argument is taken further to suggest that the nature of politics is also altered by these new political concerns (Ruddick, 1989).

In South Africa, debates on the women's movement have been somewhat peripheral to broader debates on civil society. The focus on the impact on democratization of movements in civil society has spawned a wide literature in South Africa (Friedman, 1991; Glaser, 1997; Humphries and Reitzes, 1995). What is absent from the literature is a consideration of women's role in the process. Glaser (1997: 6) points out that two arenas have engaged analysts: the labor movement and the civic movement. Despite unusually high levels of women's involvement in the civic movement in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, and a significant body of literature documenting women's political activities, little attention is paid to the gender dimensions of these political activities and debates in mainstream civil society literature. And yet, as this article will argue, women's organizations have been relatively vigorous in democratization struggles, and have addressed their demands at both the institutional design of the new democracy as well as at the outcomes of democratic processes. The demands of women's organizations have deepened notions of democracy in the constitution as well as extended the scope of institutions in South Africa. Nevertheless, these contributions tend to be excluded from mainstream analyses of democratization in South Africa. The omission stems from both the constitutive as well as the practical limitations described above, and are reinforced by the weaknesses of the women's movement in South Africa in sustaining a national impact.

The constitutive and practical exclusions of women from analyses of politics have implications for processes of democratization in the longer term. Despite the achievement of formal democracy in many formerly authoritarian systems, including South Africa, enormous socio-economic inequalities still remain. In South Africa, where the distribution of income is among the most unequal in the world, women are at higher risk of poverty than men (Baden, Hassim and Meintjes, 1997: 37). The gap between women's high level of political achievement and their developmental status is most clearly revealed in a comparison of their positions in the United Nations' Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)³. On the GEM scale, which measures women's degree of participation in economic and political decision-making, South Africa ranks twenty-third in the world, just behind the United Kingdom (twentieth) and ahead of the Czech Republic (twenty-fourth). On the GDI scale, which measures the achievements of a country in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and GDP per capita desegregated by gender, South Africa fares relatively poorly at seventy-four, just ahead of Tunisia (seventy-six) and behind Kazakhstan (seventy-three) (UNDP, 1998).

This discrepancy between the country's egalitarian norms and the inequalities between large groups in society has the potential to weaken the consolidation of democracy. White (1998: 28) identifies two dangers for new democracies which fail to address glaring inequalities: firstly, social discontent and political instability is likely to increase, and secondly, large sections of the population are excluded from access to the political process as a result of persistent poverty. The implication is that formal inclusion will not serve the democratic purposes of stability as long as it fails to be the basis for addressing socio-economic inequalities (including those of gender). This argument reinforces feminist demands that it is not only the formal institutions and procedures of democracy that must be addressed, but also the outcomes of democracy.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS

Although women's organizations in South Africa have a long history (Walker, 1989; Wells, 1993), they have not always been nationally significant actors. Part of their marginality stems from the constitutive and practical exclusions discussed above. In addition, however, there are weaknesses all women's organizations face: a dispersed constituency, the difficulties of identifying common interests in the face of cross-cutting racial, class and ethnic identities, and the intricate relationship between personalized discrimination and oppression on the basis of gender with systematic male bias.

In understanding why these weaknesses were overcome (at least temporarily) during the 1990s, we address two key factors identified in civil society debates - the development of a political consciousness of gender (Cohen and Arato, 1992), and the nature of political opportunities external to women's organizations (Tarrow, 1994), particularly in terms of their relationships to both the state and the dominant liberation movements. Both these factors have had a significant impact on the ability of women's organizations to position their claims within the larger demands of socio-political and economic transformation demanded by dominant sectors of civil society in the 1980s and 1990s. The emergence of women as a political constituency in South Africa in the 1990s can be traced to three interrelated developments: the changing spaces occupied by women within the African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) during the 1980s, the opening of new political opportunities during the transitional process, and, allied with both of these, the maturation of a political consciousness of gender in the engagement with both the state and national liberation movements.

The relationship between the development of a consciousness or identity is central to the emergence of a social movement (such as the women's movement) within civil society. Cohen and Arato (1992) distinguish between two models of explanation for this relationship, described as the stage model and the dual politics model. The stage model posits that social movements move from non-institutional mass protest action to institutionalized, routine interest groups in a linear process (Cohen and Arato, 1992: 556). In the first stage, demands are made that are non-negotiable and diffuse and usually involve mass protest action. During this stage, identity formation takes place and the aim is to form solidarity around this identity rather than with strategic gains and losses. In the second stage, routinization, inclusion and finally institutionalization take place. The organizational structure is changed from informal to formal. Successful inclusion and full institutionalization implies representation in "normal" politics, involving party competition.

Cohen and Arato (1992: 557) criticize this assumption of linearity for its inability to account for significant features of the feminist movement in the USA. They posit instead a notion of "dual politics", in which the discursive politics of identity and influence targeted at civil and political society exist simultaneously with the organized politics of inclusion and reform aimed at political and economic institutions (Cohen and Arato, 1992: 550). In this model, identity formation is inextricable from the development of movement objectives and strategies, each shaping the other.

Drawing on studies of the women's movement in the USA, Cohen and Arato argue that the dual politics model is of greater explanatory value than the "stage or life cycle" model usually used to explain collective action. In the USA, such a dual logic existed in the women's movement from the start. While routinization and institutionalization have taken place, these processes did not substitute collective action, grassroots mobilization or identity-oriented politics. The women's movement was able to shift between mass action and political pressure on the state. They conclude (1992: 562) that the success of social movements on the level of civil society should be conceived not in terms of the achievement of certain substantive goals or the perpetuation of the movement, but rather in terms of the democratization of values, norms, and institutions that are rooted ultimately in a political culture.

Part of this political culture, in their view, must include the development of a specifically feminist consciousness (1992: 552). In our view, such a feminist consciousness cannot - should not - be defined *a priori* according to the abstract definitions of universal theory, but should be defined in the context of particular social formations and should have resonance in the historical experience and political culture of specific societies. Feminism is not a coherent ideology, nor is it uncontentious even among organizations committed to gender equality, as the South African debates reveal. Despite these limitations, we draw on Cohen and Arato's (1992: 553) important insight that a successful movement requires a politics of identity aimed at norms, social relations and institutional arrangements and practices constructed in civil society, as well as mass action aimed at political society. A new collective identity for women that is simultaneously articulated at the grassroots level and accepted by the political elites is a necessity for success.

Cohen and Arato raise issues which lie at the heart of debates conducted within South African women's organizations for decades. What is omitted from their discussion is the relationship between identities, interests and issues in gender politics. We deal with these issues in the South African context below. In South Africa, the women's movement has contested the relative importance of gender vis-à-vis other social and political identities. As an ideology, feminism has been challenged not only by resistant men, but also by women themselves. The definitions of what constituted feminism, and concomitantly the women's movement, have been fiercely debated.

There have been three aspects to this debate. Firstly, to what extent is feminism an 'external ideology', i.e. imported from the west and therefore of little assistance to the struggles waged by African women. This issue was posed as a question of both relevance (feminism has no meaning for the lives of black women) as well as prescriptiveness (feminism imposes a set of criteria derived from privileged economic and political standpoints and judges non-western women's organizations to be backward⁴). As argued by "Clara" in the South African Communist Party journal "African Communist" (1989: 38-39), gender oppression needed to be separated from feminism as an ideology: Feminism cannot be adopted by a liberation movement committed to the liberation of the African people led by the black working class . . . Feminism is a reformist ideology.

The relationship between women's equality and national liberation was central to this debate (Beall, Hassim and Todes, 1989). Despite the recognition of feminism as an umbrella term encompassing many variations, popular usages of the term tended to treat the ideology as coherent and distinct.

The second set of debates revolves around the definitional problem of what precisely constitutes a woman's movement. Does the mere existence of a range of organizations with female membership and addressing issues of interest to women constitute a women's movement, or are feminist consciousness and common purpose prerequisites for claiming the status of a movement? Finally, the third set of debates addresses the issue of diversity. What are the boundaries of commonality and difference among South African women, and does racial solidarity across gender lines override (for moral-political or strategic purposes) the unity of women as a group? Even when many of the demands made by women in political organizations such as the ANC could have been termed feminist, the use of the word itself was regarded with suspicion (Driver, 1991:92).

The context of a national struggle against apartheid framed many of these debates in a way that was often difficult to resolve. Some argued that a focus on national liberation weakened the possibilities for the emergence of an assertive women's movement in South Africa (Beall, Hassim and Todes, 1989; Charman, De Swart and Simons, 1991; Horn, 1991). This constraint has been seen as both epistemological as well as strategic. At the epistemological level, the formulation of 'triple oppression', while capturing the inter-relationship between race, class and gender, treated these three identities as additive (Hassim, 1991:68) and led to an 'unilluminating repetition of formulae' (Walker, 1990: 3). Ironically, the specificity of gender was downplayed in activist approaches to women's political roles. Analyzing contributions to the ANC's Malibongwe conference in 1990, Charman *et al* (1991: 42-43) point out that there is an 'androcentric legacy' in political and popular discourse: When women are discussed it is very much in the masculine conception of women. Women are added on. Gender is not a fundamental category of analysis.

Others have argued that a reluctance to build a women's movement separate from the national liberation movement stemmed from both the inseparable nature of race, class and gender oppression as well as from "a strategic choice made in the face of opposition from a seemingly invincible white nationalist party-state that was quick to exploit any sign of division in order to subjugate black people even further" (Kemp et al, 1995:142). Primo (1997:33) argues that there are positive aspects to women's participation in national liberation movements that have been under-emphasized: The participation of women in the national liberation struggle aided the women's struggle. For one, it raised the profile of women in the national liberation struggle, and placed some in leadership positions. Secondly, it created the space to raise issues of concern to women, to give public voice to many women's private struggles.

Definitions of what would or did constitute a women's movement in South Africa varied, and were overlaid with prescriptive formulations of 'progressiveness' (Walker, 1990, Hassim, 1991). The dilemma of defining a women's movement is not confined to South Africa; it is tied to the question of the linkage between interests and identities. Women's interests cannot simply be read off from their economic or social position; women are divided by race, class, regional and other interests in ways which threaten to undermine the coherence of their gender identity. Addressing the tension between feminist theoretical perspectives on what constituted feminist politics and grassroots women's action, Maxine Molyneux (1985) offered a conceptual distinction between 'strategic gender interests' and 'practical gender needs'. Strategic interests

can be defined as those claims which seek to transform social relations so as to promote the equality of men and women, while practical interests may be seen as those which arise from women's gendered responsibilities within the family and community and which make no explicit claims to challenge power relations. While pursuing strategic gender interests assumes the existence of some form of feminist consciousness, practical gender needs can be articulated without such consciousness.

Although there has been some debate about the separability of these two concepts in actual struggles conducted by women's organizations (Kabeer, 1993), the usefulness of Molyneux's distinction was to open the space for a conceptualization of women's movements which allows for this diversity of interests to be accommodated. A women's movement can contain within it conservative elements that organize women from a particular social base but do not seek to question power relations within that base, let alone within society more generally. By contrast, in its broadest formulation feminism has a direct political dimension, being not only aware of women's oppression, but prepared actively to confront patriarchal power in all its dimensions. From the point of view of making an impact on national political processes, we would argue that the development of political identity based on strategic gender interests is crucial to the success of the women's movement in addressing gender inequalities through institutions.

The groundwork for the emergence of a strong political consciousness and advanced organizational forms among women was laid in the 1970s and 1980s, when community-based struggles drew in significant numbers of women. The central thrust of these struggles was a battle against the apartheid state (Meintjes, 1998), although in the process women's organizations also defined a new space within civil society and new relationships with other organizations. The formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1984 added impetus to the organization of women, as it galvanized a range of forces at community level (Fester, 1997; Madlala-Routledge, 1997). Organizations such as the United Women's Congress (UWCO) in the Western Cape, the Federation of Transvaal Women (Fedtraw) and the Natal Organization of Women (NOW) organized women around a core of issues which stemmed from local community concerns but made broader demands for the abolition of apartheid and for economic transformation. The membership of these organizations was mixed: veterans of the 1950s women's struggles, young black women (both educated and working class) and a small number of white academic and professional women. Women's organizations under the UDF umbrella in the 1980s developed strong branch formations as well as articulated linkages between women's issues and national issues through marches and other forms of protest (Houston, 1998: 152). These in turn provided opportunities for leadership training which formed the bedrock of the Women's National Coalition in the 1990s. In the process women's issues increasingly were placed on the agenda of major progressive organizations, although not without continuing tensions about the status of gender in national struggles.

There are two positions taken in the literature which analyses UDF-aligned women's organizations. One position is that women in these organizations were primarily focused on issues of immediate relevance to their gendered responsibilities (or in Molyneux's terms, their practical gender needs) such as service delivery in the townships, rents and health, and that these became the basis for the emergence of a grassroots consciousness of gender (their strategic gender interests) (Beall et al, 1987; Patel, 1988, Jaffee, 1987). The formation of the UDF Women's Congress was a mechanism for addressing the latter set of interests: "A concerted attempt to assert women's leadership, bring women's issues into the UDF in a more forceful way, and ensure that women's struggle is an integral part of political struggle" (Jaffee, 1987: 74).

An alternative view, expressed most succinctly by Fester (1998), suggests that motherism, or women's identities as mothers, was the basis of women's mobilization. She points out that the re-launch of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) and the United Women's Congress (UWCO), both of which affiliated to the UDF, was accompanied by references to women's roles as mothers and the impact of injustice in the country on women as mothers. Fester (1998: 6) argues that the overall political struggle for national liberation was an integral part of women's lives as mothers caring for their children. She concludes that Motherist movements which defy oppression of all kinds, including patriarchal oppression, are more likely to inspire a feminism which will be effective in South Africa than would be the liberal feminism espoused by most first world feminists (Fester, 1998: 16).

We return to the issue of motherism as political identity below. In this context, we are concerned with the impact of the heightened involvement of women on the discourses and practices of major civil society organizations. The most significant impact was the declaration on May 2, 1990 by the ANC that the emancipation of women is not a by-product of a struggle for democracy, national liberation or socialism. It has to be addressed in its own right within our organization, the mass democratic movement and in society as a whole.

The significance of this declaration lies in the space it allowed women within the fold of the progressive movements to organize self-consciously on their own terms and in their own interests. It made possible the autonomous organization of women. This statement also provided the organizational latitude to the ANC Women's League to open discussion in 1991 on the possibility of a broad-ranging, multiparty women's coalition – a women's movement.

The transitional process itself, during which political antagonists were engaging each other, facilitated this development as cross-party meetings were legitimated. Furthermore, the discourses of transition - the terms of the democratic society, the nature of new institutions, the values which would underpin the Constitution - were discourses in which the broader notions of social justice demanded by women could make an impact.

However, establishing such a movement of women was difficult. Firstly, as has been noted above, gender solidarity had historically been undervalued as a political resource and strategy. Secondly, feminism itself encompasses a diverse set of interests and identities, raising what post-structuralists have seen as the core dilemma in establishing and sustaining a women's movement. Soper (1994:14-15) captures this dilemma well: feminism as theory has pulled the rug from under feminism as politics. For politics is essentially a group affair, based on the idea of making 'common cause', and feminism, like any other politics, has always implied a banding together, a movement based on the solidarity and sisterhood of women, who are linked by perhaps very little else than their sameness and common cause as women. If this sameness itself is challenged on the grounds that there is no 'presence' of womanhood, nothing that the term 'woman' immediately expresses and nothing instantiated concretely except particular women in particular situations, then the idea of a political community built around women - - the central aspiration of the early feminist movement - collapses.

An examination of the immediate past of the women's movement in South Africa (the 1990s) would suggest that the possibility exists for the creation of a political community built around women, where that political community is prepared to accept that the terms of unity are rather narrow and constantly under negotiation. The experience of the Women's National Coalition reveals that it is possible to build a movement while recognizing diversity, where solidarity rather than sameness is the basis of political action.

The formation of the Women's National Coalition in 1991 was a turning point in the history of women's organizations in South Africa. Cock (1997: 311) argues convincingly that the Women's National Coalition was an organic women's organization which brought together different constituencies from political parties to occupational and religious groups, service and special interest groups and community organizations, as well as the women's sections of the different political parties (see also Kemp et al, 1995: 150). Initiated by the ANC Women's League, the WNC soon comprised a range of women's organizations with diverse interests, drawn together by the single issue of ensuring that women were included in the transitional and negotiations processes. The formation of the WNC also stemmed in part from the concern among some women's organizations allied to the UDF that the unbanning of the ANC Women's League would undermine the autonomy which had been achieved during the 1980s. From this perspective, a national organizational structure that retained some degree of independence from the national liberation movement was desirable.

The transitional process both galvanized and sustained the WNC. On the one hand, the immediate rationale for the formation of the WNC was the exclusion of women from the initial team of nineteen delegates to the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), the multiparty negotiating forum. As Jackie Cock argues, the driving force behind the Coalition was the "shared sense of exclusion from the negotiation process" rather than a "recognition of common interests or a shared experience that transcended the divisions of race, ideology, ethnicity and class" (Cock, 1997:310). This exclusion of women from the decision-making process served to galvanize women's organizations and women within political parties to concerted opposition. The head of the ANC's research department, Frene Ginwala⁹, commented, according to the male delegates' understanding, that women do not have any role in matters of state, in politics or public affairs. These are considered to be the 'rightful preserve of men. (The Star, 23.5.1992)

The ANC Women's League took an especially strong stance over women's representation in constitutional negotiations, threatening to boycott the first non-racial elections with the slogan 'no women, no vote'. Although it can be questioned whether the Women's League had the organizational capacity and grassroots support to give effect to such a threat, this stance was instrumental in establishing the notion of women as a political constituency.

The central aim of the Coalition was to draft a comprehensive "Women's Charter for Effective Equality", to be presented to negotiators for inclusion in the Bill of Rights. To keep this single-issue campaign together required intense debate about women's needs and interests. The development of the Charter was a mechanism for resolving a range of competing concerns among women, but ultimately the document itself represented a collection of disparate demands, rather than a prioritization of particular women's needs and interests. The affiliates in the Coalition were concerned not to superimpose a false universalism, but to ground the organization's strategic direction in the diversity of South African women's experiences and in addressing specific material conditions of disadvantage (Cock, 1997: 316).

The broader context of transition provided a framework within which an articulate women's movement could make certain gains. The discourses of transition - the terms of the democratic society, the nature of new institutions, the values which would underpin the Constitution - were discourses in which the broader notions of social justice demanded by women could make an impact. This impact of the WNC on the constitutional debates as well as on the institutional framework for democracy provided immediate gains from collective action which sustained the organization in the short term.

Cock (1997: 317) argues that through the Charter campaign, a collective identity began to emerge within the WNC. It brought together a hybrid of organizations that were very different from one another through a liberal feminist emphasis on rights and political representation. However, this identity appears to be rather muted. She points out that while the WNC represents an extremely wide cross-section of South Africa's women, it does not have the common purpose that enables it to campaign effectively. On the other hand, the individual organizations that are able to mount campaigns tend to represent narrow groupings among women (Cock, 1997: 329).

It is unclear, therefore, whether the WNC was kept alive by the strategic spaces opened up by the transition process, or by the emergence of a common identity. Meintjes (1998: 79) argues that identity was built around a limited agenda of common interests - most notably the demand for equality- tempered by the recognition of diversity. An alternative view is that the consciousness that kept the WNC alive was rooted in motherhood and mothering and not the typically Western-inspired feminist consciousness (Fester, 1998). The Women's National Coalition communications with UWO, UWCO, FSAW and the Women's Alliance included the request to mobilize unorganized women through appealing, *inter alia*, to motherhood. Both Cock (1997: 320) and Fester (1997: 46) argue that "motherism" is a form of South African feminism that often brings women together and leads to mobilization around women's issues. Meintjes (1988: 68) highlights the uses of motherist discourses within nationalist movements. This "motherism" is linked to an ethic of care which includes characteristics such as responsiveness, attentiveness, responsibility and nurturance (see Gilligan, 1982) and which causes women to perceive their lives as linked to that of children and others with whom they have close relationships. Yet, we need to ask whether "motherism" was used for the purposes of inclusion - to build solidarity among women, and to smooth over differences rather than forming a bond based on a common experience of motherhood (see Cock, 1997: 320).

Even though the WNC can be viewed as an organic women's movement, the issue of collective identity remains a thorny one. Membership of the WNC was only open to organizations, not to individuals. The WNC was therefore already institutionalized through different organizations such as political parties, unions and service organizations even before it emerged as a coalition. This prior institutionalization is expressed in the close connection of the WNC with political parties, especially the ANC. This closeness was also expressed toward other political allies. A logistical problem arose, for example, when COSATU as a union federation could not join because its constitution makes it impossible to join another "federation". The problem was solved by allowing COSATU to be involved without affiliating (Kemp et al, 1995: 152).

These already constituted political groupings established limits on the ability of the WNC to consolidate a common feminist identity. Ethel Klein (1984: 3) argues that the rise of a political consciousness (such as a feminist consciousness) is a three stage process: (1) affiliation to a group, (2) recognition of group membership and (3) shared interests. If this is the case one should ask whether affiliation to a group and the recognition of group membership in the case of the WNC was with a broader women's group or rather with the affiliated groups that belonged to the WNC. Although a feminist consciousness did not deeply root itself in the WNC, nevertheless a very strong sense of the relationship between gender issues and social justice did emerge, which came to be accepted formally by the political elites and was implemented in the drafting of the constitution.

However, when the single-issue charter campaign came to an end "motherhood" was not enough to sustain a common identity. Nor can the recognition of difference in itself sustain a

movement. As Meintjes (1998: 81) points out, "Women's capacity to work together depends upon mobilizing around unifying issues and, since the elections, these have not emerged in a way to engage the WNC". From this perspective, "demobilization" might have resulted from the fact that women went back to the institutionalized narrow interests of their different organizations, from which it is difficult to mobilize mass action, rather than from their incorporation into state processes. As Kemp et al (1995: 153) point out, after the Charter was adopted, the constant balancing of political forces and interests led many of the WNC's key leaders, especially those within the major political parties, to advocate the Coalition's dissolution.

Although Fester's argument that motherism is a more fertile ground for the development of a women's movement in South Africa than western feminism, is seductive, it does not take full account of tensions between conservatizing aspects of motherism and the project to transform gender relations. The problem with motherhood as an identity is that it locks women in the private sphere and reinforces their identities in relations to others as opposed to their autonomy as individuals. Thus, when the politics of feminism starts to challenge the boundaries of the private sphere resistance emerges even among women against issues of autonomy, bodily integrity and self-determination. A political strategy based on motherhood is not inherently progressive, no matter how strongly rooted it may be in women's experience. As Gaitskell and Unterhalter have shown, the concept of motherhood is 'very fluid and manipulable' (Gaitskell and Unterhalter, 1989:75). It is not incidental that motherhood is central to nationalism in both its conservative and progressive variants. In comparing the uses of motherhood by the ANC and the IFP, Hassim (1993:20) argues against the reification of motherhood as a political concept. She makes the point that 'both conservative and progressive forms of nationalism draw on women's support in terms of their relationship to others rather than in their own terms. Women are equated with mothers, and families with women.

Freedom of choice, demand for control over one's body and autonomy are more than a quest for equal rights in a bourgeois sense. Rather, they challenge the traditional identities of women and their gender roles and thus pose a serious challenge to the private sphere that cannot easily be accommodated by motherist politics. The resistance to this challenge in South Africa is expressed through the lack of support on the level of women's public opinion for abortion. Abortion in South Africa was legalized through the efforts of law reformers and feminist reproductive rights groups, not by large scale women's demands for autonomy and control over their bodies.

This is not to deny that motherism is an authentic, alternative South African feminist consciousness. It has played a central role in making space for the discussion of the relationship between nationalism and women's rights in a context in which the more conventional western forms of feminism had little to offer South African women. This is not unique to South Africa – it is also the case in Eastern Europe, for example. Gal (1997: 42) points out the importance of distinguishing between structural issues of organizing in civil society and oppression that is discursively constructed. Civil society has ideological and discursive boundaries that determine what can count as "political" and these boundaries in turn shape what identities and activities can form part of the public in a given historical version of civil society (such as motherhood). In Eastern Europe women as a social category are depoliticized. Gal argues that what has not been discursively constructed is the political category of "woman" as an independent subject whose interests and issues can be publicly defined and debated.

However, the limits of discursive constructions have to be actively and continually confronted by social movements. While the discourse of women as "mothers" or "mothers of the

nation" or "desexualized beings" allowed space for women's political mobility in difficult circumstances (Primo, 1997), and even cleared the ground from which to speak of women as autonomous political agents (as in the ANC's May 2 Document), its appropriateness as the dominant discourse needs to be under constant examination. This is particularly true in the context in which women have a constitutional right to equality, bodily integrity and autonomy. Are certain boundaries still discursively constructed through which new feminist identities cannot break?

Unlike Eastern Europe where the category "women" was depoliticized, in South Africa the category is infused with race. New feminist identities cannot be constructed as long as the women in South Africa do not deal sufficiently with the "politicisation of difference" that is a prerequisite for feminist identity politics (Watson, 1997: 22). The politicisation of difference on grounds of race and gender in South Africa is the subtext of identity politics that has led to the "politics of hostility". It has been the undertone in much of women's organizing and mobilizing, even though it may not always be explicitly articulated. In order to develop feminist politics in South Africa—politics which includes issues of autonomy, self-determination and bodily integrity—we need to grapple with the shifting boundaries of the intersection of the identity markers of gender and race. Identities are constituted through the intersections between race, class, and gender which bear the mark of a particular cultural and historical context. At the same time, as De la Rey (1997:9) cautions, the problem of race should not be reduced to the general label of 'difference'. She argues that any South African feminism that ignores the centrality of race will run the risk of making it invisible, and it will be a limited feminism. . . . We need to avoid the notion that all forms of difference are equivalent.

The WNC experience would suggest that the development of an identity for the women's movement emerged from a pre-existing history of women's organization, of intense debate about the meanings of gender in a society dominated by racial divisions, and the will of a politically committed and experienced core of women leaders. It was tied, crucially, to the successful identification of issues which cut across a wide set of differences and gave a common basis for solidarity. The formation of the WNC as an activist federation and the subsequent departure of women leaders into the arena of institutionalized politics have undermined leadership in the organization, but the mobilizing of women as a constituency has left a significant legacy. This legacy is both institutional, in the creation of the national machinery for women, as well as political, in that it has created a reference point of success for future movement battles.

To some extent, the successes of the Coalition have also opened up the discursive space for feminism to be debated in new ways. The demands for participation, representation and for changing gender power relations have become an acceptable part of the discourse of women's organizations. The challenge for the women's movement now appears to be centered more directly on the ways in which institutional gains can be used to address different women's needs. In this process, as the Deputy Speaker, Baleka Kgositsile-Mbete (1998: 6) argued, the challenge is to create mechanisms for communication, support and accountability between the women's movement in civil society and women inside the state.

New spaces have opened up in civil society to deal with issues of violence and poverty in ways which directly address male power in society. A different type of feminist consciousness may be developing that is transcending the politics of the private sphere and is taking on issues of women's autonomy and independence. This politics transcends that of motherism, in that its reference points lie beyond women's relationship to children (although these are often encompassed as well).

INSTITUTIONALIZATION: OPENING SPACES OR DEMOBILIZING?

In order to understand why the "women's movement" in South Africa has become relatively inactive since the 1994 election, it is necessary to examine the shifting relationships between the state and civil society. To what extent are the conventional arguments of social movement theorists about the link between institutionalization and demobilization useful to understand the trajectory of women's politics in South Africa in the 1990s? In addressing this issue, we develop the argument made in preceding sections about the interconnections between constructions of the state, civil society and a feminist identity.

A key concern in social movement theory has been the impact of institutionalization on movements. By institutionalization is meant the creation of a repeatable process "in which all the relevant actors can resort to well-established and familiar routines". For political movements, institutionalization denotes the end of the sense of unlimited possibility (Meyer and Tarrow, 1997:21). Meyer and Tarrow identify three main components of institutionalization. Firstly, collective action becomes routinized. Secondly, a process of inclusion and marginalization occurs, in which those actors who adhere to the 'rules of the game' are granted access to key institutions while those who refuse are excluded. Thirdly, co-option occurs, in that movements alter their claims and their tactics into forms that are not disruptive to the political system.

From the point of view of women's movements, these conventional markers of institutionalization are of limited benefit. They derive from an analysis of social movements characterized by high levels of overt protest action, perhaps even violent activism, and with a high potential to disrupt the political order. These have not been typical characteristics of women's movements, which have particularly not had the power to radically disrupt the system. For these reasons, Katzenstein (1997:197) approaches the problem in a slightly different way, conceiving of institutionalization in spatial terms as the establishment of 'organizational habitats'. 'Such habitats are spaces where women advocates of equality can assemble, where discussion can occur, and where the organizing for institutional change can occur'. To what extent did institutionalization of gender, through the creation of the national machinery, result in the kind of institutionalization that Meyer and Tarrow highlight, and have the consequences been negative for sustaining the women's movement? What alternative 'habitats' have the new institutional arrangements created, and can these habitats be useful spaces for women to articulate their interests?

An examination of the institutionalization process in South Africa reveals that at many levels, civil society appears to be demobilized. Despite the significant constitutional and political gains (not least of these the right to equality), it would seem that in the period since the first democratic election since 1994, women's politics has been less effective and women's organizations less visible than in the previous years. This does not mean that women's issues were off the agenda; indeed, certain issues such as violence against women, and rape specifically, have enjoyed a higher profile than ever before. One of the reasons for this downward trajectory is that the departure of many highly skilled women organizers and leaders from civil society into government 'has harmed existing networks and organizations of civil society, and placed increased pressure on the human, technical and financial resources of non-governmental organizations' (Albertyn, 1995:11). Thus the shift to 'engaging' the state has at one level had the direct, albeit unintended and unavoidable, consequence of demobilizing women's organizations, most notably the Women's National Coalition. This pattern has been

noted in other contexts by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), who argue that in the early phases of transition, social movements have considerable influence to push the transition further, but that in the latter stages of transitions political parties dominate in shaping political agendas.

The development of a range of institutions inside and outside government for the purpose of making and influencing social policy from a gendered perspective has shifted the terrain of politics more closely into and around the state, rather than in civil society. This range of institutions, referred to as 'national machinery', includes structures within the government, as well as independent statutory bodies such as the Commission for Gender Equality. The establishment of the national machinery has shifted gender discourses away from an engagement with politics in the broader sense of vigorous organizational articulation of, and contestation around, interests, to a preoccupation with internal state processes on policy-making, on the one hand, and with the establishment of structures, on the other. The danger of this is that, as Kathleen Jones argues, "what counts as political action (becomes) limited largely to formal interactions between citizens and the state" (Jones, 1990:799). This is consistent with a general shift in political focus as the consolidation of democracy in South Africa appears to revolve largely around state-centric, policy-related issues.

It would seem, therefore, that the process of inclusion has at least temporarily served to privilege those actors who are within the state and marginalized women's organizations outside the state. There appears to be an assumption that real change in a feminist direction is possible through the state¹⁰. National machinery (or state institutions for addressing gender inequality) is seen as the node at which state and civil society can work together to effect a shift from inequality to equality (Albertyn: 1995:4). The arguments adopted by the Women's National Coalition during the negotiation process emphasized the need to recognize and include women in the public sphere; the substance of the debate was how they should be included. This rather pragmatic (and ultimately successful) strategy was consistent with the dominant liberal democratic mode of political debate in this period, a mode which translated into the entrenchment of liberal democratic notions of citizenship in the constitution, and into a continuing debate centering on the inclusion of women into state structures and processes.

However, as the demand for inclusion is nominally met, and the demands for transformation sidelined, the limitations of inclusionary strategies are being confronted. An example of the limits of inclusion is the political battle which ensued between women's organizations and the women-friendly Minister of Welfare and Population over the reform of the child benefit grant system. In this battle, women activists inside the state were ranged against women activists in civil society in contestation over the impact of policy outcomes on poor women. Despite the potential for a strong motherist politics to emerge during this battle between state and civil society, women's organizations articulated their demands around a discourse of poverty and gender, rather than around the identity politics of motherhood. What was interrogated was the extent to which the state can in fact act as a medium for transformation, which parts of a state (which is evidently riddled with contradictory policies) are more likely to benefit women, and how to deal effectively with institutional resistance to the inclusion of women.

At the same time, the policy-making process itself has generated a new dynamic of civil society regeneration, and a changed political opportunity structure. The relatively open nature of policy formulation in democratic South Africa, in which the public has the opportunity to comment and challenge draft policy before it is put to Parliament, as well as the formalized processes of consultation, have provided a focus for organizational energy and demands. Unlike in closed political systems, social movements in South Africa do have the space to protest

against unpopular policies. Thus, for example, the protest against the state's child benefit grant galvanized women's organizations; a 'New Women's Movement' based in the Western Cape has emerged. Similarly, the prioritization of poverty as a concern by the Deputy President's office was accompanied by "Speak Out on Poverty" hearings hosted by the Gender and Human Rights Commissions and the South African Non-Government Organization Coalition. Issues of violence against women have also been central to the public debate about gender, and have been the focus for a number of large-scale protests. New coalitions of women's organizations have emerged which are based on common struggles around specific issues, such as the Reproductive Rights Alliance, and the Network Against Violence Against Women. These developments have revived the terrain of civil society by opening up spaces for alternative discourses, involving women's autonomy, self-determination and bodily integrity.

On balance, it would be premature to argue that institutionalization has had negative consequences for the women's movement. While institutions are a form of constraint on social movements, they can also be viewed more positively as points of access for previously marginalized groups. This is particularly true in South Africa presently, where state policy formulation is the mechanism through which both the government and civil society contest the manner in which fundamental socio-economic inequalities will be addressed. The process of institutionalizing women's demands has opened up a different set of concerns, largely policy-related, to which women's organizations will have to develop policy-articulate responses. In the process, interests and identities are constantly re-shaped as the policy process constitutes interests as much as it responds to pre-existing demands (Fraser, 1989). Given the differences in interests between different groups of women, it is likely that this process will lead to a disaggregation of the women's movement. A policy-focused politics has the danger that groups will seek to extract advantages in narrow constituency-based terms, and that collective action of the kind Tarrow describes above will become rare. Furthermore, the demands of the policy process have further stratified the arena of women's organizations, with relatively well-resourced women's advocacy, non-government organizations occupying center stage and grassroots women's movements struggling to define their space and to access resources¹¹.

This stratification reinforces the tension between engaging the state to extract gains from inclusion and the task of maintaining a critical distance so as to ensure that there is accountability to a political constituency. The issue has to be seen in historical context: we would argue that women's organizations have much to gain from the process of engagement and constructive dialogue (*a la* Kgositsile-Mbete) in terms of shaping the form of policies and budgetary priorities. In the longer term, however, this dual politics of engaging/ criticizing can only be successful if the constituencies of women on whose behalf engagement takes place is broadened beyond the non-governmental organization sector. Accountability of elected women representatives to different constituencies of women is key in this regard. As Kemp *et al* have argued, 'at their best, the dialogues women hold with each other disrupt authority and redefine all the issues' (Kemp et al, 1995:159).

CONCLUSION

A feminist critique of civil society shows that it is premised on the divide between the public and the private sphere and that the important contributions of the women's movement to the development of, and debate about, civil society in South Africa have been marginalized and neglected. In this article, we have attempted to reinstate issues of gender in civil society debates.

In particular, we have foregrounded the dilemmas of defining identity within the women's movement, particularly in a society deeply marked by class and race differences which appear to be more overt stimuli to political action than gender. We argue that the formation of the Women's National Coalition was a significant turning point in history of women's organizations, not only because of the gains it was able to make in negotiations to democracy but also because it established the possibility of women as a political constituency, able to act in defence of a set of interests, albeit narrowly defined. We argued that inclusionary strategies have the potential to open new political spaces for women's struggles. The skillful positioning of the WNC during the negotiations period pushed the terrain of what was negotiated beyond the initial intentions of political parties. Furthermore, the achievement of formal equality in the context of a brutal apartheid past should not be under-estimated.

The article also posed the question of whether institutionalization of the women's movement through the creation of a national gender machinery has contributed to the demobilization of women's organizations within civil society. We argued that a simplistic demobilization argument does not suffice to explain the relative inactivity of the South African women's movement presently, but that this "demobilization" should be viewed within the specific historical context of the development of civil society and other social movements in South Africa.

Using assumptions of the dual politics model of civil society we argued that identity is inextricably linked to the development of the strategies and objectives of the women's movement. We also interrogated the development of a feminist consciousness and pointed out that it is linked to strategic gender issues. Feminist consciousness develops within the context of particular social formations. While we agreed that motherism is an authentic South African feminism, we argued that it may not be enough to sustain a political identity and solidarity among women. What is needed is a move to the politics of autonomy, bodily integrity and independence to transcend the politics of the private sphere.

Exactly what the impact of the institutionalization of women's politics has been on civil society in South Africa needs empirical investigation. We leave this challenge open to ourselves and others who want to extend and deepen the existing body of literature on women's citizenship and civil society.

NOTES

1. At the AWEPA/GAP conference "Women at the Crossroads", this view was expressed frequently and without being challenged by both women Members of Parliament as well as by women active in civil society. For a written sample of these views, see Kgotsitsile (1998) and Watson (1998). Among commentators, this view has been expressed most succinctly by Madonsela (1996), Cock (1997) and Meintjies (1998).

2. This is not to deny that the notion of women's interests needs further interrogation. This issue is discussed below.

3. These are very narrow measures, calculated on rigid criteria. The GEM, for example, looks at participation only in parliament. Nevertheless, they are used here to capture the enormous variation in South Africa's scores on the two indices.

4. For a discussion of this point, see Kemp *et al*, 1995.

5. For example, women's sewing groups.

6. See Hassim, 1991; Horn, 1991.

7. The journal Agenda carried a special issue devoted to "Women and Difference" in 1993.

8. For example, the demands that national liberation should take account of women's oppression, the demand for women's equality within the movement and in the constitution and the questioning of the customary authority of chiefs over women.

9. Dr. Ginwala is now speaker in the National Assembly.

10. Of course, the belief in the progressive value of a focus on the state was predominant among many actors in South Africa at this time.

11. This insight is derived from attendance at a range of forums, including most recently the WomensNet/Commission for Gender Equality Information Audit in October 1998.

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CHAPTER V

TENSIONS IN LEGAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES IN THE 1996 SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION

EBRAHIM MOOSA

INTRODUCTION: LAW AND RELIGION

It is no longer intelligible to posit the view that religion and law are two absolutely opposing antinomies that have no interconnections. Even radical secularists have to admit that religion plays a greater implicit and explicit role in our thinking processes than had hitherto been acknowledged. In the Western tradition two statements were to herald the end of religion. Karl Marx's famous and abused characterization of religion as the "opium of the masses" and Friedrich Nietzsche's announcement of the "death of God." By the close of the second millennium "the classical religions have been neither destroyed nor consigned to folklore," in the words of Pierre Legendre.¹ To the contrary, religion is making an unprecedented appearance on the world stage. And, panic-stricken observers fear that the major achievement of the Enlightenment, namely the secular state, is increasingly under attack by social movements and forces inspired by religion.

Some quarters view this tendency with alarm, accompanied with the fear that it may undo the hardwon achievements of post-Enlightenment secularism, especially the achievement of the secular state. On the other hand, for many the emergence of political and social orders in which religion plays a prominent role is viewed as a corrective to the aberrations and havoc that secularism had wrought on society. While the debate on religion and secularism will be briefly dealt with below, we will direct our gaze to law and the effect religion has had on this pillar of secularism.

Even among the Greeks and the Romans, the progenitors of modern legal systems, law was rooted in the mythic and supernatural worldviews of these societies.² In other words, the fact that law did have religious moorings of some kind is no longer denied. By the close of the twentieth century law has "undisguisedly" become a pragmatic human process and the Siamese twin of the secular order.³ The nation-state as a political system has become the symbol of the secular order. And, secularism and secularization are no longer the exclusive features of Western societies. Colonization has in its wake brought about a semblance of homogenization of legal and political systems in non-Western cultures in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. While each of these contexts are variegated and differentiated there is a noticeable tension between what can be characterized as the globalizing legal and political order on the one side and the local socio-cultural order, on the other. Within non-Western cultures specifically, though not exclusively, this conflict becomes manifest in the debates about democracy when the attempts to domesticate imported political systems come into conflict with indigenous values and worldviews.

Nowhere else does this encounter of imported legal and political systems versus resurgent indigenous socio-legal orders make itself manifest as it does in certain Muslim societies where these debates have assumed fierce proportions. This debate is also evident, albeit in less spectacular ways, in societies in which African traditional religion, Buddhism or Hinduism are found.⁴

In this essay I will sketch the relationship between religion, state and law in South Africa until the adoption of the 1996 Constitution. Thereafter I will do a close reading of the provisions of "freedom of religion, belief and opinion" in the overall context of South Africa's new constitutional order. Finally, I will explore some of the implications of this rights discourse for religious communities.

RELIGION AND STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle received significant support from religion, especially in the last two decades prior to the demise of a political order based on racism. Some of the leading work on liberation theology in Christianity and Islam emerged from the South African context. Lest it be forgotten, one should remember that organized religion has had a longer tryst with history in this African sub-region. The European colonial adventures brought with them religion, whether it be the Calvinist brand of the Dutch colonists, the Protestantism of the French Huguenots or the Episcopalian variety espoused by the droves of Anglican missionaries of the London Missionary Society. Other religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Chinese traditions also made their presence felt in this sub-region over a period of roughly three centuries of colonial rule. The indigenous religions of the African peoples were repeatedly denounced and demeaned as superstition, syncretism and false religions. Once European conquest began to succeed in southern Africa around the 1890s, only then did the missionaries begin admitting, albeit reluctantly that indigenous people had a religion.⁵ Today, African traditional religion may still be the core religion of the majority of South Africans. However, the mainstream religion, particularly a variety of Christian denominations, prevails over all others in South Africa, both in terms of size, visibility and profile. African traditional religion proper, has been eclipsed by the high profile of the African Independent Churches. While the institutional representation of African Traditional Religion in terms of modern organization can hardly compete with other religious traditions, it still has a strong following and is showing signs of resurgence. In the past, Christianity defined what was normative with respect to religion and shaped both colonial policy and that of the apartheid state. Marginalized religious communities enjoyed no protection from either the state or hegemonic religions. In fact adherents of Islam and African Traditional Religion were legitimate targets for proselytisation. When the basis of relationship between the colonial state and its subjects was not one of ethnicity, then it was very often determined by religion.⁶ Relationships between religions, if they were not marked by hostility, could be described as being competitive. This endured for most of South Africa's history until special social circumstances as well as changes within religious traditions in the last two decades of the 20th century made inter-religious social action and dialogue possible.

In the 1980s a coalition of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and even Buddhists was formed against apartheid called the World Conference of Religion and Peace (WCRP). The representatives of each religious community articulated a social message rooted within their respective religious teachings against the evil of enforced racial separation and tyrannical white rule. Religion in this sense played the role as both liberator and later as facilitator of the transition from apartheid rule to a democratic order by promoting racial reconciliation most notably between black and white. This historic development possibly secured a place for religion in the new and emerging post-apartheid political order. It was particularly the Christian church, though not exclusively, that played a leading role in promoting reconciliation.⁷ Religion in South Africa had no reason to fear its marginalization in the new South Africa.

DECLARING RELIGIOUS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: RELIGION ANTICIPATES CHANGE

Anticipating the emergence of a constitutional state, the religious communities under the auspices of the South African chapter of the inter-religious WCRP began to positioning itself for the emerging new political order. On November 22-24, 1992 it held a landmark national inter-faith conference. It was by all accounts the most inclusive religious gathering of its kind in South Africa and adopted a pre-circulated draft "Declaration on Religious Rights and Responsibility" that comprised ten principles aimed at regulating the relations among religious communities, as well as relations with the state.⁸ A crucial assumption the declaration made was that "these principles will function within the framework of a Bill of Rights" and the conference thus proposed a clause for such a Bill of Rights (BoR). The proposed clause stated:

1. All persons are entitled:
 - 1.1 to freedom of conscience
 - 1.2 to profess, practice, and propagate any religion or no religion,
 - 1.3 to change their religious allegiance
2. Every religious community and/or member there of shall enjoy the right:
 - 2.1 to establish, maintain and manage religious institutions;
 - 2.2 to have their particular system of family law recognized by the state:
 - 2.3 to criticize and challenge all social and political structures and policies in terms of the teachings of their religion.⁹

The "Declaration" also defined a "religious community" as "a group of people who follow a particular system of belief, morality and worship, either in recognition of a divine being, or in pursuit of spiritual development, or in the expression of a sense of belonging through social custom or ritual."¹⁰ In the Declaration the signatories acknowledged that religion was "used to justify injustice, sow conflict and contribute to the oppression, exploitation and suffering of people." At the same time the signatories also recognized that religion also upheld human dignity and justice in the face of oppression. For this reason the representatives of the various religions, gathered at Pretoria in 1992, undertook to redress past injustices and committed themselves to the construction of a just society.

A careful observation of the way the religious sector itself (at least as represented by the WCRP in South Africa) defines religion and how that notion gets grafted onto the 1996 Constitution will help to illuminate the discussion. "Religion" in the Declaration is defined as "belief, morality and worship" in the recognition of a divine being, or/and in pursuit of spiritual development or/and as a sense of expressing one's belonging. In the pursuit of all these rights and responsibilities, the religious communities bound themselves to an "expression of religion [that] shall not violate the legal rights of others."¹¹ In so doing religious communities thus affirmed a form of religious freedom that was subject to the surveillance of the law. Religious rights were to be circumscribed by an authority outside of religion. This extra-religious authority or referee is assumed to be the state and its legal apparatus. In the same breath however, the Declaration asserts that religious communities, singly, jointly or collectively "shall have the right

to address the state and enter into dialogue on matters important to them." Any conflict between religion and state was thus to be resolved through "dialogue." What the parameters of this dialogue should be and how it is organized remains unstated, unless one is to infer a commonsense understanding of the term. The Declaration also stated that the religious sector would "critically evaluate social, economic and political structures and their activities."¹² In a bid to prevent the co-option of the religious community by the state, the Declaration appealed to the religious leadership to "follow the dictates of their consciences to avoid conspiring or colluding to violate the public good or the legal rights of others."

What becomes evident is that religion, as articulated in the Declaration, sees its future role in the public space in two senses: a passive and private role; and an active and public role. The passive role is to ensure the rule of law is enforced and that all public activities take place within the framework of legitimacy set by the state. The activist role is limited to the extent that the religious sector will at its discretion invite the state to an undefined mode of dialogue about social and political issues. In terms of this self-understanding of the role of religion in a post-apartheid South Africa it remains unclear whether civil disobedience on the part of the religious sector, for instance, is an option in the event that dialogue fails. However, the appeal the Declaration makes to the religious leadership to follow the dictates of conscience in certain instances suggests that protest beyond dialogue may be contemplated. Yet one cannot ignore the fact that in claiming to be a corrective force and moral conscience of society, the religious sector does envisage a political role for itself. Given the role that religion played in delegitimizing power under apartheid, it is understandable that the religious sector understood how power is organized as well as its own role in the networks of power in post-apartheid society.

Whatever the religious sector expected in 1992 on matters of religion turned out to be very different in the Bill of Rights (BoR) as contained in the 1996 Constitution. If one reads the Declaration together with the 1996 BoR, the only power that religion can lay claim to is an appeal to the power of morality. It will be remembered that in the Declaration, the religious sector, in some instances, proposed for itself an alternative authority or voice to political authority. There could be several explanations for this gap between expectation and fulfillment. It appears that the religious sector either zealously overestimated its own future role or that the incumbent political powers may not have fulfilled their undisclosed commitments to the religious sector. Less carefully explored is the fact that the religious sector may have overlooked what the possible role of religion would be in a modern state with a liberal, secular and human rights-friendly Constitution. In the latter context public expressions of religious beliefs are constitutionally subordinate to the state and the principles of morality are theorized separately from the domain of politics.¹³ This raises the question as to what conditions and circumstances necessitated the Declaration to make such far-reaching claims about the authority of religion in a new democratic order. The reasons as to why this carefully drafted Declaration did not translate into a suitable legal formulation for consideration by the constitutional writers also needs to be explored.

The religious sector was not the only group to have been mobilized by the African National Congress and other pro-democracy forces. Women's groups, trade unions, youth formations, the medical and health-care sector, as well as the education and legal sectors, all produced documents and declarations that would forward their respective visions for a post-apartheid society. From that perspective the religious sector did not have an unusual experience. How the vision of these sectional interest groups translated into the norm-setting document of the nation, namely the Constitution, has to be examined elsewhere. Translation is certainly the key metaphor

here. How did the vision of the religious sector as set out in the 1992 Declaration translate into the 1996 Constitution? Translation is not a benign act, but is a profoundly political one, in so far as it involves a discourse and process of power. In converting the language of religious values, sentiments, visions and dreams into concrete norms and rights, from the brokers of religious power to the politicians and constitutional writers, all engage in the process of manufacturing the template of power.

The power wielded by the religious community in South Africa is significant. One has to consider the role of the Christian church not only in delegitimizing the apartheid state, but also in baptizing the negotiated settlement. The close proximity of crucial members of the religious establishment to the liberation movement prior to the lifting of the ban on the anti-apartheid political parties is an important consideration. With the liberation movement in exile, the religious establishment and that sector of the church and other religions that espoused liberation theology, acted as the moral guardians of the anti-apartheid struggle. With the return of the political exiles and the political leadership, the religious establishment in a sense transferred the mantle of moral authority to the politicians. Unfamiliar with the complexity of the vision of the religious establishment for the new society, the politicians only partly incorporated sections of the 1992 Declaration into the final text of the Constitution. Another less generous explanation could be that the politicians did not share the views of the religious sector and that the Declaration and the process leading up to it was nothing but political posturing and the co-option of the religious sector into the agenda of the dominant African National Congress alliance. Skeptical as it may sound, this view was not without its supporters. As the ruling ANC continues to amend its pledges to the various sectional social charters prior to the elections, this view is increasingly being validated with the benefit of hindsight.

Before dealing with the specifics of law and religion in the South African context it may be useful briefly to explore the link between religion and public policy. This link is particularly important in the light of the secularization of the public space in the post-apartheid era. Jose Casanova has argued that the theory of secularization should be complex enough to account for the historical contingency that there may be legitimate forms of "public" religion in the modern world.¹⁴ He suggests that the traditional bias against the role of religion in the public domain may be reconsidered in the light of new roles that religion may play. Religion may have a role to play which is not necessarily that of "positive" societal integration. There are certain expressions of public religion, says Casanova, that do not endanger the modern functional differentiation between the public and the private. In fact the latter may allow for the privatization of religion on the one hand and the pluralism of subjective religious beliefs on the other.

In order to conceptualize such possibilities, Casanova argues that the secularization theory will need to reconsider at least three of its historically ethnocentric biases: firstly, the bias for subjective Protestant forms and definition of religion as belonging to the realm of the private, secondly the bias towards the liberal conception of politics and what constitutes the public sphere, and, thirdly, the bias for the sovereign nation-state as the systematic unit of analysis.¹⁵

By failing to take cognizance of the changing role of religion and not adequately theorizing the notion of the collectivity (of which religion is only one) we may be denying ourselves a meaningful account of the deprivatization of religion. The dominant sociology as well as the liberal or civic republican models of analysis that make a radical distinction between the public and private are not very helpful models of analysis. For instance, to say that society is being secularized could mean one or more of several registers of signification. It could mean a) the differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms; b) the decline of

religious beliefs and practices; and, c) the marginalization of religion to the private sphere. At the same time theories of religion or secularization and modernization should be open to the idea that there are other kinds of religion that play some role in institutionalizing their own patterns of secularization. Various religious traditions have maintained an uneasy relationship with modernity, partly accommodating and also recognizing some of the values of the secular as their own. But at the same time these religions refuse to accept the claims of the market as well as that of the state, which suggest that moral norms ought not to interfere in the public space. If carefully considered, the above options, as suggested by Casanova, could offer a new way of conceptualizing religion in public policy in South Africa, compared to the kind which is enumerated below.

RELIGION AND THE 1996 BILL OF RIGHTS

The 1996 South African Constitution, more specifically chapter two called the Bill of Rights (BoR), does not create a Jeffersonian "wall of separation between church and state," which is also the emblematic metaphor for religion and state relations in modern secular societies. The BoR actually attempts to create what I would call a "flow" or "umbilical chord" between state and religion without establishing a theocracy based on Calvinist principles as the constitution texts of 1961 and 1983 attempted to do.¹⁶ In the preamble to the 1996 Constitution there has been a controversial reference to "God" which some people felt excluded persons who did not adhere to any religion. The controversial part read: "May God protect our people. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika....God bless South Africa."¹⁷ Persons not affiliated to religion argued that if there was a reference to God there should also have been a reference to some values with which non-religious persons could identify. In this sense the Constitution can be viewed as being biased toward theists.

The clause on *freedom of religion, belief and opinion* in the BoR states:

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.
- (2) Religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that:
 - (a) those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities;
 - (b) they are conducted on an equitable basis; and
 - (c) attendance at them is free and voluntary.
- (3)
 - (a) This section does not prevent legislation recognizing:
 - (i) marriages concluded under any tradition, or a system of religious, personal or family law;
 - or
 - (ii) systems of personal and family law under any tradition, or adhered to by persons professing a particular religion.
 - (b) Recognition in terms of paragraph (a) must be consistent with this section and the other provisions of the Constitution.

In this section of the BoR, standard freedoms are entrenched. However, when it comes to religion one is only free to hold beliefs, opinions and thoughts. As soon as these freedoms are translated into practice, in the form of religious observances at schools or religion-based family law codes, then such actions are subject to conditions and limitations. It is required that religion

in the public domain must comply with administrative procedures such as obtaining permission, comply with a notion of equitable practice and be voluntary. All religious practices in the public space must in addition be "consistent" with the overall thrust of the Constitution and its values. The 1993 Constitution did not explicitly require religious practices to be consistent with the overall constitutional values, but the final text was amended in order to make such a qualification explicit.

A close reading of the BoR discloses a dualistic understanding of religion: 1) religion as belief and, 2) religion as practice. If religion manifests itself as conscience, belief, thought and opinion, in other words as a Cartesian *cogito*, then every citizen has a right to hold such views. In theory, there appears to be absolute freedom in the exercise of religion is an abstract and unarticulated dogma. Freedom of religion as the expression of pious intentions. It is however, debatable whether an abstract freedom can be termed a "freedom" without its political implications and whether anything in the abstract can be termed "religion." Can one talk about freedom of religion and thought, if one is not free to speak one's thoughts? Can one talk about religious freedom if one cannot express such belief?¹⁸

On the other hand, the expression of the religious practices is subject to the limitation of the "secular" values of the Constitution. What section 15 actually achieves is to affirm abstract freedoms and limit the freedom to practice. Clearly the measure of the limitation is to curb any practice that goes beyond what is "reasonable and justifiable"¹⁹ and in so doing to undermine the values of "an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom."²⁰ There is obviously a huge gulf between the right to believe and the right to manifest such belief. That space is mediated by the constitutional values of dignity, equality and freedom. A more appropriate title for this section would have been the "limits to freedom of religion, belief and opinion."

This dissonance, or rather paradox between the promise of freedom of religion and the limit on practices occurs because the language on freedom of religion had been borrowed from elsewhere and does not reflect the organic texture of the way in which religion is understood and practiced in South Africa. The rhetorical pedigree of the 1996 BoR is transparent. Its genealogical affiliation is to post-Enlightenment European thought, not post-colonial Africa. The fundamental freedoms of religion in the European context arise out of a quest for freedom from a particular kind of religious oppression and denial. It was also a move towards the plurality of religious beliefs. The same can also be said about the United States. In fact, the disestablishment of religion in the United States was meant to protect religion from state interference and not to create hostility between religion and state.²¹

It is not very difficult to grasp the presumptions and assumptions the authors of the Constitution make about religion. The working assumption is very much a post-Reformation one, which distinguishes between the public and the private, the secular and the profane.²² In this discourse, religion is primarily a private concern. So what may appear to be the privileging of religion, in the rhetorical phrase, "freedom of religion" actually only means the freedom to practice religion in the realm of the private, not the public. Stated differently, one can say freedom of religion means the restriction and limitation to have jurisdiction in only a narrow set of activities.

What this means is that when religious practices are offensive to the secular constitutional values, but not necessarily devoid of moral insight, the abstract notion of freedom is erased, and a form of civic republicanism would deem these religious acts to be illegal. For Liberals, religious belief worthy of respect depends on its mode of acquisition. From a political point of

view if religious belief and practice have the tendency to promote the habits and dispositions that make good citizens or promote the good life, but conflict with some constitutional values, would such religion be deemed offensive in South Africa? Polygyny would be a good example. If this practice which is sanctioned by religion does not inhibit the making of good citizens, but may conflict with an interpretation of gender equality, would polygyny then be deemed offensive on these grounds? Most probably yes, in terms of the liberal doctrine of constitutionalism. The problem raised here is not so much whether society should or should not be protected from offensive and degrading behavior from whatever quarter, including religion. The issue is a more fundamental one: the misrepresentation of religious rights in South African constitutional discourse. It gestures an absolute freedom by the invocation of the phrase "freedom of religion" but does not necessarily fulfill that pledge. At the same time the legal regulation of religion does not necessarily reflect the social practices and expectations of a very diverse religious community.

Another feature of the 1996 constitutional text is the complete omission of any reference to "*ubuntu*", the value of African humanism which constituted one of the philosophical strands that informed the 1993 interim Constitution. In fact the reference to "*ubuntu*" was a positive feature since it at least acknowledged that African tradition and values would inform the interpretation of an otherwise extremely Eurocentric legal system. The postamble of the 1993 Constitution stated that ". . . there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimization." In a major ruling abolishing the death penalty the Constitutional Court in *S v Makwanyane* made reference to *ubuntu* as one of the values that informed the BoR. A great deal was made of the positive contribution of indigenous and organic values to the overall legal system. The omission of *ubuntu* must therefore mean that the Constitution was de-Africanized in the re-drafting process. With that the religious-cultural values of African people are also devalued. Thus the desire to formulate a core legal system which encapsulates the multiple value systems in South Africa was not necessarily accomplished in the final Constitution.

METAPHYSICS OF LAW AND RIGHTS

Juridical categories, Legendre, tells us do not conceal within themselves their own justification. ". . . [T]hey are juridical categories only because they are founded in, that is to say they refer to, the principle of division from which they spring. The *Tiers* of juridical categories...the founding Reference...are dealing with the theatrical character of institutions. In every society the basic founding discourse is a celebration, a ritualization, because it is a matter of bringing alive, on a social scale, the representation of the foundations, the representation of that which renders the function of the categories conceivable."²³ It appears that society organizes itself on the basis of representation. This representation takes place through theater, as Legendre points out, of which political dramatization, music, song or rituals are the mediums for the enactment of totemic truth. Whether we call it metaphysics, myth or cosmology, even legal systems and legal institutions inhere elements of these hidden components from which they derive their justification. This is what is meant by the French term *Tiers*, which refers to an external third element that is outside of juridical categories.

Not only is religion an enactment of totemic truth but so is the Constitution. The combination or the tension between religion and political-legal categories enhances the complexity of these truths. While the Constitution is mainly a guide for political conduct and

reflects on the authority of legal language, it does introduce religious themes at crucial points, such as the reference to a theism: "May God protect our people" and "God bless South Africa." The ecumenical thrust of the Constitution, for the want of a better term, appears to espouse inclusivity, healing, reconciliation, human dignity, equality, freedom and the redress of past injustices. In other words, in a sense it speaks the language of justice and the theology of reconciliation under the watchful guise of a nondescript theism. But these same terms also have another register of meaning. The terms freedom, equality and openness employed in the Constitution are framed in the language of rights—the language of modern political theory and law. These contending "meanings"—ethical, religious, legal, political or even eudaemonic—are thematic categories that are torn apart by the perplexing difficulty (*aporia*) that constitutes each of them.

Paul de Man believes a constitutional document, following his close reading of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, describes two things: firstly, the ideal state, the constative aspect, and, secondly, the legal acts, which is the performative aspect. The system of relationships that generates the text, not its referential meaning, is what de Man calls, the grammar or logical code of the constitutional text.²⁴ The grammar or logical code of the Constitution is only conceivable by suspending its referential meaning. By this he means the immediacy the code has to a very specific instance and consequence. This is different from Legendre's term *Tiers* for "reference" which is a mythical referential point. For this reason, to return to de Man, a law must be written by suspending its applicability to a particular entity; in the same way the grammatical logic of the constitution can only function if its referential consequences are disregarded. Paradoxically we also know that law ceases to be if it is not applicable to particular individuals. It is only when law refers to a particular praxis that the justice of the law can be tested. Justice is always realized in a very particular instance. Yet citizens always desire the well-being of each and everyone, while secretly appropriating the word *each* for him or herself.

There can be no text without grammar: the logic of grammar generates texts only in the absence of referential meaning, but every text generates a referent that subverts the grammatical principle to which it owed its constitution. What remains hidden in the everyday use of language, the fundamental incompatibility between grammar and meaning, becomes explicit when the linguistic structures are stated, as is the case here, in political terms. . . . [T]he incompatibility between the elaboration of the law and its application (or justice) can only be bridged by an act of deceit.²⁵

The constative and performative aspects of the Constitution are in permanent tension. In the gap between the grammar of the Constitution and its applications, legal history evolves. New and varied legal acts and interpretations are attributed to the original text by means of the rhetorical figure of metalepsis, the trope that reverses cause and effect through the shuttling of priorities. By means of the rhetoric of metalepsis, current decisions are legitimized as the choices of the legal tradition or as the necessary or correct interpretation of the legal texts. Any legislative text that attempts to reconcile the conflicting requirements of a discourse of politics, justice and truth is prone to such metalepsis.

Implicit in the framing of religious rights, is a binarism which contrasts religion versus non-religion, the private versus the public and the secular versus the sacred. In so far as the practices of religion or religious persons conform to the overall values of the Constitution, there is a symmetry in the reason of the individual (*logos*) and the reason of the state (*nomos*). The

constitutional text makes the assumption that the individual and the state are reconciled in its values and the reason of the law. It may be too early to predict, but there are very few indications to prove that the new Constitution had incorporated the consensus values of the majority community. In making the (false) assumption of the reconciliation of the individual or community with the reason of the law, the Constitutional text arrives at the metaphor of Western metaphysics, *logos*—the reason of the individual—versus *nomos*, the reason of the state. *Logos-nomos* is the name of the reconciliation of self and others. "A perfect harmony is thus attained in the realization that we are puppets of a good puppeteer in whose game we participate (life is a patterned nomological play)."26 In the metaphor of logonomocentrism, "the claim of the unity of self and others in absolute reason of the law" is made.27 Logonomocentrism promises the truth of reason and the reason of law, which are both games of figures and rhetoric. If however there is asymmetry between the practices of religious persons and the reason of the state (*nomos*), then the only way logonomocentrism deals with these relations is to "other" and delegitimize these as aberrant and illegal.

What the Constitution does is to retain the fiction of the sovereignty of religion, whereas the logic of modernity, and liberalism in particular, had long eroded this in practice. It retains the pretense of this sovereignty by the invocation of the freedom of religion rhetoric. But in reality it is a freedom which finds its limits in the logic of the state.

The problematic part of this kind of constitutional formulation is that it creates the expectation of religious freedom, but in effect allows the state to interfere with religion. There is only one sovereign which is the state, although lawyers would argue that in South Africa the Constitution is sovereign. However, one has to acknowledge that constitutional sovereignty is largely in the service of the state. If one takes the example of religion, then constitutional guarantees for freedom of religion are reduced to the will of the state. Religion in South Africa is without a doubt more vulnerable to legislative and judicial interference than is religion in the US where there is a proverbial wall of separation. The partnership between religion and state in South Africa, as some would describe it, reduces religion to the "junior partner." There are no clauses which protect religion from the caprice of the state. The possibility of religion being co-opted by the state is infinitely more possible, despite the wishes of the authors of the Declaration to the contrary. At least within the US constitutional system, the state is prohibited from supporting any particular religion or legally interfering with religion. In South Africa the state may legally recognize any religion, provided it can justify such procedures to fulfill the requirements of administrative propriety and equality. This opens the way for the co-option of religion and diminishes the possibility for the prophetic voice of religion to be heard in a critique of the state. While it is possible to co-opt religion in the United States, this cannot be done in a legal manner without skillful subterfuge. In South Africa, such co-option can be achieved with Constitutional sanction. In the United States religion would have to translate itself into a secular and pragmatic value and cease to be religion, before it could legally play a role in legislation and the affairs of state. In South Africa values can theoretically be incorporated with their religious peculiarities intact.

CONCLUSION

South Africa concluded a liberal constitution where religion is subordinate to state authority. The paradox in the South African context is the dissonance between the aspirations of the religious communities and the lack of any legal and political means to realize such goals. At least

constitutionally, religion is coerced to operate within the language of rights and will willingly or unwillingly shape a rights-bearing citizen. But religion also sees itself as a normative discourse and the making of a virtuous citizen. The question of duty is an important requirement in a nascent democracy like South Africa with its myriad social and economic challenges. The debate between rights and duty in political culture is far from resolved and remains a contentious one.

The post-apartheid South African state is moving towards a monolithic culture of secular legal morality, if the excision of non-secular values and references in the new Constitution is anything to go by. Inclusivity, transparency and openness does not necessarily mean the possibility of multiple moral references. The Constitution may be tolerant of multiple moral centers, as long as these do not threaten the emerging rights-centered, juro-moral authority. In the final instance the state will dictate its own secular moral register.

The Bill of Rights as part of the Constitution could have been lifted out of any European setting, even though there is great excitement about it being one of the most advanced and liberal documents of its kind. As previously indicated this normative document lacks an indigenous moral foundation and a rootedness in local culture. It is difficult to see how and where the values and culture of the African majority resonate in this text, except through rapid acculturation and subordination to a Eurocentric juristic culture. The BoR has its moral foundations in the universal reason of a rights culture, and its compatibility with a culture that furthers the cause of a disciplined and virtuous citizen is unknown.

The advent of constitutional governance in South Africa is bound to impact on the transformation of religion. It also heralds the success of the modern state in the grand narrative of cultural transformation accompanied by the rise of modern industrial societies and globalization. Cultural transformation means the decline of religion in industrialized societies and the progressive secularization of beliefs and practices as well as the rationalization of social life. So while pre-modern forms of religion and magic lose their hold over societies, we witness the proliferation of newer forms of religion, religious institutions through mass communications and networks of transmission by means of which commodified symbolic forms, religion included, are made available to larger and greater audiences.

What happens in South Africa, as elsewhere, is that religion is mediated through a range of symbolic forms, in law, politics, economics, culture. Religion as a symbolic form is embedded in structured social contexts involving relations of power, forms of conflict and inequalities. When the social contextualization of religion as symbolic form occurs, it also means that these religious forms become the objects of complex processes of valuation, evaluation and conflict, what J.B. Thompson calls the process of valorization as ideology.²⁸

NOTES

1. "The Lost Temporality of Law: An Interview with Pierre Legendre," Peter Goodrich and Ronnie Warrington, trans. Allain Pottage, *Law and Critique*, 1:1, 1990, 3.

2. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), 186 points out that among the Greeks, Romans and Hindus, law was first a part of religion.

3. Harold J. Berman, *Faith and Order: The Reconciliation of Law and Religion*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993), p. 6. In Muslim political thought there is an adage which says: "*al-din wa'l dawla tawaman*—religion and state are twins." Here religion refers to the juro-moral code (law) and the state as the social order.

4. Besides what is happening in the Muslim world, the re-assertion of Hindu fundamentalism in India and with it the Hinduisation of the political and legal order comes to mind as well as the conflict between Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka's ongoing civil war.

5. David Chidester, "Authentic Forgery and Forging Authenticity: Comparative Religion in South Africa," Inaugural Lecture, New Series, No. 186, (Cape Town: UCT Printing, 1994), 8.

6. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1976) 83, who shows that religiously based caste associations were the *modus operandi* for the organization of relations with the state in Central Africa, especially Uganda.

7. Names of church leaders such as the Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as well as influential members of the Dutch Reformed Church such as Allan Boesak and Beyers Naude, became household names at home and also enjoyed international standing in the world anti-apartheid forums.

8. World Conference on Religion and Peace—South African Chapter (WCRP-SA), "Declaration on Religious Rights and Responsibilities," no date, section titled, "Affirmation."

9. WCRP-SA, Declaration, "Proposed Clause for the Bill of Human Rights."

10. WCRP-SA, Declaration, "We Who Subscribe to this Declaration," (a).

11. WCRP-SA, Declaration, section 1. 2

12. WCRP-SA, Declaration 3. 4 and 3. 5.

13. See Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 206.

14. Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 39.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Gretchen Carpenter, "Beyond Belief—Religious Freedom under the South African and American Constitutions," *Tydskrif vir Hedendaagse Romeins-Hollandse Reg*, band 58, no. 4, November 1995, p. 684.

17. From the Preamble:

"We therefore, through our freely elected representative, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to . . .

Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law. .

..

May God protect our people.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. . . . God bless South Africa."

18. See Etienne Mureinik, "A Bridge to Where? Introducing the Interim Bill of Rights," *South African Journal on Human Rights*, vol. 10, 1994, pp. 31-48, esp. 34.

19. Constitution 1996, section 36 1, "Limitation of Rights."

20. Constitution 1996, section 39 1. (a) "Interpretation of Bill of Rights."

21. See Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1993).
22. See Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *Paying the Words Extra: Religious Discourse in the Supreme Court of the United States*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 37.
23. "Lost Temporality of the Law," pp. 7-8.
24. Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 268.
25. de Man, *op. cit.*, p. 269.
26. Costas Douzinas, Ronnie Warrington, Shaun McVeigh, *Postmodern Jurisprudence: the law of texts in the texts of the law*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 91.
27. Douzinas *et al.*, p. 91.
28. John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), p. 12.

CHAPTER VI
ETHICAL CREATIVITY IN A CULTURE OF UNEASY
RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, INCOMPLETE
DEMOCRATIZATION AND ECONOMIC INJUSTICE
MARTIN PROZESKY

How should people who wish to live ethical lives judge the religious, political and economic situation of the world and how should they act in these three great spheres of contemporary culture? In this chapter I explore some answers by briefly reviewing those three great aspects of contemporary culture, next giving an interpretation of ethics based on the process perspective of Alfred North Whitehead and others, and then applying that ethic to the religious, political and economic situation as I understand it. In the last part of the chapter I offer some brief comments about ethics and the common good.

What follows is not exegetically close to or bound by the thought and idiom of Whitehead or any other process thinker. What I do attempt is to be faithful to the fundamentals of the ideas that stem chiefly from Whitehead's understanding of things, honoring its spirit if not always its letter, and freely joining to it convergent ideas and expressions from my own earlier research before I began to study process thought (Prozesky 1984).

The Global Situation: Religion, Politics and the Economy

None of us, of course, is an expert on the details of global reality. But we can try to understand its main features, and it is in any case important to develop the skill of thinking globally by venturing interpretations of the state of the planet and inviting critical responses to them—which is what I am now about to do— if only because at least four key aspects of the world around us are already global in their effect: communications, information, the environmental crisis and the power of the transnational corporations. Planetary humanity is thus now a real prospect, and we need to prepare our minds, our values and our institutions for its advent.

Turning first to religion, I want to portray the situation world-wide and in South Africa as one of strained diversity and moral ambivalence which cries out for some possibility of resolution. The diversity needs no further comment, for we all know that the world is home to many kinds of religions. What is not so well understood, at least outside the ranks of those who study the different faiths, is that the diversity is most striking in four of the facets or dimensions of religion: doctrine, ritual, custom and organization, and least evident—significantly—in the core ethical values of the various faiths.

What this amounts to is a planet deeply divided by what many think of as the world's greatest social and personal good, its religions. It is just a fact that although Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Africanists, Christians, Humanists and virtually all other kinds of believers all agree that compassionate service and honesty of life are essential to the upright life, religions mostly create personal and cultural identities not out of their ethical values, but out of their different metaphysical doctrines, their specific rituals, their exclusive places of gathering and uses of spiritual power, and their endlessly varied customs. Catholics genuflect or cross themselves,

Muslims touch the ground with their foreheads, Buddhists announce their Threefold Refuge, and nearly all feel distinctly out of place in other people's sacred spaces.

As a result, there is not much spiritual kinship or friendship on this planet, though there is now, in the main, mercifully less of the murderous hostilities and spiritual imperialism that once characterized the borderlands of religions, and in liberal democracies the norm is now to treat the religions more or less equally before the law. But the fact remains that religions worldwide as they presently exist and understand themselves are far better at dividing humanity than at uniting it. All who take seriously the ideal of working for the common good and who think globally must surely feel deep concern at this state of affairs, especially if by personal conviction they count themselves among the ranks of believers. One test of the mettle of process thought and any other kind, for that matter, is what light it can shed on this troubling religious reality and what ethical action it can inspire to help alleviate it.

What next can be said about the spheres of politics and of economic matters, which I shall discuss together because of their close connection? Not being an expert in these fields, I offer only from a layperson's perspective of a set of impression based mainly on long experience of living in Southern Africa and on what I glean from educational and media sources and many personal visits about other parts of the world, presented as a set of impressions.

The first one is that an irreversible feature of our times is the passion of people everywhere for equality of status before equitable laws, for fair opportunities in life, for the same respectful treatment and basic civil liberties, for material well-being, self-expression and peace. The second is that so far as political economy is concerned, there simply is—in painful contrast to the desire of people everywhere—again no such thing as the common good. Instead there is a highly incomplete process of democratization, even in its historical heartlands, and grotesque economic imbalances with mind-boggling levels of luxury for the few, contrasting starkly with mass abject poverty.

I think it is especially important for any of us who live, work and think in first-world communities—the anglophone ones perhaps most of all—to be very clear about the huge gap between the aspirations of people everywhere for basic equality, rights, opportunities and material well-being, and the realities of the situation: while we feast, they dream and curse. What is good in our world is not common and what is common is not good, but very, very bad: empty stomachs, diseased bodies, ill-fed minds, frustrated dreams, all of them experienced within visual reach of television screens parading the luxuries enjoyed by the fortunate—or ruthless—minority. We who think of three good meals a day, a sixteen-year education and late-model cars as necessities need to understand that we are the living symbols of a set of heavily fortified pockets of affluence and self-indulgence for the few surrounded by a world of want and anger for the many.

My third impression concerns the relation between those who are rich and powerful and those who are poor and weak. The have-nots are coming for the haves, and they will keep coming until there are no more haves and have-nots. This is now the daily reality of life in our own country, but we can see it just as clearly elsewhere, with Mexican people crossing into adjacent parts of the USA, central Europeans doing so in Germany, and so on. My fourth impression, therefore, is that the world is now living with the results of two massive failures, at least when measured by the norms of human equality and inclusive well-being: the obvious failure of communism and the less obvious failure of liberal capitalism because of its manifest inability to alleviate the poverty of such vast numbers of people. This in turn gives rise to my fifth impression concerning political economy: we now need—in the words of the title of a

recent book by a colleague of mine—to move beyond both Marx and the Market (Nurnberger 1998). What light can the ethical perspective set forth in this chapter shed on this need and on the action it requires? To find out, let us turn now to that ethical perspective, informed as it is by some important themes in the process tradition.

The Ethics of Creative Co-operation

Although it is often tedious and pedantic to preface a discussion with definitions, sometimes it is necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings. Discussions of ethics are a case in point. Let me therefore declare my meanings. By ‘ethics’ I have in mind that which answers three questions: firstly, what should we understand by the words right and wrong, good and evil: secondly, how should we live if we would give effect to the good and deny the evil: and thirdly, why should we do so? I assume that most people would agree that, in general terms, giving effect to what is good means assigning to the interests of others an importance at least equal to our own, as Peter Singer has proposed (Singer: 1995). Explaining just why anybody would want to do so is perhaps the greatest task now facing ethics, and it is above all here that I believe that the process perspective has the potential to make a significant contribution to the common good.

What then does the process philosophical tradition understand by the key ethical concept of the good? The answer is as follows, as students of the tradition know: firstly, moral goodness is that which fosters the enjoyment of experience as fully as possible by all. In words that I personally prefer, moral goodness is the maximizing of inclusive well-being. This leads to the answer to the second question about the nature of the ethical: if we want to bring about the good we should do all we can to foster inclusive well-being and help it be as richly enjoyable as possible for all. Things are however much more complex when we turn to my third question about the nature of the ethical, namely just why we should live in ways that maximize well-being, but the short answer is this: we should be ethical because, given the nature of things, there is no more rational way to live wisely and well, which is what we all want anyway.

To explain this answer I must now deal with the way process thought understands the nature of things and above all how it understands human existence. This is seen as a flow of creative, inner-related, valorizing agencies manifesting both novelty and stability, adventure and order, a reality evident to us in our conscious experience, but, according to process thought, characteristic not just of human beings but of all that is real. This, of course, means that process thought sees moral values as grounded not only in our human reality, but in the bedrock of the way things are. If that is the case, then moral values are as deeply anchored as it is possible to be.

In most of the process literature known to me, the themes of creativity and inner or essential relatedness receive the greatest emphasis. To my mind it is necessary to give special attention to what I have called valorizing agency if we want to develop the ethic that is latent in the process worldview. What I have in mind by this expression is the way human beings—and all else according to process thought—exemplify a special kind of agency. This is not just creative and not just essentially related to other actualities, but additionally involves the judging of experience for the satisfaction or dissatisfaction, enjoyment or aversion it yields, a judging that is, I think, rooted in our power to sense. Then we select for further enactment that which experience shows is likely to yield the former rather than the latter. I would say that this is what gives direction to our creative agency by discerning and assigning values to things, selecting what is positively valued for realization, and thereby acting like a behavioral steering mechanism.

As I reflect on my own experience, I sense this enables me to react to, and move from, the settled past as it enters into and is received by my own life towards a future—preferred because of the greater overall well-being I wish to foster.

By means of these ideas—creative, inner-related, valorizing agency without absence of order—the process perspective believes we can best discern the grain of reality and thus also what kinds of action are likely to prove fruitful by going with that grain and what kinds are likely to fail because they do not. To live in ways that express as fully as possible this set of related characteristics is therefore to live realistically and with some prospect of productive existence. When all of them are expressed harmoniously in our lives, then life is ethical because it is productive of, and instantiates, the common good.

As a next step in this discussion I want now further to unpack the core characteristics of reality, starting with creativity. What else will be the case if creativity is the universal of universals characterizing matters of fact, as Whitehead once said? A whole string of items comes to mind: a creative universe is a universe of freely chosen action yielding novelty, freshness and plenty of surprises; it is a universe with in-built grounds for hope because nothing can forever be cornered or shackled; it is a universe that defies absolute predictions and refuses to be controlled except in smallish ways for shortish periods; it invigorates and invites adventure; and it produces endless diversity and personal distinctiveness through all those wonderful nuances of creativity that enable each of us to be special, unique and precious. It is a universe that refuses to march in lockstep, a constant joy to the Leonardos in us and an invincible nemesis for the Hitlers.

With an eye to the religious, political and economic state of society, I need to comment further on some of these hallmarks of a creative universe. For one thing, in such a universe things will always be amenable to some measure of transformation. And for another, power is always; not evenly shared, since some clearly have more than others, but shared none the less, so that ours would be a universe that excludes the extremes of absolute power and absolute powerlessness.

Essential or inner relatedness means that reality is holistic, to use the term invented by a famous fellow South African of Whitehead's vintage, General Jan Smuts (Smuts 1926; Beukes 1994: 18). It is thus indeed a universe—a single, all-inclusive whole in which nothing can in any ultimate sense be an outsider. If conservatism is finally a futile attempt to defy the creative process of reality, then apartheid in all its forms, for all its demonic creativity, is just as much a futile attempt to resist the embrace of a cohesive universe. With an eye on politics and economics, let me add two further points: firstly, ours is a world where the flourishing of one is inextricably linked to the flourishing of others, and in the end to the flourishing of all others because, according to the process worldview, reality is none other than the ensemble of *all* things in their inner-connected advance into novelty. Furthermore, while the creative power that we all share enables us to be distinctive individuals, the holistic nature of reality makes the universe just as surely a social reality. Indeed, only in a social universe can distinctiveness and thus individuality have any meaning or scope.

Turning now to the orderly side of reality, let us remind ourselves that for all their marvelous ability to yield freshness and novelty, the processes that constantly shape and reshape the universe happen alongside a welcome measure of stability, continuity, predictability and resistance to change, giving scope to efforts aimed at conserving things whose loss we wish to avoid. Reality thus balances its habit of summoning us to episodes of risk-taking and adventure with times of relative settledness and security, thereby also offering us scope to develop the

wisdom that knows when it is time to seek out the quiet corners of life and when it is time to stride out boldly towards the horizon.

What transforms the process worldview from an ontology into an ethic—or better still an aesthetic ethic—is its inclusion of the theme of the enjoyment of experience, which I prefer to speak of as the valorizing of experience in quest for maximum well-being. Because this too is fundamental to the way of things, the creative power we all share has a tendency to seek out and prolong that which gives enjoyment and to minimize or remove that which brings pain, and it thus has a decisive influence on what kinds of action and intention will have prominence. And since reality is simultaneously an inner-related whole, this valorizing power must ultimately be a shared endeavor to foster the common good; anything less yields lives and cultures in which sectional or selfish pursuits of well-being generate harm and pain for others, and hence also give rise to creative steps on their part to thwart the source of their dissatisfaction. It is easy to see that this will tend in the long run especially to lower the harvest of enjoyment for the selfish person or community.

The moral rule that emerges here is this: well-being can only be maximal—as we all want it to be—when it is fully inclusive and thus ethical. From this central value two others immediately follow: truthfulness and effective action. Without the former there will be no correct discerning of what yields enjoyment and what does not, so that we can now identify a second moral rule: without truthfulness there can be no true and lasting well-being, not even for the selfish. As for effective action, its moral value will surely be obvious, for without effective action, well-being can only be spoken and thought about, not brought about, as we all want it to be.

I therefore draw the conclusion that a world that corresponds to this interpretation of the process worldview will be a world which by its very nature favors—in the long term—the pursuit of moral value and above all of the supreme value of the greatest well-being for all including nature. By its implicit inclusion of what I call valorizing agency in all things, an inclusion more hinted at and logically entailed, so far as I can see, than clearly foregrounded, the process worldview provides a powerful answer to the third of my three questions about the nature of ethics: why should we live in ways that actively promote the maximum enjoyment of experience by all? Why should we pursue the greatest possible inclusive well-being and not just our own? By holding before us our togetherness with all else and our innate way of differentially valuing all that we experience, process thought shows that using our creative power to pursue selfishly our own personal interests is sure in the long run to be self-defeating because of the resistance and at times conflict it will produce. By contrast, promoting the common good has real and long-term prospects of success and durability, and thus of that deeper satisfaction which we all seem to want by nature. In a world where education and longevity are increasing, I would say the prospects of this being understood and taken to heart are better than ever before.

Religious Pluralism, Politics and the Economy

It is time now to apply this ethic to the three great facets of contemporary society covered in this chapter. If we let our lives be shaped by such an ethic of creative cooperation, how would we judge and act in relation to them at this time? I want to approach this matter by means of the key points in a process-based theory of culture, according to which every part of culture (including its beliefs about how to find or create truthful depictions of reality) is artefactual and no part is pre-given. Every part is more or less provisional and thus amenable to transformation in quest of enhanced, inclusive well-being, with no part being cast in concrete or sacrosanct. Thus, the

cultures that merit the support of ethical people are those that are maximally inclusive, combining the greatest scope for personal creativity, fulfillment and hence diversity that is compatible with the same scope for all others and with the orderliness that is also ingredient in the richest well-being.

Let me comment first on the political and economic situation of society in the light of this process-based view of culture. It should be clear that the ethic contained in this chapter cannot but render a largely negative verdict on that situation because its inequalities of both political and economic power fall so far short of the common good. The problem is not with the democratic ideal of equally empowering all the adult members of society, for that is exactly what a process ethic would approve. The problem is the minimal progress the world has made towards that goal, and I want to contend that this is caused by a number of factors. One of them is bad education. A world where knowledge has become the primary form of and means to wealth is a world where the quality of education, in its broadest sense covering the whole person-making process, is a key determinant of who prospers and who does not. We really do need new forms of mass education which will give all of us the ability to understand the nature and sources of our dehumanization and a sound grasp of the huge potential of the kind of informed, co-operative creativity that can help things take a turn for the better.

Along with bad education there is the problem of a global economic system that is, so far as I can see, inherently incapable of pursuing maximum well-being for all, judging by the evidence of mass poverty or at least economic hardship and severe environmental damage in a world that has been far more extensively and deeply affected by the pursuit of personal profit than by socialism—which only arose because of outrage at the degradations produced by that pursuit. And let me add that the litmus test of the current form of market economy is not the affluent first world, but the places on whose resources that affluence has been to a large extent built: Africa and parts of Latin America. It is simply untrue that affluent neighborhoods are built only by the creative initiative and hard work of enterprising individuals; they are at least as much built on the labor and resources of marginalized people and places. So, if you want the truth about the merits of liberal capitalism, go to Soweto in South Africa or the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro.

Given its insistence on the reality of holistic inter-connectedness and on the shared nature of creative power, and given the economic distortions all around us, I cannot see how a process ethic could possibly regard liberal capitalism and its idea of market sovereignty as the last word, as though human nature itself were such as to frustrate all other ways of organizing the production and distribution of scarce goods. I think this has opened up a truly historic opportunity for a new kind of ethic. This must combine personal creativity and enterprise with an equal emphasis on the social nature of reality. It must put its conceptual and practical resources into the task of reshaping the world economy into something more workable and equitable than both communism and capitalism, as the extremely important work of John Cobb and Herman Daly is showing. (Daly and Cobb, 1994) For a start, it would help if we recognized that the market has taken over from the God of classical theism as the world's current icon of absolute power.

I said above that there are a number of factors preventing the world from advancing as it could towards the common good. One remains to be discussed, and that is religion. What does the ethic outlined in this chapter have to say about this great facet of human culture? What does it applaud as good and what must it oppose as evil?

To my mind it is quite clear that there must be a mixed verdict on religion, some of it being seen as ethical and some not, and the criterion to be used is also clear: good religion is religion

which gives maximum scope for intensities of fulfilled experience marked by creative diversity and which fosters and justifies spiritual convergence. If all power is shared power, then all saving power is also shared. I cannot help feeling, as I review what mostly seems to happen inside many of our religious institutions, that they are doing an excellent job of blinding many believers to this truth by inculcating in them a spirituality of subservience and isolation.

If the process worldview is sound, so that all power is indeed shared power, then there are no such things as a final revelation, a savior who alone can save, an infallible pope or a single, exclusively true religion or scripture, any more than there is a deity who has all the power. Instead, we should expect and support religious diversity and ongoing transformation so long as they enable people to grow creatively and richly into their own prophetic, messianic and indeed salvific, divine potential, partnered by the same growth in all others. From a process ethical standpoint, religious pluralism as such is therefore not only an inevitable and permanent feature of the spiritual dimension of reality, but also a profound moral good; what must be transformed and transcended are the dogmas and powers that make it an uneasy and strained reality by trying to chain the inexhaustible richness of the divine to this or that cultural and historical ghetto.

Conclusion: the Common Good

Let me end this chapter by offering some brief suggestions about the perspective outlined above and the common good. As will be clear, I believe that we have here a worldview which is also a powerful and workable ethic. If carried out it can yield conditions and experiences of truth, beauty and goodness for all of a quality that has not and will not, to my mind, come from any other philosophy upon which we might pin our hopes. Inherent in it is a persuasive argument that what is truly good must also be common and all-embracing.

Unfortunately this potential will remain just that—potential—so long as the process perspective retains its present confinement. There was a time when the mainstream of culture expressed itself theologically and philosophically, but those days are over except perhaps in parts of North America. Out there in the world of secular academia, of politics and business, very few have ever heard of Whitehead and even fewer are going to read his works. But my own experience of introducing students and others to a non-technical version of basic process ideas and an applied process ethic leaves me quite sure that many people for whom philosophical and theological orientations are sterile will respond eagerly and even with passion to the process perspective, provided it is made accessible and shown to be relevant to the world of practical experience, as it is. At the same time I think that we who espouse process values and beliefs are nowhere nearly forthright enough in acting as critics of the immoral features of our world, most notably in relation to such aspects of religion, the economy and education as I have indicated above.

So I end this chapter with a call for an adventure of cooperative, prophetic creativity in which the lure of a life that journeys bravely and companionably towards ever richer enjoyments of shared experience and ever greater inclusive well-being, extends the process experience from the secresies of Whiteheadian idiom, metaphysical over-elaboration and perhaps above all from the idea that religion is mainly where salvation happens. As William Temple, that great Archbishop of Canterbury once said, "It is a mistake to suppose that God is solely, or even mainly, concerned with religion."

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CHAPTER VII

VALUES IN THE WORK PLACE

BERNARD C. LATEGAN

INTRODUCTION

What cultural and religious resources are available for the (re)construction of civil society, assuming that civil society is necessary to the transformation of South Africa as a whole? More specifically, what is to be expected from religion in this regard, given the ambiguous role of religion in shaping South Africa's distant and recent past?

This chapter explores these questions from the perspective of a limited exposure to some aspects of the work place. It takes its cue from the two fundamental characteristics of civil society *à la* Habermas—its public nature and its relationship to power (Cochrane, p. 7). This implies firstly, that the discourse about the reconstruction of civil society by definition has to be a public discourse, that is, accessible and understandable to participants. Secondly, it has to recognize and deal with the aspect of power or interests that are inevitably involved in such a discourse.

No public talk about interests is possible without raising the issue of values. Citizenship depends on how well the public discourse about values is conducted. Because this discourse can so easily be privatized or highjacked by interests, the issue of accessibility becomes crucial. Coleman (1997: quoted by Cochrane p. 12) is therefore correct when he argues that citizenship must be theorized in terms of "everyday and tangibly accessible life" in which "values such as trust, openness, responsibility, love and solidarity . . . replace the cynicism of the narrow ideals of a manipulative or passive citizenship sponsored by the state or elite experts".

What follows below, is an attempt to pursue some aspects of the public discourse now needed in South Africa. It is based on experience gained in developing common values in various South African companies and organizations. The final section returns to the question of what contribution religion can and should make in this regard.

Whose values?

Coleman makes the important point that theorizing about citizenship needs to be conducted in terms of 'everyday and tangibly accessible life'. His remark raises two important points—the space where such a discourse should take place and the subjects who need to be involved. One of the reasons for religion's ironic loss of influence in the post-apartheid era is the inability to keep these distinctions clearly in focus. Successful participation in the discourse on South Africa's enfolding democracy depends on distinguishing between the different interests involved and the way in which they are made operative. Asking whose values are at stake here, is another way of asking who the subject(s) in this discourse are.

Most audible or visible are those in power, be they government, official bodies of the church or, in the case of business, management. Because of their dominant position, the voices of other exponents often are not heard—the poor, women, the 'ordinary' person in the street, marginalized individuals or groups. But for the establishment and implementation of any value system, these exponents are of critical importance. In companies, it is the employees (and often at lower levels) that in final instance determine the 'corporate culture' of the company—

whatever culture management would like to impose. Wise managers know this and involve the whole of the work force in any process of change.

Besides different exponents, different audiences are involved in the value discourse. The effectiveness of the discourse depends heavily on understanding and addressing the needs of a specific audience. David Tracy's (1981:1-46) distinction of at least three audiences or 'publics' as far as theological discourse is concerned, has proved to be a useful analytical tool and it would be interesting to test whether this distinction also works for other religious traditions.

The first public is the academic public. Through the ages, theology has found a place at the university—however controversial and precarious. At the moment, this location is again under siege and religious traditions respond differently to the threat of exclusion from academe. Without debating the issue, there can be little doubt that the academic study of religion has an important contribution to make to the discourse on values. In the critical environment of the university, theology is exposed or 'made public' in a specific way. The publication of research, the defence of theses and the scrutiny by peers form part of the academic ethos and the tradition of academic freedom. For a sustained discourse on values the contribution of this sector is of critical importance. Although often obscured in academic language and protected by elitist traditions, academe is in essence a public space, open to public scrutiny. One of the main reasons why discourse in this context is not living up to expectations is that there is confusion or conflation with the second audience. This results in a discourse that is not effective in the university context, but which represents the interests of the second public.

The second public is constituted by the believing community. Its discourse has the character of an in-house conversation. It assumes the existence of a common basis, the sharing of the same basic values. It is a discourse aimed at strengthening and building the own community. Indirectly, it also has a public dimension, in the sense that it prepares believers for life in the 'outside world', where the close support of their own community is not available. This discourse is important for maintaining the personal and collective identity of the group and the understanding of their role and place in the world. It is equally important for the establishment of personal values.

The third public finds itself in the unprotected space of the market place—the public sphere. Here no common ground can be assumed beforehand, no privileged position can be claimed for whatever group or privilege. This is the critical public in any social transformation. If civil society is not securely established on the basis of an alternative value system, if changes are not internalized in the form of clear and coherent ethos, if its procedures and practices do not conform to this ethos, there is in fact no transformation.

It would seem that the South African transformation is unable to complete this process and to take it to its consequences in the public sphere, thereby endangering the operation as a whole.

Yet another variable, besides the actors and the audience, is the style in which the discourse is conducted. The discourse of critical analysis, of second-order reflection and of rational argument naturally belongs to the first public. The discourse of proclamation, of witnessing, of prophecy and of counselling is typical of the second public. The third public likewise requires its own style, but, as we will see, this is poorly developed in most cases.

In order to put the issue in perspective, it could be useful to look at another transition that took place in the same period of time.

A COMPARATIVE DETOUR

The South African transition to an inclusive democracy is of course not the only example in recent times – many similar transitions have taken place in various parts of the world. The re-unification of the two Germany offers some interesting insights. Despite fundamental differences between the two events, there are certain points of similarity that may help to put the South African case in sharper focus. Two of these are of special significance:

On the one hand the re-unification of Germany illustrates quite dramatically the loss of values that follows when the form in which these values are presented is no longer functional. On the other hand, the comparison makes clear how substantial South African advantage is in terms of the inclusiveness of the process and the levels of participation.

More needs to be said about each of these factors.

The reunification of the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (BRD) and the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR) also meant the re-unification of the two parts of the Evangelische Kirche Deutschland (EKD) and of the Catholic Church in the two states. Theologically speaking, the church was one all through the 40 years of the DDR's existence, but in practice they functioned as separate entities. The re-unification highlighted in a dramatic way the weakening of the church in the DDR. Although the pace of secularization also picked up in the BRD, the shift away from the church in the former DDR is nothing but startling (cf. Pollack 1996:604-615 and the accompanying tables). In 1950, 77 percent of the population were baptized, in 1993 25 percent. In 1950 the ratio between people leaving the church and those joining it was 4,9:1, in 1993 in was 7,0:1. These external indicators seem to correlate with a decline in the strength of personal religious convictions. What is happening on a national scale, is corroborated by what happened for instance in a state like Berlin-Brandenburg, where membership of the EKD has dropped by 50 percent (Huber 1997:4), and in certain suburbs of the former East Berlin (Marzahn, Hellersdorf), it is as low as 4 percent (Huber 1995:6).

According to Pollack (1996:596), the social backbone of Protestantism was broken by a series of restructuring measures pushed through by the political leadership of DDR. These included the elimination of the influence of the propertied and educated classes, teachers, the collectivization of agriculture, state industry and control of unions. *"Die politisch betriebene Mobilisierung der Gesellschaft führte zu einem umfassenden Traditions-und Kulturabbruch, der die Kirchen in ihrem Mark traf"* (1996:596).

The concerted effort to restrict the influence of the church was therefore apparently hugely successful – after 40 years of DDR rule, the need for a liaison with the church has for all practical purposes disappeared. Contrary to expectations, there was also no growth in alternative religions after the *Wende*. According to Pollack (1996:608), many East Germans were so alienated from Christianity that all forms of religious ideas or forms of expression were viewed with suspicion. Meulemann (1996: 235) comes to the conclusion: *"Die meisten Menschen in der DDR konnten ohne Kirche und auch ohne ausserkirchliche Formen der Religiosität . . . leben, aber nicht ohne positive religiöse Überzeugungen"*. In his view, religion was replaced by "Scientism", that is, the belief that science and technology will not only improve the quality of life, but also holds the answer to life's questions. Thus the basis for political dominance was created. Meulemann (1996:239) therefore concludes: *"Die DDR hat sich mit der erzwungenen Säkularisierung etabliert, aber keinen Wertwandel durchgemacht."*

What is of specific importance for our topic is that religiosity in the research quoted above is defined in terms of the second public, that is, in terms of affiliation/disaffiliation of the believing community. No attempt is made to formulate the significance of religious values in terms of the third public. And this despite Meulemann's claim that citizens of the DDR could live without the

institution of the church or without alternative forms of religiosity, but not without positive religious convictions or values. This provides an important clue for the argument regarding the modes of religious discourse in the debate about values that will be discussed below.

The German reunification is of relevance for the South African situation for quite a different reason. This concerns the way in which the transition came about. The immense impact of the fall of the Berlin wall is due not only to the speed of these events and the fact that they were totally unexpected, but also because Berlin, since the days of the Cold War was an international symbol of the struggle between 'East' and 'West'. Berlin was (by choice or default) always larger than life and the artificiality of its existence is becoming even clearer now than the battle lines have shifted elsewhere.

But it is not only the suddenness of the events that are causing problems for the reunification process, but also its one-sidedness. Perceptions of the change differ radically in the former 'West' and the former 'East Germany'. Many in the East experience the change as a takeover bid, as a re-colonization by the ideology of the market. Because of the virtual non-existence of private property and of private capital, the lack of managerial expertise and experience, the inability to compete in the global market, East German companies and institutions (including universities) became an easy target for those with capital and the necessary skills. The result is a deep resentment in the East that is compounded by a feeling of powerless to have any significant influence on the turn of events. The total lack of participation, the feeling that the East had nothing to contribute to the new state, is highlighted by the nature of the change. The reunification was not the bringing together of two entities, of two sovereign states, but the abrupt end of one and the incorporation of the 'new' provinces into the existing *Bundesrepublik*. The lack of continuity of East Germans with their own past is acute. Officially, that past does not exist. It is at most an aberration of the history of the *Bundesrepublik*, which represents the real German state. A new, joint constitution did not come into existence. The constitution of the BRD remained unchanged, except for making provision for the incorporation of the new provinces. The experience of alienation in the East takes many forms. On the other side, the perception of many West Germans is that their compatriots of the East are unskilled, unfit, unproductive and unable to fit into the new global economy, that the reunification is costing too much, that their standard of living and social security is threatened, that the East is unthankful for the sacrifices the West is making.

The lack of participation is compounded by the decision to treat the reunification as a legal process. The DDR is defined as an *Unrechtstaat*, a state that has no legal basis and whose government stands accused in legal terms. Parallel to this, the Gauck Commission (the German equivalent of the TRC) operates as a court and handles the abuse of human rights as a punishable legal offence.

What complicates matters further is that these issues are not brought into the open or worked through in any structured way. The impatience of the West with the East, the deep feeling of injustice and rejection in the East and the resentments, tensions and resistance to the new dispensation remains for a great deal under the surface. A concerted, systematic, inclusive process to develop shared values that will support the new dispensation has not started.

This is in contrast to the South African transition. In this one respect, South Africa has a major advantage. The new constitution is the result of a long process of consultation and participation. The Bill of Rights is the outcome of a similar process. The Government of National Unity as a transitional measure, the inclusive approach of the new government (recently demonstrated by the ANC's attempt to keep Afrikaners involved in and committed to the process

of change), the TRC Act and the way it was implemented, aimed at bringing the past into the open, mediating between victims and perpetrators and hopefully achieving reconciliation before resorting to legal measures, underline this advantage. A joint interview with Tutu and his German counterpart, Gauck, gives a good indication of the fundamentally different approach (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* 7/2/1997). South Africa therefore does have certain distinct advantages regarding the way in which the transition was prepared and the level of participation in the process.

Nonetheless, the disturbing fact of the German example is that once the formal religious structures and traditions were stripped of their privileges and their influence minimized in the public sphere, people discovered that they could do without formalized religion and without the discourse that accompanies it. What was still held intact by custom and tradition suddenly fell apart when the props keeping them up collapsed and the ineffectiveness of the discourse was exposed. This more than anything else caused the experience of a loss of values. Furthermore, once the opportunity was lost, it proved to be extremely difficult to reintroduce the value discourse in the public sphere. The consequences for the unfolding situation in South Africa, despite the obvious differences with the German situation, should be taken seriously—especially when attempting to rebuild civil society.

To return to the question raised at the end of the second section: What are the chances of a constructive discourse on democratic values in one of the most crucial domains of the public sphere—that of the work place? Let us remind ourselves again of Coleman's warning that unless "values such as trust, openness, responsibility, love and solidarity" are given new content through an inclusive discourse by citizens themselves, there is little hope of overcoming the "cynicism of the narrow ideals of a manipulative or passive citizenship sponsored by the state or elite experts."

Practical experience in developing common values in the work place—in situations of extreme diversity—would seem to indicate that such an undertaking is not completely impossible. That religion can and does play a role in the process, is a further conclusion.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Against this background, we return to the South African situation and to the challenge to develop an effective way to talk about values in the public sphere. In contrast to the German situation, the South African situation has the additional problem that it also has to deal with various forms of diversity in the work place—racial diversity in the first place, but also diversities between management and employees, differences in corporate culture and diverging interests of companies, the community and the environment. A successful discourse should be able to deal with diversities of this kind effectively.

What follows is a report on one such experiment. In pursuing a suitable discourse for the third public, a deliberate attempt was made not to use frameworks usually associated with discourses of the first and second publics. It was for this reason that the theoretical framework developed, for the project takes as its point of departure central concepts of Manfred Max-Neef. In his *Human Scale Development* (1991) he proposes an alternative approach to development. Dissatisfied with the restrictions of both the growth-centered and the state-centered vision of development, he opts for a human-centered approach. Its focus is on the content of development (namely its meaning and purpose) rather than its form. It is more concerned with how development ought to take place than how it actually occurs (Van Zyl, 1995: 2). For our purpose,

the holistic nature of this approach and the inclusion of the full spectrum of human needs are important. As Hettne (1989:153-4) explains, the human-centered vision has the following characteristics: needs oriented (intent on meeting human needs, both material and non-material); endogenous (not imposed from the outside, but arising from the needs of a particular society as defined by that society); self-reliant (relying primarily on the strengths and resources of a particular society or environment); ecologically sound (using natural resources responsibly, with a view of its impact on local eco-systems and on present and future generations); based on structural transformation (ensuring that the conditions are created for self-reliant management and participation in decision-making by all those affected by the implications of such decisions).

Even if one opts for a needs-oriented approach, the important question is how wide these needs are conceptualized. In mainstream neo-classical economics needs are understood as desires or wants for material or economic goods and services that are measurable and quantifiable both in principle and in practice. Even though the restricted nature of this definition (which excludes non-material needs) is recognized, the question remains how a broader and richer understanding approach to human needs could be made operationally significant (Van Zyl 1995:3).

It is in this context that Max-Neef's idea of 'human scale development' is of special importance. It represents a sustained attempt to operationalize the full spectrum of human needs in the process of development. In his own words:

(Human Scale Development) is focused and based on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance, and on the construction of organic articulations of people with nature and technology, of global processes with local activity, of the personal with the social, of planning with autonomy and of civil society with the state (Max-Neef 1991:8).

The first step is to define needs in a much more fundamental way. "In the conventional growth-centered approach, human needs are not defined in fundamental terms, but rather as desires or wants for objects or artefacts for particular goods and services. Economic goods can therefore satisfy needs directly in a one-to-one relationship. If, however, a more fundamental perspective on human needs were adopted, the process of meeting such needs would become more complex and should be viewed quite differently" (Van Zyl 1995:4).

At the same time, it is of crucial importance to distinguish more radically between these fundamental needs and their satisfiers. What often is understood as a need is in reality a satisfier for a more fundamental need. Sustenance and shelter are usually understood as needs, but in reality they are satisfiers for the more fundamental need of subsistence. Likewise, education, research and communication are satisfiers for the fundamental need of understanding. This leads Max-Neef to identify nine fundamental needs: subsistence, understanding, creation, protection, participation, identity, affection, idleness and freedom.

Max-Neef makes the bold claim that these fundamental needs are finite, few in number and classifiable. They are also universal, the same in all cultures and in all historical periods (Van Zyl 1995:4). The obvious variations in cultures, systems of government and types of societies have their origin in the different way these needs are satisfied. The distinction between needs and satisfiers is of critical importance for the process to develop common values, as will be explained below.

These needs form an interrelated and interactive system with no linear hierarchies (contra Maslow). It is the context in which these needs are experienced which will also determine the

order of their satisfaction. The inclusive nature of these needs makes it possible to broaden the concept of poverty to include not only lack of material goods, but also the lack of freedom, respect, identity and the like. We can speak of a poverty of participation because of discrimination against women or minorities, even if this occurs in an otherwise economically prosperous country. Poverty in terms of the fundamental need of protection can be caused by widespread violence or by poor primary health systems.

By broadening the concept 'poverty', it also becomes possible to highlight the dynamic nature of needs. An analysis in terms of needs may reveal important deficiencies, but at the same time unlock potential. The lack of participation is at the same time the starting point for engaging and mobilizing people. In this respect, the different types of satisfiers are of particular importance.

Max-Neef distinguishes between positive and negative satisfiers. Negative satisfiers can further be classified as destructive (imposed on people, e.g. the arms race, censorship), pseudo (induced through persuasion: indoctrination, status symbols) or inhibiting (rooted in customs and habits: paternalism, unlimited permissiveness). Positive satisfiers can either be singular (satisfying needs on a one-to-one basis, e.g. handouts, insurance systems) or synergic (satisfying more than one need with a single action, e.g. work place forums, satisfying the need for participation, understanding and creation). In applying these distinctions, Max-Neef has developed a process whereby a 'negative matrix' is completed by a group or community as a first step, that is, a synthesis of all the negative satisfiers of the nine fundamental needs in a specific situation. This is followed by a 'positive matrix' of the positive satisfiers.

These concepts have been integrated in Max-Neef's alternative development strategy which was put in practice in several Latin American countries over the past decades. Subsequently, the approach has been used in a variety of development initiatives worldwide. At an international conference to mark the tenth anniversary of the publication of his *Human Scale Development*, held in Valdivia, Chile in October 1996, reports of these initiatives in the United Kingdom, Australia, Spain, South Africa and several Latin-American countries were discussed by practitioners in the field.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Max-Neef's ideas thus proved to be a suitable point of departure. However, these ideas had to be adapted and expanded in many respects to be suitable for our purposes. The opportunity to put the process to the test arose in 1991 from a request to facilitate in a large gold mine in North West Province, where tensions and divisions in the work force threatened to disrupt production on a large scale.

The management of Vaal Reefs at Orkney, a mine with 48,000 employees, realized that, despite their efforts to improve technology and to contain costs, the human factor still remains a crucial issue. Exactly because the employees of the mine cannot be isolated from the broader social transition that was taking place in the country and because the same lack of common values was manifest on the mine, it was decided to give urgent attention to the human element. With this in mind, management adopted a value statement in the form of a Preferred State, with the intention to disseminate the statement throughout the company. It was decided to do this with the help of outsiders, and this created the opportunity to get involved in the process.

The assignment at Vaal Reefs was accepted on three conditions. Firstly, that the process of taking a value statement developed by management down the mine be suspended for the time

being; secondly, that employees be allowed to identify and develop their own values without interference from management; and thirdly, that management itself become part of the process by reflecting on and articulating its own values and by accepting that whatever common values emerged from the process, would be equally applicable to and binding on management.

On this basis, work was started in June 1992 on West Mine, one of the three divisions of Vaal Reefs, comprising of three shafts (3, 4 and 10) and 16,000 employees. A series of workshops was held over a period of twelve months, before moving to the engineering, accounting, maintenance, transport and other services departments.

The composition of the workforce at Vaal Reefs seems to defy any possibility of shared values. In terms of culture and language it is very diverse, while the full political spectrum is represented—from the AWB (*Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging*—a radical white right wing group) to the PAC (*Pan Africanist Congress*—an Africanist movement) and everything in between. As far as employee organizations are concerned, eight different bodies have to be taken into account. An overriding concern is the continued profitability of the mine. Some shafts face closure, which will result in the loss of a considerable number of jobs.

As already mentioned, one of the conditions on which the project was started, was that management would not interfere in the process and would allow the free development of values. Management had already adopted a "preferred state" which they wanted to become the value statement of the whole mine. The first challenge was to convince management to abandon this top-down approach and to allow employees, without any interference or pressure of any kind, to develop their own set of values. Management eventually accepted this bottom-up approach.

Employee organizations presented a different challenge. From the side of white organizations, the suspicion was that the values program was a way to prepare for integration in the mine. From the side of black unions, the suspicion was that the values program was the first step in the process of retrenchment. These fears were addressed and eventually allayed by calling a meeting of representatives of all employee organizations, where the content of the program was presented and debated. Consequently, the consent of all organizations was obtained to proceed with the process.

STAGES IN THE VALUE PROCESS

The logic behind the process was to move from the present state of division and mistrust to the discovery of (hopefully sufficient) shared values on which to base the strategic re-organization of the company. It was essential to ensure the widest possible participation in the process. This also implied that it could not be management controlled or directed. As one of the parties involved, management had indeed a right to participate, but then on an equal basis with other parties involved. It was one of the challenges of the process to ensure that management did not control—either explicitly or implicitly—the process, but that management at the same time was not excluded from it. The goal was ownership by all levels of the company. This required a carefully planned consultation process before the actual work began and extensive feedback sessions to employees to report on progress and the results achieved. Consequently, the process consisted of distinct stages, each with its own methodology and goals. These stages may be summarized as follows:

Preparing the ground. The goal of this stage is to set a benchmark to serve as criterion to measure what the process achieves (or fails to achieve) in terms of progress, changed attitudes,

improved relations and performance. The instrument normally is a pre-survey of a representative sample of employees (including management), using a questionnaire specially developed for the purpose.

Involving all stakeholders. The aim is maximizing co-operation and the method used is a series of meetings to inform employees, unions, outside contractors, relevant government representatives and community leaders of the precise nature and aim of the process. Stakeholders are invited to send observers to the subsequent workshops, and the final results are also made available to the different parties.

Ensuring representativity. The aim is to prepare the ground for accepting accountability of the outcome of the process. The composition of the different workshops to ensure full and well-balanced representativity requires careful and responsible planning. The election of representatives (and not merely appointing them) proved to be an important pre-requisite.

Confrontation of perceptions and stereotypes. The first step in the actual workshop is to create a climate where people are willing to share their present experiences of the country, the work situation and the 'other' group. Careful facilitation is needed to create a climate of openness and lack of fear. Participants are therefore not asked to defend or attack the correctness of these perceptions, but to ask for explanations or examples. If well done, submerged tensions, the 'hidden transcripts' and the stereotypes people have of each other are brought to the surface, revealing often for the first time how one group experiences the other. It is of crucial importance that these stereotypes are experienced in the presence of the other. This stage of the process is usually the most explosive and requires skilful and mature facilitation.

Articulation of hopes and fears. Whereas the previous exercise focused on present experiences, in this stage the attention is shifted slightly to the future. The aim is to let participants discover what they share in their long-term ideals, despite present tensions and inequalities. By asking people what they hope will happen to the country, the company and interpersonal relations, and what they fear might happen, it is revealed that they often fear the same things (increased violence, crime) and share the same hopes (economic security, good education, stability). Some sense of communality starts to emerge at this stage.

Setting goals. The aim is to broaden the emerging sense of communality by focusing more specifically on the work situation and asking participants what they expect from their supervisors, their colleagues and their subordinates in the company. Starting with their superiors, it is not difficult to extract a long list of *desiderata* people have of their boss: fairness, empathy, vision, decisiveness, respect, good communication. When the list of expectations of colleagues and subordinates is drawn up, the commonalties become all the more evident. It is soon clear that for all practical purposes we are dealing with common expectations—even from subordinates 'leadership' can be expected in the sense of taking initiative and exercising self-supervision.

Generating common values. The communality thus achieved is then consolidated in the form of basic values. These values and their meaning are thoroughly discussed to ensure that everybody is clear about their implications and that the values chosen are supported by all. The consensus of the group is thus consolidated in the form of common 'building blocks', representing what the members of the group do share, whatever other differences may exist. This consensus is reported back and compared with the results of other workshops before deciding on a final set of values for the company. In this way, participation and ownership are maximized.

Deciding on implementation. The crucial next phase is to find suitable satisfiers for the common values or needs decided on. It is in this context that Max-Neef's ideas are of particular practical value. The psychological effect of having already established a basis of communality

during the previous step is most important for the effectiveness of the present stage. By first letting the group identify the negative satisfiers which prevent them from reaching their objectives, before deciding on the positive satisfiers for their common values, two important goals are achieved. First, it provides a way to deal constructively with diversity. Diversity as such need not be a problem—it can in effect be a source of strength. It is only when diversity leads to negative satisfiers that a problem arises. Second, by making each other aware of the forms of negative satisfiers already present in the work situation, the subsequent positive satisfiers are usually much more realistic and achievable. This stage is in fact the start of a process of joint decision-making and signals the beginning of the implementation process.

Formulating a practical code. The implementation is taken a step further by translating the set of positive satisfiers in a practical and more simplified code of conduct—understandable by all and applicable to all levels of the organization. Thereby a process of reciprocal control (as opposed to control from the top) is set in motion.

Reporting back. Great care is taken to prepare the report back to the group who originally elected the representatives for each workshop. The aim is to get the support of the wider group and to ensure ownership and accountability. As literacy often is a problem on certain levels of the mine, visual ways of presenting the basic values as the building blocks of a new foundation are used, sometimes supported by the judicious use of industrial theater.

Forming work place forums. The next step is to formalize the consensus reached in the form of workplace forums as required by the new Labor Relations Act of 1996. As will be explained below, the inclusion of these provisions in the law was not unrelated to the process developed at Vaal Reefs. The idea of these forums is to maximize worker participation and to provide alternative forms of constructive mediation in matters of industrial relations. Setting up a forum is technical and not a complicated matter. Ensuring its effective operation is quite a different matter. Experience has shown that without first establishing a firm basis in the form of a set of common values, the chances for getting a constructive forum going are slim indeed.

Regular assessment. The aim of the final step is to put in place an effective monitoring system and a way of measuring progress on a regular basis. The workplace forums proved to be an excellent instrument for this purpose. Not only were members of the forum intimately involved in generating a set of common values and the subsequent code of conduct, but they were also ideally placed to observe and monitor any digressions of the code. Again the principle of participating management is of cardinal importance. Instead of top-down enforcement, the self-generated code and the targets set by joint decision-making become the responsibility of the forum. The forums, if properly set up and based on commonly accepted values, have shown to be very effective instruments to solve new problems as they arise and to ensure adherence to the code.

Results and Consequences

A typical set of values emerging from the process would be the following: communication, respect and human dignity, trust and honesty, education and training, justice and equality, responsibility, leadership, safety and health, teamwork, profitability.

After a series of more than 50 workshops in several sections of the mine, ranging from underground teams, engineering, accounting, finance, maintenance, transport and general services, the set of values has undergone certain revisions and refinements, but has remained basically the same. Each of the values has been discussed extensively in terms of its satisfiers

and has gained acceptance across the board by black and white employees, union representatives and management alike. An indication of the nature of this interaction was an interesting discussion of the value of 'profitability'. It started out as 'productivity', predictably proposed by management. The resistance to this formulation from the side of employees was based on the argument that production without a clear indication of what role production plays within the total operation of the company, will only become a tool in the hands of management to manipulate the work force. After an intense discussion, 'productivity' was replaced by 'profitability' as the value. Employees accepted that the survival of the company and their own job security depended on the company staying profitable, but they wanted information on how production was used and managed in order to attain the goal of profitability. This was further enforced by 'communication' 'trust and honesty', values which again illustrated the interdependence of various values and their non-hierarchical relationship to each other.

The representative workplace forums that were established at the various shafts used the common values as basis for their planning and operations. They also became the framework to decide on future developments and for the solving of new problems (e.g. 'queuing', which led to work stoppages at other mines). Based on this experience, the concept of workplace forums later became incorporated into the new Labor Relations Act.

The process was subsequently applied in a wide variety of companies and organizations—noticeably in the field of agriculture and forestry, state and semi-state departments, institutions for higher education, community organizations and other institutions undergoing rapid social transformation. An important advantage is that the process makes possible the discovery of common basic values, despite deep cultural and other divisions. It then makes this commonality the basis to address the differences and divisions. The distinction between basic needs (values) and satisfiers has lifted the debate from a clash of basic values to a discussion of how a set of commonly supported values can best be implemented. Shifting the debate from whether one supports respect for human dignity to how the need for respect can best be satisfied, is a subtle, but most important change of perspective which immediately leads to a more constructive result. At the same time these basic values, often very generic and almost too general to have an impact, are re-defined and enriched by the variety of perspectives present in a diverse group.

CONCLUSION

What relevance does the process described above have for the basic problem stated in the first section? What can this secular intervention contribute towards understanding the role of religion in civil society?

There are important consequences for religion both in terms of process and of content. Public discourse (that is, the discourse of civil society) can only be effective if it is accessible – accessible in terms of participation and in terms of communicative potential. As indicated above, religion has made it difficult for itself by the way in which it has participated in this discourse. On the one hand, it has confused audiences. By speaking to the third public in terms of the second, religion has created obstacles that prevented its voice from being heard properly. On the other hand, the full spectrum of potential subjects who could contribute to this discourse has not been given the opportunity to do so. There is too much reliance on 'religious bodies'. In practice, this usually means the official pronouncements of religious authorities. The 'ordinary believer' on the shop floor, the most obvious and most readily available subject for this kind of public discourse, very seldom is given the opportunity or encouragement to make a substantial input.

Judging from the quality of inputs by 'ordinary participants' in the value process, this contribution promises to be substantial and far reaching.

In terms of content, the potential contribution is even greater. The values generated by the value process in the cases where it was applied, are in no ways in conflict with what religion could support. To the contrary – respect and human dignity, responsibility, participation, trust and honesty, equality and justice are all values that most religious traditions would enthusiastically endorse. In fact, religion could provide a much deeper basis and motivation for these values. But this is possible only if they are formulated and articulated in terms of the third public, or, to use Coleman's formulation again, in terms of 'everyday and tangibly accessible life'. The challenge is neither the process nor the content, but the willingness, the wisdom and the hermeneutical ability to participate creatively and constructively in this discourse.

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CHAPTER VIII
LAMENTING TRAGEDY FROM "THE OTHER SIDE"
DENISE M ACKERMANN

Fragments from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission¹

"Thembinkosi's cries are still hurting me today. I want to know from the police where they took my children. Where did they kill my children?" Nohle Anna Nika-Jonas whose three sons, at the time all in high school, were taken from their shanty by police on the night of July 1, 1976.

"Just in pieces . . . pieces of him, brains, splattered all over the room". Catherine Mlangeni describing how she found her son Bheki's body after he had been blown up by a police booby trap.

Joyce Mtimkulu, mother of Siphiwo killed by police, said she blamed former president F W de Klerk: "He must have known about it. He must have known what was going on. I have always said it was the system. I still feel very sad. I have suffered for a long time and I want to see the men who killed Siphiwo".

Cynthia Ngewu, mother of Christopher "Rasta" Piet killed by police, said her notion of reconciliation was to "restore the humanity of the perpetrators. . . . I don't want to replace one evil with another".

"In a flash my whole youth was gone." Marina Geldenhys, victim, car bomb explosion, Pretoria, May 20, 1983.

"I must admit I cry easily." Archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu, Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

A CONTEXT OF BROKENNESS AND HOPE

The above fragments are taken from moments recorded before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.² Week by week for the years, South Africans witnessed the testimonies of the victims and the perpetrators of gross violations of human rights during the apartheid years on our television screens and in halls across our country. These stories have seared souls with rage, feelings of vengeance, guilt and longing. They have also evoked more memories, stories as yet untold. The process of truth-telling, truth-seeking, the need for justice and accountability, relief to have spoken the unspeakable, horror, pain and the shattering of illusions—emotions in turmoil, and the ever present longing for a new day—these are familiar realities.

The work of the Commission has taken place in a context of fragile processes of social and political transformation. Dealing with the legacies of the past is seen as necessary for the nurture of our fledgling democracy. Sadly these legacies have multiple offshoots. Violence and criminality are placing the lives of many South Africans in a straitjacket of fear and uncertainty.³ Poverty, displacement and ruptured family lives are the social reality for scores of people. Standards in school education appear to be declining, universities are under threat as subsidies are cut every year, the health and welfare services are inadequate to meet the demands of a growing population and the present HIV/AIDS pandemic, and our environment is imperilled by lack of water, denuding of the land, dumping of toxic waste and uncontrolled urbanization. There is further disenchantment as corruption scandals rock our country, as the poor perceive the

new elite to be insensitive to their plight and as many politicians appear unable or unwilling to deal with our pressing social problems.

Despite the formidable task of reconstructing our nation, the miracle of April 1994 cannot be summarily erased. After years of political bargaining, we now have a bill of rights enshrined in a new constitution with a constitutional court to watch over the rights of every citizen. Our first democratically elected government is in power and most local authorities now too have their elected bodies. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has afforded all victims of the apartheid years the opportunity to tell their stories, to weep and to rage over their losses and to seek reparation. All these events were inconceivable not long ago.

I write as a white South African woman who has lived through decades of apartheid in a multi-cultural, ethnically and religiously pluralistic society and which has known the sweet smell of democracy only very recently. This contribution begins by reflecting on the themes of difference and otherness from my particular context. Clearly South Africans have not managed to live justly and respectfully with one another across our differences. The tales told at the Commission's hearings bear testimony to the tragedies of our past. The second half of this paper then examines what the age old custom of lament can bring to the healing of the pain in my country.

DIFFERENCE AND OTHERNESS⁴

Few issues have exercised so powerful a hold over the thought of this century as that of 'the other' or what is known as 'the problem of difference'.⁵ To speak of difference and otherness is immediately a problem of language. Other than whom? Different from what? Am I the norm and those who do not conform to my norm 'the other' or 'different'?⁶ Today this problem has taken a prominent place in philosophy, theological ethics and anthropology and has penetrated deeply into our reflections on our religious practices. The theme of difference and otherness is not limited to one context. The problem of difference lies at the heart of the inability of human beings to live together in justice, freedom and peace.

As we approach the end of this millennium we can look back on a century (ironically termed 'the Christian century' by the modern missionary movement) in which more people have suffered and died in war and conflict than ever before in human history. "To be alive today is to live with pain. . . . We live in a world come of age, a world no longer innocent about the suffering human beings can inflict on each other," writes Rita Brock.⁷ Wars, sexual violence and the abuse of women and children in a myriad of ways, the terror camps of North Korea, the killing fields of Bosnia, Sudan, Rwanda and Cambodia, famine, poverty and the displacement of people, the disparity of resources between the developed and developing worlds, the systematic rape and plunder of the environment,⁸ and now the catastrophic affliction of AIDS; these and much more are the realities of the late twentieth century. We are a broken world, a world in crisis, an age which is difficult to name.

Dealing with difference elicits at least three problematic responses. In the first, the other is simply seen as a *tabula rasa*, a person with no story, no selfhood, no history. Difference is then made over into sameness. The underlying text is: "You should be like me. But, as you are not like me, remember that I am the center, the fixed point by which you and 'the rest' will be defined". This is the language of dominant power. In reality, there is no one center. There never was—except in the delusions of certain dominant philosophies and political systems.

A second response is a familiar one in today's world. The other is experienced as a threat. The poisonous *apartheid* mentality of Afrikaner nationalism, the genocidal activities of the Nazis and the Hutus, the intransigent otherness of the Serbs, Bosnians and Croats, and all racist and sexist attitudes, are contemporary examples of otherness as threat. Lastly, there is a response which is manifested in two distinct yet similar ways: The other is either seen as some exotic, romantic being who does not have to be taken seriously since she or he is so different, or the other is seen as a universal category of person with no particularity. The nineteenth century western idea of the "noble savage", or the unthinking assumptions in the early days of the women's movement that saw "women" as one large unspecified category of human beings, are examples of this kind of thinking. Against these problematic responses, the question arises: What, in fact, is meant by difference and otherness?

To speak of the other, is to speak of space, boundaries, time, difference, our bodies, cultures, traditions, ideologies and beliefs. To speak of the other is to speak of that other human being whom I may mistakenly have assumed to be just like me and who, in fact, is not like me at all. To speak of the other is to be open to otherness within myself, to the possibility of a foreigner within my own unconscious self.⁹ To speak of the other is to speak of poverty and justice, of human sexuality, of gender, race and class. To speak of the other is to acknowledge that difference is problematic, often threatening, even alienating and that we do not at all times live easily or well with it.¹⁰

To acknowledge and to accept difference and otherness holds out the hope of relationship. What is meant by relationship?¹¹ Although being-in-relationships is central to our being and our well-being, it is difficult to describe. It is easier to say what relationship is not: it is neither alienation, nor apathy. It resists the '-isms' which separate, like racism, classism, sexism. Relationship is what connects us to one another like the strands of a web, spinning out in ever widening circles, fragile and easily damaged, yet filled with tensile strength. We are not made to live alone. We are made to be in relationships with one another. We live out our yearning for connectedness by making relationships with one another. By being in relationships, we are shaped as individuals and as members of our communities. In the words of ethicist Beverly Harrison, "relationality is at the heart of all things".¹²

There is an African saying which declares: "A person is a person through other persons".¹³ This articulates what is called *ubuntu*. This traditional African philosophy and way of life sees all of life, that is all of creation of which we humans are a part, as being sacred. Humanity is like a vast interrelated web. As John Mbiti has put it so strikingly from an African world view "I belong, therefore I am".¹⁴ In this boundless human web our humanity is something which comes to us as a gift. It is found, shaped and nurtured in and through the humanity of others. We can only exercise our humanity by being in relationship with others, and there is no growth, happiness or fulfillment for us apart from other human beings.¹⁵ Finally, because of this notion of a universal human web of relationships, no one is a stranger.¹⁶ Archbishop Desmond Tutu comments:

A solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. A totally self-sufficient human being is ultimately subhuman. We are made for complementarity. I have gifts that you do not; and you have gifts that I do not. *Voilà!* So we need each other to become fully human.¹⁷

This idea is not foreign to European thought. It was already present in Hegel's *Phenomenology* and has been developed in the twentieth century philosophies of, among

others, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, John MacMurray¹⁸ and Paul Ricoeur.¹⁹ Feminist theologians such as Carter Heyward, Beverly Harrison, Elizabeth Johnson and Catherine Keller²⁰ have also written about women's brand of *ubuntu*. Yet the concept of relationship is still in striking contrast with much western individualistic thinking with its emphasis on individualism and self-sufficiency as a mark of the mature person. The move from the rational Cartesian man (and I mean "man") at the center of the universe, is yet to be completed.

LAMENT AND THE HOPE FOR HEALING

In the face of the pain and suffering caused by the inability of South Africans to deal with difference and otherness, coupled with the longing for a healed society, the age old tradition of lament offers interesting possibilities. Traditions of lament exist in a variety of religious communities. I write out of Christian background and shall focus on the background and tradition of lament in western Christianity as an important ingredient in our country's search for healing and reconciliation.

Why lament? My interest in lament was originally aroused by the praxis of a women's human rights organization called the Black Sash. For well nigh forty years the women of the Black Sash engaged in the work of justice, in advice offices in different parts of our country, in acts of civil disobedience, in propagating and monitoring human rights and in protesting waves of racist laws and repressive political actions. Their name was derived from the public wearing of black sashes as a sign of mourning for injustice. The sight of white women standing with their sashes, eyes downcast, at times holding punchy placards, became a familiar sight during the years of the struggle for democracy. This public lament for injustice haunted the lives of the apartheid politicians, a visible demonstration of (one of a few) pockets of white resistance to racist policies. The activities of the Black Sash earned them a generous accolade from Nelson Mandela who, in his first speech after his release from prison, called them "the conscience of white South Africans".

So why lament now? Indeed, some of us have over the years lamented the tragic consequences of apartheid. Now, however, in the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the time is ripe for public liturgical acts in the interest of healing and reconciliation. The starting point for us is simply this: we shall have to confess and to lament our unwillingness to deal lovingly with neighbors who are different. Too often we stigmatize the other and thus refuse to be in relationship with her or him. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has offered South Africans the opportunity to confess and to lament. Perpetrators of human rights abuses from all sides of the political spectrum and those of us who benefited unjustly in the past from positions of advantage, have been given the opportunity to confess and to repent. Victims have been allowed to lament, telling their stories of terror and pain.²¹ The place to start is with genuine confession and repentance for what we have done to 'the other'.

Those who have survived the ravages of the last forty years and more, are faced with the fact that "the sword of destructive suffering remains".²² What is left is the hiatus between the longing for justice and the reality of suffering. Tragedy enters into this hiatus. According to Wendy Farley: "Unlike traditional theodicies, tragedy does not attempt to penetrate the opacity of evil by providing justifications for suffering. It recognizes that certain kinds of suffering are irredeemably unjust . . . a tragic sense of life burns with the desire for justice, but, unlike theodicy, burns even more with anger and pity at suffering. In tragic vision, unassuaged indignation and compassionate resistance replace theodicy's cool justifications of evil".²³

Resistance to the tragedy of suffering finds expression in the hope for healing and wholeness, and in the embracing of actions which express both an understanding of the tragic vision of life and that which counters tragedy. The search for healing is not to be seen as merely an individual quest for personal healing. Women know how difficult it is to separate the personal and the political. Our crying need is to "bind up the wounds" at every level, and for all, in different ways.

Healing is inseparable from justice-seeking. In a context with a history glutted with blatant injustices, doing justice is an inescapable priority. This raises the vexed question of perpetrators who are applying for amnesty to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As their atrocities are revealed, the relatives of victims experience afresh the trauma of loss and grief and, not surprisingly for some, feelings of anger and retribution. We are learning that justice is more elusive than we had thought and that the need for justice is, in this case, superseded by political compromise reached in our negotiated transition to democracy. We remind ourselves constantly that the granting of amnesty was a crucial ingredient in this negotiated settlement, one which prevented the inevitable, blood bath that stared us in the face. Nonetheless the hunger for justice remains. The moral significance of the victims anger and the desire for retribution should not be trivialized or ignored.

The quest for healing praxis is in essence the expression of the dire need for the healing of creation. Humanity's social, political and spiritual needs are both challenged and encouraged by a theology which places the values of a healed and mended creation at its center. This is not a solitary task. For healing praxis to be truly restorative, it has to be *collaborative and sustained action for justice, reparation and liberation, based on accountability and empowered by love, hope and passion*. It is not the prerogative of any one group of people. It can emerge from the actions and knowledge of those who are suffering, marginalized and oppressed, as well as from those who have privilege and power, provided they too understand its genesis in the hope for a restored creation and are willing to hear the pain of the suffering of "the others" and to act in response.

Lament is, I suggest, one such response. For those who are victims, lament can be an entirely spontaneous response. For those who bear the responsibility for causing suffering, a process of coming to awareness is necessary before lament can happen. In this process, acceptance of accountability, memory, repentance, receiving forgiveness and making reparation, all play a role. These stages cannot be neatly delineated. Whites in this country ought to understand that forgiving and being forgiven are acts of mercy and that both call for profound transformation. Waiting for forgiveness is an exercise in a state of dependence, an acceptance of a kind of unfreedom. Forgiveness denied is always a possibility. But one waits nonetheless. And, whilst one waits, one laments.

THE NATURE OF LAMENT

Lament is a form of mourning. It is also more. It is somehow more purposeful and more instinctive than mourning. At times it is filled with notes of accusation and at others with contriteness and pain. Lamenting is both an individual and a communal act which signals that human relationships have gone awry. While lamenting is about past events, it also has present and future dimensions. It acknowledges the brokenness of the present because of injustice. It instinctively makes a link between healing and mourning which make new relationships possible in the future. Lament should be generous not grudging, explicit not generalized, unafraid to

contain petitions and confident that they will be heard. Above all lament is never for a purpose. It is never utilitarian. Lament is an existential wail which comes from the depths of the human soul. The cry of lament, while ostensibly wrought from the human heart in situations of suffering, is filled with enigmatic energies, unbearable urges, moments both profane and sacred. It is a coil of suffering and hope, awareness and memory, anger and relief, desires for vengeance, forgiveness and healing. It is, in essence, supremely human.

Walter Brueggemann describes lament as "a dramatic, rhetorical, liturgical act of speech which is irreversible".²⁴ It articulates the inarticulate. Tears become ideas. Brueggemann acknowledges that lamenting is risky, saying that it is "dangerous, restless speech".²⁵ It is risky because it calls into question structures of power, it pushes the boundaries of our relationships with one another and with God beyond the limits of acceptability. It is refusal to settle for the way things are and is an action of "restless hope".²⁶ We cannot be instructed to lament, but we can create space which allows the wailing, keening voice which is intrinsic to our humanity to emerge uncensored. Lamenting is as primal as the child's need to cry. Yet, once the wail is articulated, the lament usually takes on a structured form. Lament is more than railing against suffering, breast-beating or a confession of guilt. It is our way of bearing the unbearable. It is a wailing of the human soul, a barrage of tears, wails, reproaches, petitions, praise and hopes which beat against the heart of God.²⁷

Lament in Antiquity

Prayers of lament have certainly existed from early recorded history. Lament is found at the core of rituals for both individual and communal mourning, and has been danced, accompanied by music, wailed, recited as poetry or spoken as dirges. Given the long history of lament and its many different genres,²⁸ I want to look briefly at the form and function of lament in the ancient world and, in particular, focus on women's role in lamenting.

Some of the earliest laments recorded are those concerned with the fall and plunder of cities and cult centers. When the great city of Ur which had long held sway over Babylonia was utterly destroyed by the Elamites in 2004 BCE, the ancient Mesopotamians lamented.²⁹ In these ancient city laments, physical and emotional distress in the face of adversity as well as fear of divine disapproval are described. The history of a time of affliction and the theology of a people come together in moving prayers of communal lament.³⁰

In Greece the practice of ritual lamentation is found in both ancient and medieval sources and to this day remains a part of a living folk tradition. It was and is ritual behavior intimately connected to the cycle of life and death. City laments were also common. According to Margaret Alexiou in her classic study *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, "perhaps for no other single event in history were so many laments composed in Greek as for the fall of Constantinople in 1453".³¹ Here, too, lament has both a communal and an individual nature. In communal laments a professional class of mourners, usually women, perform the rituals which express grief and loss.³²

The origins and early development of lament were integral to the rituals of mourning and burial. In pre-classical Greece this is attested to in Homer's poetry. Once again, women conduct the formal laments, both as kinswomen of the deceased and as professional mourners.³³ At Hector's death, "They put him on the carved bed, and stood singers beside him, leaders of laments, who lamented in grievous song, and the women wailed. And white-armed Andromache began their wailing" (Homer, *Iliad* XXIV, 720f). Homer also allows men to lament. Achilles's

grief for Patrocles is an outpouring of grief and lament in which his weeping is so loud that it is heard by his mother in the depths of the sea. After covering himself with sooty ash and tearing out his hair, the poet notes that "Achilles had taken full satisfaction in lament. . . . For no good comes of cold laments" (Homer *Iliad* XXIV, 5-3-524). According to Holst-Warhaft (1992:103), Homeric lament was not spontaneous but was "linked with burial as a necessary part of the . . . privileges of the dead."³⁴ It was characterized by extravagant outpourings of grief accompanied by much wailing and is a reliable guide to understanding the way in which men and women lamented their dead in pre-classical Greece.

With the emergence of tragedy in the Athenian state in the fifth century before the common era, lament took on new forms, and changes occurred as to who could lament and how. This enduring literary art deals with the universal themes of revenge, morality and guilt, retribution, self-sacrificial heroism, death and lament. Holst-Warhaft suggests "that the state of Athens may, consciously or unconsciously, have channelled the passion of lament into its two great rhetorical inventions, the funeral speech and the tragedy".³⁵ In tragedy, the role of lament was often assigned to the chorus. The chorus, who consisted largely of unpaid volunteers, combined music, dance and drama, and thus stood between the world of the play and the world of the audience. The role of the chorus served, therefore, "as an intermediary in universalizing the story, and in relating the tragic action to the audience's present".³⁶

In the earliest Greek tragedy, Aeschylus's *The Persians*, performed in 472 BC, the chorus laments the Persian dead and the defeat of Xerxes. The lament in this tragedy is portrayed as so powerful that it is able to call the dead Darius back to life. Rising from his tomb, the king acknowledges this magical power: "You stood beside my tomb and lamented, and called me piteously to rise up by your laments that lead the soul" (Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 687-688). Interestingly this play identifies women's lament with the barbarians, for it is the women of Persia, not Greece, who are weeping and tearing their veils. In *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus has the chorus shifting back and forth between being moral commentator and a body of helpless subjects lamenting their dead king. In her analysis of this tragedy, Holst-Warhaft raises the question of the dangers of excessive mourning. Clytemnestra who dominates *Agamemnon*, consumed with fury over the sacrifice of her daughter Iphigenia at Agamemnon's bidding, epitomizes unleashed female power in the terrifying dirges of the Furies. Thus lament goes over into violence.³⁷ Lament in politically volatile situations can be dangerous, as anyone who has attended the funeral of a victim of apartheid can attest to in South Africa. The danger of vengeance is also bound up with the role of women as lamenters, a connection which we shall see has consequences for the practice of lament in the Christian tradition.

Both Margaret Alexiou and Gail Holst-Warhaft point out that women's recognized role as lamenters changed fairly dramatically in classical Greece during the time of Solon's reforms in the sixth century before the common era. This was a time of highly inflammable blood feuds between families. Public lamenting could stir up feelings of vengeance. The new state required order, not chaos, cooperation not vengeance. Traditionally lament was expressed by pulling hair, lacerating cheeks and beating breasts. Such behavior could amount to a social menace and disturb the public order. Although Solon did not do away with these gestures entirely, he restricted them. Women under sixty were, for instance, no longer allowed to lament unless they were related to the dead person and no women were allowed to beat themselves raw.³⁸ Women were hard hit by these changes. They were singled out in the new restrictions and their roles were radically challenged. Women as public makers of lament were consequently devalued in classical Greece. Ritual lament was gradually transferred from the clan cults to the state cult and

the political nature of orations at funerals was confirmed because they were delivered by a representative of the state.³⁹ Lament was tamed in service of the state.

It is not easy to assess how effective these curbs were. The relationship between ritual and lament showed a change in emphasis from grander public lamentation to a more personal kind of lamentation at the tomb of the deceased. But funerals never became purely private affairs and thus in the rural areas where restrictive legislation did not penetrate to the same extent as in the cities, for a long time the tradition of lament continued much as it had always done, in some cases even until present times. But as a professional class, women lamenters with their particular gifts of poetry and songs for the dead, were no longer at center stage as *the* makers of lament. It is interesting to note that in a patriarchal society lamenting gave women, who already had control over birth as midwives, a temporary control over the rites concerned with death.

Holst-Warhaft adds a further interesting perspective to the restrictions on women lamenting in classical Greece. Lamenting focused on actual mourning rather than on praise of the dead. A state which is dependant on a volunteer army of obedient men who, prepared to make sacrifices for their country, needs some means of recording their heroic feats.⁴⁰ The tension between private and public burials can only be resolved when the state can convince families, and particularly mothers, that the glory of dying for country outweighs their private grief. In South Africa, on the one hand, the apartheid state managed to convince many grieving white mothers of this kind of warped patriotism. However, no outlet for their grief existed in their controlled brand of western Christianity. On the other hand, black funerals became highly politicized occasions for expressing opposition to white minority rule. They also afforded a momentary outlet for the grief and anger of the oppressed.

I suspect that what is stake here is the issue of power as control. Weeping, wailing women communicating emotions of grief, mourning and loss are not easily controlled and can thus be seen as a threat to the state's ability and power to preserve order. In western societies women are considered to be more emotional than are men. Is this view derived from the fact that women have a history of being the public lamenters? Or is it undergirded by stereotypes of how women and men ought to be, stereotypes which usually serve the purposes of those in control? Arguably it is more expedient to both project emotions of grief onto women and to allow their bodies occasions on which to express a kind of collective mourning, while the men get on with the 'real' business of governance.

Once again the strange notion in western thought surfaces, that emotion stands in opposition to reason. So often we hear of a distinction between the affective and the cognitive, between feeling and thinking. Emotions are viewed as being more 'bodily' than are thoughts. Overt bodiliness is not considered to be proper to worship. Marking behavior as 'improper' grants the power of definition and eventually of control to those doing the labelling.

LAMENT IN ANCIENT ISRAEL⁴¹

As part of the ancient near eastern world, Israel also lamented. The powerful tradition of lament in ancient Israel continues into the practices of modern Jewry. People with faith in a caring God have yet to find a satisfactory answer to the problem of suffering in the world. The ancient Jews were no exception. But there is much to learn from them about how to relate to God in the face of suffering and grief.

In Israel where lament, according to Claus Westermann, is "the chief component of prayers in the Old Testament", national as well as personal disasters and suffering were

lamented".⁴² Undoubtedly all lament has a history and is rooted in experiences of suffering. From the time of leaders like Moses and Joshua, through the lamentations on the fall of Jerusalem, to the lament of the people in exile in Second Isaiah, Israel spoke out in complaint against God.⁴³ When Moses, Samson, Elijah, David, Jeremiah, Job or the psalmists raised their voices, they did so in different times, contexts and literary forms. Despite these differences, Westermann argues that all biblical laments have three basic elements: "The one who laments, God, and the others, i.e., that circle of people among whom or against whom the one who laments stands with a complaint".⁴⁴

Israel's tradition of lament was an exercise in what Brueggemann calls "enormous *chutzpah*". These ancient people simply refused to settle for things as they were and held onto their faith that God could and would transform unbearable circumstances. It was, indeed, God's responsibility to do so as part of the covenant. This is bold and risky theology but it is one which holds restlessness and hope, protest and praise in tension. Brueggemann points out that Moses's bold faith enables him to throw down the gauntlet to God and he dares to pray that if God will not forgive the sin of the people, God may "blot me out of the book that you have written" (Ex. 32: 32). This indeed is risky faith. It can also be pretty bleak. In Ps. 88, for instance, "the most dangerous, unresolved, and perhaps hopeless of all the laments" Brueggemann (1985:403), there is "an unmitigated accusation against God". The speaker, "one of those whom you remember no more", speaks from "the depths of the pit in the regions deep and dark" intoning relentless despair, unintimidated by the fact that, although there may be no resolution, God must be drawn into the circle of suffering.⁴⁵

In one of the most poetic laments in the scriptures, David laments the slain Jonathan and Saul, "Beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, and they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul" (II Sam 1:23-24a). Jeremiah in his passionate pleas, both for himself and for his people as they face impending disaster, does not hesitate to accuse God of having seduced him and made him a laughing stock (Jer.20:7). But he also calls for God's retribution, challenging God to be present, now in the time of trial. It is in the story of Job that the lack of substance of the kind of theology which always legitimates life's trials is revealed. Job, through terrible circumstances which are much lamented both by him and his friends, finds the courage, in Brueggemann's (1985:405), words, "to stand in the face of the Holy One and force issues in new directions".⁴⁶ By refusing to accept his friends' conventional arguments that he is the cause of his own suffering, Job raises his voice of pain into an authentic and mature partner in the making of theology and shows that God's order can be "addressed, assaulted, impinged upon, and transformed".⁴⁷

The women of Israel also lament. According to Jeremiah, Rachel's voice is raised in Ramah in lament for her lost children. Hannah laments her barrenness which she calls her 'affliction' with prayer and fasting and bargains with God for a son (I Sam. 1). Her crisis is rooted in God's action: "The Lord had closed her womb" (I Sam. 1:5). Her lament is directed at God who is both part of her problem as well as the recipient of her complaint. At the same time she is faced with an enemy, Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah, who provokes her severely. In a world in which a woman's worth was bound up with her ability to bear children, especially sons, Hannah's lot is bitter and full of shame and isolation.⁴⁸ Her lament, in her own words, is speech which arises out of "great anxiety and vexation" (I Sam.1:16).

The professional status of women as lamenters is alluded to by the prophet Jeremiah. Faced with the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah records God calling for "the mourning women to come; send for the skilled women to come; let them quickly raise a dirge over us" (Jer.9:17,18a).

These women were professional mourners who generally followed the bier of the deceased, lamenting the person's death in elegiac measures. Reading this text from a feminist biblical scholar's point of view, Angela Bauer finds intriguing possibilities. God not only calls the women to listen, but orders them to teach (v19) about how to mourn and be dirge-singers in this time of "terror and tribulation". These women are to lead the wailing of the people. Bauer comments:

The requiem ends with women called to mourn, to wail in the face of Death, to sing the dirges of utter devastation in the face of the destruction of Jerusalem. At a turning point in the history of the people, a turning point in the book of Jeremiah, it is the women who embody a response to the devastation in being there and do the only wise and compassionate thing to do, to mourn themselves and teach others to grieve in the face of death.⁴⁹

In his inaugural lecture to the chair of poetry at the University of Oxford entitled *The Lamentation of the Dead*, Peter Levi commented that "There is curiously little ritual lamenting in the Bible, and for an interesting reason. Lamenting the dead has usually, perhaps always, been the role of women. The true lament is women's poetry, and the Bible is mostly men's".⁵⁰ I agree with Levi that laments such as those mentioned above, are not common on the pages of the scriptures. Why is it that a religious rite which in all probability was pretty prevalent is so seldom mentioned in the scriptures? The clue to understanding this fact lies once again in issues of power, difference and control as well as in stereotypical views of women and their bodies which in themselves are often culturally defined. Lament, in short, was largely women's work. As such it did not merit much attention.

Despite these reservations, what is seen of Israel's lament can be described as candid, intense, robust, and unafraid. Those lamenting claimed the power to wring the hand of God and to disrupt accepted power relations between the people and God by claiming that their petitions were to be taken so seriously that, in doing so, God is put at risk. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the psalms.⁵¹

Lamenting Psalmists

The psalms represent Israel's conversation with God in a unique way. They are conversations in which anger and pain in the midst of trying circumstances stand side by side with hope for deliverance. In the psalms, Israel expresses the rawness of their experience of suffering and God's apparent lack of intervention on their behalf.⁵² The extraordinary and undimmed ability of the psalms to speak to human suffering lies in the fact that, in Brueggemann's (1974:4) words: "Israel unflinchingly saw and affirmed that life as it comes, along with joy, is beset by hurt, betrayal, loneliness, disease, threat, anxiety, bewilderment, anger, hatred and anguish".⁵³ Israel also saw that lament and praise go hand in hand. On the one hand, the psalmists almost assault God with facts about the human condition. On the other hand, they reveal trust and confidence that God will deliver them.

There are both individual and communal psalms of lament. They both follow much the same pattern. Opening with an address to the One who is being petitioned, they then move into lament which is followed by a confession of trust, perhaps a further petition and then end with praise.⁵⁴ Scholars appear unable to agree about the actual social and religious settings of these

psalms of lament. Some argue that they belonged in the temple as cultic religious acts while others hold that they were sung or spoken in the home.⁵⁵ Whatever the setting, lament was integral to Israel's relationship with their God.

The psalms of communal lament are a public form of complaint against God, an expression of grief or sorrow over some calamity.⁵⁶ Ferris describes a communal lament as:

A composition whose verbal content indicates that it was composed to be used by and / or on behalf of a community to express both complaint, and sorrow and grief over some perceived calamity, physical or cultural, which had befallen or was about to befall them and to appeal to God for deliverance.⁵⁷

These psalms are cries against God and against the enemies of Israel: God where are you? Why this suffering? How long? Why are you absent? These bitter cries take God to task in the midst of the people's suffering. Laments encompass sighing, mourning, weeping, bemoaning, chanting a dirge, languishing, cursing.⁵⁸

Although not as numerous as the psalms of individual lament, these communal laments show how a people can unite through the experience of hurt, anger, loss. They are important because they move people of faith from private grief to articulate concerns and pain which are shared. In times of social disruption, the psalmist recounts the people's distress: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion" (Ps. 137:1). Recalling the reason for their exile, the psalmist cries out: "O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins" (Ps. 79:1). Communal lament can be both a political and a religiously subversive act. By expressing profound doubt at the accepted ways of understanding human suffering, namely that it is deserved, the psalmists subvert accepted meanings and cry out for deliverance.

Approximately a third of the psalms are devoted to lament of the individual.⁵⁹ These psalms of personal suffering have a less pronounced structure than the psalms of communal lament.⁶⁰ Here complaint against God is not dominant. In these psalms the voice of personal affliction, of a sense of forsakenness in situations of personal crises, is heard. Instead of asking for a way out in a positive sense, these individual laments often petition God in a negative way. "Do not hide your face from me, Do not turn your servant away in anger . . . Do not cast me off, do not forsake me" (Ps. 27:9). Needs are described and hearts are poured out before God. The nature of enemies as well as personal feelings of disgrace are also causes for complaint. In these psalms relationships are in trouble and need to be made right. Brueggemann points out that unless the communal laments are placed alongside those of individual lament, biblical faith will be betrayed by being harnessed solely to serve private needs.⁶¹ Individual prayers of lament also relate to experiences of communal suffering, which in turn feed back into our individual prayers.

The psalms of lament combine two elements which seem to stand in opposition to one another: lament and praise.⁶² These two moments are vastly different in tone. Lament is insistent, accusing, angry—an extravagant form of complaint and sorrow. It in effect says to God: In the face of our suffering, we insist, without embarrassment, that you honor your responsibility to right this wrong, to restore justice, and we know that you can do so. Praise in effect says: We trust you and we honor you to accomplish your just and loving ends. Praise thus follows lament. It can be a costly moment which follows on the primary act of protest and pain. This blend of lament and praise in the prayers of Israel is "a guard and a guarantee against

an *over polite idolatry*. Such an idolatry imagines that God is fragile, delicate, and easily offended. In much of fraudulent piety, God is too nice and so our prayers must be censored".⁶³

Combining lament and praise has powerful political implications. The voices of the people speak out, claiming the power and the authority to define reality and the fact that all is not well. At the same time their voices are subversive for they claim that the impossible is possible. God's ability to act in this world, to right the wrongs far beyond conventional notions of the possible, is celebrated. This paradoxical blend of lament and praise is joyous rather than stoical, alive and hard won against all odds. It recognizes the fact that life is a movement from tragedy to celebration, from plea to praise, from displacement to reestablishing of self, from dispossession to recovery. Such are the extremities of human experience. Life is lived in the tension between what Brueggemann calls "exile and homecoming".⁶⁴

WHO MAY LAMENT?

Traditionally and overwhelmingly lament is the prerogative of the suffering victim. This is attested to in the scriptures and in acts of lament at funerals in ancient and contemporary societies. Can white South Africans, like David, lament, from "the other side"? Can we in fact afford not to lament? Some whites all too readily "lament" the loss of past privileges while refusing to see the need for deliverance from our murky history and for healing from the wounds that perpetrators inflict on themselves as well as on others. We can lament the misuse of power and privilege, and our lack of courage in not standing up to evil and injustice. Mothers can lament for their sons, drafted into the defence force and emerging after two years, scarred and depressed, cynical or ready to leave for far shores while at the same time remembering other mothers whose sons were tortured, imprisoned, killed and exiled in the cause of the same ideology of white power

I want to suggest that *public lament* for the injustice and the torments of the past is a potentially healing way of responding to the past. By stressing the *public* nature of lament, I am suggesting that such lament should be expressed communally as a liturgical act. It will have to be preceded by *public acts of repentance*. At the same time, however, lamenting publicly calls for individual hearts which are weeping and raging, seeking a response from God. The very nature of lament is profoundly spiritual and profoundly political. Remorse, anger, the need for accountability and justice, combine as we contend with God. Ever present in the lament is the hope for a better day.

CONCLUSION

How and where are we to lament? Given the limited mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the understandable constraints imposed by the very nature its mammoth task, the ethical clamor for justice will not go away.⁶⁵ Neither will the need to speak the anger, pain, fear, remorse and guilt. There is much to lament—the loss of dear ones, the destruction of young lives, the loss of justice, the loss of our humanity, vision and faith. For whites this will be a process that begins with awareness, acceptance of accountability, repentance, confession. 'Whites' is not a monolithic category or people. We too are divided by experiences of difference and otherness. Yet all whites need to lament.

We have no public forums for lament. We will have to find spaces in which to lament where groups of people who are prepared to go through the processes that lead to reconciliation can

create their own liturgies for lamenting together. Often suffering isolates its victims. Solidarity and real understanding can ameliorate feelings of isolation. "Sympathetic knowledge enables compassion to participate in suffering, mediating courage and love to the sufferer".⁶⁶ Dorothee Sölle believes that suffering is transformed through communication and solidarity:

The way leads out of isolated suffering through communication (by lament) to the solidarity in which change occurs. . . . By giving voice to lament one can intercept and work on his suffering within the framework of communication. . . . That sort of thing is conceivable only in the context of a group of people who share their life—including their suffering—with one another. One of them can then become the mouth for others, he can open his mouth "for the mute" (Prov. 31:8).⁶⁷

Just as holocaust museums or memorials for the dead are places for pilgrimage where people can gather publicly to remember, to mourn and to lament, South Africans can now make our own places to lament the years when difference and otherness were the cause of so much tragedy. Perhaps we need a memorial to the victims of apartheid with a Book of Lament which records the names of the victims and which can be signed by both those who knew the pain of oppression as well as by those who repent of being oppressors. Such a record can also serve as a salutary reminder of our history should we ever be tempted in the future to elevate difference and otherness again to a canon of exclusion and so destroy our fledgling civil society.

Religious institutions can also offer space for lament. In the Christian tradition, liturgical leaders will have to be convinced of the necessity for lament. These leaders are still overwhelmingly male. History testifies to the fact that men in authority may not be wholly comfortable with the practice of lament. Will the clerical dominance of ritual not be threatened by a lamenting congregation? And may this threat not be exacerbated by women leading the lament? Yet, the liturgy can offer a framework, a 'safe space', within which people can lament while at the same time the structure of the liturgy can contain lamenting which becomes too prolonged, thus offering reassurance to congregants who are as yet nervous of the practice. This of course raises the specter of a domesticated lament. Can real lament be contained lament? Have existing liturgical traditions anything to offer lamenting hearts? Traditional liturgies are not without elements of lament. In liturgical churches, confession of sin, reading of psalms, words of judgment and praise, and communal prayers are moments which can embody lament. Only a slight shift in emphasis is needed to rivet attention on the sublime ambiguity of lamenting hearts which praise God. In churches with less formal and more flexible liturgical traditions, members can be encouraged to bring their own prayers and songs of lament for inclusion in worship services. In all cases the need to lament can only emerge in communities in which the communal longing for healing is compelling enough to allow pain, anger and loss to be articulated while contrite hearts speak words of repentance.

Finally, public lament can start with the voices of women and marginalized and oppressed people telling their stories, daring to rage and wrangle with God, questioning doctrines of faith that glorify suffering, resisting further pain and calling on God to act, forgive or restore. Modern women's desire to lament is no different from those women in antiquity who led the lament. The women in Jeremiah or those who followed Jesus carrying his cross to Golgotha "beating their breasts and wailing for him" (Lk 23:27), or those who today stand at the open grave of a child, all need to lament.

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentations and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

Jeremiah 31:15

Rachels abound in South Africa. Once we drench Ramah in lamentations and tears, we may, like the psalmists, find words of hope.

NOTES

1. See also Denise M Ackermann, "On hearing and lamenting: Faith and truth-telling," in H. R. Botman and R. M. Petersen (eds.), *To Remember and to Heal: Theological and Psychological Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation*. (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1996); "'Take up a taunt song': Women, Lament and Healing in South Africa," in Leny Lagerwerf (ed.), *Reconstruction: The WCC Assembly Harare 1998 and the Churches in Southern Africa*. (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1998).

2. This Commission was set up in 1996 with the threefold task of investigating human rights abuses during the apartheid era, determining reparations for the victims of gross human rights violations and granting amnesty to perpetrators of human rights abuses.

3. According to the World Health Organization, the incidence of violent death in South Africa—57 per 100,000 people—is now the highest in the world (*Cape Times*, May 13, 1996).

4. The discussion in this section contains extracts from an article by me entitled "Becoming Fully Human: an Ethic of Relationship in Difference and Otherness," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 102, 13-28.

5. Jacob Neusner, "Thinking about 'The Other' in religion: It is necessary, but is it possible?" in *Lectures in Judaism in the History of Religions* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), p. 17 writes: "The single most important problem facing religion for the next hundred years . . . is . . . how to think through difference, how to account, within one's own faith and framework, for the outsider, indeed for many outsiders".

6. See Collette Guilaumin, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 250 who points out that "*difference* comes from a Latin verb (*fero*) which means 'to carry', 'to orient'. *Difference* adds the idea of dispersion (*di*) to this orientation; we say 'to differ from'. What is important is the little *from*. . . . The kernel of the meaning is the distance from a center, the distance from a referent (still *fero*)."

7. Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), p. 1.

8. See Denise M. Ackermann and Tahira Joyner, "Earth-healing in South Africa: Challenges to Church and Mosque," in R. R. Ruether (ed.), *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996).

9. See Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, tr. L. S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

10. M. Shawn Copeland, "Difference as a Category in Critical Theologies for the Liberation of Women," in E. S. Fiorenza and M. S. Copeland (eds.), *Feminist Theology in Different*

Contexts, Concilium 1996/1 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1996), p. 143 writes: "Difference insinuates not merely variance, but deviation, division, discrepancy, discord, incongruity, incompatibility, inconsistency, anomaly, contrariety, aberration and misunderstanding". She adds: ". . . difference carries forward struggle for life in its uniqueness, variation and fullness; difference is a celebrative option for life in all its integrity, in all its distinctiveness".

11. See Ruthellen Josselson, *The Space between Us: Exploring the Dimensions of Human Relationships* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), pp. 2-3, where she observes that the word 'relationship' has become hackneyed. "When people speak of 'having a relationship', they are usually referring to a sexual partnership. Relationships are to be 'had' rather than "created in the flow of intention, action and response between people". See also pp. 4-10 where she sets out eight dimensions of relatedness which form the core of her book.

12. Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. by Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p. 15. See also the work of the Stone Center in regard to the "self-in-relation": Jean Baker Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self" and Janet L. Surrey, "The 'Self-in-Relation': at Theory of Women's Development," both in Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean. B. Miller, Irene P. Shriver and Janet L. Surrey, *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), pp. 11-26, 51-66. Apart from feminist theorists and theologians who have propagated the idea of relationship as central to our understanding of being human beings in communities, a concern for community has also been the focus of recent writings by men. See Christian ethicists, Larry Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community: A Proposal for Church and Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) and Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), and the historical/sociological critique of American Society in Robert Bellah, *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), as well as the moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, especially his *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

13. Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.

14. Quoted from Luke L Pato, "Family and Human Sexuality from the Perspective of an African World-view," unpublished paper presented to pre-Lambeth discussion group, October 1995.

15. A critique of *ubuntu* among some African intellectuals is that it can have the effect of "levelling" people to one accepted norm which can stifle individuality.

16. For a discussion on *ubuntu* and *seriti* (force, power) which enable us to live in relatedness, see also Augustine Shutte, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu: An African conception of humanity," in P. J. Hartin, B. F. Connor, P. B. Decock (eds.), *Becoming a Creative Local Church: Theological Reflections on the Pastoral Plan*, a project commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), pp. 185-200.

17. Desmond Tutu, *An African Prayer Book* (New York: Doubleday), p. xiv.

18. In the early 1960's, the Scots philosopher John MacMurray attempted to offer a counter to modern European philosophy's preoccupation with the self understood primarily as a thinker, inactive in the world. In *Persons in Relation* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1991), p. 28, he formulates his basic thesis: "I exist as an individual only in a personal relation to other individuals." We can isolate ourselves from others intentionally so that our relation to others becomes impersonal. In consequence I can, as MacMurray points out, treat

you as object, refusing the personal relationship. This is what torturers do to their victims—making them objects in an impersonal relationship and refusing to 'know' the victims. We can only know other persons by entering into a relationships with them.

19. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1958); Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*; Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*.

20. See Isabel Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (Lanham: University of America Press, 1982); Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. By C. S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1994); Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

21. See Antjie Krog, *Country of my Skull* (Johannesburg: Random House, 1998) in which the author, a white Afrikaner woman, documents two years of reporting on the TRC.

22. Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), p. 22.

23. Farley, *Tragic Vision*, pp. 22-23.

24. Walter Brueggemann, "The Shape for Old Testament Theology: 11 Embrace of Pain," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 47, 400.

25. *Ibid.*, 401.

26. *Ibid.*, 402.

27. See Dorothee Sölle, *Suffering* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 70-74 for her description of the phases of suffering which include lament.

28. See Paul W. Ferris Jr., *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) p. 9, for a working definition of the term "genre".

29. See also Samuel N. Kramer's critical study, *Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1940). According to Ferris, *The Genre*, pp. 21-25, there are six distinctive Sumerian city-laments, the three major include the above mentioned lament, "Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur" and "Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur". See also Ferris pp. 25-28, 48-50.

30. This insight, attributed to the Sumerologist Thorkild Jakobsen, was made at a Jewish Christian dialogue held at Harvard Divinity School in 1965 and related to me in conversation with Krister Stendahl in November 1996.

31. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 86.

32. Alexiou (1974:6) points out that on Attic and Athenian funerary plaques and vases detailed pictures of lament are found of women acting as professional mourners.

33. Gail Horst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 113-114.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

36. T.B.L. Webster, *The Greek Chorus* (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 114, 127. For further insights, see Peter D. Arnott, *Public Performance in the Greek Theater* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.34 and Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 86-91.

37. Horst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices*, pp. 137-141.

38. Dorothy M. Koonce, "Formal Lamentation for the Dead in Greek Tragedy," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1962), pp. 4,6.
39. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, p. 19.
40. Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices*, pp. 3-4.
41. Scholars have debated the issue whether Israel's laments are essentially different from those of their surrounding cultures. Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 29-31 warns against seeking false dichotomies in lament in religions which are essentially polytheistic and Israel's monotheism. Although not precisely identical there is, according to Miller, an high degree of formal similarity. Ferris (1992) in his comparative study between lament in the Hebrew and Mesopotamian cultures concludes that Hebrew laments show a cultural dependence on the common oriental culture of their times. See also S. N. Kramer, "A Sumerian Lamentation. (The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur)," in J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 455-463 and the work of Geo Widengren, *The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents: A Comparative Study* (Stockholm: Bokförlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1937).
42. Claus Westermann, *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretations*, tr. C. Meunchow (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 94.
43. The Hebrew *kinah* is the technical term for the lament for the dead.
44. Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, tr. K.R. Crim and R.N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 169.
45. Brueggemann, "The Shape," 402-403.
46. *Ibid.*, 405.
47. *Ibid.*, 406.
48. Miller, *They Cried*, p. 237.
49. Angela Bauer, "Tracking Her Traces: A Literary-Theological Investigation of Gender in the Book of Jeremiah" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1993), ch. 3.
50. Peter Levi, *The Lamentation of the Dead with the Lament for Arthur O'Leary by Eileen O'Connell*, tr. E. Dillon, inaugural lecture as professor of poetry in the University of Oxford, given on 25 October 1984 (London: Anvil Press Poetry Ltd., 1984), p. 11.
51. For earlier scholarship on the psalms which informs the work of both Claus Westermann and Walter Brueggemann, see the historical critical scholarship of Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen: Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1928, 1933). See also Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962) who worked on establishing a religio-cultural framework for understanding the psalms.
52. Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 43.
53. Walter Brueggemann, "From Hurt to Joy, from Death to Life," *Interpretation* 28, 1974, 4.
54. Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, pp. 52-55, 64-71.
55. See Mowinckel 1962, *The Psalms* and Hans Schmidt 1928. *Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten Testament*, BZAW 40 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann), who argue for lament in the temple setting. See Erhard Gerstenberger, *Der bittende Mensch: Bitritual und Klagelied des Einzelnen im Alten Testament*, WMANT 51 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980) who suggests that lament took place in the home.

56. For communal lament see Ps. 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89.
57. Ferris, *The Genre*, p. 10.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
59. For individual lament see, Ps. 6, 13, 22, 27, 35, 38, 42, 43, 88, 102, 109.
60. Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, p. 178.
61. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg), p. 68.
62. See Michalowski, *The Lamentation*, pp. 43, 45, 49, 69. Here lament and praise also occur together. The lamenting goddess cries "Alas, the destroyed city, my destroyed temple", describes orchards "scorched like ovens" and ends in affirmation "O Nanna, your kingship is sweet, return to your place! May a good abundant reign be long lasting in Ur!".
63. Brueggemann, *The Psalms*, p. 58.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
65. Abraham Heschel (in Farley 1990:82) remarks, "Justice dies when dehumanized no matter how exactly it may exercised".
66. Farley, *Tragic Vision*, p. 81.
67. Dorothee Sölle, *Suffering*, tr. E. R. Kalin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 74.

CHAPTER IX

BEYOND PATRONAGE GIVING AND RECEIVING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

CHIREVO V. KWENDA

Many discussions of civil society never take the trouble to examine the conditions for the existence of civil society. Much is taken for granted. My interest in this chapter is in questioning this seeming givenness of civil society. Where one concern may, on the assumption that we already know the object of study, be to identify and analyze its workings, my concern is to establish an important ingredient in the constitution of civil society. In a continent that has grown more than sceptical of the blessings of civility and even questions its possibility, this question must be asked. Starting with no givens, we shall put forward a fundamental condition for the possibility of civil society.

I explore the thesis that, in order for there to be civil society, there must be giving and receiving. In spite of its somewhat pedestrian tone, we must realize that this is not about what is usually, and unreflectedly called "give and take". The latter is unhelpful in this search because it participates in what is evidently the problem in human relations: a kind of giving which refuses to receive but takes by force or guile what it wants. For the most glaring example of this one needs look no farther than colonialism, with all its impositions of what is supposed to be good for the colonized, on the one hand, and blatant denial of reciprocity, on the other. Yet the attitude underlying this kind of giving can, and often does, assume more subtle and even respectable forms. It is this characteristic of one-sided giving and studious rejection of reciprocity that I seek to capture with the notion of patronage.

Combining asychoanalytic focus on the issue of difference and otherness with an ecological perspective, in conjunction with gleanings from European and African philosophy, I will explore the dynamics of giving and receiving in ways that endeavor to show how some of the most "progressive" thinking around is still locked in the patronage paradigm. With application to our findings in the South African situation, questions arise about the meaning of the idea(ology) of civil society that may be left as rhetorical questions, which provoke further thought, or may serve as starting points for further research. But before we venture too far into uncharted waters, a few definitions need to be made.

PATRONAGE

Of the several meanings of patronage the one that most clearly brings out the problematic of one-sided giving is the one that is distinguished by offensive condescension toward the recipient. It is an aspect of this that people are complaining about when they refuse to be patronized. Relevant as this meaning is to our discussion of the construction of civil society in post-apartheid South Africa, it is the other pole of it, the invisible one, that illuminates the path for us. Just as vulgar racism has in recent years tended to retreat, giving way to more subtle strains of chauvinism, so with patronage: in its refined forms it has ingeniously purged the overtly offensive elements and assumed a socially more acceptable and politically correct posture of supportive interest and concern. To speak of patronage in these terms, however, does not mean that it can be pinned down to a stable sentiment or attitude. Too often it remains fluid at the edges and imprecise in its thrust. Saul Dubow's (1995:7) description of scientific racism as

"unstated assumptions and unthinking responses" comes closest to capturing the nature of patronage as it is used in this chapter. Further echoing Dubow on the nature of scientific racism (which is applicable to patronage), we should think more in terms of "collective mentalities" or "more or less conscious `habits of mind'" (:5).

Two randomly chosen examples will suffice to illustrate this. The first one relates to the strange pieces of legislation called "Masters and Servants Acts" (Gann 1964:44), which were pillars of colonialism in southern Africa. These laws, it may be said, were codifications of a general consciousness of European settlers' perception of themselves as superior (masters as opposed to employers) and Africans as inferior (servants as opposed to workers). The second one is about a kindly slave master in the Caribbean who, on discovering that his slaves were about to commit suicide, so as to rid themselves of the horrors of slave life, offered to die with them. Hanging oneself had become tolerable, even attractive, to slaves on account of a belief they held that upon death the slave would return home to Africa. We see the power of the kind of patronage that is under discussion in that even this possibility of freedom, at extreme cost, is denied the slave in its very nascence.

In their anger and frustration at this wanton destruction of valuable "property", masters were known to react to suicides in a variety of ways. One master was in the habit of chopping off the heads from the dangling corpses, with the express aim of ensuring a headless existence in Africa for wilful returnees. Not so with our hero, benignly disposed Major Crips, who amazed his suicidal slaves by offering to hang himself with them, so that he could accompany them to Africa: "I'll hang myself with you. I'll accompany you. I've bought a big sugarmill in Africa, and there you'll work for me" (Galeano 1985: 256-257).

The first example illustrates patronage of the overtly offensive type, which rigorously erects and maintains a sharp divide between the master race and the servant races. As an oppressive structure this type of patronage is relatively manageable from the servants' perspective, as they are in no doubt as to what they are dealing with. The second example, subtle and deceptive to the extent of erasing the external features of the master-slave boundary, and even choosing to make the supreme sacrifice of solidarity in death, affords the slave no such opportunity for do-it-yourself consciousness raising. There is a primary lesson here for situations of reconstruction which are sequels to liberation struggles, the diverse, and often disparate, elements of which might have been held together by the mortar of fighting a common enemy. As the internal conflicts and contradictions reassert and re-align themselves, or new ones develop during the reconstruction phase, it is important to look for signs of a streak of patronage that might have been subdued in the heat of struggle and are now re-emerging, sometimes with a vengeance. Integral as it is to negotiations of power from an advantaged position, patronage is a part not only of such obvious outlooks of dominance as colonialism but is endemic to all situations where power is taken, brokered, negotiated or distributed. Each time it rears its head, it causes violence.

CIVIL SOCIETY: GIVING AND RECEIVING

Civil society is no less problematic. The term has been used in many competing and contested ways. While this discussion recognizes the significance of the tensions between the state and civil society (the latter understood as a space for independent social organization for the articulation of interests and perspectives), it will not focus on this debate. Rather, it will locate its problematic in the more limited "tensions and debate within the realm of civil society" (Kossler 1994:4), on the one hand, and on the other, on the wider global context within which national

states register as either players or pawns. One outcome of this choice of focus is the imperative to probe the significance of "civil" in civil society. The linkage with "civilized" (Shils 1991:19) which has been rejected by some scholars (see Kossler op. cit.), then becomes unavoidable. Indeed, without this interpretation of civil society it is virtually impossible to ferret out patronizing tendencies within a society whose central guiding principle is political correctness in service of "rainbow nationalism" (pursuit of a pluralist society)¹. In its turn, this focus will lead us to an encounter with the primordial violence of the "civilizing mission", without which it is difficult to understand the choice of violent solutions to social and political problems over peaceful civil mediation of conflicting interests and perspectives that is so rife in Africa today. Then, with the application of an ecological model of analysis, we will be able to see that the "civil" in civil society may actually be implicated in a cult of giving, a giving marked as the "civilizing" mission of "progress" and "development". As such it has to be unmasked to reveal its ugliness as a violent, one-sided negotiation of power which can only be corrected through the knowledge and practice of mutual receiving, which opens the way to the development of an ethic of mutual indebtedness.²

The Cult of Giving

To call any kind of giving a cult may be to overstate matters a little bit, but the decision to so designate one-sided giving is made advisedly, on the basis of close observation of the pattern of giving endemic to western cultures. If colonialism was about taking - raw materials, raw labor- it was also about selective, violent giving, distinguished by lack of reciprocity. Cult in this respect refers to the manner in which this stylistic of giving and taking insinuates itself into every corner of colonial and imperial relationships. Take the imposition of western civilization, modernity and western ways of exchange with the universe; all the marks of the cult of giving are present there, deeply scarring the African psyche, as Africans try to come to terms with this mode of being human. Among the many literary portrayals of the psychological import Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has become a classic. It is an agony to read, for someone who is an African, not only on account of the tragedy implied by the metaphor of falling apart, but in respect of the sense of hopelessness it engenders. Its hero, Okonkwo, comes to embody the fate of colonized people: violence in life as well as in death. As the cult of giving would have it, what the conquerors want they take, including African lives.

Some of the questions this raises are: can we talk about civil society, the state, modernity and development without first going back to this moment of falling apart? What does reconstruction and development (prime concerns of civil society) mean against this background? Can human reconstruction start just anywhere and not at the place where human deconstruction started? Going back to this moment and place is a painful journey. It implies confronting the question of whether the conqueror-vanquished mode of human relations has died with the official demise of apartheid. In his erudite inaugural lecture as Professor of African Studies in the University of Cape Town, Professor Mahmood Mamdani (1998) argues that citizenship, and its entitlements, is still being awarded on the basis of this paradigm throughout post/neo-colonial Africa. Conquerors continue to give and take; the vanquished suffer the indignity and pain of receiving in a perverted mode that hates reciprocity.

An even more pressing question is whether, with the falling apart of things the center also fell or continued to hold. If, as in Yeats's poem, "The Second Coming" (1977: 401-402), from which the title of Achebe's novel comes, the center did not hold, then there can be no talk of

civil society in Africa, and especially in those parts where nation-building is predicated on welding together erstwhile colonizers and colonized. In fact, in Yeats's view, the center cannot hold! (my emphasis). If this should be true, what does it mean for the reconstruction of Africa? What is the substance and integrity of what Africa brings to the encounter of civil society? In actual fact, the very possibility of Africans bringing anything of worth to that common ground all but hangs in the balance.

We see patronage at its most virulent as Africans, unable to attain the equality and reciprocity that the very notion of civil society presupposes, remain mere recipients, stepchildren in the benign but alien and alienating household into which their former master, in his benevolence, has adopted them. They may be civilized, but the relationship cannot be a civil one. If, on the other hand, the African center held when things fell apart³, its nature and status ought to be identified and the manner of its participation in the construction of civil society carefully understood. Otherwise, an even greater evil than one-sidedness results, namely the passing of this condition as an equitable arrangement, thereby undermining any possibility of transformation.

These are some of the troubling questions that must be addressed in any attempt to construct civil society in post-apartheid South Africa. To talk of civil society is to imply that the minimum conditions of human intercourse, viz., giving and receiving, prevail. Hence the tenacity with which the conquerors of southern Africa cling to a cultural stylistic of spurning hospitality while taking what they want, and refusing to listen to anybody while demanding attention from all and sundry. This presents a peculiar liability to the search for civil society. In light of the crucial role that religion played in molding colonial and imperial consciousness and the cult of giving, we may need to trace the roots of the latter in the religious traditions of the West.

That Christianity has profoundly influenced western values is common knowledge. Where giving is concerned one quickly recalls the injunction of one of the founders of the religion, St. Paul, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Without having to carry out a systematic investigation of the history and development of this idea in the west we can learn a great deal from the Enlightenment ethic, according to which to be human included assuming responsibility not only for one's own affairs but for those of one's fellows (Bosch; 1991). Though it was to be rudely contradicted by the outcomes of progress and modernization thinking (Bloom; 1987:34), this tenet is very much alive as the spirit driving social welfare programs, both state and civil.

Evidently, in addition to Pauline teaching this ethic also drew from the Hebrew religious tradition, for instance, the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4), which teaches that we are, or ought to be, our brother's (and sister's) keeper. When we look at such western institutions as modern social welfare systems, charitable organizations and development aid schemes, the influence on these of biblical ethics becomes quite apparent. Even environmental philosophies seem over the years to have drunk copiously at this well. While nature, according to these philosophies, is generally seen as existing for the benefit of humans (Genesis 1 and 2), the latter are enjoined to give back to nature and take care of it, protecting it (ironically) from excessive exploitation and wanton destruction by humankind.⁴

The Imperative to Receive

Contrary to the counsels of the biblical tradition—or particular interpretations of it—experience shows that it is not always more blessed to give than to receive. There are times when

knowing how to receive graciously is, in practical, socio-political terms, more blessed than giving patronizingly. In fact, given the sad history of the world in the "Age of Europe" (West, 1993:5), there seems a necessity to promulgate a commandment that says, "Thou shalt receive!"⁵ For civil society, or any society for that matter, is built on the seesaw of knowing when to give and when to receive, as well as what to give or receive and how.

Where these delicate rules of exchange are lacking or have collapsed any talk of civil society becomes hollow, void both of meaning and substance. The rhythms of honorable giving and receiving are easier to sense when the interconnected nature of life is considered, something that traditional cultures tend to do better than modernized ones. Indeed the latter wax uneasy with the slightest suggestion of a mystical bond between humans and the rest of existence, a discomfort betrayed, among other things, by the unflattering tone in which words such as *pantheism* (recognition of the divine nature of all things) and *monism* (recognition of the interconnectedness of all things) are used.

Be this as it may, history attests to the continued human craving for connectedness. More and more the sciences confirm the existence of this principle at the very core of life and its processes (Holbrook 1987). And some of the leading thinkers of our times have long been reminding us that this is the right way to think and act. The message is clear in Pierre Teilhard De Chardin's argument that love is the force that attracts one thing to another, be it human hearts or molecules in a glass of water (1955:264-72). It comes as a sobering challenge in Ali A Mazrui's serious suggestion in a UNESCO sponsored study that totemism is one of the most valuable contributions Africa can make to the development of a common world culture (1974:76-81). My submission at this point is that an outlook of respect and friendliness towards nature is a pre-requisite to the development of that cosmopolitan ethic that embraces the whole human family, differences and problems and all, which is crucial to the making of civil society.

If the major problem in the latter pursuit is radical difference, as is the case in South Africa, then a serious, meaningful and respectful encounter with nature is the perfect starting point. What could be more radically different from human beings than nature? By encountering nature, though, is not meant a wishy-washy romanticized, lopsided glamorization of nature, but a hard-nosed realization that whatever else they are, humans are first and foremost members of "a family of living organisms, each dwelling in close proximity to each other, sharing the same physical space, with conflicting appetites or complementary needs" (Arnold 1996: 3).⁶

In many respects this is what modern ecological philosophers set out to teach. They entreat us to develop an ecological consciousness (Norman 1995: 307-16). Ecological thinking reminds us that because all things are interconnected, no difference can be absolute, thus paving the way for an ethic and consciousness of the broadest and deepest possible commitments and responsibilities to all and everything everywhere. Applied to humanity's relationship with nature ecological consciousness has the merit of reaching beyond exploitative and dominating orientations toward nature, and encourages empathetic interaction with everything in our universe. Obviously, we are bound to be headed in the right direction as we move away from the suffocating utilitarian and instrumentalist attitude toward nature and into enlightened partnership with it as opposed to lordship over it. Disappointingly, however, nature still occupies the seat of a junior partner; it still has to be cared for and protected, for it is viewed as sitting out there, helpless, vulnerable, waiting to be saved from villainous humanity by heroic humankind. While this ironic realism is understandable on the practical level, theoretically it continues to wallow in the shallow, murky waters of benign dominance. In so far as its vision is one-dimensional (from humans to nature), it still is in the patronage paradigm.

What is needed is that we move forward to what may be called radical ecological consciousness. In this mode stress falls not on giving (caring for the environment), very important, though, this is, but on receiving (dependence on the environment). Going beyond co-operation with nature, itself a progressive step, human beings learn to bear themselves with humility in the face of nature. They sit at its feet to be taught its seemingly familiar yet unfathomable wonders, which may contain keys to intractable human problems. They come to see, or rediscover, that nature is there in its own right, for itself primarily, and only secondarily for mutual co-operation with humankind. They make the sobering discovery that while they need nature, nature does not need them. Perhaps they must not stop there; they must move on in boldness to affirm that human beings are ontologically not caretakers or stewards of anything, but dependants and beneficiaries of the universe. They are caretakers only by default, as a result of their status as *naturicides*.

This means that humankind needs alternative philosophies of its being in the world, philosophies rid of anthropocentric arrogance and self-deception. Instead of dominance of nature, humankind has to live in mutual indebtedness with nature. But even this is a concession made necessary by human greed and senselessness which has turned nature into an endangered species. Otherwise the equation is that nature owes humans no debt. This is vitally important for an analysis of the social and political situation in post-apartheid South Africa. For just as the endangered status of nature is not incidental to normal ecological development but was caused by humanity, so is the precarious situation of post-colonial Africa an outcome of human agency.

But before we embark on an application of our ecological model to the development of civil society in South Africa, we need to take a further look at the issue of difference, which is really the crux of the matter. This we will do through a critical appreciation of Jacques Derrida's most helpful discussion of the gift, and by means of a brief excursion into an analysis of Julia Kristeva's political ethics by Noelle McAfee, and by way of a dip into the pool of African thinking on the subject of alienness.

GIFT, RESPECT AND THE ALIEN

Derrida, the Gift and the Cult of Giving

Since Mauss's ground-breaking study, *The Gift* (1954), the notion of the gift has been a useful tool in the hands of French and other philosophers. In the skilful grip of Jacques Derrida it has greatly illuminated a vast area of thought around the intractable subject of "the other". His theory of deconstruction enables Derrida to use the notion of the gift to effect a trenchant analysis of the relation with the other. In a vigorous critique of the kind of giving that takes place in the sort of exchanges Mauss discusses, Derrida rejects the reciprocal obligations and expectations that exchange entails. He is not alone in seeing this as a bondage. Gift giving without expecting anything in return is enjoined by, among others, the Abrahamic faiths. What distinguishes Derrida's contribution is the rigor of its elaborations. His discussion of hospitality, community and justice seek to pry the gift from the cycle of exchange and transform it into a liberating practice in which no strings are attached to doing good. Justice, he says, has "the structure of the gift", the logic of which is impossibility. He is emphatic that justice is "gift without exchange". A gift, in order to be or to remain a gift, deconstructs itself the moment it is given. The gift, in other words, does not appear as such (Caputo, 1997:141, 143).

No clearer declaration of war against exchange is possible. Derrida goes all out in the crusade to liberate the gift from the faintest suggestion of obligation or expectation. What is not so clear is whether and to what extent the din of this just war accounts for the deafening silence on receiving. It should not be too hard, of course, to see how paying attention to receiving can serve to reinforce the dreaded chain of reciprocity. In the absence of a clear statement by Derrida himself, however, we can only hazard a timid guess before proceeding to look for possible connections with similar omissions in the western discourse on giving.⁷

At the risk of unfairness to Derrida, a champion of the underdog, I want to submit that the model of giving he proposes, enlightened and progressive as it is, conforms to what I have called the cult of giving. All one has to do to see this is look at his elaboration of the dynamics of hospitality, for instance. For Derrida doing the right thing consists of welcoming the other, the stranger, offering him (sic) hospitality and making him feel at home. Hospitality is "a giving which gives beyond itself" (:112) which, nevertheless, is characterized by a tension that ever exists between the host and the guest. The stranger's situation makes a demand on the host to which the latter must respond. But in responding by welcoming the stranger and offering him hospitality, the host retains control of his property. For this reason hospitality is still shy of the mark of good giving. As with the gift, genuine hospitality starts happening when hospitality pushes against this limit, this impossibility, and goes beyond itself. And, by any reckoning, Derrida goes beyond many in his daring thought.

However, for all its progressive insights, his model is still plagued by the sweet demon of giving. Even where self is destabilized and decentered, the rhetoric of one-sided giving is as eloquent as ever. Simply to locate correctness in giving in excess, in generosity outdoing itself, may address the problem of reciprocity but it totally fails to even raise the issue of receiving. The motivation may be right: excess in giving cancels the demonic power of selfish calculation in social relations. But the method is inadequate or insufficient: one-way giving may weaken or even destroy the force of exchange, but it cannot do away with the power of the hand that gives. To the contrary, it strengthens it. It seems that the albatross of necessity that Derrida, a rebellious child of the European Enlightenment, is fleeing from has to be faced head-on.

It is in moments like these, at the height of the most strident of its self criticism that western thought succumbs to the cultural weight of the obsession with autonomy. Even in the munition house of deconstruction, where the praises of heteronomy are religiously sung, the little ghost of autonomy rears its troubled head. It dons and doffs different crowns, of course, as dictated by the occasion. To what, if not to the eerie visitations of this shade, is the stridence against reciprocity to be attributed? Why is the empirical other always a stranger and not a brother or, worse still, why is he a brother to the internal other (dark side) rather than the celebrated self? I am addressing the problem of intimacy, which western thought, no doubt burdened with imperial, even racist, ideologies, is often clumsy with. However, brotherhood or sisterhood poses no threat to alterity. Blood ties as models of structures of giving must not be feared beyond reason, for they too can be deconstructed without losing their usefulness. Fictions of kinship, going a little beyond friendship, yet retaining their voluntary roots, seem fraught with analytic potential. Later we shall explore some ways in which Africans handle the issue of alienness as we continue to search for ways to go beyond Derrida. For now let us see how Julia Kristeva can assist us in this quest.

In her "Abject Strangers: Towards an Ethics of Respect" (1993:116-34),⁸ McAfee analyses Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) by a process that she calls "Reading Heidegger through Kristeva" (:117). As with Derrida, the practical question that Kristeva deals with is that of strangers, be they migrants, refugees or exiles, and how they are experienced as a threat by citizens of a country or nation. The theoretical problem lies on the personal level and can be accessed through psychoanalysis. It arises from the realization that we all have got a stranger in our very psyche.

Where does this stranger come from? Kristeva analyses this in terms of the concept of "abjection", a word which means "expel". The child comes into being by a process which involves expulsion. The mother is expelled (abjected) in order that the child may emerge as a self. But in the same act the child expels itself. "I expel myself", says Kristeva, "I spit myself out. I abject myself within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish myself." But this is a second stage or second repression. Before this the child is part of undifferentiated being, which Kristeva calls the *chora*. The break with the *chora* represents a primary repression which is necessary for the child's self-creation.

Later in its life the child will experience the return of the abjected when it appears as a threat that might swallow the self back into the mother's body, where all difference and subjectivity stands to be lost. It is this strangeness and the threat of reversion to undifferentiated being that, when projected upon empirical strangers, awakens primal fears and anxieties.

Simplified to caricature level, it may be said that the return of the abject confronts us as something uncanny, as a stranger within. The question is, as McAfee puts it: "Is it possible or even desirable to eradicate the abject character of foreigners—that is to eradicate absolute difference?" Going beyond Freud, Kristeva answers no to both. For the uncanny is not only a bi-product of repression; rather it is itself a factor in the constitution of the self. On the personal level we should at least learn to live with and respect the stranger within us. However, where empirical strangers are concerned the borderline between personal and public is crossed. Hence the solution cannot be found in psychoanalysis. Political solutions with legislation and related mechanisms have to be found.

McAfee identifies a contradiction in Kristeva's solution. "On the one hand, Kristeva claims it is possible to become reconciled with oneself, but on the other hand, she wants to work toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable". She thinks further that Kristeva is "looking for a psychoanalytic solution to an ontological problem". This is where McAfee turns to Heidegger. She finds a lead in his notion of "authenticity" according to which one must become one's own self, rather than follow the crowd. But since the self is already split by virtue of part of it being hidden from itself, Heidegger's solution proves untenable. In the final analysis, the answer is to be found, again with Kristeva, in the subversion of the unitary self. Echoing Tzvetan Todorov's (1987:249) notion of the "exile", Kristeva sees salvation as flowing from everyone coming to a realization that we all are foreigners, not only to one another, but to ourselves as well.

It is important to note that while Kristeva manages to make some correctives to Freud, she does not challenge the notion of undifferentiated being from which the child emerges in the process of differentiation. Separation is still the goal in self-creation. As we have seen in the case of Derrida, this is the beginning of the problem of autonomy, and although Kristeva problematizes the process of the emergence of the self, she does not quite get rid of the category of the Separate.

At this point Jessica Benjamin's critique of the "overvaluation of separation" in philosophical and psychoanalytic analyses of the development of the self should come to the

rescue. She expounds intersubjective theory in a way that allows us to see uncertainty, contradiction and paradox not as the ogres that the self must always strive to flee, but as intrinsic to its very structure and development. Instead of being "a closed system" that must vie with other such systems for assertion of omnipotence and achievement of dominance, the individual is conceived of as existing in a relationship of constant tension "between assertion of self and recognition of other". Thus confrontation with otherness becomes less of polarization and more of "the simultaneous process of transforming and being transformed by the other". Two points are pertinent to our concern with giving and receiving. First, just as serious an encounter with oneself is essential for a respectful encounter with others, so is serious encounter with otherness crucial to self-knowledge and development. Second, an understanding of self that is not predicated on the centrality of separation lessens, if not eradicates, the fear of receiving that is so deeply embedded in the western psyche.

Alienness in African Thought

From the perspective of African religious and philosophical thought, to be human is to run the full course of life as delineated by the life cycle: to receive life, live life, transmit life and, as ancestor, protect life (Kwenda 1996:12-13). All this is made possible by marriage. Since the majority of African people are exogamous, otherness or difference is found at the very core of what it means to be human. Legitimate, auspicious self-perpetuation, both for the individual and the group, is dependent on fertility from outside (Kwenda, Mndende, Stonier 1997:36-38). Admittedly, the abhorrence with which incest is regarded by exogamous African societies may be interpreted as an expression of male chauvinism (Hammond-Tooke 1989:99-100). On the other hand, it can shed an immense amount of light on the sensitive issue of difference. It is through the encounter with otherness in marriage that either spouse is rid of the primordial darkness of sexual ignorance. At a deeper spiritual level, the lobola cattle that are given to the wife-givers by the wife-receivers ideally are ancestral cattle, that is, beasts that have been dedicated to the family ancestors (Hunter 1936:192). This exchange brings together a congeries of different spirit worlds, shoring up difference as the fundamental condition for auspicious reproduction of human life. Moreover, in so far as it is driven by what Suzette Heald (1990:387), discussing the respect and distance which regulates the relationship between the son-in-law and the mother-in-law, rightly terms "the asymmetric gift of life", it contains the seeds of its own permanent interruption.

Another area where alienness plays a crucial role is healing. For the traditional healer, power comes from association with a variety of otherness, including the spirit world, other people, non-clan ancestors, other species (animals, vegetation). In funeral rituals outsiders such as sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and ritual friends play critical roles (Gelfand 1977:41). Finally the constitution of chiefship and the inauguration of a chief are only possible through complex symbolic incorporations of otherness. All this points to the complexity of African understandings of self and other. If anything, the main thrust is that otherness is embraced as a matter of survival and well-being.

Losing oneself should not be dreaded. As Pierre Teilhard De Chardin (1959:262-3) points out, it is in so losing oneself to the other that one actually regains oneself. An ideology of radical identity can only be held by the powerful who have something to lose; the poor and weak have already lost much of themselves (cf. slaves committing suicide). The solution is not in rejecting solidarity or community, but in finding a different basis for it, fictions of kinship⁹, for instance.

In Search of Civil Society in Post-apartheid South Africa

We saw above that the place to start thinking about civil society is the place where things fell apart for African people, where the continent lost its innocence. Our first move must be to take stock of history. We learn that the situation in which Africa finds itself did not just happen; it was brought about by imperialists and colonialists in a violent praxis which included in its core a mission to civilize the people of Africa. Conquest and patronage allowed giving to take the form of imposition and taking to displace receiving. What was imposed were the blessings of the bitter pill of modernity because of the welcome wonders of science and technology, bitter because while Europe entered modernity as liberation from moribund and autocratic forces in the time of the Enlightenment (Serequeberhan 1998:440), Africa suffered it as already a possession of European conquerors and thus as terror and humiliation. Civil society could never mean the same thing in the two contexts.

To press this issue further, we must ask about the "aboutness" of civil society. What is the problem? There is much flogging of the Trojan horse of the state in debates about civil society. But if we are right in seeing the neo-colonial state in Africa as in the first instance, guilty by association, if not by default, that is, as an appendage and pawn of imperial powers, can we then proceed to admit it as a legitimate first accused, or a reliable witness, even? There appears to be some wool here that when it gets in our eyes gives us "civil-vision", that is, seeing things as they are refracted by the mirror of dominant ideology; and when it gets in our mouths we get "civil-talk", what James C. Scott (1990:4) calls "speaking the lines and making the gestures he knows are expected of him".

Which is where I think the search must be directed. Take a word such as "globalization". Should we not be wary of transitive verbs without objects and nouns that are neither subject nor object? Like all euphemisms they conceal and obscure (:52-55) subjectivity (agency) and objects (victims)—these are often the casualties. In the idiom of this paper, the nature of giving and receiving is masked. As if this is not enough, it turns out that the masking itself is as violent as the praxis it seeks to conceal. If we were to ask: globalization of what? Who globalizes (gives) what to whom (recipients)? we would end up either immensely frustrated or greatly agitated: frustrated if the concealing act kept wrapping on endless folds, agitated if we are lucky and we not only get a glimpse of the truth but actually get someone to accept responsibility for the situation. If the expansion of Euro-America in naked imperialism aimed at creating "little Europes" (Serequeberhan : 235) was terror and humiliation to Africa, one can only contemplate in fear and trembling the aftermath of the masked giving that takes the dubious appellation of "globalization". When we take this to the place in Africa where things fell apart, one question arises with suffocating urgency. Is this another enslavement?

Wrapped up as it is with modernity, how can the concept of civil society commend itself to an Africa in which things fell apart in "the Age of Europe" (West 1993:5) and are likely to fall apart again in the age of globalization? If what we are witnessing is indeed a mutation of the Age of Europe, then we can without hesitation forecast more rather than less humiliation and terrorization of Africa and other parts of the world that fall into its league. How do South Africans speak about civil society in such a context? To start with, the country presents a particularly complicated case as it embodies a significant bit of Europe. In the search for a discourse that atones for rather than deepens the wound of Africa's humiliation and pain, can the ideology of civil society be a help or a hindrance? Much will depend not so much on the rhetoric

as on its content. Civil society is meaningless as long as the violence endemic to the modernizing (civilizing) project which continues to humiliate and terrorize Africans is not effectively addressed. What is the way forward?

Indications of possible solutions consist, as suggested above, in radical transcendence of difference in a move that approximates conversion. A move that starts with a profound encounter with one's own stranger within, thereby opening a window through which the empirical stranger next door or from the other side of town can be experienced in their integrity. Such a window swung open on the South African scene in the form of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some people collected the courage to take healing peeps at otherness through it. Some were understandably sceptical. Those who saw it as something to scoff at paraded the turmoil that continues to rage within.

Serious lessons, some having global import, were learnt. Related to our theme of giving and receiving is the issue of victims of "gross human rights violations",¹⁰ or their families and relatives, who refused to (for)give some perpetrators on the grounds that they either were not telling the whole truth or did not show remorse. Here are people who had never had a chance to give because things were always taken from them before they could give; now when it appears that they have a chance to give, they will not because under the circumstances they feel that something is still being taken away without their consent.

On the other hand, there are those perpetrators who after they were (for)given did not know how to accept forgiveness. It is not very clear why they found it hard to accept the offer of forgiveness. Maybe they simply were overwhelmed by the intensity of the emotionally charged prospect. Or could it be that as members of a culture and history that is accustomed to take what they want they did not know how to receive what is freely given? These issues can be addressed on the national level through the provision for the development of values in the educational system and in other forums of a voluntary nature, from the home to churches, clubs and organizations of various sorts. Hopefully, we can meet with some success.

Much as one would like to think otherwise, there is a nagging voice at the back of probably the majority of African minds, reminding us of fundamental historical antecedents of refusal to reconcile. Europeans¹¹ seem to take lightly the hurt that Africans around the world feel at their (Europeans) refusal to show remorse for the Atlantic slavery episode. All kinds of lame excuses are often advanced as to why this is the case. But an honest search for truth must be able to cut through this veil of dishonesty and uncover the real problem. Is a demand for token reparation in the form for instance, of cancellation of Africa's debt, really that unreasonable?

What Antjie Krog (1998:8) says about the South African situation may be true of the slavery case: "It remains one of the most baffling elements of the majority of the country's population, that they always demand much less than what the minority expects. The other amazing fact is that this same minority always reacts as if the ultimate sacrifice has been demanded; that the final trenches must be dug." At face value, the African demand for reparation for slavery may appear just as one more encouragement for Europeans to indulge further in the cult of giving; in actual fact it is a way of affording them a chance to receive in the form of listening and hearing how this hurt stands in the way of genuine encounter with African people on the continent and in the diaspora. Reparation would give Europeans an opportunity to convert the original act of taking to one of receiving. At that point reconciliation would occur.

There is talk of an African Renaissance (Diop 1996; Mbeki 1998), an imperative to regenerate Africa in all spheres of life. Whatever else this means it must entail taking the painful history of colonialism and European imperialism seriously on the one hand, and on the other,

reinstating Africanity (African culture, values and thought) as indispensable resources and strategies in the reconstruction of Africa. The tentative beginnings that have been made in health, education and the working place must be augmented and expanded into other areas. Here South Africans of European extraction must bear an unequal burden of learning to listen. They must learn to hear African¹² voices.

Black people¹³ themselves are not exempt but, in all fairness, all they have done these three odd centuries is listen to Euro-American voices, in schools, in churches, in popular literature, the press and the electronic media. They need a break, and it is only this break that will allow their voices, thus far drowned in the din of European dominance, to be heard. In this space of silence they will be surprised as much as anybody else at the degree of tenacity with which they have clung to, and continued to renew cultures of their own, opinions, points of view, values, aesthetic and ethical standards, although these were often driven underground or sequestered to subterranean safe havens. It is now time for these "hidden transcripts" (Scott op. cit.) to come out of the closet with their heads held high. It may not be amiss to opine that in the twenty-first century the stature of African leadership will be decided more by success in spearheading this human reconstruction than in the materialist terms of capitalist economic criteria.¹⁴

It would be extremely myopic to limit the scope and range of these experiments and their outcomes to South Africa and the continent. Lessons can be learnt and models adopted abroad that originate locally. After all the terror of modernity is a global reality. The dark side of human consciousness about which Kristeva, among others, reminds us is not to be taken lightly. History and the day's news are ever flashing warnings to this effect. All the more reason to wake up to the realization that no single tradition, cultural, religious, intellectual and even economic, can save the world today, much less in the future. Consequently, only policies, debates, and discourses that are meaningfully informed by the best of what the human race as a whole has to offer might hold some promise for the world, and certainly for Africa. This should be a major focus on the agenda of the awaited African Renaissance. Then civil society as a human society can come into being.

A radical encounter with nature may be a critical starting point, affording human beings a more realistic estimation of humanity and its place in the scheme of things in the world, a place defined by an ethic of soberness regarding human capabilities and the species' survivability. This means giving up the savior complexes implied in the globalization of easy resort to military solutions, in favor of participation in the seesaw of giving and receiving that characterizes the natural flow of life. I realize that this may go against the grain for people of the technological age, who pride themselves not only on their ability to take care of things but to create them. But again, experience shows us that there does not seem to be a correlation between technological advancement and social and moral well-being. In fact uncritical application of mechanistic thinking to social relations can have detrimental consequences (Adas 1989:345-418, passim).

Let me end by relating a short biographical story which occurred one day, back in the 1980s, when I was working for a non-governmental organization (NGO) which specialized in disaster relief and community development projects in Zimbabwe. An American colleague and I had flown to a remote community near the country's border with Mozambique to see some projects. Two years of drought had hit the area hard, causing great hardship to the people there. It was most fulfilling to be able to give the gifts of food and water to the community through our relief work and even to provide some development components which included child care, literacy and skills training.

At the end of our visit, my friend and I were invited home by an elderly woman in her sixties, who had just learnt to write. She wanted to show us her success. After excitedly viewing her work we stood up to go, but she motioned for us to sit down while she disappeared behind her house and into the dry bush. My friend was visibly worried because there was a dusk to dawn curfew on small aircraft in the country at that time, and time was running out. After a while our host reappeared holding in her hand two dried pods of baobab fruit. She gracefully laid them before us. "I couldn't let you go empty handed", she explained with a beautiful smile.

NOTES

1. The phrase "rainbow nation" has become a popular catchword for a model of nation-building on the basis of unity in diversity expounded by Desmond Tutu, see *The Rainbow People of God* (London: Bantam Books, 1995).

2. I am aware of the philosophical problems that this position raises but since they will be dealt with below, in the section on Derrida and his discussion of the gift, I shall not deal with them here.

3. For a novelist's treatment of this optimistic view see Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Healers* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1978.)

4. In historical perspective the picture is more complex, displaying shifts between anthropocentric and what we might call eco-centric emphases. See, for instance, the discussion of environmental history by David Arnold, *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture and European Expansion* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

5. It may seem contradictory that those who are tired of unequal receiving should be bound by this commandment, too. Women, as a female colleague was quick to remind me, will see this as reinforcement of the role of passive receptacle they traditionally have had to play. The difference, however, is that this receiving will be new in so far as it will be based on the condition of reciprocity, as well as on the mutual exercise of wisdom in discerning when to give or receive what, how and so on.

6. It is not necessary to invoke the radical spirituality of Pagan Environmentalism to take the human-nature relationship seriously (For a brief yet informative treatment of Pagan Environmentalism see Bron Taylor, "Resacralizing Earth: Pagan Environmentalism and the Restoration of Turtle Island", in David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, eds., *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 97-151. John M. Mackenzie, "The Natural World and the European Appropriation of Nature," in Kaarsholm Preben, ed., *Cultural Struggle and Development in Southern Africa* (Harare: Baobab Books; London: James Currey and Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991), 13-31, contextualizes some of the issues and perspectives in southern Africa.

7. In response to a question I put to him during his lecture, "Forgiving the Unforgivable" which he delivered at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town on Monday, 10 August, 1998 Prof. Derrida was emphatic that he pays as much attention to receiving as he does to giving. But I still insist that both in this particular lecture and in his other writings, "receiving" only arises incidentally as a problem of giving and not as something that may be positive in itself. For instance, where he enjoins us to ". . . know how to give, know what you want and want to say when you give, know what you intend to give" (quoted in Caputo *op. cit.* 146) I am not aware of an equivalent injunction to know how to receive.

8. In Kelly Oliver, ed., *Ethics, Politics and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

9. Many African myths of origin feature this strategy of welding together strangers into viable polities. The power of fictive kinship lay not so much in the people's belief in the myth (indeed people joke about these) but in its having come into existence and the undergirding history. Karen McCarthy Brown relates how in Haiti slaves who had sailed on the same ship from Africa developed such strong kinship ties that marriage between them would have amounted to incest. "Afro-Caribbean Spirituality: A Haitian Case Study." In *Healing and Restoring: Medicine and Health in the World's Religious Traditions*, ed. Sullivan, Lawrence (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 255-85.

10. This is the formula used by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995. *Statutes of the Republic of South Africa* to define and delimit the sort of human rights violations the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was charged to deal with.

11. Inclusive of overseas extensions of Europe.

12. Thabo Mbeki, in his now famous, "I am an African" speech (1998) expounds in rich poetic cadences a complex definition of "African".

13. As used in South Africa to include Africans, "Coloreds" and Indians.

14. The plurality and diversity of cultures is only one of many challenges the ANC (African National Congress) led Government of National Unity (GNU) in South Africa is faced with. Presently Parliament is debating the possibility of establishing a Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (Randall 1998), to spearhead work in this area of nation-building.

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CHAPTER X
THE *OIKOS* IN A GLOBAL ECONOMIC ERA
A South African Comment
H. RUSSEL BOTMAN

INTRODUCTION

Julio de Santa Ana, well-known for his major studies for the World Council of Churches (WCC) on "the church for the poor," in his own contribution to his recently edited book on *Sustainability and Globalization*,¹ asks a difficult question: "Is sustainable society possible in the context of globalization?"

This is a significant question. The ecumenical debate on the "sustainability of society" has focused on the limits inherent to creation, which requires responsible choices, life-styles and economics. Here society and community stand in a certain relationship one to another. The issue of sustainability also includes the matter of sociality, understood in terms of those relations that construct community. In as much as the destruction of creation spells doom, the destruction of the moral and social centers of community is also under attack in the context of globalization.

Enrique Dussel, the Latin American liberation theologian, has shown how important the relationship between ethics and community is to the project of a liberation theology.² Concretely, he argues that goodness is communal. The word "people" as a theological category, "expresses the presence in the world, in history, of holiness or goodness as community, as institution . . . in the positive sense of the word." Ethics is thus not primarily a set of principles; it is the praxis of a community. Applying this to the present dominant economic system, he argues that it breeds relationships of domination that threatens "communal economic relationships."

I will argue, using Dussel's point, that the very essence of ethical community, reflected in the holistic world of the biblical *oikos*,³ is under attack in the context of economic globalization. I am interested in the impact of globalization on the central values and essence of "community," the very things that make for responsible societies. This is an exploratory paper, with a theological focus, referring to Christianity, and locating the question in relation to the African notion of *ubuntu*,⁴ which we might equate with the concept of the *oikos*.

IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

The *oikos* concept is not only key to the Bible, it is also a central concept in Africa, in an African idiom. I refer here to the term used in southern Africa, which has equivalents elsewhere, namely, *ubuntu*. It stands and falls with Archbishop Desmond Tutu's statement:⁵

I want to suggest that the West might consider a small gift we in Africa just could offer. It is the gift of *ubuntu*—a term difficult to translate into occidental languages. But it is the essence of being human, it declares that my humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours . . . I am because I belong.

That is the essence of being human for Africans, being human in relational and cooperative terms. The human being is not only a personality, but also a sociality. This is also the first thrust of the creation story: God created humanity in relationship.

The concrete person is a web of interactions, a network of operative relationships. A person is fashioned by historical, cultural, genetic, biological, social and economic infrastructure. These relationships are not mechanical ones, they do not allow for a competitive individualization which would damage the dignity of the human being. The dignity of human beings emanates from the network of relationships, from being in community; in an African view, it cannot be reduced to a unique, competitive and free personal ego.

Community is a gift of God (*Modimo*) in creation, unalienably guaranteed in the power (*seriti*) of God's presence. In as much as the dignity of human beings, the chief foundation for human rights, arise from the idea of persons being created in the image of God in the Christian tradition, the dignity of communities in an African view proceeds from the notion of human beings being created in relation to God the creator and to one another. Thus, community first and foremost means being in community with the Creator and with creation.

Thus, when one speaks, as we often do, of "Africanization," we have in mind this particular African anthropological claim. Because this is a generalizable claim, we may further say that the project of Africanization is more than a continental effort, it constitutes a wider challenge to the dehumanizing forces of globalization. Put differently, the globalization of the project of Africanization as a political and economic agenda is essentially the quest for ethical community.

The Oikos as Key Concept

Let me link these comments on the African notion of *ubuntu* to the way in which the idea of the *oikos* has developed in recent times within the Christian tradition linked particularly to the WCC. Ernst Lange was the first to use the phrase "household of the world" as a translation for *oikoumene*, the term which defines the ecumenical movement of twentieth century Christianity. In his Vancouver Assembly report, Phillip Potter, former general secretary of the WCC, explored the importance of the word *oikos* in the Bible and in the context of the ecumenical movement. Most recently, Konrad Raiser, current general secretary of the WCC, has called it a "keyword" in his proposal for "Ecumenism in Transition." It lies at the heart of what he calls "A Paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement."⁶

Raiser outlines a number of crucial characteristics of this keyword, as follows:⁷

1. The metaphor of the *oikos* supersedes any narrow vision of history as the central category of interpretation of social reality; it reminds us that history is bound up with community, webs of relationships, belonging, and with life together.
2. The *oikos* is a space for living that enables relationships, evoking neighborliness.
3. It has an ecological structure that displays boundary and openness, independence and relationship, rest and movement.
4. It embraces the familiar and the alien in the "one household."

Raiser then cites the many ways in which the Hebrew Bible is underpinned by this keyword. It is given in creation, and it unfolds in Israel as the "*oikos* of God." Jews receive God's house rules (*oikonomia*), which aim at sustaining their relationships, their co-existence, their grounds for cooperation, and their humanity as such within the household. Above all else these house

rules are meant to protect the humanity and the livelihood of the weakest and poorest in the *oikos*. The Sabbath, Raiser says, has become "an eschatological symbol of the restored order of the household of the whole creation, which permits all creatures to live and dwell in peace."⁸ God covenants with Israel and is introduced as the guarantor of the ordinances and the social life of the household. Therefore, God "dwells in Israel" (Ex. 25:8) and Israel is "God's house" (Hos. 8:1, Jer. 12:7).

The New Testament equally breathes the centrality of this keyword. It opens with the claim that in Jesus Christ, God dwells among the people. Where the Spirit is, there the group becomes a household. The idea also opens up a new status for the children of God: From being slaves to being free persons, sons and daughters. They eat a common meal in the *oikos*. They pray together for that common meal. The first church is depicted as a household of life, sharing and cooperation. And again the weakest, the exploited, the poorest are preciousely protected within the household. And they all say: *Abba!* Father!.

The Oikos in Church Theology

Dietrich Bonhoeffer⁹ earlier developed the most comprehensive theological argument of the *oikos* concept in so far as it pertains to church and theology. God's creative act includes the creation of community. Thus Bonhoeffer derives the central idea of community directly from relationship with God. The essence of social community is given with the communion that the creation itself has with the Creator.

He develops this idea in relation to the proposition that every theological question proceeds from asking "Who?" For Bonhoeffer, "The question 'who?' is the religious question. It is the question about the other man (sic), and his claim, about the other being, the other authority. It is the question about love for one's neighbor. . . . That means that man (sic) can not answer the question 'who?' by himself."¹⁰ He then argues that the most fundamental question for the Church is the question "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?" On this basis Bonhoeffer develops a characteristic ecclesiology with an ethical center. The meaning of the claim to be "Church," he claims, is that Christ exists among us as community in the hiddenness of history.

This has significant implications for the life of such a community: It is constituted as life together. Prayer, therefore, a distinctive practice of the Christian community, cannot be privatized or individualized:¹¹

No one can pray for the kingdom . . . who thinks up a kingdom for himself (sic) . . . who lives for his own world view and knows a thousand programs and prescriptions by which he would like to cure the world. . . .

Furthermore, co-operation, as acting for the sake of others, even future others, is the only way to live in such a community-formed reality:¹²

Thinking and acting for the sake of the coming generation, but being ready to go at any day without fear or anxiety—that, in practice, is the spirit in which we are forced to live.

Community and its values of co-operation are crucial for future generations. As such it is inherently part and parcel of the quest for sustainable society.

THE *OIKOS* IN A GLOBAL ECONOMIC ERA

Are these considerations relevant to the theological discussion of globalization?

Indeed, globalization is a socially constructed economic process which has integrated certain markets (excluding the labor market) and which is dominated by the financial market.¹³ It is strengthened and proliferated by the growing interdependence of economics and technology. This allows for fast and free movement of capital and valuable information. The forces of globalization have assumed the status of economic necessity; they project an ideological imperative.

Globalization as an ideal allows for no alternative measure of thought; it presents itself as the only view on contemporary society. Neo-liberalism is the ideological vehicle of economic globalization. This ideology redefines humanity as *homo economicus*, and it influences behavior towards aggressive competitiveness in which only the strongest survive, claiming that "the trickle down effect" will solve the problem of poverty. It prescribes a certain autonomy to the market that increases inequality and fragments political life and communities.

Its negative impact on the *oikos* is, thus, not only economic. It shows up in the behavior it promotes and the fragmentation it produces in the moral foundations of community. Individualism abounds and competition is celebrated. Solidarity and co-operation are sacrificed. We may see this from one angle in a series of experiments conducted by Robert Frank, an American economist, on the effect of education on students in different disciplines. In 1993 he published the results in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, also *The Economist*, and later in a book.¹⁴

The experiment was constructed to give students the option of choosing either to cooperate with others in the interest of all and thereby somewhat reduce their potential personal gain, or to aggressively assert their own individual interest over against the others, thereby doubling their potential personal gain. They were put in front of computers and told that they were in a game with other players. If you play aggressively, they were told, but your opponent cooperates with you, you get \$10. If both cooperate each of you receives \$5. However if both of you act aggressively, you each receive \$2. Finally, if you cooperate while your opponent acts aggressively, you get nothing.

Frank and his collaborators studied the students' behavior as they played the game. They found that students of economics were significantly more aggressive than students of other disciplines. They were also more pessimistic about the benefits of cooperating with others. Perhaps economics attracts non-cooperative types, one might ask? No, says Frank. The study was repeated with new enrollments of students who had chosen economics as their major. One might expect the same pattern as in the first result. But a different result in fact emerged. There was no difference between first year students in economics or first year students in any other discipline in their propensity to favor cooperation and a sharing of gains. Years later, however, when the same students were ready to graduate, the experiment was repeated with those students. At this stage, economics students now stood out among the rest as the most pessimistic about the benefit of cooperation, and similarly, they strongly exhibited a utilitarian aggressiveness.

The implication is clear: That a world-view driven by the rationality of contemporary economics does not favor the values of community. Will the priesthood of the *koinonia*, the *oikomene*, the *oikos* be wise enough and diligent enough to prepare a community of young people who are critical enough to engage the aggressive priests of economic globalization?

The question is particularly poignant for those of us who learned that apartheid was theologically indefensible because the *oikos*, the very idea of the household—whole and bound together by sacred ties—was at stake in its quasi-religious ideology. It threatened to destroy the *oikos* by taking as its point of departure the irreconcilability of people. South African churches and the ecumenical movement declared any theological defense of such a system a heresy, an idolatry.

If then economics is essentially the interest in the *nomos* of the *oikos* (the administration, the rules and regulations, of the productive and reproductive household), may we similarly say today, under the impact of globalization, that we are facing a single-minded interest in the *nomos* which has the capacity to threaten the well-being of the *oikos* or even, perhaps, the existence of the *oikos* and its sociality as we know it? Put differently, what is an *oikos* without agents of cooperation?

One may go further, I think. Globalization includes and excludes peoples and countries by its very nature, by its particular set of preferences and penalties applied variously to those who engage with or challenge its forces. The military concept of the "triage" has been used quite often to describe the exclusionary nature of the global economy. The triage principle requires that a wounded or weaker soldier sometimes be left behind in the interest of the immediate gains of battle and warfare.

Thus at a conference in 1966 of the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Kitwe, Zambia, the exclusionary nature of globalization was identified as its most threatening character in so far as Africa is concerned.¹⁵ In essence it fragments the *oikos* on the basis of a particular *nomos* (law) which takes precedence over the community. In the interests of this *nomos*, the *oikos* is wounded by the exclusion of a person or persons from the community and its communion. The economics of globalization, based as it is on a technical rationality anchored in a utilitarian anthropology, does just this. It treats the rule of the market, the laws of supply and demand, as most fundamental, and human community as secondary. Thus human community, indeed human beings, might well be a necessary, even if unhappy, sacrifice in battle.

Beyond the Church

What Kitwe shows us is that it is a serious mistake to think that the fragmentation of the *oikos* pertains only to the church. Exclusion knows no race or religion. In this respect, Daniel W. Harding correctly pointed out that Bonhoeffer failed to differentiate between created sociality, i.e. secular community, and redeemed sociality, i.e. the church as religious community.¹⁶ Consequently, he privatised the notion of community and applied it only to the church, thereby excluding created sociality. The assumption lying behind this is that Christian faith communities can be set apart from common human sociality. This is an important observation which instructs the current debate with regard to globalization.

Jürgen Moltmann aptly claims that whoever wants to "create justice in society" had better start with community.¹⁷ Justice does not exist outside of community. He proposes a scheme of three dimensions of community that essentially hold together as one: People in community, community in generations, generations in the natural environment, church of the whole creation. It is worth considering this proposal briefly.

First, the dimension of "people in community" counteracts the rough public individualism of globalization. It refuses Darwin's view of humanity in favor of Peter Kropotkin's. The latter's

view is that even in the animal world co-operation defines the nature of things; living beings and creatures are in the first place co-operative entities. Applied to the *oikonomia*, the economy, this dimension further implies that the alternative to poverty is not property, but community. Together, in solidarity, the poorest find a home, the wealth of friendship, and the gift and gifts of neighbors.

Second, the notion of "community in generations" proposed that human life is not only horizontal, but longitudinal. People are created in generations, they live in relation to generations. This suggests not only a communal, generational contract within the family. Everyone lives in the sequence of generation and owes their lives to it. Everyone has a duty towards past and future generations, the old and the young. Generational justice is required for this dimension of community life to be sustained.

Third, the idea of "generations in the natural environment" suggests that humanity and nature belong together. Human development can only happen in equilibrium with the cosmic conditions of ecological reality. This requires the conversion of human life styles, and by implication, of industrial production, for community with creation to be restored.

Fourth, Moltmann's view of the church as "a church of the whole creation" takes us beyond the dualism of humanity and cosmos: We shall no longer want to know nature to dominate, destroy and spoil it. This has important implication for economic globalization where ecological destruction is endemic.

CONCLUSION

Max Stackhouse, ethicist at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Dennis P. McCann, of DePaul University in Chicago, argue that "The truth is: no system has a monopoly on greed," and that "Modern capitalism [their name for globalization] engenders greater co-operation," whilst "Socialism is more exploitative."¹⁸ Let me say clearly, I am not glorifying a system. However, I want to show a fair amount of appreciation for a biblical and theological accord: Community is prior to economics. The "*oikos*" precedes the "*nomos*." The *nomos* must be informed by its communal key. The *oikos* transcends economics both logically, historically, biblically and theologically.

We know that the concept and the reality of community norms, or of the *oikos* as primary, is not uncomplicated. It can easily lead to the oppression of individual freedom, the suppression of creative imagination, and intolerance. I would not want to romanticize the value of community at all cost. But neither can I accept the cost of a *nomos* that threatens the very *oikos* it was meant to serve.

I claim no less than that globalization is at odds with the *oikos* of life, the community base of being and the household narrative of the Bible. It is not accidental that the concept of "sustainability" caught the attention of all those many scholars, community leaders and ecumenical forums that concerned themselves with the matters of the global economy and its impact on the ecology. The term has received a wide range of meanings over the years including sustainability of future generations, justice for the poor, debt relief, etc.

I am led to think about another great leader who asked "Where are we going from here: Chaos or community?" Martin Luther King Jr., in these words, called on people to learn the art of cooperation in communities, to break with the most subtle and most overt forms of aggression, even as aggressive self-interested people set out to kill him. King left us with the choice to die

with or without a dream of community, of *oikos* restored, of an *oikonomos* where the *oikos* takes priority. Can we restore community against the odds?

NOTES

1. Julio de Santa Ana, *Sustainability and Globalization* (Geneva: WCC, 1999), 1-22.
2. Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986).
3. Literally, "household."
4. A shorthand term for a longer phrase often translated as "a person is a person through other people," a strongly communal anthropology.
5. Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann, *On the Way to the Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 101.
6. K. Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition: A paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement?* (Geneva: WCC, 1991).
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
8. Raiser, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
9. The question of the relevance of Bonhoeffer's theology to the South African context has recently been examined and affirmed; see H.R. Botman, "Is Bonhoeffer still of any use in South Africa," in J.W. De Gruchy, (ed.), *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997).
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christology* (London: Collins, 1960), pp. 27, 31-2.
11. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 34.
12. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 15.
13. Peter Beyer, in *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage, 1994, 7), argues convincingly that "The core hypothesis in this discussion is that, increasingly, there is a common social environment shared by all people on earth and that globality conditions a great deal of what happens here, including how we form theories about it. Any social analysis that ignores this factor is incomplete and misses a key aspect of the human condition in our contemporary world."
14. Cf. Varoufakis, Y.1998. *Foundations of Economics: A beginner's Companion* (New York: Routledge).
15. *Update*, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, June 1996, Vol. 6, No 2, 1-2.
16. D.W. Hardy, "Created and Redeemed Sociality," in C.E. Gunton and D.W. Hardy, (eds), *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1989).
17. Jürgen Moltmann, "Has Modern Society Any Future?," in *Concilium*, 1990/1, 54-65
18. "A Postcommunist Manifesto," in W.G. Boulton, *et. al* (eds), *From Christ to the World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 484-488.

CHAPTER XI
**DISCERNING BETWEEN TWO GODS:
LITERARY AND SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF
BIBLICAL VALUES**
GERALD WEST

INTRODUCTION

"When all is said and done," write Wilson and Ramphela, "the Church in South Africa is better placed than any other organization, religious or secular, to work with poor people" (Wilson 1989:303). This would be true in Africa generally. If this is so, then why has the Church had so little success in making a *sustained* contribution to the reconstruction and development of (South) Africa?

There are, no doubt, many plausible answers to this question, and others are better placed than I am to explain the complex and ambiguous history of the Church in (South) Africa.¹ However, in this paper I offer some reflections on this question. One of the answers to this question, I argue, is that we are trapped in self-sustaining forms and values of what *The Kairos Document* (ICT 1986) called "Church Theology"—a theological trajectory that is more concerned with legitimating, sustaining, and consolidating the structures that constitute the *status quo* of the Church than with the challenges, questions, and critiques posed by the pain these structures perpetrate and perpetuate.

In trying to discern "the fundamental problem" of "Church Theology" *The Kairos Document* pointed to various elements, including a lack of social analysis, an inadequate understanding of politics and political strategy, and, most importantly, an unworldly, private, and individualistic type of faith and spirituality (ICT 1986:15-16). These elements, among others, made up "Church Theology" which, as the prevailing form of Christian theology during the 1980s, left "many Christians and Church leaders in a state of near paralysis" whenever they were faced with the South African crisis (16). I have used the past tense here, but unfortunately, "Church Theology" is not a paradigm of the past; it remains the dominant theological trajectory of the present.

The Kairos Document correctly called "for a response from Christians that is biblical, spiritual, pastoral and, above all, prophetic" (17), and then proceeded to give an excellent account of "Prophetic Theology" (17-27). However, this move from "Church Theology" to "Prophetic Theology" was made too quickly. As a result, the *theological* analysis of "Church Theology" was inadequate. It is not enough, as *The Kairos Document* put it, to say of "Church Theology" that "this kind of faith and this type of spirituality has no biblical foundation" (16). In fact, "Church Theology" does have a biblical foundation. That *is* the problem with "Church Theology." This is because the Bible is not monosemic, its texts do not have one meaning and one meaning alone. So the struggle for the soul of the Church is more complex than we imagined. Biblical interpretation is one of the sites of that struggle, as I will show. More generally, we may say that the sacred texts of a tradition are implicated in the way in which we see the world around us, and in the way we discursively shape our action.

LOCATING OUR LIVED FAITH

Let me take the example of the interests of work and workers.² Two remarkable findings emerged from a Report of the ICT (Institute for Contextual Theology) Church and Labor Project Research Group, entitled 'Workers, the Church and the Alienation of Religious Life' (ICT 1991). First, it was found that 80 percent of unionized workers who responded 'would regard the Bible as significant' in their Christian life as workers (ICT 1991: 272; also Cochrane 1991:182). Second, most of the workers who participated in the research experienced the church as alienating; they felt that the church was largely irrelevant to their life as workers (ICT 1991:268-271). Something rather odd is going on here. Here is my analysis of this strange discrepancy. Implicit in it is a challenge to those of us who are socially engaged theologians and biblical scholars.

All workers have a lived faith, a working theology, that enables them to survive each day in often difficult circumstances. This working theology—a theology they live by—is not usually an articulated faith, but it is a lived faith. It is forged by a host of forces and factors in their daily experience, including their culture, their language, their gender, their personal circumstances, their home, their church, their reading of the Bible, etc. It is their theology, a theology that works for them, even though it may never be formally articulated.

When workers go to church, elements of their lived faith and working theology are affirmed, nurtured, articulated, and acted upon by being given public space. In other words, they are able to recognize something of their lived faith and working theology in the liturgy and rituals of their church. However, as the ICT Report mentioned above indicates, there are also many aspects of their lived faith and working theology that are not affirmed, nurtured, articulated, and acted upon by the church; and so workers feel alienated in and by the church. Some workers respond to this alienation, this disjunction, by joining another church. For example, they become those who are Anglicans by day and Zionists by night. Why? Because in the Zionist church they find aspects of their lived faith and working theology affirmed, nurtured, articulated, and acted upon.

Often there still remain areas of alienation, even here. Some workers respond to this by joining a para-church organization, like Young Christian Workers (YCW), or they work with the Institute for the Study of the Bible (ISB) (West 1995; West 1999). There their lived faith and working theology is also affirmed, nurtured, articulated, and acted upon.

From the ICT report it is clear that many workers feel betrayed by the church. Most churches, it would seem, are unable to affirm, nurture, articulate, and act upon the lived faith and working theologies of workers. If this analysis is correct, what can be done about this? Socially engaged theologians and biblical scholars can become the servants of workers, I argue. What could this mean?

One of the recurring threads running through the 1989 'Theology, Work and Labor' Conference was that any theology of work must be done by workers themselves; ministers, theologians, biblical scholars should become the servants of workers in this task (Nolan 1996). One such service, I would argue, comes in the form of the resources of our critical biblical training. We have often failed workers by not providing values and tools which they can take up and use, in addition to those they already use, in their struggle. We have also often failed the Church in not equipping ministers and lay leadership to interpret the Bible in ways that are empowering for the poor and marginalized, of whom workers form an important sector. The Church has become incapacitated by inherited interpretations and received readings of the Bible that are not those of the majority of ordinary (South) African Christians. In short, the Church has

become trapped in the paradigm of "Church Theology." Let me illustrate my analysis and argument by reading a particular biblical text.

RE-READING MARK 12:41-44

Most (South) African Christians will be familiar with this passage in Mark's gospel. It is the story of the widow's offering, often called the "widow's mite." We have probably heard sermons and participated in Bible studies on this text. If we were to ask ordinary (South) African Christians—and their pastors, ministers, and priests—what this passage is about, what its basic values are, they would be quick in their response; they would be fairly confident that they know what the text is about. Common responses are that this text is about faithful giving, sacrificial giving, the importance of the right motives in giving, how the poor tend to give more proportionally than the rich, and the like. While such interpretations do capture certain important aspects of the passage, we must be prepared to go deeper if we are to equip the Church in its work with the poor. Let me explain.

First, it is useful to take account of the literary or linguistic context of the passage we are reading.³ Ideally, we should have some sense of what Mark's gospel as a whole is about. Reading it as a whole, in one sitting, would thus give us a good idea of what Mark is trying to say and how he is trying to say it. It would provide us with a preliminary sense of its central concerns and content, as well as a preliminary sense of its structure. This is probably unrealistic for most ordinary (South) African 'readers' of the Bible, but socially engaged biblical scholars and theologians ought to do this. When we work *with* ordinary (South) African 'readers,'⁴ reading the sections of text that immediately proceed and follow the selected passage will offer enough sense of the literary context of the passage.

Returning to our example, we could begin by reading Mark 12:35-40 and then continue on to re-read verses 41-44 in this broader literary context. Initially, there may not appear to be much of a connection between these passages. However, a careful reading reveals that there are a number of interesting connections between Mark 12:35-40 and Mark 12:41-44. In Mark 12:35-40 Jesus is arguing against the teaching (verses 35-37) and the practices (38-40) of the scribes. One of the practices of the scribes which Jesus warns his disciples and the crowd to beware of is that they "devour widows' houses" (40; NRSV).

While it is not quite clear from the text what this means, what is clear is that in the very next verse, as Jesus watches people putting money into the treasury, among them is "a poor widow" (42)! The attentive reader can make the connection:⁵ the scribes who devour widows' houses are probably the reason this widow is poor! She is not simply a faithful giver; she is also a victim of the oppressive practices of the scribes. This connection shifts our focus from an individual, the widow, to an oppressive system, the practices by which the scribes devour widows' houses. Knowing now that her poverty is as a result of an oppressive system only makes her giving that much more remarkable. But in addition to portraying this widow's sacrificial giving, Mark also wants us to notice the connection between the practices of the scribes and this woman's poverty. The point I am making is that we can only make this connection if we are prepared to read the passage (12:41-44) in its literary context.

We can turn now to the section that immediately follows that passage. There is a chapter division here; but we should disregard it as the chapter divisions are not a part of Mark's narrative. They were put into the text much later for reference purposes. If we then carry on with

our reading we find that Jesus leaves the temple in 13:1, and then pronounces judgement on the temple in 13:2.

Clearly, Jesus has been in the temple until this point in the story. Another connection now emerges: While in the temple Jesus criticizes the scribes (12:35-40); while in the temple Jesus watches a victim of the scribes, the poor widow, put her money into the temple treasury (12:41-44); when finally Jesus leaves the temple, he predicts its destruction (13:1-2). The temple is common to each passage. Is there something about the temple that Jesus is opposed to? What is the relationship between the temple and the scribes? What is the relationship between the temple, the scribes, and the ordinary people that were "listening to Jesus with delight" as he denounced the scribes?

In order to answer these questions we would need to know something about the socio-religious context of Jesus's world. Before we go behind the text to the context that produced it, however, it would be worth exploring the literary context more broadly and in more detail. Does the literary context provide us with some answers to these questions? I think it does.

Jesus leaves the temple in 13:2; the scene then shifts to Jesus discussing the future with his disciples on the Mount of Olives (13:3). If the temple is a key issue in the passages we have read, and if Jesus leaves the temple in 13:2, when did he enter it? We will need to go back in Mark to find out. Remember, we are attempting to understand how Mark has structured his gospel, so it is important that we try to determine what the literary units are that make up Mark's narrative structure. I am suggesting that the section from when Jesus enters the temple until he leaves it might form a literary unit.

Jesus enters the temple for the first time in Mark's gospel in 11:11; but he does not stay long. Rather strangely, he looks around, and then leaves both the temple and Jerusalem, returning to Bethany. The next day he returns to Jerusalem and enters the temple again (11:15). This time Jesus acts: "He began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple" (11:15-16).

Having acted, Jesus then teaches, saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a den of robbers'" (11:17). Immediately after this we read that "when the chief priests and the scribes heard it [all that had happened in the temple], they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching" (11:18). Once again, Jesus does not stay in Jerusalem, he leaves and returns to Bethany (11:19). The next day Jesus enters Jerusalem and the temple for the third time (11:27), and this time he does not leave the temple until 13:2! The passage we began with, Mark 12:41-44, is a part of this section, so we should read the literary unit 11:27-13:2 carefully in order to establish its main concerns. But before we do this, we should pause briefly to note one or two connections between our passage about the widow making her offering and the first two occasions on which Jesus enters the temple.

Notice that Jesus is reluctant to spend too much time in the temple when he first enters it (11:11); what is more, he is reluctant to spend too much time in Jerusalem! He does not stay overnight in Jerusalem but returns to Bethany. Clearly, Mark is indicating that Jesus is somewhat wary of the temple and the city. In describing the second entry into the temple (11:15), Mark is more overt; Jesus is now openly hostile towards the temple and those who have made it "a den of robbers" (11:17). But who are these people who have made the temple "a den of robbers"? The following verse, 11:18, suggests that it is the chief priests and scribes whom Jesus is addressing, because it is they who react to his words and actions by "looking for a way to kill him." Could

there be a connection between the chief priests and scribes who have made the temple "a den of robbers" and the scribes who "devour widows' houses" (12:40)? There is, as we will see when we read 11:27-13:2 as a literary unit.

The entire literary unit is located within the temple in Jerusalem; the temple is the setting in which all the action of the literary unit takes place. The literary unit 11:27-13:2 contains a number of smaller sections which have a number of common elements. It begins with Jesus being confronted by the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders as he enters the temple (11:27). In the first section of the literary unit (11:27-12:12) Jesus argues with the temple leadership—the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Conflict with the temple leadership characterizes each of the sections of the literary unit, as we will see. Moreover, when we read the literary unit as a whole, it is clear that Jesus is supported by the crowd (12:12). This is an important feature of the literary unit: That the crowd is on the side of Jesus and that Jesus is on the side of the crowd (see 11:32, 12:12, 12:37). It is Jesus's support among the ordinary people that prevents the temple leadership from acting against him.

In the second section of the literary unit (12:13-17), we are introduced to more of the temple leadership, the Pharisees and Herodians. Once again, they attempt to trap Jesus, but he is able to counter their attempts. Similarly, in the third section of the literary unit (12:18-27), Jesus is confronted by some Sadducees. In the fourth section (12:28-34), where one of the scribes engages Jesus in discussion, Jesus responds quite positively to this lone scribe, recognizing, perhaps, that he is genuinely interested in understanding who Jesus is and what he is doing. However, after this discussion, and having been confronted by the full array of temple leadership, Jesus turns to the crowd and begins to offer them his own analysis of the temple and its leadership. This brings us to the sections we have already read.

In the fifth section of the literary unit (12:35-40) Jesus provides a devastating critique of the scribes. As we have seen, he analyses both their teaching (12:35-37) and their practices (12:38-40), much to the delight of the large crowd that is now listening to him (12:37). Without a pause in the narrative, Jesus then sits down opposite the temple treasury and watches the victims of the teaching and practices of the scribes—and of the whole temple system—making their offerings. In this penultimate section of the literary unit, Jesus attempts to demonstrate to his disciples how the temple system exploits and oppresses. He shows them one of its victims, the poor widow. The disciples are slow to understand, as they often are in Mark's gospel; when they leave the temple in the final scene of the literary unit (13:1-2) they admire the beautiful temple building. But Jesus does not see a beautiful building, he sees an oppressive institution that is administered by corrupt and oppressive officials. This institution, this system, Jesus says, and all those whose teachings and practices sustain it "will be thrown down" (13:2); God will not tolerate such an abomination.

We now have a quite different reading of Mark 12:41-44 than the "standard" reading of it that I mentioned at the outset. A careful reading of this passage in its literary context has generated a reading that can assist us to see the structural and systemic dimensions of poverty. In so doing, we have a biblical and symbolic resource that can undergird a renewal of the Church's theology and its role in the reconstruction and development of (South) Africa. In other words, such a reading offers us resources for constructing theologies that resonate with our context and that match the experiences of ordinary people. The familiar missionary and neo-colonial readings of this text, which project other values, lie at the base of the bankrupt theologies we have inherited. It is time to move beyond these bankrupt theologies and values, in particular, beyond the specific interpretations of the Bible that sustain them.

A careful literary reading of Mark 12:41-44 thus provides us with resources for seeing and understanding differently and, most importantly, for theologizing differently. This is not yet sufficient, however. We need to acquire additional tools and resources. A careful reading of our text in its literary context raises a host of historical and sociological questions, questions that can only be answered if we turn to the socio-historical context of the text.⁶ This is our next step.

Briefly, crucial to a socio-historical understanding of the temple is the recognition that the temple ordered the religious, social, political, and economic life of Israel. The temple was not a religious institution alone.

First, the temple ordered each person's status in the social order. The outer walls of the temple identified the holy people, Israel, setting this people aside from all others. Within the temple there was a separate court for women, men, priests, and then the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year. Significantly, the sick, the maimed and mutilated, the mentally and physically disabled, and 'unclean' women⁷ were excluded from temple worship.

Second, the temple ordered time through its annual cycle of festivals, including, for example, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Booths, Passover, Pentecost, and many more.

Third, the temple ordered the political life of Israel. After the Roman procurator, the High Priest was the most powerful individual in Roman-occupied Palestine. The High Priest controlled the governing body of the temple and the high council of the Sanhedrin. The seventy members of the Sanhedrin, a sort of parliament under the Roman procurators, were drawn largely from the chief priests, Sadducees, Pharisees, and scribes—all of whom were closely connected with the temple. Members of the Sanhedrin were also drawn from the Jewish secular aristocracy, namely, the elders and the Herodians.

So the groups mentioned in Mark are not just religious figures; they are clearly political figures too. Furthermore, there are additional political dimensions to the relationships between the temple and its leadership and Roman imperial power. The Roman procurators, when resident in Jerusalem, were quartered, together with their military troops, in the fortress of Antonia, which looked down on the temple court from the northwest corner. Furthermore, the fortress Antonia also housed the high priestly vestments, a sign of Rome's control and the subjection and collaboration entailed in the appointment of the High Priest.

Finally, and importantly, the temple ordered the economic life of Israel. In fact, the only groups that were hostile to the temple, the Essenes and what we may call the Jesus movement,⁸ focused on the economic dimension of the temple system. The Essenes, for example, rebelled against what they saw as a corrupted temple, mainly because it compromised truth "for the sake of riches," and piled up "money and wealth by plundering the people" (*Damascus Document*, CD 6:11-14, CD 7:21-8:10). Jesus, as our reading has already suggested and as we will see more clearly below, had similar reasons for acting prophetically against the temple. A historical perspective on the development of the temple will make the position of the Essenes and the Jesus movement clearer.

Early Israelite society in the pre-monarchic period was based on an egalitarian association of tribal/clan groups. The land was distributed equally among the people, with periodic reallocations of land. Extended families worked together for labor intensive tasks and the community owned all of its produce. Warfare was largely defensive, and each tribe provided resources, human and material, in the event of having to form an army. However, under the threat of Philistine domination a centralized monarchy developed (see 1 Samuel 8), following the Canaanite model of kingship. The Canaanite system was based around a central temple, seen as the home of the god. The king was seen as the son of the god, whose duty it was to collect the

agricultural produce of the peasants on behalf of the god. The agricultural surplus of the peasants was gathered in as their due to the god. This enabled the king to pay a standing army, administrators, and priests. The king was also entitled to conscript for military service and labor (see Gottwald 1979; Gottwald 1985; Pixley 1991).

Similarly, during the time of the united monarchy under Solomon, one of the functions of the temple was to gather the surplus from the peasant farmers in order to maintain the military, administrative, and religious structures of centralized government (see Chaney 1993). This economic, and political, function of the temple continued into the New Testament period:

For centuries the temple . . . functioned as the control center of the tributary mode of production that appropriated the agricultural surplus of the peasant cultivators and shepherds of the rural countryside and redistributed it among its priests, Levites, and lay officials. In time it became the hub of all commercial enterprise and activity—at least in the province of Judea—although it was always subject to the imperial power that dominated the country and drew off much of its profits in the form of taxes and tribute. Additionally the temple received a vast income from the temple tax which the law required every Jew to pay annually, gifts from the wealthy individuals, revenues from its land-holdings, and profits from the sale of sacrificial animals and money exchange. In effect, it served as the central bank of worldwide Judaism, and all of its assets and disbursements were controlled and administered by the priestly aristocracy (Waetjen 1989:183).

The temple, then, was not merely a religious institution, but an economic and political one as well. "Indeed," Horsley (1989:72-73) notes, "the religious dimension served to legitimate the political-economic aspects of the Temple and high priesthood. The Torah provided both the divinely given 'constitution' of the political-economic-religious rule of the Temple and the high priesthood along with the fundamental traditions through which the people were governed." Because it was understood that the ultimate head of the society was God, and because the Torah taught that the people owed tithes and offerings to God, it was relatively easy for the high priests to legitimate a system that served their interests and "in which the peasant producers supported the Temple apparatus and priestly aristocracy." Furthermore, "It was this religiously sanctioned economic support from the people's tithes and offerings that enabled the high priests to exert political power over the peasant producers." It is no wonder that Jesus devoted so much of his ministry to undermining the biblical interpretations of the dominant sectors of this system.⁹

In summary, during the time of Jesus the temple was the hub of all commercial activity in Jerusalem and Judea. Jesus's actions in the temple (Mark 11:11-13:2) can therefore be seen as a prophetic and symbolic rejection of this central religious, economic, and political system of Judaism, and by implication, of Roman occupation. However, Jesus was not only standing against the injustice of the temple system, he was also standing with the Jewish masses who were being oppressed and dispossessed by this system:¹⁰

Obviously the negation of this central systemic structure of Judaism, which Jesus symbolically enacts, marks the termination of its power and privilege but especially its oppression and dispossession of the Jewish masses. . . . Consequently it is no surprise that the sacred aristocracy, specifically the chief priests and the scribes, whose guardianship of the temple has been self-serving, begin to pursue the same objectives sought earlier by

the Pharisees and the Herodians in Galilee (3:6): they were seeking how they might destroy him (Waetjen 1989:183).

DOING THEOLOGY DIFFERENTLY

We may now make some general claims. Reading the Bible (or another sacred text?) differently—drawing on the literary and socio-historical dimensions of the text—enables us, I would argue, to do theology differently.¹¹ The Church in (South) Africa has a reasonable record in ‘reading the signs of the times,’ as it happens. It has often been willing and able to analyze our social reality and to act according to this analysis. However—and this is my main point—while the Church has been able to make important intermittent interventions, the Church does not seem able to make a *sustained* impact on our (South) African realities. One of the reasons for this, I suggest, is that the Church has not developed the theological resources necessary to support and sustain its social analysis and social programs.

In South Africa we are familiar with this phenomenon. The Church has produced many politically astute and politically active people who made a significant contribution to the struggle against apartheid, but who yet remained trapped in forms of theology that were inadequate in our context. Returning from the streets and structures in which they had been struggling, Christians would come to their churches for sustenance, only to receive dry, stale bread. They found that they could not live by the readings and theologies they were offered in their churches, even in those churches that had been involved in socio-political struggles. Somehow, active participation in the struggle against apartheid by sectors of the Church only made a minimal impression on the theology of the Church; it did not penetrate into and transform "Church Theology."

The result is that Christian activists, ordinary Christians, and even church leaders, succumbed either to some form of theological ‘schizophrenia,’ in which there was a disjunction between their faith and their political practice, or to theological disillusionment, in which they simply abandoned their faith altogether. The theologies we have inherited from the missionaries are inadequate for our work with the poor specifically, and for our task of transforming and reconstructing (South) Africa more generally.

We need to find ways of doing theology differently. We must offer ordinary Christians, including workers and women, and church leaders if they are willing to hear, additional tools and resources for doing theology. The daily experiences of ordinary (South) African Christians are already the basis for their lived theologies, their working theologies; but these working theologies remain incipient and inchoate, not said, not articulated. And when ordinary (South) African Christians do encounter public (‘said’) theology, the theology of their churches, there is often little resonance with their working theologies (West 1996). In other words, the theologies of the churches do not articulate the theologies they live by, and the theologies they live by are not articulated. One of the main reasons these two theologies hardly intersect is that the socio-historical context that generates each of them is different. They have different socio-historical trajectories.

Theological Trajectories in Socio-Historical Perspective

In a series of articles, and most recently in a major book,¹² Walter Brueggemann proposes that recent developments in biblical studies enable us to speak of the Bible as having two major theological trends or trajectories that run through it.¹³ Each has its associated value system, even

though these may change their form as they find expression in different socio-historical contexts. The Bible does not speak with one voice; it expresses more than one value system.

The power of Brueggemann's proposal lies in his claim that these theological trajectories, as with all theologies, do not have a life of their own, but are rooted in each in its own specific socio-historical experience.¹⁴ The two trajectories Brueggemann discerns are the 'Mosaic liberation' trajectory and the 'royal consolidation' trajectory (Brueggemann 1993). Each can be traced through the socio-historical periods of Israel.

The Mosaic liberation theological trajectory emerges as the theological response of peasants to the theology of the Canaanite city-states. It is the founding faith of early, premonarchic, 'Israel' (1250-1000 BCE). The Mushite priesthood of Shiloh and Nob during the united monarchy (1000-922 BCE), the prophets during the divided monarchy (922-587 BCE), the Deuteronomists during the exile before their theology became hardened and harsh (587-537 BCE), the visionaries from the displaced Levitical priesthood during the post-exilic period, and a variety of other voices that cry out on behalf of the poor and marginalized—all these stand in continuity with this trajectory of theology, giving it new articulations as contexts change.

The royal consolidation theological trajectory finds its first 'Israelite'¹⁵ articulation during the united monarchy of David and Solomon. It includes the ideology underlying the transition from a communal tribal society to a centralized city-state system, the Aaronid priesthood of Hebron and Jerusalem, and the institutions of the monarchy. This trajectory continues in the theology of the priestly writer, in the post-exilic Zadokite priesthood, and in a number of other sectors of the privileged and powerful, wherever the dominant concern is to consolidate and to control.

We can summarize the trajectories or traditions as follows. The Mosaic tradition "tends to be a movement of protest which is situated among the disinherited and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who decisively intrudes, even against seemingly impenetrable institutions and orderings." In tension, and contending, with this trajectory, the Davidic tradition "tends to be a movement of consolidation which is situated among the established and secure and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who faithfully abides and sustains on behalf of the present ordering" (Brueggemann 1993:202).

These trajectories do not stop, of course, at the end of the Old Testament.¹⁶ They can be tracked through the New Testament as well, as we have seen. The royal, Davidic, consolidation trajectory, whose dominant purpose is "structure legitimation" (Brueggemann 1992a), can be discerned in the theology of the temple leadership as described by Mark in the passages dealt with earlier. The chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians defend the status quo and legitimate law and order. Jesus, however, standing as he does in the Mosaic liberation trajectory whose main aim is to embrace the pain of those excluded and exploited by the temple-state system, subjects the dominant theology of 'structure legitimation' to sharp critique (see Brueggemann 1992b). More to my original point, these theologies do not stop at the end of the New Testament either! These competing trajectories continue into our present.

What is particularly helpful about Brueggemann's proposal is that it illuminates "the various alternatives in current theological discussion" (Brueggemann 1993:217). As we will see, the dominant theological trajectory of the missionaries and colonialism is the royal, Davidic, consolidation trajectory, where control and 'structure legitimation' are the key concepts. This is the theological trajectory that we in (South) Africa have inherited and which we perpetuate in our churches. We may tinker with it, but it remains substantially intact. It is little wonder, then, that the church is unable to sustain its commitment to the poor. We urgently need to recover the

remnants of the other trajectory: a theological trajectory in which liberation and 'the embrace of pain' is foundational and fundamental.¹⁷

Having said this, however, clearly there are aspects of the 'structure legitimation' theological trajectory that are important for our human well-being. This theological trajectory "is an assertion of creation theology, the sense that the world is ordered and governed. The world is not chaos; it is not endlessly pliable; it is not yet to be decided. There is an ordered quality to life that will not be mocked. No one is able to fashion a private order according to one's own selfish yearning. There is a transcendent mystery before which everyone must answer, sooner or later" (Brueggemann 1992:16). Or, put differently, "This theology provides an ordered sense of life that is lodged in the sovereignty of God, beyond the reach of historical circumstance. It is a way of speaking about God's non-negotiable governance" (Brueggemann 1992:22).

As Brueggemann goes on to argue, it "is precisely this fundamental conviction that lets social life exist, that permits a measure of humanness, that lets us set limits on our common beastliness, that lets us nurture our children in decency, and that lets there be some public planning and continuity of policy" (Brueggemann 1992:16). Furthermore, this theological trajectory "satisfies a religious yearning by an affirmation of providence. Not only does God govern, but there is an order that works through the processes of history, even if that purpose is not always visible" (Brueggemann 1992:22).

But, and this is a significant qualification, this theology of moral coherence is open to exploitation. It tends to serve the ruling class who "regularly identifies the order of creation with the current social arrangement" (Brueggemann 1992:22). "Every theological claim about moral rationality is readily linked to a political claim of sovereignty and a political practice of totalitarianism." While Brueggemann recognizes that there is no necessity for such a linkage, he argues that creation theology regularly and readily "becomes imperial propaganda and ideology." 'Structure legitimation' theology, in whatever form it takes, has as its central concepts consolidation and control (see also Welch 1990).¹⁸ Important as these concepts are for human existence, they too easily serve the interests of the dominant. In other words, "there is a strange affinity between this structure-legitimizing theology, which is essential to a viable community and which articulates the governance of God, and the easy use made of it by those who have a vested interest in its articulation and practice" (Brueggemann 1992:21). So when the order of life is celebrated, the ruling classes use the occasion to affirm the dominant social system.

The political order may be derived from, reflect and seek to serve the cosmic order, but derivation is so easily, readily, and frequently inverted that the cosmic order becomes a legitimation for the political order, and so there is a convenient match (often regarded as an ontological match) between God's order and our order. What starts as a statement about *transcendence* becomes simply *self-justification*, self-justification made characteristically by those who preside over the current order and who benefit from keeping it so (Brueggemann 1992:16-17).

The crucial point I am making in this analysis is that there is always a connection between theology and socio-historical reality, between theological values and socio-historical experience. So, for example, there is often a link between creation theology and royal theology.¹⁹ This can be clearly seen in the building of the temple, both the first temple built by Solomon and the second temple built by the ruling classes on Israel's return from exile in Babylon. As Brueggemann points out, "The temple is a characteristic way of legitimation, not only of God's

governance and providential care but also of the particular form of power distribution with the present regime." Persons in authority in every age tend to present their policies and practices in cosmic terms in order to make them immune to criticism: "The present order is traded on as though it were the cosmic order" (Brueggemann 1992:17).

Early egalitarian Israel (see Gottwald 1979; 1985) came into being as an articulation of a theology different from the dominant theologies of its day, namely, the theologies of Egyptian and Canaanite imperialism and totalitarianism. "Israel, in contrast to those political forms, is a social movement of the failures and rejects who delegitimize both the rationality of the empire and the coherence of the gods who legitimize those structures" (Brueggemann 1992:20). This new social movement we call 'Israel' begins with a cry of pain (Exodus 2:23-25) that is heard by a God "upon whom the cry of pain can impinge."

The narrative makes clear that this *pain voiced and processed* is the stuff of this new relationship and this new social experiment [i.e. Israel]. The new social possibility depends also upon the remarkable response of this God who takes this hurt as the new stuff of faithfulness. In response, this God makes an intervention in the historical process against the legitimated structures of the day and delegitimizes them (Brueggemann 1992:20).

Consequently, the key question facing any theology that claims to be in continuity with Israel's founding faith and the ministry of Jesus is the question of pain. A theology of consolidation and control has no place for the pained and the pain-bearers: the poor, the useless, the unemployable, the sick, the disabled, and the other marginal ones. Indeed, the very presence of pain-bearers "is a silent refutation of the legitimated structures. Visible pain-bearers, therefore, must be denied legitimacy as well as visibility because they assert that the legitimated structures are not properly functioning" (Brueggemann 1992:19). Our call is to contend with such theologies and to provide resources for recovering and reconstructing the other trajectory that is a part of our biblical heritage—the theological trajectory that embraces pain, and that works for liberation and life for all.

Interpretation as Site of Struggle

The terrain on which this struggle is waged is interpretation. It is no accident that the interpretation of scripture is at the center of Jesus's conflict with the temple leadership (see Mark 11:17, 12:10, 12:24, 12:35).²⁰ One of our tasks as theologians, biblical scholars, and educators is to see biblical interpretation, the way we read the 'sacred text,' as a site of struggle. We dare not let the dominant theological trajectory go unchallenged. There is a link between the real hunger of our people and the dry and stale theological crusts they are offered week-by-week in their churches. The Church will not be able to hear the cry of the people's pain nor will it be able to sustain its contribution to the reconstruction and development of our country and continent unless we recover, reconstruct, and revive the Mosaic theological trajectory—the theological trajectory of the marginalized.

This theological trajectory is, after all, the theological trajectory in which ordinary poor and marginalized Christians, especially workers and women, stand. Theologies that embrace pain are a part of their reality and their experience, though they call them by other names,²¹ unlike the theologies they encounter in their churches, theologies which embrace pain nourish and sustain

their working theologies. Because the theologies in their churches tend to be theologies within the royal consolidation trajectory, they experience a sense of isolation and alienation in the church. In other words, their theologies resonate with their socio-historical reality but they find no resonance in their churches.

Furthermore, they have to fashion and forge their own ways of ‘reading’ the Bible—what I have called a ‘re-membering’ the Bible (West 1999)—in order to discover resources for their working theologies, they have had to locate their own lines of connection between their lived theologies and the biblical traditions. Surely it is our task to assist them in this process. We can supplement their own ‘reading’ resources by offering them the rich resources of biblical scholarship, especially literary and socio-historical resources, so that they can make connections between the trajectory of their lived faith and the Mosaic trajectory in its various forms in the Bible.

Making connections with the biblical theological trajectory that embraces pain and its associated values—the theology which articulates the experience of the poor and marginalized within the biblical traditions—will enable them to articulate and own their working theologies. Their working theologies which are now incipient, but not said, may then be spoken and heard. But this is not the whole task. Our task is also to enable the Church in (South) Africa to sustain its ministry among the poor and marginalized. But how can it do this if its theological trajectory remains that of the royal consolidation trajectory, where structure legitimation, and so the legitimation of the status quo, is the order of the day? The task of *The Kairos Document* remains, "to return to the Bible and to search the Word of God for a message that is relevant to what we are experiencing in South Africa today" (17).

NOTES

1. Wilson and Ramphela themselves provide some important reflection on this question.
2. I write this ten years after the Pietermaritzburg conference on "Theology, Work and Labor Conference" and for the Pietermaritzburg "Theology of Work Seminar: Three-fold Cord Revisited"; this article is both a tribute to and a continuation of that early impulse to explore these important issues.
3. Not only is this dimension of biblical interpretation neglected in (South) African biblical scholarship (see Holter 1996; Kinoti and Waliggo 1997), but there are good pedagogical and theological reasons for using this mode of reading when working with ordinary (South) African readers of the Bible (see West 1993, and footnote below).
4. My emphasis on the preposition ‘with’ is deliberate, signifying an interpretive process in which ordinary poor and marginalized (South) African ‘readers’ of the Bible interpret the Bible as equal dialogue partners with socially engaged biblical scholars; for a fuller discussion see (West 1996).
5. Mark tends to use the rhetorical technique of juxtaposition to make his point; by placing characters, scenes, or symbols next to each other Mark prompts *the reader* to make the connection.
6. Again, this is a neglected dimension of (South) African biblical scholarship. Socio-historical resources for reading, as with literary resources, are part of the contribution *the socially engaged biblical scholar* makes to the interpretive process. Ordinary readers, of course, have their own contributions to make (see West 1999).

7. I think it is no accident that a woman is the focus of Jesus's attention in the text we have been reading.

8. The Zealots, for example, a loose collection of various groups who were 'zealous' for Jewish identity and independence, were not opposed to the temple, only to Roman influence in the temple.

9. The governing class or ruling group made up about 5 percent of the population and yet had a virtual monopoly on political-military power; they and their retainers and servants (another 5 percent) lived from the produce they took from the rural peasant communities who made up 90 percent of the population.

10. Wealth and poverty are systemically related (see my discussion of the story of the rich man and Jesus (Mark 10:17-27) in West 1999).

11. I am not implying that the Bible is *the* source for doing theology; what I am arguing is that if we are going to use the Bible when we do theology then some attention to literary and socio-historical context may be useful.

12. In Brueggemann's most recent book, *Theology of the Old Testament*, he moves away from locating theological trajectories in particular socio-historical contexts and instead stays within the text itself; while there are reasons for this shift, my own view is that he has given up too much in making the shift (Brueggemann 1997). In what follows I will therefore concentrate on his earlier work.

13. The idea that the Bible speaks with more than one voice is not a new one; Claus Westermann, for example, made the point that the Old Testament does not speak about God in a uniform manner (Westermann 1982). Interestingly, Charles Villa-Vicencio uses Brueggemann's analysis in his argument that right wing religion has its roots in "the reactionary dimensions of the Christian tradition," what I have called "Church Theology" and what Brueggemann refers to as the royal trajectory (Villa-Vicencio 1989:16).

14. It is not necessary to 'buy into' every detail of Brueggemann's socio-historical analysis; indeed, recent socio-historical scholarship raises a number of important questions about generally accepted reconstructions of Israel's history and even about designating such reconstructions as 'Israelite' (Whitelam 1996). Whether one agrees with Brueggemann's particular locations is less important than the thrust of his argument. Similarly with the important work of Itumeleng Mosala; while many have questioned the details of his socio-historical work, his basic contention that biblical texts are a product of socio-historical struggles cannot be ignored (Mosala 1989).

15. See above note.

16. Brueggemann's primary concern is with Old Testament theology.

17. Brueggemann uses the phrase 'structure legitimation' to characterize the royal theological trajectory and the phrase 'the embrace of pain' to characterize the liberation trajectory. Neither my argument nor his depends on this terminology; we may have to construct our own terms in analyzing the two trajectories in our context.

18. Sharon Welch argues that a theology of control is central to patriarchal and capitalist interests (see Welch 1990).

19. For an alternative view of creation theology see (Nürnberg 1997).

20. Another central concern, of course, is the interpretation of current events—signs of the times (see Mark 11:30, 12:15, 12:43).

21. An example, is what African American womanist theologian Dolores Williams calls "theologies of survival" (Williams 1993).

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