

The Silent Bush-boy: Placing South Africans through Language and Names

• Elwyn Jenkins •

Résumé: Dans cet article, Elwyn Jenkins examine la présentation et la description des Boschimans sud-africains dans les romans britanniques du siècle dernier. À l'instar du critique canadien Terry Goldie, il conclut que l'Altérité de l'indigène se manifeste surtout dans le traitement des échanges verbaux entre colonisateurs et colonisés, et qu'en dernière analyse, ce sont bien des marqueurs linguistiques qui inscrivent les valeurs de l'impérialisme dans le texte.

Summary: This article examines how "othering" occurs through the handling of language in imaginative literature. Jenkins focuses on nineteenth century Scottish and English writers who depicted British encounters with African "bushmen" in the juvenile fiction which was read throughout the British empire, including Canada. Looking at writers such as R.M. Ballantyne, A.W. Drayson, Thomas Mayne Reid, and Charles Eden, he asks questions like (1) whether they let the indigenes speak, and in what language (2) whether they name the indigenes and (3) whether they make them into real characters. He contrasts these and other nineteenth century writers with the recent South African historical writer, Jenny Seed, and he shows, as does Canadian critic Terry Goldie (who writes about the image of the indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand's literature), that imperialism is subtly conveyed through linguistic markers.

In 1824 Thomas Pringle published his poem "Afar in the Desert," which has the refrain,

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.

Thomas Pringle — a Scotsman, who arrived in the Eastern Cape with a party of settlers in 1820 — is generally regarded as the founder of South African poetry written in English. Strong men have not been shy to quote his poetry, including the nineteenth century boys' adventure writers R.M. Ballantyne, A.W. Drayson, Thomas Mayne Reid and Charles Eden. Since most of them never visited the country, Pringle helped shape their ideas of what it was like.

"Afar in the Desert" (Chapman 35-37) is probably Pringle's best-known poem, and it came to Ballantyne's mind (at least in retrospect) when, scouting South Africa in 1876 for his next boys' book, he went riding:

Oh! it was a glorious burst that first race over the wild Karroo, on a spirited steed, in the freshness of the early morning — ‘With the silent bushboy alone by my side,’ — for he *was* silent, though tremendously excited. (*Six Months at the Cape* 26)

That single line encapsulates three issues about the way children’s writers portray the indigenous people of South Africa: whether the indigenes speak a language, and, if so, what language; what they are called; whether they are real people. In this article I look at the linguistic issues of language and naming; but it would be equally fruitful to consider the implications of that word “alone” — when Pringle changes the line later in the poem to “Afar in the Desert alone to ride!” and says that he is “afar from man,” does the Bush-boy share his solitude, or does he not count as a human?

Someone wishing to write a novel in English about people who have a different mother tongue has a range of options available. The writer can choose to follow a literary convention such as those of the nineteenth century adventure story or the less binding conventions of the modern children’s book; the writer may attempt to follow actual speech customs; or the writer may take an idiosyncratic line. Whether the choices that writers make are deliberate or thoughtless, what they write must influence the reader’s impression of the speaker, and, by extrapolation, of other speakers of the same language. This article examines the approaches that British nineteenth century children’s adventure writers adopted in their stories set in South Africa, with some references to subsequent practice by South African writers.

Keeping a character silent, or giving the character less to say than others, is a subtle way of creating a hierarchy among characters. In the case of Ballantyne and the Bush-boy, as Gray (*South African Literature: An Introduction* 117) remarks, he “does not expect talk of anyone who is not English.” Years later, G. Manville Fenn, who typified the worst form of hack writing about South Africa that was produced at the time of the South African War, introduced a black servant in *Charge! A Story of Briton and Boer* (1900) called Joeboy, who speaks a little pidgin, consisting mostly of the expression “Um!” This does not stop the narrator of the story condemning the Afrikaners for their “bitter and contemptible race hatred,” (31). Modern children’s writers are not quite as brutal, but speech and silence can still be used as part of the manipulation. Töttemeyer (“Towards Interracial Understanding through South African Children’s and Youth Literature”), after studying many modern South African children’s books in English and Afrikaans, comes to the conclusion, “We still find books in which black characters play subordinate roles, take orders given by whites, are passive as against the dominant and active roles of their white counterparts. They talk less ...” (80). Brantlinger (*Rule of Darkness* 196) quotes Fantz Fanon as saying, “A man who has language ... possesses the world expressed and implied by that language,” and he points out the implications: “Victorian imperialism both created and was in part created by a growing monopoly on discourse. Unless they became virtually ‘mimic men,’ in V.S. Naipaul’s phrase, Africans were stripped of articulation.” Certainly, people who do not understand each other’s languages may not be able to communicate

with each other; but a sensitive writer may see this as an instance of pathos, or even potential, rather than as confirmation of a racial hierarchy. Here, in contrast to Ballantyne, is Jenny Seed's account in *The Far-away Valley* (1987) of an encounter between a local boy and a little Dutch boy at the first European settlement in the Cape:

They looked into each other's eyes and they both smiled as if they had shared a discovery. It was almost as if they had spoken to one another. (28)

Usually the plot of a story requires the indigenes to converse, either among themselves or with the white people. This provides the author with many options: using the indigenous language itself, or various degrees of pidgin, or English in various registers.

Unlike Ballantyne, most nineteenth century writers of juvenile fiction about South Africa never visited the country, so they were unable to give more than the occasional word in a local language. A.W. Drayson, who spent a lot of time there, liked to bring in whole sentences in his own idiosyncratic transliteration, such as "Uku sasa, inkosi," in the nonfiction "On the Hills and in the Kloofs around Natal" (1866), which he interprets as Zulu for "It is sunrise, chief," when his servant wakes him (127). (It actually means "Tomorrow, sir.") This allows Drayson to show off his knowledge and also adds local colour, stressing the exotic nature of his experience. Single foreign words, on the other hand, not only suggest the exotic, but also are used at times by all writers when no English equivalent exists for an object, creature, dish of food and so on.

In the hands of some writers, using the original language can convey the purity of the noble savage, untouched by hybridization. Less romantically, it creates a sense of harmony. J.M. Coetzee (*White Writing* 165) has pointed out that attempts by writers to use European terms and styles to convey a sense of Africa fail — "the veld will become inscrutable and indifferent"; the alternative for writers is "first, deciding that the real Africa will always slip through the net woven by European categories, and then wondering whether native African languages may not be in harmony with the landscape as European languages are not."

It was only when South Africans, rather than expatriates, started writing juvenile fiction that we see extended dialogue in African languages appearing, as in Telkin Kerr's *At Moseti's Bidding* (1905). Here the effect is no longer exotic but authentic. The passages are never long enough for the non-Xhosa speaking reader to lose the drift of the action. However, not many authors include extended passages in African languages.

One children's writer, Jenny Seed, succeeds in creating harmony with Africa in her historical novels. She began in the late 1960s by putting translations in footnotes, but her more recent stories omit them. Marguerite Poland's highly admired stories — *Sambane's Dream and Other Stories*, 1989, and *Shadow of the Wild Hare*, 1986 — incorporate San and Xhosa language in a way that blends setting and theme. Some recent books of African folktales in translation include songs in the original: an African translator, Nombulelo Makhupula, has several

in *Xhosa Fireside Tales* (1988), but provides a translation, whereas English-speaking Phyllis Savory does not for the song in *African Fireside Tales Part 1* (1982).

However, books of translated folktales (of which South Africa has a great many) are full of vernacular words and phrases, and the question arises as to whether a glossary should be provided. The books usually provide them, along with other ethnographic information. Although the glossaries are helpful, and the effect of the strange words and phrases should be to encourage the English-speaking reader to share in the culture from which the tales come, there is some justice in the observation of Terry Goldie (*Fear and Temptation* 57) that glossaries and notes contribute to the “process of defamiliarization” of the indigene.

It is common in books about South Africa for the authors to describe the indigenous languages, and especially the Khoisan languages of what used to be called the Hottentots and Bushmen, as “jabbering” and “clicks” (“Images of the San” 284). One can differentiate between attempts by writers to convey the impression that the languages make upon the whites when they first hear them, and thoughtless concurrence of the writers in the perception that these languages are an ugly noise and, by implication, inferior to European languages.

A typical first encounter occurs in *Richard Galbraith* (1895) by Emma Phillips, when the shipwrecked hero is approached by Africans “jabbering and leaping like fiends incarnate.” However, the author immediately informs the reader, “They were of the true Kaffir type — tall, well-made, noble and graceful in their bearing, patterns of manly beauty ...” (80). It is a different matter when E. Money, in *A Little Dutch Maiden* (1887) describes an incident on a civilized farm when a messenger, a farm labourer known to Jack, asks him for tobacco, and the author reports, “Jack smiled, took out his tobacco pouch, and, taking from it a lump of fragrant cavendish mixture, dropped it into the paw so eagerly extended. April nearly choked himself with clicks” (177). Here the gratuitous description of the language combines with other racist features — the condescension and generosity of the white, and the metaphor of the messenger as an animal.

Ballantyne is one of several Victorian writers who likens indigenes to monkeys and baboons, and their speech to the sounds that these animals make. To him, Khoisan speech sounds like “klicks, klucks and gurgles” (*The Settler and the Savage* 3). Henty, in *With Roberts to Pretoria* (1902), has a character say that they “jabber” even when they speak Dutch: “Evidently Dutch is the language here, for even the Kaffirs and Malays jabber in it” (29). There is no hint that Henty disapproved of this; in fact, it seems to be part of his technique of instructing readers about the Cape. Two other illustrations could go in here — when they hear jabbering and think it is blacks but it is baboons, and the gobbling of turkeys.

As recently as 1986 John Coetzee, in *Flint and the Red Desert*, describes the San language as “a strange clicking sound” (52), though he might be intending to give the first impressions of a white boy. Nevertheless, it is amazing how this

tradition has persisted, considering that Edward Kendall had ridiculed it as far back as 1835 in *The English Boy at the Cape*: when an English woman tells her husband that a friend has written from the Cape, saying that “the Hottentots cannot talk without making a clicking or clucking noise in their throats — Martha says they talk like cherry-clacks,” he replies, “As to that, Margaret, you know we have little people in England also, that can talk like cherry-clacks” (11).

Instead of having the indigenes use their own language, some writers present their speech in English although the reader will know that this is a convention to represent what they say in their own language. This is sometimes necessary when the plot calls for indigenes to converse with each other, and at other times, when we are told that the white person can speak the other person’s language. All the retellings of folktales fall in this category since they are implicitly translations.

When authors use English, they can direct the reader’s perception of the indigene through the register of English that they choose. This can be illustrated by quotations from two nineteenth century boys’ stories. The first, by Charles Eden, *Ula in Veldt and Laager* (1879), opens with the same situation as Drayson portrayed — the narrator is awoken by a Zulu: “Awake, the eastern sky is flushing red, and the sun is at hand” (1). The second, from F.S. Brereton’s *With Shield and Assegai* (1899), has a white boy cradling a dying Zulu: “Lift me, white brother, that I may look upon the sun, and upon Zululand, the country dear to my heart” (135). In both these stories, the white boys are born South Africans who speak Zulu like natives. Far from the bungled language of Drayson, these poetic speeches portray the nobility of the Zulus and their willingness to treat the whites as their equals, which, one feels, is an honour for the recipients. Jenny Seed, in her historical novels for children about the Zulus, such as *The Voice of the Great Elephant* (1968), uses the same style to show Zulus conversing with each other. However, it can be overdone, so that the speakers sound extremely alien, as in Telkin Kerr’s *At Mosei’s Bidding* (1905), where we overhear one Xhosa say to another, “That is well; and hast thou done what was given thee to do?” (77).

The use of a “high” style of English, with its element of the archaic, is common in translations of folktales. Nowadays it sounds rather precious, but it goes back to the days when most fairy stories were told in that way. When the South African, Kingsley Fairbridge, contributed to Andrew Lang’s *The Orange Fairy Book* in 1906, his stories sounded like all the others:

Now it happened that, after many years, when the hair of Gópani-Kúfa was turning grey with age, there came white men to that country. Up the Zambesi they came....” (“The Magic Mirror” 22)

Throughout most of the twentieth century, writers of stories about the San (Bushmen) have them speaking a kind of archaic English with strange turns of phrase which (improbably) are presumed to reflect the San languages. Dennis Winchester Gould does this as recently as 1993 in *God’s Little Bushmen*, using it for the voice of the omniscient narrator. He describes love at first sight: “Nxaxa had looked at his little duiker doe, and she had kicked at his heart” (12); and

later, "Three-and-one babies had she born" (13). Yet to a San person, their language is as commonplace as modern English is to today's child reader. This practice of archaism is typical of the historicist view of indigenous peoples as existing in a timeless past, robbed of their own history.

There is an alternative to this style: Goldie (51) does not mention the high style as an option, but he does list the use of simple English. This was already the style adopted by Ethel L. McPherson in her *Native Fairy Tales of South Africa* (1919); Geraldine Elliot made it less formal in her classic South African folktale collection for children, *The Long Grass Whispers* (1939):

Weeks passed and the Animals got used to doing without honey. Many of them, in fact, quite lost the taste for it and have never eaten honey from that time to this. But Chule, the Frog, was not one of them. He pined for his honey. He could think of nothing less; could talk of nothing else; and even his friends began to find him unbearable. He had only to see a Bee, to hear a buzzing noise, to at once start whining: "Oh! for some honey! I shall die if I don't have some soon, I know I shall!" Which was all nonsense, because Chule was no worse off than anyone else, and his longing for honey was nothing but greed. (58)

Since *The Long Grass Whispers* was first published, some popular retellings such as Hugh Tracey's *The Lion on the Path* (1967) have set a style of even racier modern English, though there are still retellers today who prefer the archaic style (Jenkins, *Children of the Sun* 18-19). On the whole, modern English versions of African folktales no longer draw attention through language to folktales as a separate genre and as a borrowing from another culture. Especially if they are animal stories, they focus on the plot only and the delight of language as part of the storytelling.

There is a marked contrast between the fluent English provided by the author as an acknowledged translation, and the broken forms of English which most nineteenth century children's books show indigenous people using. The same book of Brereton's (*With Shield and Assegai*) in which the dying Zulu hails his white brother also has a black army servant who speaks like this: "Time to get up, sar!" (102) — it seems that servants spent a lot of time waking their masters — and "With little cry him fall over on him side and die" (110).

The most common form of broken English which the nineteenth century adventure writers put in the mouths of South African indigenes was a kind of stereotyped "American negro" speech. The fashion might have been set by Thomas Mayne Reid, an Englishman who spent much of his life in the USA before settling down to write boys' books. He set a series of four novels in South Africa, which he never visited, as the geographical vagueness and factual mistakes in his books show. In the first of the series, *The Bush Boys* (1856), he has a Bushman, Swartboy, speaking this unlikely dialect, and Africans throughout his books use expressions such as "Lor'," which are not found in Southern Africa. A typical example from many subsequent authors is the sulky parlour maid in *A Little Dutch Maiden* (1887), by E. Money, who complains, "It's only the tea I'se puttin', Mass Freddy" (1). A whole volume of folktales by A.O. Vaughan,

Old Hendrick's Tales (1904), is narrated by an "old Hottentot" in the language of Uncle Remus, incongruously interspersed with badly spelled Afrikaans words, like this:

'Well, now, look a-hyere, Nief,' ses Ou' Wolf. 'I cahn't stan' him no longer nohow. I's yust a-gun' to get even wid him.' (20)

The fate of any African character who is given speech like this would be to make him alien to readers in South Africa and probably everywhere else.

Typically, the ludicrous pidgin that Victorian writers put in the mouths of semi-westernised indigenes reflects the contents of their speech and their behaviour. They are commonly portrayed as cowardly buffoons. A servant in J. Percy Groves's *The War of the Axe* (1888) says, "Plenty lion in Bosjeman's country, an' dey terrible savage dere too! Eat up poor black mans" (61). Often their cowardice arises from superstition, as Mayne Reid suggests facetiously in *The Giraffe Hunters* (1867): "Swartboy had a system of logic not wholly peculiar to himself" (73). The image of the indigene as a comic figure was a stereotype of nineteenth century adventure stories, part of the formula according to which the authors wrote. The trope of the comic foreigner continued well into the twentieth century in comics (and even, of course, the writing of popular novelists such as Dornford Yeats). The author of the Billy Bunter stories, Charles Hamilton, is quoted by E.S. Turner in *Boys Will Be Boys* as defending this practice by pointing out simply that "foreigners were funny" (214).

No doubt some black people did — and still do — communicate with white people in broken English and a form of pidgin, but what the Victorian writers did not show was that the white people responded in similar fashion. In fact, the creole Dutch spoken at the Cape since the seventeenth century had by the early twentieth century become Afrikaans, the mother tongue of the majority of white people and a great many other people. It became one of the two official languages of the country, and today boasts a body of fine literature. A pidgin Zulu called Fanakalo flourished for a hundred years as the official lingua franca on the mines of South Africa, spoken and even written by whites and blacks alike, and is still current. By showing only the indigeneous people speaking pidgin the Victorian adventure stories perverted the actual linguistic situation in a way that portrayed them as less than human — worse than "mimic men."

Nevertheless, writers did not have to be part of the convention. Some of the earliest writers of stories set in South Africa were influenced by missionaries who steadfastly refused to be racist (and consequently were a thorn in the side of many settlers and successive governments). W.H.G. Kingston, himself a clergyman (unlike many of the other writers, who were military men), consistently avoided the racist trap that language could lead him into. When, in *Hendricks the Hunter* (1884), Umgolo the Zulu speaks to his white employer, the author remarks, "He had of course spoken in his native tongue" (3). With the phrase "of course" Kingston reminds the reader that Africans had a right to their own language. In *Philip Mavor* (1865) young Philip becomes friends with a converted African boy on his father's mission station:

The young Kaffir already spoke a little English; but as their conversation was carried on partly in Kaffir and partly in English, it would be impossible to give it properly. (23)

Consequently the author proceeds to record their speech in normal English.

Some writers go ahead and attempt to reproduce the local patois without being insulting. This is not easy to do, and is almost impossible if the writer has never visited the country. In early nineteenth century adventure stories, most examples of this approach were their versions of the English spoken by white people of Dutch descent, whose home language was the "Cape Dutch" that later became Afrikaans. The results are so ludicrously inaccurate that the speakers look like clowns even though the authors may be attempting to portray them in a favourable light. A South African critic, Craig MacKenzie ("The Emergence of the South African Oral-style Story" 65), has recently criticised A.W. Drayson, who, as we have seen, had in fact visited the country, because in his *Tales at the Outspan* (1862) he "makes no attempt to capture the unique inflection of English in the mouth of a Dutch speaker, and the flat neutrality of the Boer's standard English is both incongruous and singularly unappealing" (65). However, by doing so Drayson wisely avoided sounding bigotted. MacKenzie had in mind the successful use of an "Afrikaans" English by the twentieth century writer, Herman Charles Bosman, but in the nineteenth century, as anti-Boer hysteria grew in Britain, boys' writers made Afrikaner speech sound increasingly brutal and repugnant.

The personal names that are given to characters in fiction follow the same pattern that the representation of their language does, only it is often easier to distinguish whether authors are personally denigrating towards an indigene or distance themselves from the racist behaviour of white characters.

The anonymous author of *A Missionary Present about Kaffir Children* (1871) sets the tone for European attitudes to African names by declaring dismissively, "Many of the names are mere meaningless sounds" (6), which is not more or less true for personal names in any language.

A typical response of whites in South Africa to names of people in indigenous languages has been either to simplify and shorten the name or to substitute a European name (Jenkins, "The Language Politics of Proper Names" 58). Two well known nineteenth century writers of boys' adventure stories, Marryat and Ballantyne, happily follow this custom. Marryat, without distancing himself, has his hero in *The Mission* (1845) use the same classification system for his twelve-year-old Bushman servant as he does for his pet baboon: "As my baboon is by title a princess, I think we cannot create him less than a prince. Let us call him Omrah" (160).

The facetiousness of Marryat's tone is typical. In *The Settler and the Savage* (1877) by Ballantyne, a Bushman servant is named "Booby," and the author refers to him in appropriate terms: "That ill-used and misguided son of the soil arose about daybreak with much of his native soil sticking to his person" (274). (Presumably, the white people sleeping near him on the ground arose immaculate.) One of the Xhosas in *The War of the Axe* (1888) by J. Percy Groves

is named Umtsikana, but young Tom, when referring to the Xhosas' practice of consuming medicines found when they sacked a white settlement, asks jocularly, "And did your friend Umpty go in for this course in promiscuous physicking?" (191). This kind of humour at the expense of indigenous people is a gratuitous indulgence by the authors.

In other books, we hear South African white boys, who the authors are at pains to show are not racist, on the naming of Africans: "I say, Dick, let's call them something else if they are going to stop with us. Sebopo! Bichele! What names!" (so they call them Coffee and Chicory because they are brown, not black) (Manville Fenn, *Off to the Wilds* 6); "When he first came to us he was blessed with a name as long as your hand, and it was gradually cut down" (F.S. Brereton, *With Shield and Assegai* 109). Since authors do not distance themselves from the white boys, it would appear that they do not regard naming practices as potentially racist. It may well have been typical of settler practice, but one suspects that the authors might have been simplifying the names for the convenience of their readers — or even their own, judging from Charles Eden's confusion in *An Inherited Task* (1871), in which he fluctuates between spelling the name of the famous Zulu king as *Dingaan* and *Dinquan*. Lian Goodall justly sums up this practice: "Through the Anglicizing of names or the renaming of black individuals and tribes, whites claimed power over the plants, animals and the inhabitants of Africa" (54).

A.W. Drayson, by contrast, sticks to African names — even difficult ones like "E Bomvu," which appears repeatedly in *Early Days Among the Boers* (1900). This is usually the practice of modern children's books, even though in reality the practice of whites might not have changed much since Drayson's time. It has the effect of accustoming English-speaking readers to African names, and the characters are not stripped of their dignity.

It is a small step from the personal names that people are given to the racial appellations that are applied. Labels can be used glibly that are really insulting. For example, writers until well into the twentieth century simply echoed the use of the word "boy" to refer to men servants, or even African men in general. It is ironic that they could use this term, considering that the great theme of the Victorian writers was that the British saved the indigenous peoples of southern Africa from the tyranny of slavery and subjugation at the hands of the Afrikaners. So we have a young, jingoistic English-speaking South African, the narrator of *Scouting for Buller* by Herbert Hayens (1902), justifying his support for the British against the Boers by explaining, "Wherever the red-cross flag waved, I had seen spring up, as if by magic, comfort and freedom" (25); yet he calls the farm labourers "boys." One exception was F.S. Brereton, Henty's cousin, who had the grace to distance himself from this usage in *With Rifle and Bayonet* (1901): "He paid the Zulu 'boy', who, as a matter of fact, was a fine, big, strapping man of about thirty-five" (65).

Setting aside racist epithets, what to call indigenous people is difficult. Most, like the San, have no general name for themselves, but only specific names for particular tribes or clans. The names that whites give to them soon take on pejorative connotations even if they did not have them to begin with. Yet most

nineteenth century children's writers treated this matter with insensitivity. Henty, for example, used "Kaffirs," "natives" and "blacks" interchangeably. Bessie Marchant was one of two or three authors who used the term "darkies," even though it was American (*Molly of One Tree Bend*, 1910).

The only word some writers seem to have regarded as insulting was "nigger," which they usually put in the mouths of lower class whites such as Irish soldiers, sailors, and uneducated Afrikaners. Other writers, however, did not distance themselves from the term in this way, but allowed their heroes to use it as well.

Yet information on some of these terms was available. As far back as 1835, Edward Kendall, the writer who rejected the word "click" for Khoisan languages, also deconstructed the word "Caffre" for "African," pointing out authorially that it was not their real name but the Arabic word for "Unbeliever" (*The English Boy at the Cape* 3). Later, in 1892, Sarah Findlater, who obviously knew the Cape well, was ahead of her time in noting that the term "African" was correctly applied to indigenous people, though the flood of racist hack novels of the South African War that was to follow paid no attention.

In *The Children's Voyage to the Cape*, which offers lessons in the old-fashioned didactic style of conversations between children and an adult, little Jennie asks her father whether, if Boer and Brit could become one nation, "Would the new nation be called Africans?", to which he replies, "That would scarcely do. We have too long spoken of the native tribes as Africans" (48).

One way around the absence of acceptable generic terms is, where possible, to call people by their tribal names. Sporadic examples are to be found throughout South African children's literature. The Victorian writers, drawing on what sketchy ethnographic information was available to them, distinguished such peoples as the Hottentots, Bushmen, Zulus and Korannas, and some writers use these names instead of generic terms. In recent years Jenny Seed, the historical novelist, has her white characters do the same, even though this might be anachronistic (Jenkins, *Children of the Sun* 117), and she even coins a term, "Bushranger", for the Khoikhoi because of the controversial nature of others terms used for them (*The Far-away Valley*). However, categorising indigenous people by "tribe" is nowadays regarded as a Eurocentred, colonialist practice, discredited even further by the theorists of apartheid. Instead, children's books with contemporary settings simply drop all labels, leaving the reader to infer where necessary the racial or linguistic origins of the characters.

When authors omit racial appellations and the linguistic markers of otherness that might imply inferiority, they are in keeping with the "best practice" that can be observed, going back to the earliest juvenile literature set in South Africa nearly two centuries ago. The import of this silence is to suggest the accessibility of other cultures and an *ordinariness* about people; to accept calmly that certain characters may speak another language or have a different appearance, whereas what matters is the sort of person they are.

South Africa is at present going through an awkward period when this liberal privileging of the individual is in conflict with concerns based upon the

interests of classes of people. The need for large-scale redress and the global re-emergence of nationalisms combine with the postmodern devaluing of the individual subject to make liberalism appear outdated. It will be interesting to see whether children's literature will follow this trend, and language will once more have to be found to denote difference.

Works Cited

Primary

- Adams, Rev. H.C. *Perils in the Transvaal and Zululand*. London: Griffith, 1887.
- Anon. *A Missionary Present about Kaffir Children*. London: Wesleyan Mission House, 1871.
- Ballantyne, R.M. *The Settler and the Savage. A Tale of Peace and War in South Africa*. London: James Nisbet, 1877.
- . *Six Months at the Cape; or, Letters to Periwinkle from South Africa*. London: James Nisbet, 1882.
- Brereton, F.S. *With Rifle and Bayonet: A Story of the Boer War*. London: Blackie & Son, 1901.
- . *With Shield and Assegai: A Tale of the Zulu War*. London: Blackie, 1899.
- Coetzee, John. *Flint and the Red Desert*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986.
- Drayson, A.W. *Early Days among the Boers; or, The Diamond-hunters of South Africa*. London: Griffith Farran Brown & Co., 1900.
- . "On the Hills and in the Kloofs around Natal." *Beeton's Annual: A Book for the Young*. Ed. S.O. Beeton and the Rev. J.G. Wood. London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1866. 122-136.
- . *Tales at the Outspan; or, Adventures in the Wild Regions of Southern Africa*. Second edition. London: Saunder, Otley & Co., 1865.
- Eden, Charles. *An Inherited Task; or, Early Mission Life in Southern Africa*. London: SPCK, 1871.
- . *Ula in Veldt and Laager: A Tale of the Zulus*. London: Marcus Ward, 1879.
- Elliot, Geraldine. *The Long Grass Whispers*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939.
- Fairbridge, Kingsley. "The Magic Mirror." *The Orange Fairy Book*. Ed. Andrew Lang. London: Longman, Green & Co., 1906. 17-23.
- Fenn, George Manville. *Charge! A Story of Briton and Boer*. London: W. & R. Chambers, 1900.
- Fenn, George Manville. *Off to the Wilds, being the Adventures of Two Brothers in South Africa*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, (1882) 1889.
- Findlater, Sarah L. *The Children's Voyage to the Cape*. London: Nelson, 1892.
- Groves, J.P. *The War of the Axe: Adventures in South Africa*. London: Blackie, 1888.
- Hayens, Herbert. *Scouting for Buller*. London: Nelson, 1902.
- Henty, G.A. *With Roberts to Pretoria. A Tale of the South African War*. London: Blackie, 1902.
- Kendall, Edward Augustus. *The English Boy at the Cape: an Anglo-African story*. 3 vols. London: Whittaker & Co., 1835.
- Kerr, Telkin [W. Angus Kingon]. *At Moseti's Bidding: a Tale of the Galeka War*. London: Printed for the Author by Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1905.
- Kingston, W.H.G. *Hendricks the Hunter; or, The Border Farm: A Tale of Zululand*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1884.
- . *Philip Mavor: or, Life amongst the Kaffirs*. London: SPCK, 1865.
- Makhupula, Nombulelo. *Xhosa Fireside Tales*. Johannesburg: Seriti sa Sechaba, 1988.
- Marryatt, F. 1845. *The Mission; or, Scenes in Africa. Written for Young People*. 2 vols. London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1845.
- McPherson, Ethel L. *Native Fairy Tales of South Africa*. London: Harrap, 1919.
- Money, H.E.L. *A Little Dutch Maiden: A South African Sketch*. 2 vols. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887.
- Phillips, E.W. *Richard Galbraith, Mariner; or, Life among the Kaffirs*. London: Dean & Son, 1887.
- Poland, Marguerite. *Sambane's Dream and Other Stories*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989.
- . *Shadow of the Wild Hare*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1986.

- Pringle, Thomas. "Afar in the Desert." *A Century of South African Poetry*. Ed. Michael Chapman. Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1981. 35-37.
- Reid, Thomas Mayne. *The Bush Boys or the History and Adventures of a Cape Farmer and his Family in the Wild Karoos of Southern Africa*. London: David Bogue, 1856.
- . 1867. *The Giraffe Hunters: A Sequel to "The Bush Boys" and "The Young Yägers"*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1867. [Serialized in *The Boys' Journal*, Vol. VIII, 1867.]
- Savory, Phyllis. *African Fireside Tales Part 1: Xhosa, Matabele, Batswana*. Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1982.
- Seed, Jenny. *The Far-away Valley*. Pretoria: Daan Retief, 1987.
- . *The Voice of the Great Elephant*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968.
- Tracey, Hugh. *The Lion on the Path and Other African Stories*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Vaughan, A.O. *Old Hendrik's Tales*. London: Longman, Green & Co., 1904.
- Winchester-Gould, Dennis. *God's Little Bushmen*. Pretoria: Rhino Publishers, 1993.

Secondary

- Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1988.
- Coetzee, J.M. *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. Sandton: Radix, 1988.
- Goldie, Terry. *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1989.
- goodall, Iian. "'Zebros and Elosphants': Images of Blacks in Natural History Adventure-Empire Tales Read by Young People in Wellington County, Ontario, 1880-1890." *CCL: Canadian Children's Literature/Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse* 79, 1995: 47-57.
- Gray, Stephen. *Southern African Literature: An Introduction*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1979.
- Jenkins, Elwyn. *Children of the Sun: Selected Writers and Themes in South African Children's Literature*. Johannesburg: Ravan, 1993.
- . "Images of the San." *Other Worlds, Other Lives: Children's Literature Experiences*. Ed. Myrna Machet, Sandra Olén, Thomas van der Walt. Pretoria: Unisa P, 1996. 270-296.
- . "The Language Politics of Proper Names." *VITAL* 9 (1) (June 1994): 33-43.
- MacKenzie, Craig. "The Emergence of the South African Oral-style Story: A.W. Drayson's Tales at the Outspan." *Current Writing* 7 (2) (October 1995): 55-68.
- Töttemeyer, Andrée-Jeanne. "Towards Interracial Understanding through South African Children's and Youth Literature." *Towards Understanding/Op Weg na Begrip*. Ed. Isabel Cilliers. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1988. 80-88.
- Turner, E.S. *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et al.* London: Michael Joseph, 1948.

*Professor Elwyn Jenkins is the author of a book on South African children's literature called **Children of the Sun: Selected Writers and Themes in South African Children's Literature**; he spent a recent study leave in Toronto researching children's literature in Canada.*