CHAPTER TWO

THE PRE-LITERATE PERIOD[1]

Already, at the outset, in the chapter title, there is an indication of being at variance with the standard nomenclature in South African history. In the context of this dissertation, this period refers to the time before 1652, i.e. prior to the arrival of Van Riebeeck and the establishment of a White settlement in the Cape. Unfortunately this division creates certain problems in regard to the thematic-chronological framework followed. It is clear that in some cases the pre-literate period extended to long after 1652 and in others until well into the nineteenth century, with the arrival of White missionaries and settlers on the east coast and the highveld. For the sake of consistency it has been decided, where relevant, to refer to the works that deal with pre-literate society in later periods in those particular chapters dealing with that period.

Generally works on this period, irrespective of which of the non-Black schools they originate from, refer to the period prior to the arrival of the Whites as the pre-historical period, even though the exact wording may differ. By use of the term "pre-literate" the negative implications of alternate concepts are eliminated. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the terms previously applied imply that there was no history until the arrival of Whites in the sub-continent. Complementary to this viewpoint is that until the present, a people who have no written tradition have no history and are therefore not worthy of inclusion in a history of South Africa. This rather generalized introductory comment has to a large extent been contradicted by the increased sophistication in the use of the oral tradition and literature. Similarly the inclusion of the chapters on the archaeological background and physical and social anthropology of the indigenous peoples in the first volume of The Oxford History of South Africa provided a seminal precedent for

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1 I owe a word of thanks to my colleague Mr N S Kekana for suggesting this term, but its interpretation in this dissertation is my responsibility.

subsequent works.[2]

It should also be pointed out that most of the works referred to during the course of the research for this dissertation contained little that could be construed to be a direct reflection of the pre-literate era. Instead reliance has to be made on the inferences that can be drawn from the evaluations that are given of the impact of colonization on traditional societies. Frequently a writer will say that a society has changed in one way or the other. And even though no direct exposition of the pre-conquest societies is given, the writer must give some indication of the nature of this society, in order to reach the conclusion that he does.

One of the earliest Black writers, Molema, was content to dismiss the pre-literate period on the grounds that no written records existed,[3] and therefore no history existed. Even though Molema acknowledged the existence of the oral tradition amongst traditional communities he was dismissive of it. He felt that, at best, oral tradition could go back a century in time as the bearers of the past were "pitiful repositories of historical facts, both as to time and truth."[4] The "national historians" were unable to avoid glossing over defeats, and inflating victories, although they did provide a fairly accurate record of royal genealogies.[5] Kekana, in his dissertation, is highly critical of the legacy of Theal. The heritage of Theal has until the modern age created the impression such as Molema laboured under. His whole study is devoted to refuting Theal's theses on the origins of the Bantu-speaker in South Africa.[6] Molema did not conceive that "this rich oral literature" could teach the "children, men and women" about "morality, reli-

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2 M Wilson and LM Thompson (eds), The Oxford History of South Africa, Volume I, pp. 1-186.

3 S M Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 51-52

4 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 52.

5 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 192.

6 NS Kekana, "A History of the Black People in South Africa to 1795...".

gion, philosophy, wisdom, geography, history and politics and the entire spectrum of human existence in the various communities."[7] Nor did he allow that, even without benefit of a formal Western-type education, children were educated to accept "the responsibilities of man and woman when they were married."[8] He did not concede that the high standards of virtue of the Black women, the sound authority relationships in the family, and, more importantly, the power of the chiefs as the arbiters of society, went into decline as a result of the arrival of the White settlers.[9] By implication Dube perceives traditional society to have been based on high moral standards, and respectful of authority. To Molema Blacks lived in a state of barbarism until they made contact with "the missionaries or any other civilising influence."[10]

There appears to be a slight contradiction in Molema's standpoint as he does attempt to provide some information on the early migrations of the Bantu-speakers to Southern Africa, based on archaeological and anthropological sources available to him. Nevertheless he subsequently implies that Blacks had no history of their own making, because they had failed to produce any "enduring monuments, save when they have been forcibly directed by the energies of other races."[11] The general tenor of Molema's work, when dealing with the pre-literate period, is consistent with the idea that Black history, in as much as it demonstrated an evolutionary progression,[12] was non-existent.

That Molema subscribed to such views is not surprising. Apart from his

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7 B Leshoai, "The Nature and Use of Oral Literature", in M Mutloatse (comp and ed), Reconstruction..., p. 242.

8 E Mphahlele, Father Come Home, p. 36.

9 JL Dube, in "Proceedings and Resolutions of the Governor-General's Native Conference, 1924" [Extracts], (Published in Native Affairs Commission (Union) Report for 1925), quoted in T Karis and GM Carter (eds), From Protest to Challenge. Vol 1, p. 168.

10 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 113.

11 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 329-330.

12 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 192-194 and p. 335.

own innate abilities, he owed much to the missionaries for making his education and medical training possible. It is clear from the work under discussion that he considered the impact of missionary intervention in his life as a relief from the "backwardness" of his people who had remained untouched by the influence of the missionary. To Molema the question of who first settled South Africa was not at issue, in fact his progenitors were also "colonists" in Southern Africa.[13] At the time that he wrote The Bantu Past and Present, the controversy of first settlement and the right to the land, had not become an issue.

Based on the information available, Molema states that the original Bantu-speakers probably migrated here over several thousand years from Asia to reach the south coast of Africa in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries.[14] Molema's interest in attempting to portray the Blacks of the pre-literate period was merely to provide a basis of comparison with the inception of the colonial period; to demonstrate that only through the arrival of the White settlers did a meaningful evolution in Black society take place. Thus Black history commenced, according to the criteria that Molema set for the nature of history, with the arrival of the White colonists and their active intervention in aboriginal societies through the missionaries.

That Molema and his generation should have adopted this view is not surprising if one takes the following comments of Kekana into account. He says that the missionaries came to Africa as the "self-proclaimed avante-garde representatives of Christian civilization." They saw themselves "as dauntless servants of God", who overcame all manner "of obstacles by force of their racial, moral and technological superiority." These same proselytizers wrote diaries redolent with their attitudes. And these records became the basis of historical works. As a consequence "Africa was presented as a cursed land given over to the devil."[15]

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13 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 20.

14 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 1-6 and p. 20.

15 NS Kekana, "A History of the Black People in South Africa to 1795...", pp. 111-112.

Despite Molema's apparent disdain for his "barbarous" cousins his use of the term "Bantu" has some interesting connotations. At the time that he employed the word it had none of the pejorative implications that it has today, and he used "Bantu" rather than the then more frequent appellation of "Kaffir", which he recognized as demeaning and insulting. Like JT Jabavu he had "proudly arrogated" to himself "the name Bantu... in the same manner as the early Aryans assumed their name. Those who do not answer to this description are superciliously designated either by their colour or by some striking peculiarity of their physique."[16] Molema was indicating a tendency towards racial pride that was in conflict with the liberals' tenets of the time, and to which he mostly subscribed. Those who employed the word "Bantu" could not apprehend at the time "that the political use of the word is detested and rejected as a symbol of political disinheritance of Africans."[17]

It must be pointed out that although Molema considered his antecedents barbarous, he did not deem them totally devoid of social organization. In the chapter on "Manners and Customs" he outlines customs prior to the advent of Whites, and though he concedes that some of the customs are contrary to Western-Christian civilization they are not without precedent and are entirely acceptable within the framework of what he calls "utilitarianism". By this he means that social customs and manners are based on the need to create and maintain a society that is based on the common good, rather than individual advancement. He is, however, at pains to point out that these conditions pertained at the time before White penetration.[18] His Victorian liberal ideology, that was such a concomitant of missionary endeavours at that time, is evident from his emphasis on the ability of the individual, provided that he had the freedom presumed to emanate from a just society based on a lib-

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16 JT Jabavu, "Native Races of South Africa", in G Spiller(ed), Papers on Inter-Racial Problems. Communicated to the First Universal Races Congress Held at the University of London, July 26-29, 1911, p. 336.

17 M Motlhabi, The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid. A Social-ethical Analysis, p. 11

18 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 113-133.

eral ethic, to advance himself.[19]

This reading of Molema appears to contradict that of Paul Rich who contends that Molema was more inclined to Garveyism than liberalism.[20] Nevertheless it is clear that Molema was not uncritical of liberalism, as is evident from his repeated calls for an adherence to what he believed to be proper liberalism. Thus he could see nothing to recommend an egalitarian society, where "[C]ollectivism was the civic law, communism and a true form of socialism the dominating and uniting principle", which he believed to exist among the traditional societies.[21]

A modern writer, Manganyi, saw no benefit in this individuality which Molema favoured and instead mourned the passing of the "spirit of communalism" that was impervious to a materialist ideology.[22] The ambivalence of Molema's stance towards his people was clear from his failure to commit himself on the question of whether civilization was endogamous or exogamous. Given Molema's generally pessimistic views on his people it can be assumed that, in the case of Blacks, he would take the view that the growth of civilization depended on external influences. Nor did he commit himself as to whether the Bantu represented a civilization that had gone into decline, or, whether they still had to progress up the ladder of "civilization" as he perceived it. Nevertheless he maintained that just as Gibbons described the early Germanic and English civilizations and their progression so will the Blacks evolve.[23]

The Khoisan peoples, as they receive virtually no attention when Molema deals with the pre-literate era, are to be considered in the discussions dealing with the period after the commencement of White settle-

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19 J Butler and D Schreuder, "Liberal Historiography Since 1945", in J Butler, et al, Democratic Liberalism in South Africa. Its History and Prospect, p. 149.

20 PB Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience..., pp. 18-20.

21 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 116.

22 NC Manganyi, Being-Black-in-the World, p. 20.

23 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 192-201.

ment and will therefore be discussed, where relevant, in the following chapters.

A publication that is virtually contemporaneous with that of Molema's The Bantu Past and Present, is Magema M Fuze's The Black People and Whence They Came. Fuze also attributes the Black peoples' origins to a migration from the north, but unlike Molema, he does not hazard a guess as to the time that the migration took place.[24] He is also preoccupied with the period after the arrival of Whites on the continent as slavers and their settlement at the Cape. From his descriptions of Zulu customs and rituals it is not clear whether Fuze is referring to the pre-literate period or that of his own experience, which would be from the mid-nineteenth century.[25] In fact the title of the book is a trifle misleading because the vaguest aspect of the work is that part which deals with "whence" the Black people came.

In line with Molema's work, Fuze also ignores the Khoikhoi except to suggest that they had their origins in Namibia, and then proceeds to describe how they were dispossessed by the colonists. Consequently his concern is also with the period after the arrival of Whites in the Cape and will therefore be discussed, if applicable, in more detail in subsequent chapters .

The polemics of history had not yet emerged to influence the writers thus far discussed. They had not yet become involved in the controversy surrounding the ownership of the land, in which the question of who could claim the right to it would rest on establishing who had arrived on the sub-continent first. For later writers the concern is not with discussing the fortunes of the early peoples in Southern Africa as such, but in confirming that their (the writers') ancestors had been the first settlers in South Africa. They are more concerned with establishing the logical premises for their indictment of subsequent history

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24 MM Fuze, The Black People and Whence They Came..., pp. 6-8.

25 MM Fuze, The Black People and Whence They Came..., pp. 31-41. (The translator, HC Lugg, reckons his birth to have been in the 1840s, p. viii.).

and the present.

The term "settlers" is used deliberately. The more recent writers have relied heavily on works like those of Wilson and Thompson to substantiate their claims to the rights of first settlement by people who had migrated here from the north. Technically speaking then Molema's description of his predecessors as "colonists" gains some validity. This has created a dilemma for the modern writers. They cannot deploy the findings of modern research to support their contentions without tacitly or explicitly accepting the results of research into the Khoisan peoples. If it is conceded that the Khoisan were the original inhabitants of the country, then the subsequent arrivals, the Bantu-speakers, were just as much interlopers, as the descendants of the Bantu-speakers would accuse the White colonists of being. In the light of the preceding some attention would have to be given to closing these loopholes in their arguments.

Modern writers are not concerned with attempting to portray the preliterate past as such, but in discussing the relations between the Khoisan and Bantu-speakers prior to the arrival of the Whites. It is conceded that at times there was conflict between the Khoisan and the Xhosa during the expansionary phase of the latter. The violence was not, however, of such a scope as to be genocidal for the Khoisan. Indeed, the presence of Khoisan diviners among the Xhosa and intermarriage between the two groups is, in Pheko's opinion, indicative of generally harmonious relations between the two groups.[26] Similarly Pheko is at considerable pains to point out that there was intermarriage between the Bantu-speakers and San and this is "another sign of peaceful coexistence between the Iron Age Black people of Azania and their San brothers."[27] Pheko does not however extend this argument in mitigation of White missionaries or marriage across the colour line. Kekana makes a passing reference to interaction between the expanding Bantu-speakers and the Khoisan when he says that they "left some areas to the Khoikhoi

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26 M Pheko, Apartheid..., pp. 30-31.

27 M Pheko, Apartheid..., pp. 3-9.

and the San".[28]

In addition to alluding to early aboriginal settlement, based on archaeological findings and the accounts of survivors of shipwrecks,[29] Pheko also leads several arguments in order to destroy the myth of the "empty land". It is clear that he is not aware of Shula Marks's seminal article that finally killed the myth of the empty land,[30] nor does he credit the efforts of Wilson and Thompson. It appears that it is far more important to Pheko to keep the myth alive for the sake of the argument that he is developing. Like Boyd Makhoba, who portrays an Afrikaner as being: "puzzled by the preponderance of natives over whites, when everyone knew that South Africa was the white man's God-given country, belonging to the Afrikaners in particular. Why had his great-grandfathers allowed the natives to settle in the Union and breed like ants?",[31] Pheko also claims to see logical inconsistencies arising from the myth of the "empty land".

Pheko argues that the myth originated to help "justify apartheid and the national dispossession of the African people by Jan van Riebeeck's heirs, the Voortrekkers."[32] In an argument, whose logic is a bit obtuse, Pheko contends that those who claim that the arrival of Van Riebeeck and the Blacks in the Cape coincided tend to gloss over the fact that Van Riebeeck was not the first White to arrive at the Cape. Nor did Van Riebeeck have instructions to found a colony.[33] The suggestion of this argument is that those Whites who preceded Van Riebeeck might have a claim to the land. Alternately had Van Riebeeck had

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28 NS Kekana, "A History of the Black People in South Africa to 1795...", p. 27.

29 M Pheko, Apartheid..., pp. 12-16.

30 S Marks, "South Africa: The Myth of the Empty Land", in History Today, 30, January 1980, pp. 7-12.

31 B Makhoba, On the Eve, pp. 30-31.

32 M Pheko, Apartheid..., p. 2

33 M Pheko, Apartheid..., p. 2.

specific instructions to establish a colony then the claims to the land would not be in dispute, which is counterproductive to Pheko's underlying aims. A more meaningful question is raised when Pheko asks why Van der Stel should find it necessary to have sent Timmerman to buy the Bay of Natal from the indigenous people in 1689 if there were no inhabitants there, as is suggested by the myth of the "empty land"?[34]

Modern writers are not so much concerned with portraying past societies at the time before White penetration, but are more involved with criticising depictions of early society. Magubane avers that the "preconquest peoples" did not exist in some immutable state as is so often depicted by "Western anthropologists and imperialist apologists". Instead pre-literate societies were "complex and differentiated" and "like their European counterparts, they were also growing economically and demographically, and in conflict and cooperation among themselves."[35] In keeping with the ideological foundations of his argument Magubane groups the pre-conquest peoples into three categories based on their "basic modes of production consistent with the level of their material development." Further categorizations are made on the basis of linguistic differences.[36]

The Nguni-communities are seen as "well-organized and highly developed states that were able to maintain themselves in the face of all attempts at physical and cultural genocide."[37] Given the general tenor of Magubane's work the use of the term "genocide" is not accidental. Specifically when used in conjunction with the term "cultural". Aside from the emotive connotations of the first term it is also indicative of a total cultural annihilation; a total destruction of what had exist-

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34 M Pheko, Apartheid..., p. 36.

35 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 25.

36 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 22.

37 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 24.

ed. A further dimension is added to this viewpoint by Vilikazi's assertion that the Zulu tribal system was strengthened by their strong social cohesion, which was reinforced by their cultural and social institutions which were "cohesive and stabilizing forces in their lives."[38] Although Magubane attempts to portray the Nguni as buttressed against all forms of assault he concedes that there were forces working at the erosion of their states, and that these were not only of European origin but also "succession problems, civil wars, the growth of certain states under skilled rulers and the consequent loss of power for others".[39]

A further notion of a society that was not always at peace with itself is presented by Nkosi but, he says, even though there was strife between communities, the conflict did not lie in diametrically opposed worldviews and therefore the conflict would be resolved in a reconciliation between the opposing parties.[40] By implication the inability to resolve contemporary conflict arises from irreconcilable worldviews. The Sotho peoples were also pastoralists and agriculturalists, with the additional economic activity of mining, manufacture and trade.[41]

With reference to the Khoikhoi, the salient point is that they were pastoralists, which in the light of Magubane's subsequent arguments is significant, as a common economy was to be the basis of conflict between the Khoikhoi and the Dutch colonists.[42] Indeed the whole purpose of Magubane's depiction is to demonstrate that viable and dynamic communities existed prior to the advent of White settlers, and that their

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38 A Vilakazi, Shembe..., p. 9 and p. 40.

39 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 24.

40 L Nkosi, "A Question of Identity", in L Nkosi, Home and Exile and Other Selections, pp. 30-3.

41 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 25.

42 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 24.

arrival was the basis of the destruction of these societies. Equally important to Magubane was to show that these societies were based on the relationships of production, so that, by extension, the destruction of these communities could be attributed to material forces. David Dube does not bother to structure his arguments as carefully as Magubane, and is satisfied merely to say that the Khoikhoi were initially strong enough to resist any attempts at colonization.[43] It is ironic that an early writer should confirm this, although in an entirely different context. Molema maintains that due to the barbarous conditions at the Cape at the time of the Portuguese arrival in the region, they were reluctant to utilize the Cape as a way-station for expanding their trade and empire.[44] In a similar vein it is claimed that when the Khoisan began to suspect Portuguese intentions and offered armed resistance Vasco da Gama decided it was safer to raise anchor and leave Mossel Bay.[45]

Just as Molema justifies colonization by claiming that the pre-conquest peoples formed static communities, and therefore had to be colonized to raise them from the inertia that they found themselves in, so Magubane implies that the peoples of the pre-colonial era were evolving communities that required no external impetus in their social growth.

In fact, until the arrival of the colonists, the Blacks had the security of numbers in a predominantly Black continent, the labour that underlay their economy was their own, and they were part of a growing economy.[46] Peasant farmers partook in a diversified economy through agriculture, hunting, craftwork and bartering, but through the communal system the factors of production, such as land and labour, formed part of the communal property. Due to the communality of resources and labour there was no concept of individual ownership.[47] More importantly

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43 D Dube, The Rise of Azania..., p. 34.

44 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 12.

45 ANC, African National Congress of South Africa, p. 2.

46 JK Ngubane, "40 Years of Black Writing", in M Mutloatse (ed), Umhlaba Wethu..., p. 141.

47 D Ncube, The Impact of Apartheid and Capitalism on the Development of Black Trade Unions in South Africa, p. 1.

their lives were based on a philosophy that defined "the person in universally valid terms."[48] Even though it is conceded that there were occasional upheavals, the general tone of those writers that comment on the pre-conquest period is that life was lived at an "even tenor".[49] Unfortunately Nkosi does not expand on the comment he makes that recent research is "making startling discoveries about African cultures, the complex nature of the social texture of their communities, their aesthetic philosophies, about their moral and legal systems."[50] Despite the paucity of further comment on this particular aspect the implications of Nkosi's perspective are clear.

Nkosi is rebutting the suggestion that Black societies were static entities, that functioned without reference to any tangible and acceptable norms. Manganyi also does not elaborate on what existed before, but does maintain that a valuable "African ontology", which formed the foundation of an "African personality", pertained before the arrival of the colonizers.[51]

That there should be a lack of perceptions expressed on the preliterate period is perhaps to be found in the view that this part of the Black past was dead and could never be resuscitated, and that there was little point in a nostalgia for the past, when there were changed and changing circumstances of the present and future to contend with.[52]

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48 JK Ngubane, "40 Years of Black Writing", in M Mutloatse (ed), Umhlaba Wethu..., p. 141.

49 A Vilakazi, Shembe..., p. 6.

50 L Nkosi, "Black Power or Souls of Black Writers", in L Nkosi, Home and Exile and Other Selections, p. 111.

51 NC Manganyi, Being-Black-in-the-World, p. 40.

52 Testimony of Professor D D T Jabavu, Walter Rubusana, and the Rev Abner Mtimkulu of the Cape Native Voters' Convention and Meshach Pelem of the Bantu Union, before the Select Committee on Subject of Native Bills, May 30, 1927 [Extracts]. (Published in Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee on Subject of Native Bills), quoted in T Karis and GM Carter (eds), From Protest to Challenge. Vol 1, p. 206.

Attempts to reconstruct this past by anthropological and allied societies sponsored by or under the aegis of colonial authorities should be treated with the utmost care, if not rejected. Thus argues Magubane, in taking up the views of Franz Fanon, who says that the much-touted respect of the settlers for ""the traditions and the personality of the African people is...inevitably tantamount to the most bitter contempt, and to the perpetration of a most elaborate sadism.""[53] (The full quotation, which Magubane has taken some liberties with, is as follows: "These bodies appear to embody respect for the tradition, the cultural specificities, the personality of the subjugated people. This pseudo-respect in fact is tantamount to the most utter contempt, to the most elaborate sadism."[54])

Another sinister motive is attributed to an interest in the pre-literate peoples, and therefore any interest in this topic should be avoided. It is claimed by Tsotsi that the policy of "retribalization" is a ploy to maintain Black divisions and thus create "a mass of docile cheap labour", which in turn is a hindrance to the "normal economic development of the country."[55] In this case there is a clear indication of current preoccupations influencing perceptions of the past. Tsotsi makes it clear that any attempt to contribute to a knowledge of the pre-literate era would in effect be assisting the policy of "retribalization", that is, apartheid.

Even though a clear statement on the traditional roots is lacking there is recurrent recall of this past, generally to serve political motives. The echo of the past "acting as a leavening ferment, shall raise the anxious and aspiring mass to the level of their ancient glory", in order to restore their "ancestral greatness, and the recuperative power of the race, its irrepressibility, which assures its permanence"; all of

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53 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race in Class in South Africa, p. 69.

54 F Fanon, Toward the African Revolution, p.34.

55 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 51 and p. 52.

which "constitute the African's greatest source of inspiration."[56] Blacks must seek to re-establish their "African personality" by establishing a "dialogue between two streams of consciousness: the present and the living past."[57] A reconstruction of the pre-literate past is essential to indicate a refusal to accept the humiliation of colonization and its concomitant mentality of inferiority. Thus a spiritual liberation is important to the success of a political struggle.[58] The recreation of the past is important unless Blacks are to become foreigners in the land of their birth.[59]

There is a warning of the danger that the historical awareness can degenerate into an atavistic ancestor worship.[60] Or the correlation between Black Consciousness and history could become mere tokenism, where an elitist clique takes to "collecting jazz and dashikis for boasts",[61] as evidence of their ethnic roots. The implicit criticism here is: the manifestations of an historical awareness do not account for a true commitment to doing honour to the past and the political struggle of the present. Despite the dangers that might arise from complying with the call of Black Consciousness to develop an awareness and appreciation of the pre-literate past, Blacks "recognise the existence of a significant past in terms of statesmanship, courage in the face of significant dangers, civilisations and cultures supported by elaborate cosmologies that today make us and our children proud inheritors."[62]

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56 P ka I Seme, "The Regeneration of Africa", in The African Abroad, April 5, 1906, quoted in T Karis and GM Carter (eds), From Protest to Challenge. Vol 1, p. 71.

57 E Mphahlele, The African Image, p. 70.

58 RM Sobukwe, "Das Program des Pan Africanist Congress. Rede zum Beginn der „Statuskampagne" des PAC", in RM Sobukwe, Hört die Stimme Afrikas! Reden 1949-1959, p. 55.

59 M Pheko, Apartheid..., p. 170.

60 NC Manganyi, Being-Black-in-the-World, p. 19.

61 M Gwala, "Steve Bantu Biko", in S Ndaba (ed), One Day in June..., pp. 60-61.

62 NC Manganyi, "The Making of a Rebel", NC Manganyi, Looking Through the Keyhole..., p. 170.

In this way the tendency of White historians to include Blacks in history only in as much as they constitute a "problem" to the Whites, or to regard Blacks "as sub-humans, anthropological specimens whose existence and activities have contributed little or nothing to the historical process in South Africa",[63] will be overcome.

Irrespective of the conclusions that individual writers reach, a significant factor emerges about their perceptions of the pre-literate period, even though these depictions are at times sketchy. In the case of Molema, and other writers who subscribed to his views, it was to show that if pre-literate society was to progress then it required an external stimulus that a benevolent colonial power like Britain could provide. Thus it was important to Molema that he should have a basis of comparison, in order to demonstrate what the benefits of colonization could be, provided that the colonial power remained true to the stated motives of its colonial endeavours. By this he meant that Britain intended to penetrate the "hazy mists" of the "Dark Continent", through introducing Western civilization and Christianity. As will become apparent in the next two chapters Molema was not, however, completely uncritical of colonization and its representative power, Britain. Instead it might be said that he was calling on Britain to meet her perceived obligations as the colonial power.

Contemporary writers that concerned themselves with the pre-literate period followed the same basic structure as Molema but with entirely different objectives in mind. Their attempts at reconstructing the pre-literate past did not intend to show a society in need of external intervention. Rather they sought to reflect an evolving society, based on its own resources, that was to be corrupted and ultimately degenerate entirely under the impact of colonization and its attendant influences.

The lack of a clear articulation of this period does not appear to augur well for subsequent chapters. But the initial hesitancy is rapidly overcome as the writers move into more familiar periods, and come to

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63 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 5.

grips with questions that have a more immediate relevance to them. It is to the first of these questions, the advent of White settlers, to which attention will be given in the next chapter.