

## Chapter One

### Notes on theory

#### **Afrikaner nationalism and the construction of Afrikaner identity**

In *Imagined Communities* (1991), Benedict Anderson is concerned with the way in which the concept of the nation and nationality can be understood from the perspective of culture. In this influential study on nationalism, Anderson argues that '[n]ationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind' (Anderson 1991:4). Anderson's analysis demonstrates the interrelatedness of print-capitalism, language – specifically the vernacular and the national print-language – and the interests of the intelligentsia in the development of texts, and thus opens up creative possibilities for linking the study of nationalism with the study of literature. In part, this is achieved by his use of the concept *imagination* – a construct that is closely linked to the production of fiction. Other elements of Anderson's analysis, though, such as the way in which he employs imagery of the structure of the novel, the role he allocates to print texts, and the emphasis he places on language invite a link with studies on the production, dissemination and reception of literary texts. Anderson's analysis of nationalism points to the importance of a study of print texts, particularly in the vernacular or national language, in examining specific forms of nationalism. Proceeding from Anderson's premise about the relationship between texts and the invention of the nation, the present study on the work of Stella Blakemore seems to speak to three areas of inquiry in studies on Afrikaner nationalism. These are (1) gaps in theoretical accounts of Afrikaner nationalism; (2) the problem of level of explanation in accounts of Afrikaner nationalism; and (3) paucity of accounts to explain the processes through which a particular kind of subjectivity was developed to give rise to a self-referential Afrikaner world. These are discussed in more detail below.

First, most theoretical accounts of Afrikaner nationalism fails to adequately explain the mechanisms through which the ideas and ideologies of the Afrikaner intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie successfully permeated the consciousness of Afrikaners of all classes. Dan O'Meara articulates this problem as follows:

'Christian-nationalism' or 'Afrikaner nationalism' was more than a complex intellectual-ideological framework representing certain views of the world. The terms also encompass the mass social and political movement which emerged, comprised of widely disparate groups, mobilised through this ideology. It is not enough simply to trace the

literary forms of development of the ideational structure and simply assume its inherent appeal to all Afrikaans-speakers. The actual translation of such literary forms of ideology from intellectual journals and the debates of elite groups into a form of mass consciousness – the process by which the new subject was successfully interpellated – has to be investigated (O'Meara 1983:74).

In their work on Afrikaner nationalism, scholars such as Bozzoli (1981, 1987), Hyslop (1996) and Hofmeyr (1987) place a strong emphasis on the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie who are fashioned as self-conscious creators of the myths around which communities and ethnicities are shaped. Consequently, these theorists are interested in the way in which Afrikaner identity has been constructed and invented. In exploring this issue, they focus on the creators of those myths and symbols that make it possible to 'invent a nation' and on the artefacts or products that these 'actors' produced to speak to those that they wanted to endow with a particular identity.

O'Meara argues that during the 1930s, through the Afrikaner Broederbond, Afrikaner intellectuals were successful in crafting the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism on the literary level, that is, as a form of discourse shared among intellectuals, but that this had not yet penetrated to the majority of Afrikaners:

In effect, then, the intellectual ideological debates in the Bond succeeded in the elaboration and development of the concept of a new historical subject – an organically united Afrikaner volk... Yet the ideologues' concept of an organically-united Afrikaner volk was confronted with the reality of intense cultural, class, and political divisions among Afrikaans-speakers (O'Meara 1983:73).

The existence of class divisions among the ranks of 'Afrikanerdom', given the elite's project to construct a unified Afrikaner identity, raises three questions. First, how did the ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism espoused by the Afrikaner intelligentsia seep into or find their way into forms of discourse and representation that spoke to or was accessed by Afrikaners (or then potential 'Afrikaners') from other classes and class fractions? Second, how does exposure to this discourse or participation in such cultural and symbolic representations explain the emergence of an Afrikaner subjectivity, or, phrased differently, what are the theoretical and empirical explanations of the way in the process of subjectivity formation works? Third, how were the discourses of the elite modified, adapted

and interpreted by Afrikaners from different classes who had different interests and concerns? Important research in this regard have been undertaken by Isabel Hofmeyr (1987), with a focus on the development of literary production in Afrikaans, and Lou-Marie Kruger (1991), who explores the role of a popular magazine, *De Boervrouw*, but the area of children's literature is still largely untilled land.

In 'Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924', Isabel Hofmeyr (1987) traces the links between nationalism, class, language, the spread of capitalism and the formation of Afrikaner identity in a study of the Afrikaans language movement and Afrikaans literary production in the period 1902-1924. She argues that there exists a general paucity of knowledge on the process of construction of Afrikaner identity, particularly around the production of cultural artefacts. Hofmeyr rejects the view of a monolithic, organic Afrikaner identity, claiming that the process around the construction of Afrikaner nationalism was fractured, contested and uneven. She focuses on the important role of class interests and the strategies employed by the lower middle-class intelligentsia – associated with the First Language Movement – and the petty bourgeoisie – associated with the Second Language Movement – respectively to get working class Afrikaners to buy into the idea of the Afrikaner nation, against the background of social and economic developments in the early part of the twentieth century. Hofmeyr attributes particular importance to the production of written texts as a strategy for the construction and consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism and highlights the difficulties associated with the process of manufacturing a literary culture among Afrikaners.

The second area for inquiry is linked to the level of explanation, choice of research site, and theoretical approach in studies of Afrikaner nationalism. This issue is raised by Jonathan Hyslop in an article outlining some of the problems of explanation in the study of Afrikaner nationalism. Hyslop (1996) argues that most studies of Afrikaner nationalism try to explain the phenomenon on a national level rather than on a local level. To this one can add tendencies of research on Afrikaner nationalism to focus on symbolic representations, large-scale events and discourse produced by and circulated among the intelligentsia, rather than on everyday practice and local discourses. This leaves a particular gap as it fails to theorise the way in which subjectivity is developed through such symbolic representations and fails to explain subjectivity formation with reference to the

experiences of everyday life. Given that much of the existing scholarship on Afrikaner nationalism focuses on the state and its relationship with capital and that far less research has been devoted to the study of ideology and culture, it would seem that Bozzoli (1987) is correct in asserting that there exists gaps in the way in which the relationship and interrelationships between class formation and community formation is theorised, in particular in the realm of everyday life, which include family life and leisure:

Men and women are not shaped by their work experiences alone, but by the ways in which they survive and interact at home in the family, or during leisure hours. Economic class position may determine whether or not you are a worker or a peasant, but how you behave as a worker or peasant is not explicable only by reference to the type of labour you undertake (Bozzoli 1987:8).

Third, an emphasis on cultural production of texts through which various regimes of discourse were circulated raises questions about the nature of particular kinds of subjectivities that developed and about the processes through which these were produced. Bozzoli (1987:7-8) argues that regardless of the processes and actors orchestrating and sitting behind community creation, at some point in history communities do become 'manifest social entities, with important effects on class and ideological responses'. Hyslop (2000) asserts that the National Party, between 1948 and 1970, had as its project the construction of a stable social order around a racist modern state. He argues that for the project to be successful, 'a specific kind of subjectivity was required amongst whites, comprising a non-reflexive submission to authority' (Hyslop 2000:37). He continues by arguing that the National Party had largely achieved this aim in the 1960s:

Afrikaners of all social classes benefited immensely from the material improvements in their position which government policies brought about. They were encapsulated in a network of schools, social clubs, churches, cultural and business organizations, which created a self-referential Afrikaner world (Hyslop 2000:37).

Framing these three areas of inquiry within the broader structure of Anderson's notion of the nation as an imagined community and the research questions posed in this study invites a closer examination of the relationship between the production of popular fiction and class relations. Locating Stella Blakemore and

her world in the context of the project to mobilise around Afrikaner nationalism from the early 1930s requires a link between the biography of the author, her class position, and the world of the imagination. Theoretically, this study draws on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*, Antonio Gramsci's notion of the *organic intellectual*, and Charles Taylor's idea about the *social imaginary*.

### **Antonio Gramsci, hegemony and the organic intellectual**

Arguably, Antonio Gramsci is one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century. At the core of his political project is the question of power and how it operates in advanced capitalist societies. A strong belief in agency underpins his writings in which he endeavours to develop a revolutionary working class consciousness. Gramsci rejects economic determinism in Marxist theory, arguing instead that the economic infrastructure of society is the backdrop against which events in society take place. As such, the economic backdrop may therefore influence events, but does not determine outcomes. Gramsci defines the state not in terms of institutions, but in terms of the activities of the dominant class. He does not relegate ideology to the super structure but regard it as part of the material conditions of everyday life. Gramsci's cultural materialism, and in particular his notion of hegemony, took classical Marxism with its overemphasis on economic factors, which renders the domain of the culture an ideology as inferior, in a completely new direction. Gramsci provided a far more nuanced and layered understanding of ideology and culture and his notion of hegemony opened up the way to analyse the relationship between culture and politics.

Gramsci argues that the ruling group in society exercises hegemony throughout society. Hegemony is described by Adamson as having two separate but associated definitions in Gramsci's writings, although he concedes that the two understandings of hegemony are used with great independence from each other (Adamson 1980:173). In the first instance, hegemony is understood as the 'consensual basis of an existing political system within civil society'. Gramsci argues that through civil society the ruling class persuades the population to share their beliefs. In order to retain a hegemonic position, the ruling class incorporates alternative or oppositional beliefs, in doing so subverting or co-opting possibilities for radical social change. Yet, Gramsci maintains that ruling class hegemony can never be complete as a result of historical blocs – the alliances that the ruling class enter into as concessions to retain hegemony – and

individuals' dual consciousness. Gramsci places a strong emphasis on the role of what he terms *organic intellectuals* and the way in which organic intellectuals can assist to develop an alternative hegemony that includes an awareness of class consciousness among workers and peasants. In the second instance, hegemony is described as the way in which class consciousness among the proletariat needs to be developed in order to overcome 'the "economic-corporative"... [at] a particular historical stage within the political moment' (Adamson 1980:171). Defining hegemony in this way means that the development of an alternative hegemony implies developing class consciousness 'where class is understood not only economically but also in terms of a common intellectual and moral awareness, a *common culture*' [my emphasis] (Adamson 1980:171). In this endeavour organic intellectuals have a key role to play. Gramsci thought of hegemony as a 'mode of rule' – that is, as the opposite of violent coercion – that may be used by both the bourgeoisie and the makers of a proletarian potential state (Adamson 1980:171). Moreover, accepting the notion of hegemony as a form of rule draws attention to its *cultural form* or orientation.

### **Pierre Bourdieu and the habitus**

In his work, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu scrutinizes 'the relationship between systems of thought, social institutions and different forms of material and symbolic power' (Bourdieu 1993:1). He asks questions about the way in which specific works (or texts) link with others and does not limit his scope of enquiry to canonized works of arts, but deliberately extends it to include all cultural productions. Bourdieu's work on literature is perhaps most closely situated to the literary tradition of new historicism. His analyses are powerful for two reasons. First, he succeeds in working across academic disciplines to create new avenues and methods for analysing the relationship between literature and society. Second, his method is analytically rigorous and comprehensive.

Bourdieu's approach to the study of cultural productions, like all his work, derives from a concern with being thorough in analysing the social. In terms of what he calls the literary field, Bourdieu stands critical of both internal, discourse analysis approaches and more sociological studies on the production, consumption, and dissemination of texts. Bourdieu's work is particularly interesting because of the innovative way in which he makes it possible again to introduce questions about the author, without lapsing back into a Romantic tradition. Bourdieu emphasises

the necessity of looking at the text, as well as its conditions of production and consumption when analysing a text:

It can be only an unjustifiable abstraction (which could fairly be called reductive) to seek the source of the understanding of cultural productions in these productions themselves, taken in isolation and divorced from the conditions of their production and utilization, as would be the wish of discourse analysis, which, situated on the border between sociology and linguistics, has nowadays relapsed into indefensible forms of internal analysis (1989a:xvii).

While Bourdieu's broader project speaks to the objectives of this study on numerous levels, his theoretical contribution is used to a very limited extent in this study and is primarily confined to his notion of *habitus* and the way in which this concept is linked to his desire to restore agency to the subject:

I wanted, so to speak, to reintroduce agents that Lévi-Strauss and the structuralists, among them Althusser, tended to abolish, making them into simple epiphenomena of structure. And I mean agents, not subjects. Action is not the mere carrying out of a rule, or obedience to a rule. Social agents, in archaic societies as well as in ours, are not automata regulated like clocks, in accordance with laws they do not understand (quoted in Bourdieu 1993:269, original quotation from Bourdieu's work, *In other words.*)

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* has become central in the study of cultural production, dissemination and consumption. He defines the *habitus* as systems of 'durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu 1990:53) and as 'a system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment... as well as being the organising principles of action' (Bourdieu 1993). This notion can therefore be understood as a kind of cultural habitat, the existence of which the subject is not conscious of – that the subject internalises in the form of dispositions to feel, respond and act in specific ways. It therefore constitutes a field of possibilities from which and within which the individual can act. A person's *habitus* is derived from acculturation, which

includes upbringing and education. *Habitus* is however a much broader concept: various social groups are each associated with a *habitus*. These include groups such as social classes, but can also include other groups such as gender groups, the family, and groups defined by nationality, race, and so forth. Whilst an individual's *habitus* consists partly of the various group *habitus* inculcated in the individual, he or she also has personal qualities that are not derived from socialisation or acculturation. These personal qualities together with the various group *habitus* comprise a personal habitus. It is important to note that the *habitus* cannot be described as a set of beliefs or ideas. The *habitus* functions on the unconscious level and it has no representative content. For these reasons, it can only produce practices and actions:

An acquired system of generative schemes, the *habitus* makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those. Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not only along the paths of mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies – which the concept of the *habitus* aims to transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconsciousness, or the individual and society. Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning (Bourdieu 1990:55)

The *habitus* thus remains an elusive concept for anyone approaching it from either a subjectivist or an objectivist paradigm. Objectivists err because they assume that since they are able to abstract from individual behaviours a set of patterns that can be linked back to a set of beliefs and ideas, those very ideas and beliefs exist in that form in the minds of individuals. Subjectivists, on the other hand, are tied up in the individual experience, which is per definition subjective and therefore cannot illuminate the objective structures that shape individual behaviours and ways of being in the world.



## Charles Taylor and the social imaginary

In an essay entitled 'Modern Social Imaginaries', the philosopher Charles Taylor argues that:

The social imaginary is not a set of ideas; rather it is what enables, through making sense of, the practices of society (Taylor 2002:91)

Taylor is concerned with the development of modernity. Following Dilip Gaonkar, Taylor concedes that modernity did not develop in the same way in the West as elsewhere. Hence, he argues that it is therefore more appropriate to talk of multiple modernities rather than modernity in the singular. Similarly, there is not such thing as the *social imaginary* but a number of *social imaginaries*. Taylor's development of the notion of the *social imaginary* seems to be derived from an earlier intellectual endeavour of his, entitled 'Two Theories of Modernity' in which he already signals that in terms of social understanding there exists something between the personalised Bourdieuan notion of *habitus* and the level of explicit doctrine. In the earlier essay, he refers to this intermediate level of understanding as the symbolic, 'an understanding that is expressed in ritual, in symbols (in the everyday sense), and in works of art' (Taylor 1999:167). According to Taylor, what distinguishes the symbolic level of understanding from Bourdieu's *habitus* is that it is a shared understanding that is at the same time an 'unselfconscious' understanding, and therefore different from the level of understanding of doctrine. He articulates this idea as follows:

Because below the doctrinal level are at least two others: that of embodied background understanding and that which while nourished in embodied habitus is given expression on the symbolic level. As well as the doctrinal understanding of society, there is one incorporated in habitus, and a level of images as yet unformulated in doctrine, for which we may borrow a term frequently used by contemporary French writers: *l'imaginaire social* – what we can call the social imaginary (Taylor 1999:167-168).

When he writes on 'Modern Social Imaginaries' three years later, he is able to extend his understanding of this notion:

What I'm calling the social imaginary extends beyond the immediate background understanding that makes sense of our particular practices.

This is not an arbitrary extension of the concept, because just as the practice without the understanding wouldn't make sense for us and thus wouldn't be possible, so this understanding necessarily supposes a wider grasp of our whole predicament, how we stand in relationship to one another, how we got where we are, how we relate to other groups (Taylor 2002:107).

Whilst it is therefore difficult to define the notion of the *social imaginary* or its limits, Taylor argues that the social imaginary contains our historical awareness, and our sense of our present space and time. For Taylor, a central aspect of the *social imaginary* is the way in which it includes an understanding of moral order. But it is at the same time a form of self-understanding through which modernity is constituted. In keeping with his earlier writings on the subject, Taylor maintains his position that the *social imaginary* cannot be articulated and that it remains unstructured, a background so to speak. Taylor distinguishes three differences between social theory and the *social imaginary*. First, he emphasises the importance of coupling the notion of the *social imaginary* with that of everyday life, since the *social imaginary* is the way in which 'ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings' which is 'often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in *images, stories and legends*' [my emphasis] (Taylor 1999:106). Second, he explains that social theory is generally held by a small group of people, whereas the *social imaginary* is shared by large groups of people, even entire societies. Third, he argues that 'the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy' (Taylor 1999:106).

## Conclusion

Returning to the field of literature, it is evident that Benedict Anderson sets the stage for a closer examination of the relationship between print capitalism, language and nationalism. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* opens up a way in which to think of the author and his or her *habitus* as separate but related to the space of the text, and that it becomes necessary to explore the relationship between the two domains:

Scientific analysis must work to relate to each other two sets of relations, the space of works or discourses as differential stances, and the space of the positions held by those who produce them (1993:11).

Bourdieu and Gramsci complement each other and address some of the concerns emanating from using the social concept of class. Gramsci's notion of hegemony shifts the analysis to the cultural domain. His notion of organic intellectual offers a lens through which to 'read' the actions of the petty bourgeoisie. Bourdieu, whilst too concerned with restoring agency, provides the sophisticated and complex notion of *habitus*, explained as a field of possibilities, which illuminates the space in which the author and the reader operate and construct meaning. Through the notion of the *habitus* it becomes possible to introduce questions about the personal biography of the author, in addition to his or her class position, but without running the risk of understating class. Charles Taylor's notion of the social imaginary draws attention to the idea that fictional texts contribute to the creation of a shared understanding in a community of their social surroundings. Through the notions of the imagined community, *habitus*, organic intellectual and the social imaginary, it is possible to explore the relationship between Stella Blakemore as a producer of popular fiction and the project of Afrikaner nationalism.

## Chapter Two

### Locating Stella Blakemore and her works

#### **Stella Blakemore: A brief biography**

When André du Toit from *Die Vaderland* interviewed Stella Blakemore in London in 1972, he summarised Blakemore's heritage as follows:

Haar vader, kaptein in die Britse leer, die gehate vyand. Haar moeder Emma, uit die blouste Boerebloed as 'n mens ooit van 'n 'Boere-adel' kan praat. Uit dié teenoorgestelde pole, die twee wêrelde, is 'n meisie gebore wie se skryfnaam, Theunis Krogh, 'n huishoudelike naam sou word, soos die tafels en stoele in die huise waar Afrikaanse boeke gelees word. Sy is in baie opsigte 'n lewende ironie van die geskiedenis: Half Brits, half Afrikaans, bereise en belese met 'n wye blik op die wêreld, onbekrompe en tog nog in murg en been een van ons (Du Toit 1972).

[Her father, captain in the British army, the hated enemy. Her mother Emma, of the bluest Boer blood – if one can ever talk of Boer royalty. Of these two opposite poles, these two worlds, a girl was born, whose nom de plume, Theunis Krogh, would become a household name, like the tables and chairs in the homes where Afrikaans books are read. She is, in many respects, a living irony of history. Half British, half Afrikaans, who has travelled much and is well read with a open view on the world, broadminded yet still inherently one of us.]

It is remarkable that someone with such a complex heritage became so influential in the nation-building project of Afrikaner-nationalism. Stella Blakemore, the daughter of Emma Krogh and Captain Percy Blakemore, was born on 13 April 1906 in the Heilbron-Lindley district of the Orange River Colony. Her maternal grandfather, Theunis Johannes Krogh, a very influential man and a former Under State Secretary for Home Affairs of Paul Kruger's Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), died in Ladysmith of typhoid fever during the war.<sup>1</sup> Her father was a British soldier who had stayed behind after the Anglo-Boer war to become a farmer

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<sup>1</sup> In Memoriam: Theunis John. Krogh. Extract from *The Standard and Diggers' News*, Johannesburg, S.A.R. 6 February 1900.

(Hazelhurst 1978:6). Percy Blakemore had married her mother, a music teacher, during the war years (*Hoofstad*, 14 June 1974:29).<sup>2</sup> Blakemore was born in the Lindley-Heilbron district of the Orange River Colony in 1906, four years after the end of the Anglo-Boer War. She described the district where she had been born as enormously sad, for it was one of the areas that was almost completely destroyed by the war. Homesteads were burnt down and farmlands were non-existent. In this area, a group of what she described as unhappy people lived together in an agricultural settlement. Given her background, it is the nature of this group of people that is remarkable. Du Toit describes the set-up at the Lindley establishment as follows:

hensoppers, hanskaki's voormalige lede van die National Scouts, wat as beloning hier by Lindley 'n nuwe tuiste gegun is...drenkelinge van die EB en die vloed van ons geskiedenis (Du Toit 1972).

[hands-uppers, hand-fed pommies former members of the National Scouts, who have been granted a new home here at Lindley as reward ... the drowned of the EB<sup>3</sup> and the flood of our history.]

No information was available about exactly when her mother had married Percy Blakemore, except that it had been during the course of the Anglo-Boer war, nor on how it came about that the daughter of Theunis Krogh ended up in the midst of the 'Boere-verraaiers' (Boer traitors). It can only be assumed that it was through her association with Percy Blakemore. As a result of the destruction of farmsteads, many of those returning home or being resettled after the war, including the so-called hensoppers and boere-verraaiers – had no shelter to live in. Hence, they had to use the tents that they occupied in the camps. That is why Blakemore was born in a 'hensoppertentjie'<sup>4</sup> on 13 April 1906. In the interview with Du Toit, she explained that her father had been a compulsive gambler, a fact illustrated by the anecdote she recounted about her birth. When her mother went into labour, her father had to go to fetch the doctor. Unfortunately, he ended up

<sup>2</sup> The correctness of this fact could not be established. Whilst it would have been very difficult for Emma Krogh and Percy Blakemore to obtain permission for their marriage during the war years, evidence in support of this statement is the fact that Stella's maiden name was Blakemore and that her mother, Emma, continued to use the surname Blakemore until her death. More research is required to clarify this issue.

<sup>3</sup> EB most probably stands for English-Boer War.

<sup>4</sup> A tent that was originally issued to so-called 'hands-uppers' – those South Africans that surrendered and gave up their right to fight the British – during the Anglo-Boer War. For their own protection, these people often had to go and live in the concentration camps that were set up for Afrikaner women as part of the scorched earth policy. Here they lived in tented communities, separate from the Afrikaner women and children and Boer prisoners of war.

playing a game of cards and by the time he arrived back at her mother's side, Stella had already been born. Her father left them and returned to England, purportedly to become a professional card player, when Stella was still a young child (Dick et. al. 2001). About her father Blakemore said:

Hy het ons net so gelos... maar baie mense dink hy moes 'n aangename, lekker ou gewees het (Du Toit 1972).

[He left us just like that ... but many people believe he must have been a pleasant, nice bloke.]

As a young child, she grew up in the Transvaal. She never thought of her childhood as a happy time:

I always like writing about nice childhoods, probably because I had such a dreary one myself, in some ways. My mother did everything on earth for me, except establish a home. She had a 'thing' about boarding houses, and a more frightful existence for a child, there is not.<sup>5</sup>

Blakemore was sent to an English boarding school in Natal to complete her school studies. (Van Rensburg 1975:8). She did not enjoy the boarding school experience and also did not like Natal, which she felt was too English:

I was at boarding school in Natal, and I loathed the place. Salene, too, finds it 'terribly, terribly English!'<sup>6</sup>

After matriculating, she studied further in Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg.<sup>7</sup> On completion of her studies, she travelled through Germany and the Netherlands, before going on to London where she stayed for eight months and obtained her piano and song licentiate from the London Royal Academy of Music as well as an ARCM in song.<sup>8</sup> She then left for Germany, where she studied opera at the Dresden Opera School under the guidance of Felis Petreng<sup>9</sup> and at

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 19 May 1959.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 9 February 1968.

<sup>7</sup> Handwritten photocopied document entitled 'Suid-Afrikaanse sangeres – Mej. Stella Blakemore', 1930, with words 'E. Lindberg' and 'afgeskryf' (copied) on cover page. 10 January 1930. Reference number B.15 (4474): 8, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>8</sup> Handwritten photocopied document entitled 'Suid-Afrikaanse sangeres – Mej. Stella Blakemore', 1930, with words 'E. Lindberg' and 'afgeskryf' (copied) on cover page. 10 January 1930. Reference number B.15 (4474): 8, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>9</sup> Handwriting of the surname illegible, could also be Petreng, Petieng, etc.

the Conservatorie für Lieder under Professor Klüge. According to a friend, Anneke Reitz, Stella had 'a very beautiful soprano voice' (*Pretoria News*, 5 June 1991:7). In Dresden she played the leading part in a number of operas, including 'Faust', 'Fra Diavolo', and 'Die Zauberflöte'.<sup>10</sup> She wrote her first book, *Die Goue Sleutel*, a drama in Afrikaans, whilst she was studying opera in Germany, and it was published by J.L. van Schaik in 1931 (*Die Volksblad*, 5 June 1991:2).<sup>11</sup>

In January 1930 she returned to South Africa for a series of concerts. It was reported that she planned to stay in South Africa for six months before returning to Germany to further advance her career.<sup>12</sup> She married a Welshman and civil engineer, David Owen, in 1933 in London<sup>13</sup>, where she was teaching and singing professionally.<sup>14</sup> In 1934 she suffered a miscarriage and was ill for a long time. In May 1935, after recovering her health, she returned to South Africa where she planned to settle in Pretoria and take over some of her mother's singing and music pupils. Blakemore lived in Pretoria where she owned a house in Muckleneuk and worked with her mother in the Blakemore Studios for music, singing and drama students, which she had opened (*Die Volksblad*, 5 June 1991:2). Her return to South Africa was made possible through the fact that her husband had accepted a position in Swaziland, and Blakemore travelled to and fro between Pretoria and Swaziland. In Pretoria, where she spent most of her time, she was actively involved in the social activities of the town. This was in part because her involvement in music and drama took her to each and every eisteddfod, 'kunstwedstrijd' and music festival. Blakemore suffered another miscarriage (Dick et al 2001:62) and in 1945 she adopted a baby girl from the Armstrong-Benin Tehuis in Bloed Street in Pretoria and in 1946 a baby boy from the same home. Both children were given up for adoption by Afrikaans-speaking families. She had started her career as a writer of Afrikaans fiction for children in 1931 and by the time she left the Union in 1947 she was already well established in this field.

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<sup>10</sup> Handwritten photocopied document entitled 'Suid-Afrikaanse sangeres – Mej. Stella Blakemore', 1930, with words 'E. Lindberg' and 'afgeskryf' (copied) on cover page. 10 January 1930. Reference number B.15 (4474): 8, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>11</sup> See also photocopied document, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>12</sup> Handwritten photocopied document entitled 'Suid-Afrikaanse sangeres – Mej. Stella Blakemore', 1930, with words 'E. Lindberg' and 'afgeskryf' (copied) on cover page. 10 January 1930. Reference number B.15 (4474): 8, NALN collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>13</sup> Photocopied document, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>14</sup> Photocopied document, no date, reference number 785/78/20, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

Given that David Owen worked for the British colonial service, he was deployed to a number of African countries. It could not be established exactly when Blakemore and her husband left South Africa for Kumasi in the Gold Coast (after independence renamed Ghana), but from the correspondence in the NALN Collection in Bloemfontein, it would seem that it was sometime in 1947.<sup>15</sup> Blakemore later followed her husband to Nigeria. They also lived for periods in London and often travelled to Italy for holidays. When she and her husband left South Africa for Kumasi in the Gold Coast, the children were sent to school in Wales where they lived with Blakemore's mother, Emma. Blakemore tried to spend time with her mother and children in Wales whenever she was not with her husband in Africa.

In 1954, Blakemore and her husband bought a four hundred year old land cottage in an apple orchard in the scenic coastal town Warrenpoint, which is situated in County Down, Northern Ireland. Warren Point is in close proximity of the town Newry and the Mourne Mountains (Van Rensburg 1975:8, Hazelhurst 1978:6). They restored the house and used it as a holiday home (Van Rensburg 1975:8). Later, Emma Blakemore and the children moved to Northern Ireland where they lived in the cottage and where the children went to school.

In addition to writing books, Blakemore was involved in many other creative activities. She taught music all her life and was involved in broadcasting. Blakemore also actively participated in community activities and was a member of the Royal Commonwealth Society (*Die Vaderland*, 28 July 1978) and of the Women's Institute in Ireland, an organisation of both Catholic and Protestant women (Louw 1974:13). She was also involved in religious activities.

Despite Blakemore's dream of returning to South Africa to settle permanently, this never materialised, partly because of her husband's work commitments and in part due to her poor health. She did return to South Africa for a visit in 1974, after an absence of eighteen years, and visited the country a number of times thereafter. However, the cottage in Northern Ireland was to be the place where Blakemore finally settled. She lived there for thirty years until her death in 1991. Blakemore died at the age of 85 and was buried on 26 May 1991 (*Die Burger*, 5

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<sup>15</sup> The first letter in the collection that was written by Blakemore from Kumasi, in the Gold Coast, to her publishers is dated 11 September 1947. It could be that they had left a few years earlier in 1945 as there is a gap in the correspondence, but it seems more likely that they only left in 1947.



June 1991:3), after having been bed-ridden for a long time following a stroke (*Die Transvaler*, 5 June 1991:4).

### **Publications by Stella Blakemore**

All Blakemore's published books that could be traced are in Afrikaans, except for the translation of one of her *Maasdorp* books in Dutch and her adult novel, *Katrientjie*, in Zulu. She wrote two plays in English for a South African audience, but these were never published. From correspondence between Blakemore and her South African publisher, it is clear that she had written works in English for an Irish public. It is, however, unclear if these were ever published. For political reasons, which are explained in more detail further on in the chapter, Blakemore felt that she was not in a position to disclose her other interests – which included her writings in English – to the South African public. This could be the reason why she said in an interview in 1978, that all her published works were in Afrikaans (Hazelhurst 1978:6). However, based on her correspondence with the Van Schaiks it seems fairly likely that this statement was indeed true, and that – with the exception of a couple of short stories, contributions to magazines and single poems – she never published in English.

In addition to her own name, Stella Blakemore, she wrote under a number of pseudonyms. These included her married name, Stella Owen, as well as Theunis Krogh, Annelise Bierman and Dien Grimbeek.<sup>16</sup> It could not be established exactly how many books she wrote in her lifetime. Estimates range between 50 and 70. In an interview with Mary-Ann van Rensburg in 1975 – when she was nearly seventy years old – Blakemore stated that she had already written more books than the number of years she had lived (Van Rensburg 1975:8) and in a later interview she estimated that she had written between 60 and 70 books, 'including two plays with music and some poems' (Hazelhurst 1978:6). It is possible that a number of these manuscripts may never have been published.

Blakemore specialised in popular literature for children. She wrote only one novel, *Katrientjie* that was aimed at an adult audience.<sup>17</sup> Her most successful books

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<sup>16</sup> Photocopied document, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

<sup>17</sup> No information could be obtained about her book, *Verpleegsters is altyd die ergstes*, which was published under her married name, Stella Owen. It may be that this was also targeting an adult audience.

were the *Keurboslaan* books, a series for boys about a boarding school for boys, and the *Maasdorp* series, books for girls about a boarding school for girls. Blakemore wrote the *Keurboslaan* series under the pseudonym Theunis Krogh – her grandfather’s name – whilst she published the *Maasdorp* series as Stella Blakemore.

Blakemore published twenty books in the first *Keurboslaan* series. For a number of reasons, primarily her need to get as many of her books as possible in print so that she could get an advance or earn royalties on them, but also a disagreement between her and the publisher of the series, J.L. van Schaik, a small number of *Keurboslaan* books were originally published by Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel under a slightly different name. The majority of the original *Keurboslaan* texts were, however, published by J.L. Van Schaik publishers. Initially it was not really the intention of J.L. van Schaik Publishers or Blakemore to produce a youth series for boys. This was most probably in part because series books in Afrikaans were still a novelty. The claim that the books were not initially conceptualised as a series is supported by the facts that the *Keurboslaan* series was not written chronologically and that the titles were distributed amongst two publishers. Only in the 1950s, when J.L. van Schaik publishers reprinted and revised the series, did the cover jacket of each book indicate the correct chronological order of the books in the series. The titles in the first series are as follows:

**Table 1: Publication date, chronological order, publisher details and print run information on titles in the *Keurboslaan* series**

Title	Chronological Order	Publisher	First publication date	Print runs
1. Die hoof van Keurboslaan	4	J.L. van Schaik	1941	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1944) 3 <sup>rd</sup> print (1946) 4 <sup>th</sup> print (1957) 5 <sup>th</sup> print (1962)
2. Keurboslaan se peetvaders	5	J.L. van Schaik	1942	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1946) 3 <sup>rd</sup> print (1957)
3. Avonture op Keurboslaan	6	J.L. van Schaik	1942	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (year unknown) 3 <sup>rd</sup> print (1957)
4. Die kroon van die skool, (Die Lente Serie)	8	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	–	2 <sup>nd</sup> edition (1944)
Die kroon van Keurboslaan		J.L. van Schaik	1959	

Title	Chronological Order	Publisher	First publication date	Print runs
5. Twee nuwe seuns op Keurboslaan	7	J.L. van Schaik	1944	
6. Jong doktor Serfontein	1	J.L. van Schaik	1945	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1946) 3 <sup>rd</sup> print (1955) 4 <sup>th</sup> print (1960)
7. Die Serfontein-kindere	13	J.L. van Schaik	1946	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1957)
8. Raaisels op Keurboslaan	10	J.L. van Schaik	1947	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1958)
9. Spanning op Keurboslaan	9	J.L. van Schaik	1947	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1959)
10. Keurboslaan se eerste Kaptein	2	J.L. van Schaik	1948	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1958)
11. Moleste op Keurboslaan	11	J.L. van Schaik	1949	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1959)
12. Die skool se struikrower	3	J.L. van Schaik	1949	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1958)*
13. Die skool stuur speuders (Die Lente Serie)  Die skool stuur speuders	12	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel  J.L. van Schaik	—  —	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1949)  2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1958) 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition (1958)**
14. Kaptein Richard	14	J.L. van Schaik	1956	
15. Rugby op Keurboslaan	16	J.L. van Schaik	1956	
16. Gevare op Keurboslaan	17	J.L. van Schaik	1957	
17. Misverstand op Keurboslaan	19	J.L. van Schaik	1959	
18. 'n Sukkelaar op Keurboslaan	15	J.L. van Schaik	1959	
19. Kultuur op Keurboslaan	20	J.L. van Schaik	1961	
20. Oorwinning vir Keurboslaan	18	J.L. van Schaik	1961	

\* Now published under title *Keurboslaan se struikrower*

\*\* Now published under title *Keurboslaan stuur speuders* by J.L. van Schaik

In the 1970s, the series was revised with the assistance of Blakemore and published as the *Nuwe Keurboslaan* series. The original twenty titles were condensed into nine titles and two new books were specially written. In the table

below, the titles of the eleven books in the new series are given with the original titles that were subsumed into the new books in brackets.

**Table 2: Titles in the *Nuwe Keurboslaan* series**

Title	Publisher	First pub. date	Print runs
1. Jong doktor Serfontein <i>(Jong doktor Serfontein, Keurboslaan se eerste Kaptein)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1980)
2. Die hoof van Keurboslaan <i>(Keurboslaan se struikrower, Die hoof van Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1980)
3. Nuweling op Keurboslaan <i>(Keurboslaan se peetvaders, Avonture op Keurboslaan, Twee nuwe seuns op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1980)
4. Die kroon van Keurboslaan <i>(Die kroon van Keurboslaan, Spanning op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1982)
5. Raaisels op Keurboslaan <i>(Raaisels op Keurboslaan, Moleste op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	
6. Die Serfontein-kindere <i>(Die Serfontein-kindere)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	
7. Kaptein Richard <i>(Kaptein Richard, Rugby op Keurboslaan, 'n Sukkelaar op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1982)
8. Geheime op Keurboslaan <i>(Gevare op Keurboslaan, Oorwinning vir Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1984)
9. Misverstand op Keurboslaan <i>(Misverstand op Keurboslaan, Kultuur op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1988)
10. Krisis op Keurboslaan	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1980)

Title	Publisher	First pub. date	Print runs
11. Ongenooid gaste op Keurboslaan	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 <sup>nd</sup> print (1982)

In the 1990s the *Keurboslaan* series was yet again reprinted, this time in omnibus form. The series was substantially modernized and updated, replacing, for example, the word Transvaal with Gauteng, and so forth.

**Table 3: Titles in the *Keurboslaan Omnibus* series**

Title	Publisher	First publication date
1. Keurboslaan Omnibus I  (including <i>Jong doktor Serfontein</i> , <i>Die hoof van Keurboslaan</i> , <i>Nuwelinge op Keurboslaan</i> )	J.L. van Schaik	1996
2. Keurboslaan Omnibus II  (including <i>Die kroon van Keurboslaan</i> , <i>Raaisels op Keurboslaan</i> , <i>Die Serfontein kinders</i> )	J.L. van Schaik	1997

Blakemore's *Maasdorp* series was enormously popular amongst girls. The original *Maasdorp* series consisted of sixteen titles. In the 1970s this series was also revised and condensed by Blakemore and published in ten parts. To this she added two new titles, *Ontgroening op Maasdorp* and *Lalage op Maasdorp*, which brought the revised series to twelve books. The full list of books in the *Maasdorp* series is provided in the table below.

**Table 4: Titles in the *Maasdorp* series**

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
<b>Maasdorp</b>			
1. Allegra op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1942
2. Jongste meisie in Maasdorp Skool, Die	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1933

3. Meisies van Maasdorp, Die – 'n Verhaal vir meisies	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1932
4. Hoofmeisie Kobie	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1947
5. Kobie en die Wonderkind	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1939
6. Kobie gaan verder	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1951
7. Kobie regeer: 'n storie van Maasdorp se skool	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1935
8. Niggies op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1956
9. Maltrappe op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1961
10. Juffrou Kobie	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1953
11. Maasdorp se drie Musketiers	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1943
12. Maasdorp se nuwe onderwyseres	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1946
13. Maasdorp se redaktrises	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1957
14. Maters op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1961
15. Nukke op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1965
16. Jongspan op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1955
17. Ontgroening of Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1972
18. Lalage op Maasdorp	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1974

The *Maasdorp* series was reproduced in the 1990s in omnibus form:

**Table 5: Titles in the *Maasdorp Omnibus* series**

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
<i>Maasdorp Omnibus</i>			
1. Maasdorp Omnibus 1	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1995
2. Maasdorp Omnibus 2	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1996
3. Maasdorp Omnibus 3	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1997

In Afrikaans juvenile fiction, Blakemore reigns supreme as the queen of series books. She produced no less than six book series, including *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* books. A comprehensive list of Blakemore's other publications is provided in the table below.

**Table 6: Other titles by Stella Blakemore (excluding titles in the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series)**

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
<b>Janse Cloete Series</b>			
1. Die kuns van Janse Cloete, Die Lente Serie Die kuns van Janse Cloete	Theunis Krogh Theunis Krogh	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel J.L. van Schaik	unknown
2. Die erfposie van Janse Cloete	Theunis Krogh	J.L. van Schaik	1949
<b>Delarey Series</b>			
3. Vorm II op Delarey	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1948
4. Stryd oor Peta Stryd oor Peta	Stella Blakemore	Unie Boekhandel Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1946
<b>Blourand Series</b>			
5. Ses kamermaats op Blourand – Die Lente Serie no. 1	Stella Blakemore	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1944
6. Judith op Blourand – Die Lente Serie no. 9	Stella Blakemore	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1945
7. Drie klontjies op Blourand – Die Lente Serie no. 34/39	Stella Blakemore	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1950
8. Elfie, Apie en Carolus – Die Lente Serie no. 23	Stella Blakemore	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1946
<b>Die Rissies Series</b>			
9. Die Rissies en die Masels	Dien Grimbeek	J.L. van Schaik	1960
10. Die Rissies in die Stad	Dien Grimbeek	J.L. van Schaik	1960
11. Die Rissies en die Kersboom	Dien Grimbeek	J.L. van Schaik	1960
12. Die Rissies en die Bure	Dien Grimbeek	J.L. van Schaik	1960

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
<b>Plays and Operettas</b>			
13. 'n Wedstryd in Droomland	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1934
14. Eerste April – toneelstukkie in een bedryf	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1934
15. Die Goue sleutel – 'n blyspel vir kinders in een bedryf	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1931
16. Die Toweruur – operette in een bedryf vir kinders	Stella Blakemore	J.L. van Schaik	1932
<b>Other Books</b>			
17. Die Familie Karelse	Stella Blakemore	Nasionale Pers Beperk	1938
18. Die swaard	Annalize Bierman	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	unknown
19. Katrientjie, 'n grappige roman	Stella Owen	Nasionale Pers	1939
20. Die Wilde Raubenheimers	Theunis Krogh	J.L. van Schaik	1948
21. Verpleegsters is altyd die ergstes	Stella Owen	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	unknown

The initial *Keurboslaan* series comprised of twenty titles and when the books were condensed in the 1970s, two new titles were added. The full *Maasdorp* list includes the original sixteen titles and the two new books that were released in the 1970s. Together with her other books, it brings the total number of original books written by Blakemore, excluding the revised, abridged and amalgamated versions of earlier books, to sixty-one titles. To this list can be added the five *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* books that were published in omnibus form, the ten titles that were published in the revised *Maasdorp* series, which were abridged and merged from the sixteen titles in the first series, the nine titles in the *Nuwe Keurboslaan* series, which were abridged and merged from the twenty books in the first *Keurboslaan* series, the translation of her novel *Katrientjie* in Zulu<sup>18</sup> and of one of the *Maasdorp* books, *Juffrou Kobie*, in Dutch, as well as the words for a

<sup>18</sup> Published in 1966 by Via Afrika in Cape Town with title *U-Phum 'phele:inja yezidumo* and translated by W.M.B. (Wiseman Bishop Maqhawe de Kelsy) M'Khize. It was reprinted in 1966 by Juta in Cape Town.



score of music published by Unie Publications.<sup>19</sup> This brings the total list of books by Blakemore to eighty-eight, excluding reprints, revised editions, and single titles published by more than one publisher – which is the case with some of the *Keurboslaan* books, as well as the *Janse Cloete* and other books.

### **A concise history of J.L. van Schaik Publishers<sup>20</sup>**

In a letter from Blakemore (signed as Theunis Krogh) to one of her fans, a school teacher who wanted to put together a creative writing course, Blakemore wrote that she came in contact with J.L. van Schaik publishers when one of the first plays she had ever written was performed and Mr van Schaik was in the audience.<sup>21</sup> After the performance, Mr van Schaik made contact with Blakemore and suggested that she submits the play in for publication, as he felt that there were very few plays in Afrikaans at the time. It is likely that she referred here to her play, *Die Goue Sleutel*, which was published by J.L. van Schaik in 1931. *Die Meisies van Maasdorp*, the first title in the *Maasdorp* series was submitted to the firm by Stella Blakemore in 1932 (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:482), and the first *Keurboslaan* title in 1941.

J.L. van Schaik publishers published almost all Blakemore's Afrikaans books, including the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series. In an article in *Boekewêreld* (1992), a collection on the history of Nasionale Pers, Jan van Schaik and Heinrich Raubenheimer provide an historical overview of J.L. van Schaik publishers, which is summarised below.

Johannes Lambertus van Schaik came to South Africa from the Netherlands and established two associated ventures in the book industry. Van Schaik was born in Weesp, which lies close to Amsterdam, on 2 April 1888. He came to South Africa in 1911 as manager of the Johannesburg branch of J.H. de Bussy's bookstores. Van Schaik and Raubenheimer state that J.L. van Schaik's decision to come to South Africa was based on his interest in and support for 'die Boeresak'

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<sup>19</sup> Lentelied no. 1 in A. Music by Sydney Richfield, words by Stella Blakemore. Published by Unie Publikasies c1946, Pretoria. Consists of 1 score (11p.).

<sup>20</sup> This section is largely based on the chapter 'Van Schaik' in *Boekewêreld*, a social history of Nasionale Pers, published in 1992 and edited by W.D. Beukes. Heinrich Raubenheimer and Jan van Schaik are the authors of this chapter. In addition, I conducted an interview with Mr Jan van Schaik to clarify some of the issues in the chapter and to obtain more information.

<sup>21</sup> The letter is undated, but is likely to have been written in the 1950s. Extracts from the letter were later used as text for the cover jacket of the revised *Keurboslaan* series.

(1992:476). In 1914, he took over the Pretoria branch of the bookshop of the well-known Dutch firm Höveker & Wormser. Here he first opened a bookstore, which he called Van Schaik Boekhandel and later established a publishing house with the same name. In 1938 the bookstore and the publishing business were split into two companies. The first kept the name Van Schaik-Boekhandel, while the publishing company became known as J.L. van Schaik. The Van Schaik bookstore became so successful that he later opened three more bookstores with the same name in Pretoria.<sup>22</sup> In the early years his clientele comprised largely of well to do business people and civil servants who spoke English, but there was also a Dutch contingent and a smaller Afrikaans-speaking group that regularly visited his store. According to Van Schaik and Raubenheimer (1992:478), Van Schaik felt very sympathetic towards the Afrikaners and realised that there was a gap in the market for literature in Afrikaans. Van Schaik and his brother-in-law, A.K. Bot, discussed the possibilities of producing books in Afrikaans with a particular focus on the school book market and in 1915 he started publishing his first titles in Afrikaans. In 1917, Jochem van Bruggen's novel *Teleurgesteld* – a Van Schaik publication – was awarded the Hertzog Prize for Afrikaans prose.

Van Schaik and Nasionale Pers were the most important publishers of Afrikaans literary works from the 1920s onwards. In addition to Afrikaans prose works and dramas, van Schaik also published a significant body of poetry in Afrikaans.<sup>23</sup>

The first children's book to be produced by this publisher was *Die kaskenades van Klein Duimpie* (in English generally known as 'The antics of Tom Thumb') in 1917. Van Schaik also secured the translation rights to good European children's books to counter the dearth of good illustrators in South Africa at the time. In 1918 Van Schaik published its first textbooks for schools in Afrikaans and in Dutch, and in 1921 produced its first Afrikaans/English dictionary. One of the most successful children's books ever to be published in Afrikaans, *Patrys-hulle* by E.B. Grosskopf, was published by Van Schaik in 1926.

The firm was, however, never exclusively dedicated to publishing books in Afrikaans. It published numerous books in English and continued to publish books

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<sup>22</sup> These stores were situated close to universities. Stores were opened in Hatfield and Sunnyside in 1959 and one in Lynnwood Rd in 1964.

<sup>23</sup> Van Schaik published, among others, the majority of the works by the acclaimed author Eugène Marais, Uys Krige's debut volume of poetry, entitled *Kentering*, *Die Stil Avontuur*, by Elisabeth Eybers, and *Deining* and *Aardse vlam* by C.M. van den Heever.

in Dutch, in particular for the university market. From 1942, J.L. van Schaik also published books in other South African languages for the schoolbook market.

The Van Schaik bookstore in Church Street, Pretoria, was situated in close proximity to the offices of *De Volkstem*, a daily newspaper that was edited by Dr F.V. Engelenburg. Engelenburg attracted around himself a large group of young and enthusiastic Afrikaans writers, who would write pieces for his newspaper. Because of the proximity of the two sets of offices, these young writers would always drop in at the Van Schaik store. Through that, J.L. van Schaik got to know many of these young voices personally, and they served as a pool from which he could draw new talent for writing manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> Among these young writers were Gustav Preller, C. Louis Leipoldt, Eugène Marais, and Jan. F. E. Cilliers (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:482).

As was the case with Nasionale Pers, the decision to publish new manuscripts did not always hinge on sound business principles, as Mr van Schaik's commitment to the development of the Afrikaans culture influenced his decisions:

Winsbejag of die begeerte om 'n treffer of goeie verkoper uit te gee, het nie altyd die uitgewer se besluit om te publiseer beïnvloed nie. Dit was dikwels eerder 'n opregte begeerte om deur publikasie die Afrikaanse kultuur te bevorder en om boeke die lig te laat sien wat weens hul gehalte, maar veral ook in daardie dae 'as eerste in sy soort', uitgegee móés word (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:482).

[The strife for profit or the desire to publish a best seller did not always influence the publisher's decision to publish. It was often rather a deep-seated desire to promote the Afrikaans culture through the publication of books that simply *had* to be published, either because of their high quality, or because they were 'the first of its sort' (in Afrikaans).]

J.L. van Schaik's commitment to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism became more evident when, during the centenary of the Great Trek, the firm published a series of popular scientific booklets on 'aspects of the Afrikaner's cultural life (history, religion, literature, pedagogics, and art)' (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:484). The series was published in 31 titles and was written by a wide range of authors including H.A. Mulder, Sangiro, G. Dekker, Abel Coetzee, E.P.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with J.J. (Jan) van Schaik on 26 October 2001

Groenewald, J.C. Coetzee, N.P. van Wyk Louw, P.J. Nienaber and P.C. Schoonees (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:484). The series was called *Die Monument-reeks* and was very similar to the *Tweede Trek* series published by Nasionale Pers to commemorate the same event.

Mr Jan van Schaik, J.L. van Schaik's son, describes the 1930s as a difficult time for booksellers as there did not exist a good infrastructure for the distribution of Afrikaans books and sellers therefore had to rely on distribution through the CNA. Bookshops and publishers also placed advertisements in magazines, such as *Die Huisgenoot*, and local newspapers. In addition, the bookstore was well placed and well-known and there was a strong passing trade at the shop, comprising not only of Pretorians but also of out of town visitors for whom a visit to van Schaik's was standard practice when they were in town, as the following quote suggests:

As hier 'n sinode was in Pretoria, of 'n TO [Transvaalse Onderwysers] vergadering dan het die mense gewoonlik tuisgegaan in die Residensie Hotel. Dan het hulle altyd na die boekwinkel toe gekom om te kyk wat is nuut op die rakke. Daar was 'n 'passing trade' by die winkel.<sup>25</sup>

[When there was a meeting of the synod in Pretoria or a meeting of the Transvaal Teachers' Association, people usually stayed at the Residensie Hotel. Then they always went to the bookshop to see what is new on the shelves. There existed a passing trade' at the store.]

J.L. van Schaik formed part of a network of booksellers and publishers, including Juta, Maskew-Miller en Adams in Durban, who assisted each other in the distribution of books. Since the formal structures for book dissemination were limited, J.L. van Schaik regularly produced a catalogue of its publications, which it distributed to bring in mail orders.

Mr Jan van Schaik recounted that there was a strong revival of Afrikaans and a significant increase in Afrikaans books during the Second World War, particularly given the strong Anti-War feelings held by the majority of Afrikaners in the North. In particular, there was an increased demand for Afrikaans books for schools and libraries. In the early 1950s, criticism was voiced in Afrikaans circles, more specifically intellectual circles including the Afrikaans literary establishment, that too many of the existing publications in Afrikaans were of poor quality and

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with J.J. (Jan) van Schaik on 26 October 2001

included exaggerated representations of violence. J.L. van Schaik tried to foster close ties with some of the librarians at the Transvaal Education library services, among them Mrs Fuchs, Mrs Groenewald and Mrs Hoekstra, and used these contacts to promote the firm's publications and solicit information about current demands for books. As a result of complaints about the poor quality of children's literature, the firm translated a selection of children's literature from all over the world into Afrikaans and to publish these titles as the *Libri Series*.

It is perhaps true that J.L. van Schaik's understanding of the close ties between the publishing industry and the birth of nations and nationalism enabled the firm to capture a significant portion of the market for indigenous South African languages. J.L. van Schaik's role in the publishing industry highlights the relationship between the publishing industry and capitalism. Whilst it is true that the founder of Van Schaiks, J.L van Schaik, felt himself close to the cause of the 'Boere' and therefore produced many publications for the sake of promoting Afrikaans culture and language, the publication of key texts in Afrikaans (including dictionaries and literary works) in the long run turned into a profitable industry, once the firm had managed to grow a readership for its products. The principles of this undertaking could in turn be generically applied to the development of other languages:

Die uitgewery se uitgebreide produksielys word veral gekenmerk deur die steeds toenemende aantal titels in die Afrikatale. Behalwe letterkundige werk is grammatikas, leerboeke, en woordeboeke uitgegee. Waar die verkoop van hierdie publikasies in die jare veertig en vyftig skaars in die omset gereflekteer is, neem dit in die jare sewentig en tagtig sodanig toe dat dit al byna die helfte van die omset verteenwoordig. In die veranderende Suid-Afrika geld die slagspreuk wat vyftig jaar gelede op een van die uitgewery se embleme verskyn het, naamlik: "Jong Lewe Vol Strewe" (JLVS) (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:487).

[The publisher's extensive production list is characterised by the increasing number of titles in African languages. In addition to literary works, the firm publishes grammars, readers, and dictionaries. Whilst the sales of these publications were hardly reflected in the firm's turnover in the 1940s and 1950s, it has increased to such an extent in the 1970s and 1980s that it currently represents almost half of the turnover. In a changing South Africa the motto that appeared on the

firm's logo fifty years ago, namely 'Young Life Full of Strive' still holds true.]

Once again, the firm's efforts in this field were rewarded. In the late 1980s, books produced by J.L. van Schaik publishers had been awarded with, among others, 'the E.M. Ramaila prize (Northern Sotho), the B.W. Vilikazi prize (Zulu) and the Venda literary prize' (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:489). Up until 1989, Van Schaik had produced fifteen of the sixteen publications awarded with the E.M. Ramaila prize, and the firm produced a Sotho collection of poetry in 1989 (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:489).

Already in 1947, the firm was approached with a proposal to be bought out and incorporated into Nasionale Pers. Though Mr van Schaik initially declined, this proposal was finally accepted in 1986 when Van Schaik and Nasionale Boekhandel merged. The names of the Nasboek branches of Nasionale Boekhandel's bookstores were subsequently changed to Van Schaik, at the request of Mr Jan van Schaik that the name of the family business started by his father would in this way continue to exist (Van Schaik and Raubenheimer 1992:476).

### **A brief overview of the critical reception of Blakemore's books**

The first reviews of Blakemore's work appeared in the early 1930s in publications such as *Die Huisgenoot*, *De Volkstem*, the *Rand Daily Mail* and *Die Vaderland*. On the whole, reviewers tended to be enthusiastic and positive about her work. In particular, Blakemore was praised for the fact that her books filled an important gap in Afrikaans literature, namely that of popular fiction for the youth. Reviewers made it clear, however, that whilst her books could be regarded as good popular fiction, they did not meet the criteria set for literary works and could also not be regarded among the best books for children produced in Afrikaans such as *Patrys-hulle* by Grosskopf (*Die Vaderland*, 13 November 1939).<sup>26</sup> The positive reception of her work despite, Blakemore was criticised for the poor quality of the language, the number of spelling and typing errors in many of the books, the non-idiomatic Afrikaans she used, and for too many 'Anglisismes' (words borrowed

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<sup>26</sup> Also see 'Avontuur-verhaal', newspaper clipping, no date, no publication mentioned, no author, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

and directly translated from English, in cases where there do exist Afrikaans words with a similar meaning) (see, for example, *Die Burger*, 15 April 1935).<sup>27</sup>

The majority of reviewers chose to focus on the strong educational component of the *Keurboslaan* books and the way in which the books provided answers to some of the problems experienced in the education system at the time. It should be noted here that the *Keurboslaan* books were published under the name of Theunis Krogh, and that reviewers were not aware that the author was a woman, a piece of information that only became public knowledge much later. The books were therefore generally deemed as very appropriate for 'school libraries, the classroom or individual reading' (see, for example, *Sunday Times*, 15 February 1942 and *Die Burger*, 15 April 1935).

Reviewers frequently made mention of the quality of the production and print work and the general attractiveness of the books (see, for example, *Onderwysblad*, 1 January 1948, *Cape Times*, 11 January 1934, and *De Volkstem*, 9 September 1933). This was characteristic of the publications produced by J.L. van Schaik. For that reason, their publications were often more expensive than those of their main competitors, Afrikaanse Boekhandel.

Three characteristics became the trademark of all of her work and were emphasised by reviewers. The first was her ability to create warm, true-to-life, and distinctive characters – each with his or her own idiolect and mannerisms. Arguably, this was Blakemore's greatest strength as a writer, and she relied heavily on the use of dialogue to bring her characters to life. The second trademark of her work was the important role that the lives, thoughts and emotions of adults play in her children's books. This trademark did not go unnoticed among reviewers and the fact that it was slightly odd that so much was written about intrigues and love affairs in the lives of adults in books for the youth was remarked upon more than once (*Die Burger*, 5 January 1933). In the last instance, reviewers commented on Blakemore's peculiar understanding of narrative. Her books generally comprised of a number of episodes or incidents

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<sup>27</sup> Also see *Die jongste meisie in Maasdorp-skool. Die Huisgenoot*, no date, author's initials given as E.B., reference number 2000/88/3805.1, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein and 'Skoolkaskenades', no date, no author, no publication. Press clipping. Reference number 2000/88/3805.4, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

that together do not really add up to a tight plot as is the convention for formulaic series books (*Die Burger*, 5 January 1933).

Unfortunately most of the reviews that could be located were from the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s. No reviews of any of Blakemore's books dating from the late 1950s and 1960s could be found. These were important years as Blakemore was still churning out more volumes in the *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* series. Moreover, in the 1950s all her titles were revised and reprinted and were therefore freshly produced for a whole new generation of readers.

In the late 1960s, Enid Blyton's works were banned from libraries in England. This was part of broader criticism emerging against formulaic literature and series books, both of which were hallmarks of Blyton's oeuvre. From correspondence between Blakemore and her publishers, it is clear that these events also had an effect on the assessment of her work in South Africa. The fact that no book reviews could be located to confirm this trend is disappointing, but may perhaps be indicative of the fact that her books were no longer regarded as 'good literature' and were therefore not discussed in book reviews. The correspondence between Blakemore and Jan van Schaik definitely confirms that her books were severely criticised in the period and that this criticism mainly stemmed from educational and library circles. By the 1960s an extensive system of public libraries for white South Africans had been established. The purchasers for libraries in the four provinces therefore yielded enormous influence and power. A number of incidents involving the Cape Town Library described in Chapter Four, show Blakemore's books were no longer in good standing. However, this did not affect the popularity of the books among children, and both series were substantially revised, shortened and modernized for a new generation of readers in the 1970s.

There is, however, one other form of critical reception that provides some insight into the way in which her work was received by the establishment. J.L. van Schaik contracted professional reviewers to approve and edit manuscripts submitted by Blakemore. In Chapter Four, the feuds between Blakemore and these reviewers are discussed in more depth. However, based on review reports, there can be no doubt that Blakemore's Afrikaans writing was rather poor. This was also clear from some of the original manuscripts that I surveyed in the NALN Collection in



Bloemfontein. The manuscripts were clearly very heavily edited, and the pages literally drowned in the red ink.

In 1973, Blakemore visited South Africa after an absence of eighteen years. During this time, many articles appeared in the press that gave an overview of her work and the contribution she had made to Afrikaans children's literature. Her visit coincided with the launch of the revised editions of the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series. Her work was also celebrated in reviews that appeared after her death. Numerous obituaries were published in the Afrikaans media. An example is an article by Marina le Roux (Le Roux 1991:6) in which she reviewed Blakemore's life and made an assessment of the impact her work has had in the Afrikaner community. Once again it was emphasised that the books were equally popular amongst girls and boys. But Le Roux commented on the important and exaggerated role hero-worshipping play in Blakemore's books and the explicitly sexist-patriotic tone of the *Keurboslaan* series. However, an assessment of her work leads the author of the article to conclude that it was Stella Blakemore and her *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* books that got the Afrikaans child reading and kept them reading.

In a commemorative article on Blakemore, published in *Insig* in 2001, the fact that the *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* series had incited their love for reading is confirmed by a number of prominent Afrikaans-speakers (Dick et. al. 2001:61-63). Among these are many prominent academics, writers and journalists including Chris Louw, Eleanor Baker, Erika Murray-Theron, Martie Meiring, Madeleine van Biljon and Franci Greyling. Chris Louw, for example, remarks in the article that Blakemore's books 'have spoiled him for ever with an irrevocable nostalgia for Afrikaans'<sup>28</sup> (Dick et. al. 2001:62). Dick et. al. find it significant that someone who has had 'such an impact on the Afrikaans readers spent the majority of her life overseas' (Dick et. al. 2001:62). They conclude their assessment of her work by stating that even though it was difficult to estimate the impact of the two series, it had to have been substantial (Dick et. al. 2001:63). To substantiate this point they publish the following quotes from two prominent Afrikaans journalists:

As ek soms wonder wie of wat ek nou eintlik wou word toe ek jonger was, dan keer ek altyd terug na *Maasdorp* en *Keurboslaan*, en dan

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<sup>28</sup> Original Afrikaans: 'hom vir ewig met 'n onhaalbare nostalgie vir Afrikaans besmet [het]'

verskyn my groot lewensideale en drome glashelder voor my – en skielik weet ek weer waarheen (Dick et al 2001:63).

[When I sometimes wonder who or what I wanted to be when I was younger, I always return to *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan*, and then my great goals in life and dreams appear before me clear as daylight – and once again I suddenly know whereto.]

and

Dit was die enigste *aspirational* lektuur, buiten die Bybel, wat ons jeugdige Afrikaners gehad het (Martie Meiring in Dick et al 2001:63).

[Besides the Bible, it was the only aspirational literature our young Afrikaners had.]

The article notes that the *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* works are currently regarded by many to be a celebration of patriarchy, in addition to being sexist, racist and patriotic with an unnecessary focus on outdated middle class values. Nonetheless, the writers concur that 'Blakemore is known as *the* author of juvenile fiction that got Afrikaans children reading by providing them with escapist fiction of the highest quality (Dick et. al. 2001:63). Many other Afrikaans academics, reviewers and critics have in the past confessed their 'addiction' to Blakemore's novels (Van der Merwe, *Sarie*, 5 July 1995).

## Chapter Three

### Stella Blakemore on the practice of writing popular fiction and her fictional characters

I never can thank Providence enough for the Maasdorp and Kbl. characters, who found me rather than I found them. With all my faults as a writer, the characters live for us all.<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

When Enid Blyton wrote a foreword to a complete list of books she had published up until the end of 1950, she used the opportunity to explain why she wrote. Whilst she claimed that she wrote to entertain, her introductory notes point to the importance she allotted to the *power* of her stories to influence, form and mould the minds of young people:

I do not write merely to entertain, as most writers for adults can legitimately claim to do. My public do not possess matured minds – what is said to them in books they are apt to believe and follow, for they are credulous and immature. Naturally, the morals or ethics are *intrinsic* to the story – and therein lies their true power (Blyton, quoted in Dixon 1978:57).

Reading this foreword, one is left with the impression that Blyton felt a pressing need to educate the youth and to make her ideas, attitudes and beliefs theirs. It appears that she got great personal satisfaction from the fact that she was in a position where she exerted so much influence over a group of persons whom she saw as 'credulous and immature':

All the Christian teaching I had, in church or Sunday-school or in my reading has coloured every book I have written for you... Most of you could write down perfectly correctly all the things I believe in and stand for – you have found them in my books, and a writer's books are *always a faithful reflection of himself* [my emphasis] (Enid Blyton in an extract from an undated and untitled biography quoted in Dixon 1978:57).

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 7 February 1959.

Stella Blakemore, a South African writer of popular, formulaic series fiction for children, expressed her motivation for writing in quite opposite terms from Blyton. In all her exchanges with her publisher, J.L. van Schaik, it is evident that she had a lot of respect for her readers and that she took her craft as writer seriously. Yet, she had a profound respect for the notion of a market, not least because of the fact that her fiction secured for her a much needed income stream. This chapter explores Blakemore's thoughts on being a writer, her relationship with her characters and the contradictions and contestations present in the creative enterprises of a writer of popular fiction.

Blakemore took her writing very seriously. Doing that, for her, meant at least three things: (1) being loyal to and respecting her readers; (2) treating her characters with respect and being true to them; and (3) producing books in a fashion that was respectful of both the readers and the characters. The examples below illustrate this point.

### **Blakemore and her readers**

Blakemore faithfully replied to letters she received from fans and she took their suggestions seriously. For example, she asked one of her fans to proofread a manuscript before she sent it to the publishers, and – on another occasion – at the suggestion of this same fan, Karin Krimberg, she had one of her characters in the Maasdorp series get married, even though she did not feel that this was necessary.<sup>2</sup> Yet another fan, Renske Koen, was asked to choose the title for a manuscript that was eventually published as *Nukke op Maasdorp* – one of Koen's suggestions.<sup>3</sup> Blakemore expressed disregard for the British youth, but felt that the Afrikaans young people she has always written for were far more mature:

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 29 January 1967 and letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 9 February 1968.

<sup>3</sup> See letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 23 October 1964; letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 28 November 1964; letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Blakemore dated 1 February 1965.

On the other hand, our Afrikaans children are very mature. I have written for them all these years as one could never write for English children, who seem to me never to grow up at all, even after they have been to Eton and Oxford. I have always been able to write for our own children *as if they were adults* [my emphasis], as long as there was nothing in a book that could not be read aloud in class. We have handled birth, death, marriage, crime, and even murder, without any trouble<sup>4</sup>

The way in which Blakemore expresses her relationship with her readers, which is, in her terms, an equal relationship, explains perhaps the success and popularity of her books, and also firmly sets apart her approach from that of Blyton.

Blakemore was fully aware of the extent to which the schools portrayed in the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series were idyllic, imaginary places. In 1955, Jan van Schaik wrote to Blakemore advising her that she should not continue with the *Delarey* series or the *Janse Cloete* or *Wilde Raubenheimers*.<sup>5</sup> In her reply, Blakemore shows that she knew that one of the reasons why the books mentioned by her publisher did not sell so well was that the kind of school life sketched in those books simply could not compare with the wonderful schools *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* were portrayed to be:

I note what you say about the other series. The truth is, readers want only Maasdorp books from Stella Blakemore and Keurboslaan from our friend T. Krogh! I must say I quite understand this. From my own favourite authors, I want only what I am accustomed to from them! Apart from anything else, Maasdorp and Keurboslaan are such pleasant places, that any other schools seem to fall flat in comparison.<sup>6</sup>

She also seemed to have been aware of the fact that the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* books were likely to appeal to a particular kind of audience and that this audience was defined along particular class and geographical location cleavages. On sending a new *Keurboslaan* manuscript, *Rugby op Keurboslaan*, to J.L. van Schaik in 1955 she wrote that she would have liked to write more books for readers who do not enjoy accounts of the elite *Keurboslaan* school:

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<sup>4</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 14 November 1963.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 9 February 1955.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 15 February 1955.

About the Janse Cloete books... I should rather like to do about three more Janse Cloete books, because they were definitely intended for boys at the 'plattelandse' who get rather bothered at the idea of the privileged life at Keurboslaan.<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to gauge precisely what Blakemore meant when she said in a letter to Jan van Schaik that the *Keurboslaan* books were written with people like him in mind:

I can say, honestly, that the book is as good as I have been able to make it, and I am very sure you will like it, because the *Keurboslaan* books are written for people like you.<sup>8</sup>

A possible interpretation would be that she meant that she had written the books for people with his kind of interests, standing and profession, i.e. the children of the professional classes or those who aspired to become part of the professional classes. There is yet another person that Blakemore deemed to have been the *Keurboslaan* type – this time not the target reader though, but a typical product of *Keurboslaan*. Writing about meeting Mr (Koos) Human from Nasionale Boekhandel in 1958, Blakemore states that she found him 'a very good type indeed – good enough to have come out of *Keurboslaan*'.<sup>9</sup>

### **On writing popular fiction and the question of 'the market'**

Blakemore's letters demonstrate that she took her craft as a writer seriously and that she wrote with integrity:

Ek skaam my nie om my werk van die ernstige kant te beskou nie. Vir my is dit nie 'slegs' jeuglektuur nie; dit is, nieteenstaande my swakhede en tekortkominge, die beste waartoe ek, persoonlik, in staat is.<sup>10</sup>

[I'm not ashamed to view my work in a serious light. For me it is not "just" youth literature, it is, in spite of my weaknesses and shortcomings, the best that I am, personally, capable of.]

She did, however, acknowledge her shortcomings as a writer:

<sup>7</sup> Letter to J.L. Mr van Schaik from Stella Blakemore dated 11 September 1947.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 16 May 1955.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 14 November 1958.

<sup>10</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik in Afrikaans from Stella Owen dated 17 August 1958.

The new Maasdorp is turning out very well. I am enjoying it. When I say this sort of thing, please don't imagine I think my work is marvellous. I only mean it is the best I can do!<sup>11</sup>

These shortcomings despite, for her taking her craft as a writer seriously meant that she could not simply write anything merely to have it published. She once remarked that if she was not enjoying writing a book it never turned out well anyway.<sup>12</sup> In a letter to Jan van Schaik in which she asks him to send her copies of the most successful books in Afrikaans for children or juveniles, she makes a light reference to the fact that she was not prepared to write a particular kind of literature, saying that he could send anything, as long as it was not 'infantile ones about Baby Rabbits!'.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, given that her writing was her income, Blakemore was always interested in what the market wanted and therefore not unwilling to try new things:

I think Enid Blyton's books are puerile in the extreme, but my own children love them, and so do all others! The great thing is to give your readers what they want, I suppose, but this will be a new technique for me. I have always written the Maasdorp and Keurboslaan books to please myself!<sup>14</sup>

Since she was so closely in touch with the notion of a market, i.e. with the idea of what will sell, she was not unaware of the impact that politics in the broader sense could have on the sales of her books. As will be shown in Chapter Four, she was therefore prepared to make changes to her books to appease the market and her books did not necessarily reflect her own views, as Blyton claimed hers had done. Yet, there were a number of things on which Blakemore was never prepared to compromise. These included the integrity of her creative work and the quality of the print production. Since she wrote with her readers foremost in her mind, her approach was that reading was a total experience, and she held firmly that author and publisher should work together to enhance the reading experience.

By the mid-fifties there was a need for Blakemore to start writing new books. The *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* series were both almost finished and Jan van Schaik

<sup>11</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 3 June 1955.

<sup>12</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 7 February 1959.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 15 February 1955.

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 2 March 1955.

wanted her to attempt to write shorter and lighter books. As examples of this type of fiction, he subsequently sent her copies of the *Saartjie* and *Trompie* series, which were also written by a single author, Topsy Smith. The girls' stories were published under the pseudonym Bettie Naudé.<sup>15</sup> About the *Trompie*, *Saartjie* and *Soekie* books she received, she writes

I was interested to get them, and read them all through at once. I enjoyed them too. The writers seem to enjoy writing, and they pass this on to the reader. But though you tell me the *Soekie* books do not sell quite as well as the *Saartjie* and *Trompie*, I seem to prefer them. Perhaps this is because of the frightfully cheap, ugly productions that the Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel seems to think good enough for its readers. The *Soekie* books are beautifully produced and printed, and a joy to handle.<sup>16</sup>

The quality of the production was not the only thing Blakemore felt strongly about. When Jan van Schaik wrote to her about a manuscript for the *Maasdorp* series, provisionally titled *Reina keer voor*, he stated that he felt that she had written the book in a hurry. To prove his point, he asked her about the meaning of an encounter described in the manuscript where one of the characters, Elsabé, is described as feeling very sad at a big party, particularly because Claudia [Sic] was there. Van Schaik wants to know why Elsabé would feel so sad.<sup>17</sup> From her response it is clear that Blakemore felt very upset about Van Schaik's comments. In her reply, she points out that, in the first place, Van Schaik was referring to a character with the name Claudia, whereas the name of the character was in fact Claudius. Moreover, she felt that her publisher was not treating her stories or readers with respect. She explained to him what had happened in an earlier book and how that linked up to present events. Moreover, she emphasized that her loyal readers would definitely had known exactly why Elsabé had felt so sad. Regarding this exchange, she writes:<sup>18</sup>

You know, I have my weaknesses as a writer, but I never leave loose ends if the reader really looks for the connecting links.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Letter to Stella Owen from Jan an Schaik dated 24 February 1955.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 16 May 1955.

<sup>17</sup> Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 28 July 1955.

<sup>18</sup> Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 28 July 1955.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Stella Owen to Jan van Schaik dated 2 August 1955.



## Blakemore and her characters

Blakemore regarded characterisation to be the true test of good fiction for children. She did not approve of the British tradition – in which Blyton very much set the tone – of creating one-dimensional characters and shifting the focus of the narrative to the series of events:

As so often, I am trying to start a new series for you. I find it very hard to shape my characters in the space of a short book, and the English technique of making the character just a named peg to hang a few incidents on, in Juvenile fiction, I cannot bear. I got one of Eric Leyland's books and found it readable except for the lack of true characterisation. I don't blame the writer for this. It is what English publishers of children's books demand.<sup>20</sup>

It is precisely for this reason, that she became so aggrieved when language editors and revisers tampered with her characters' dialogue:

In both the Maasdorp and Keurboslaan series' I have tried to create people – more often than not they create themselves – each of whom speaks and acts in a purely personal way. In the MSS. of *'n Sukkelaar op Keurboslaan*, Ruysenaer has picked up the expression 'Oi, Ghewault!' from a trader, and uses it on all occasions, as boys will. I do not want this to be changed to 'Ag nee' or 'My maskas!' This is true for every other word that I have written, except for actual Grammatical or Spelling errors.<sup>21</sup>

It could be said that, to a large extent, Blakemore felt that her characters were flesh and blood people:

If only revisers would leave doctor Serfontein alone, that would be the prime blessing of my life. I often 'sukkel' a whole day to bring out a sentence exactly the way I want him to speak it. Then the reviser gets ideas and brings my hero up, speaking in a way completely foreign to himself and to me.<sup>22</sup>

and

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<sup>20</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 1 July 1957.

<sup>21</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 17 August 1958.

<sup>22</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 17 August 1958.

I never can thank Providence enough for the Maasdorp and Kbl. characters, who found me rather than I found them. With all my faults as a writer, the characters live for us all.<sup>23</sup>

In 1959 Jan van Schaik wrote to Blakemore, suggesting that she moulded a new series on something such as Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* books. In the same letter, he informed her that the sales for the *Trompie* and *Saartjie* series were declining and that it seemed that Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel was not going to reprint the titles.<sup>24</sup> To this, she replied as follows:

I am interested in what you say about the *Trompie* and *Saartjie* books. Interested but not pleased. The more good books there are, the more the reading public is stimulated and the better it is for all writers. But I thought all along that that type of book, which could never be read more than once, and in which the characters are only pegs on which to hang a very slight story, were not going to live. They stopped just short of the charm of the William books by Richmal Crompton, which they were obviously intended to follow in pattern.<sup>25</sup>

The pragmatic person that she was, and given her financial commitments, she nevertheless decided to take up the challenge to write a series in the tradition of the *Famous Five*. Her first attempt was a series about a family of children with the family name Rissik, who, since they all have red hair, become known as 'Die Rissies'. About the project Blakemore had said that 'it [was] no use my reading an Enid Blyton book to get the idea, because I never got beyond the first page in any of her books yet'. She further stated that in writing these stories she would be 'keeping well away from schools' and from parents too, as her children has explained to her that these were two of Blyton's principles.<sup>26</sup> The series comprised of four books, published in 1960 under the pseudonym Dien Grimbeek. Whilst the books did fairly well, they were not nearly as popular as her *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* books.

The *Keurboslaan* series always held a very special place in Blakemore's heart. In 1958, she writes a very long letter to Jan van Schaik, having just received a copy of the print version of her *Keurboslaan* book, *Gevare op Keurboslaan*. In the

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<sup>23</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 7 February 1959.

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 28 January 1959.

<sup>25</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 7 February 1959.

<sup>26</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 21 February 1959.

letter, she explains that she was very distressed upon reading the book, as the revisers had made many changes to the text including to the way in which some of the characters speak.<sup>27</sup> As a result of the reviser's efforts – which she did not approve of in the first place – many mistakes had slipped into the text. In the letter, she tries to explain to Jan why she felt so angry and upset about this by recounting to him how it came about that she wrote the first *Keurboslaan* book:

When I spent that very pleasant evening with you and Herma at your home, you told me that your father had felt very bad when I gave some of the Keurboslaan books to Sarel [Sarel Marais from Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel] and that you could not help agreeing with him. I told you then that I had felt obliged to spread the books out between several publishers, because at the time, during the War, each firm was allowed to publish only a certain fixed number of books a year, while I desperately needed the advances for as many books as I could write. This was perfectly true, but if I had not been very tired that night, and furthermore unwilling to embarrass Herma by a Business-argument, I should have added another truth, which is that during all the years I wrote for van Schaik's I never had a word of approval of anything I had written. I do not blame your father for this. Experience has taught me that publishers consider it a duty to take a writer down several pegs at every interview. One's greeting is usually: 'Your last book is not selling at all well. We are going to loose money on it.' Or 'So-and-so has written a much better children's book than yours' I should not complain of the latter remark, because it was one such from your father about 'Jong van der Byls' that made me turn stubborn and start the Keurboslaan series. It is grim to have to admit that the series that gives me so much personal joy should have started from such an unworthy motive!<sup>28</sup>

This then is how Blakemore came to write *Die Hoof van Keurboslaan*. At the time, however, she had no intention of writing a series. The idea to write more *Keurboslaan* books was only born after she had seen the illustration of Roelof Serfontein on the cover jacket of the first edition of *Die hoof van Keurboslaan*, which was drawn by a certain Montgomery:

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<sup>27</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik in English from Stella Owen dated 17 August 1958. For example, revisers changed the way in which characters speak. For example, in the original, one of the characters, Loggenberg, had said 'Komaan, brak!' ('C'mon you mongrel!'). In the print version, this was changed to 'Kom, Wotan, my goeie hond!' ('Come, Wotan, my good dog!').

<sup>28</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik in English from Stella Owen dated 17 August 1958.

You speak of a new dust jacket for *Die Kroon*. If you have not got it done yet, I suggest that you don't have a picture of Doktor Serfontein. No one has ever drawn him properly, except Montgomery on the cover of *Die Hoof van Kbl*. Even he never got it right again. It was that face that inspired all the following books. Until I saw it, I had no intention of writing the series, but that face triggered it all off.<sup>29</sup>

It was clear that she really felt attached to her characters, and in particular to Dr Serfontein:

If you are reissuing the *Keurboslaan* books, for goodness' sake get someone equally good to do the illustrations. If they can't get Dr. Serfontein exactly right, they had better leave him alone. Some of the old illustrations were terrible, especially the cover of *Jong Dr. Serfontein*. The only person who ever got him the way I want him was Montgomery, on the cover of *Die hoof van Keurboslaan*. That face was perfect.<sup>30</sup>

This point is reiterated in many letters.<sup>31</sup> An illustration of Dr Serfontein on the cover of the 1950s edition of *Jong Dr. Serfontein* is described by Blakemore as being 'pudding-faced',<sup>32</sup> a problem that Blakemore regards to have derived from that fact that some illustrators do not read the books they illustrate. On receiving a batch of four *Keurboslaan* reprints in 1957, she writes:

The books are lovely, but I think we ought to be 'lugtig' of drawing pictures of Doktor Serfontein. No one can really draw anyone so beautiful!<sup>33</sup>

Upon hearing of the possibility that a *Keurboslaan* story may be adapted into a radio play, she is very anxious about which actor they will get to play the role of Dr Serfontein:

I was always scared of this, as if one didn't get exactly the right person for 'die hoof' it would be a disaster. If they gave the part to someone with a high, scratchy voice, I could open my main artery in the middle of Church Square! The only person I should ever consider for the part is

<sup>29</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 18 October 1958.

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 3 February 1955.

<sup>31</sup> See letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 15 February 1955.

<sup>32</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 15 February 1955.

<sup>33</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 4 November 1957.

Gideon [Roos] himself, who has just the right voice with a ripple of humour underneath!<sup>34</sup>

Blakemore's sentimental feelings about the *Keurboslaan* series and her *Keurboslaan* characters are evident from her request to Jan van Schaik to have a portrait made of Dr Serfontein's face as it was depicted on the cover jacket of the first edition of *Die hoof van Keurboslaan*:

Listen! You know that photographer you wanted me to go to? He does crayon portraits from the photos he takes. Couldn't he possibly take Montgomery's first face of Dr. Serfontein, on the first edition of Die Hoof van Kbl., photograph it and then do me a biggish crayon drawing of it – or whichever way he processes it to look like a drawing. I only want the face. The rest of the illustration is awful. But I have wanted that face to hang up for years, because all the other Kbl. books came from it. Please let me know about this. I wouldn't care what he charged.<sup>35</sup>

Blakemore said in a number of interviews, and others have often reiterated this, that her *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* characters were based on real people.<sup>36</sup> On the cover jacket of the revised edition of the *Keurboslaan* series published in the late 1950s, an extract from a letter Blakemore wrote to one of her fans was reproduced. The extract affirmed the notion that many of the characters were based on real people:

Presies hoe die Keurboslaanreeks ontstaan het, sal ek nie kan sê nie. Dis miskien aan die karakters self te danke. Dr. Serfontein het in werklikheid bestaan, ofskoon hy nie presies daardie soort skool bestuur het nie. Hy was in elke opsig die karakter wat in die boeke verskyn – miskien minder kortgebonde! Maar toe ek jonk was, het sy persoonlikheid op my 'n besonder sterk invloed uitgeoefen, en daar ek tog 'n skrywer is, moes dit eendag uitborrel. Hy was goed bekend, beide as professor en as advokaat, maar ek kan ongelukkig nie sy naam noem nie. Krynauw ook, is die werklikheid self. Ek het veel van hom geleer, selfs toe hy my leerling was. Ek het hom onlangs in Londen gesien, waar hy 'n paar jaar vertoef om verder te studeer. Hy is vandag nog, soos altyd, 'n uitstekende mens. So lewe ook al die ander

<sup>34</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 20 December 1956.

<sup>35</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 7 November 1958.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, her publisher, Jan van Schaik's comments in Malan, R. 1991. Skrywer van jeugreekse op 85 dood. *Beeld*, 5 June 1991, p. 5.

Keurboslaan-karakters in my, en ek geniet dit om hulleself (sic) hul eie probleme te laat uitwerk.<sup>37</sup>

[Precisely how the Keurboslaan series originated, I will be unable to explain. The birth of the series is perhaps to be ascribed to the characters themselves. Dr Serfontein existed in real life, although he did not manage exactly that kind of school. He was in all respects the character that appeared in the books, though he may have been a little less short-tempered! But when I was young, his personality exercised upon me a particularly strong influence, and given that I am a writer, this had to surface at some point. He was well known, both as professor and advocate, but unfortunately I cannot divulge his name. Krynauw, too is a person in real life. I learnt a lot from him, even when he was still my student. I recently met up with him in London, where he is spending a few years to further his studies. In the same way, all the other Keurboslaan characters live within me and I enjoy allowing them to sort out their own problems.]

Whereas there might have been some truth in this statement, the reality seems to have been slightly more complex. A number of Blakemore's characters were indeed based on acquaintances of hers. So, for example, the inspiration for at least two of the Maasdorp characters appeared to have been people Blakemore knew. When she wrote to Jan van Schaik in 1966 to ask him to investigate the possibilities of finding a teaching job for her daughter in South Africa, she disclosed that Mev Renton in the *Maasdorp* series, a character loathed by the readers, was based on someone she had known in Pretoria:

As Juff. Steyn is my deadly enemy (I don't really blame her, because my juff. Muller, later mev. Renton in Maasdorp is taken straight from her, and she couldn't miss it! I only made the Renton fair-haired to avoid trouble) you had better not mention that the person on behalf of whom you are enquiring is my daughter. I heard from Willem that the lady is now high up in the Department! Mind you, I didn't attack her until she had tried, with no success, to break up my music school. She made a very good fictional character in any case!<sup>38</sup>

She also admitted that yet another *Maasdorp* character may have been moulded on another acquaintance from her Pretoria years, Mrs Gey van Pittius, even if she did it 'unconsciously':

<sup>37</sup> Cover jacket of Krogh, T. 1958. *Keurboslaan se Struikrower*. Second Print. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

<sup>38</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Blakemore dated 8 December 1966.

[O]ne's children take advice from anyone else in the world, except One. Dis jammer hulle kon nie almal ou mev. Malan as 'n ma hē nie. There was one like her in Pretoria – Mrs. Gey van Pittius – not the Judge's wife, but mother of Johann who use to play the violin. Anneke Reitz, has always accused me of copying her for mev. Malan's character. Perhaps I did unconsciously...<sup>39</sup>

Yet it would seem that her more complex characters and lead characters, such as Eugene Krynauw and Roelof Serfontein, were entirely fictional characters, taking on some attributes from people she had known and respected. Blakemore did indicate that the character of Dr Serfontein was to some extent inspired by her feelings for someone she had once known:

Perhaps I did unconsciously, just as, in a way, I took something from Paul Zorn for Doktor Serfontein. Only in a way. Paul was always gentle. A darling, he was. He taught me English for Matric, and I use to stare at him open-mouthed, and blush and drop dead when he looked at me. Thank God I am not young anymore! But Paul would have been gently amused at the thought that he gave me so many books and that I myself get such a kick out of them.<sup>40</sup>

Paul Zorn may have influenced the outline of the character of Dr Serfontein, but it is also clear that she used the characteristics of others to fill out the personality of Dr Serfontein. So for example, she once wrote that the only person who could do Roelof Serfontein's voice was Gideon Roos from the SABC.<sup>41</sup>

In October 1960, Jan van Schaik sent her a newspaper clipping about 'the well known Dr Krynauw who made quite a name for himself as a brain specialist'.<sup>42</sup> She replied by stating that she was sure that no-one would ever believe her when she says that when 'her' Krynauw was 'born, I had never heard of the flesh-and-blood one!'.<sup>43</sup> Of course, the person on whom she moulded this character did not need to have had the same surname to exist! Yet, it is strange that she did not tell Jan van Schaik in this letter anything more about from where she got the inspiration for the character of Krynauw. Based on her letters, and taking at least

<sup>39</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 9 October 1967.

<sup>40</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 9 October 1967.

<sup>41</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 20 December 1956.

<sup>42</sup> Letter to Stella Blakemore from Jan van Schaik dated 24 October 1960.

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Blakemore dated 2 November 1960.

part of the cover jacket text seriously, it is possible that Krynauw was loosely modelled on the person of a family friend of the Blakemore's, Jacob van Wyk de Vries, who later lived in London to further his career in music.

Thus, it is clear that the person who inspired the character of Roelof Serfontein was not – as she claimed on the cover jacket of *Gevare op Keurboslaan* – ‘a well-known professor and advocate’, nor was Jacob van Wyk de Vries, who probably served as inspiration for the character Krynauw, a medical doctor or a brain surgeon.

Based on the above, it is argued that some of Blakemore's larger than life characters were indeed inspired by people she had known and admired. Nonetheless, these characters were not true renditions of the persons that inspired them as she had sometimes claimed. Rather, in characters such as Dr Serfontein and Eugene Krynauw, she tried to capture the kernel or essence of the real life person that provided the inspiration, but added to that many characteristics from other people as well as a great deal of purely fictional elements through embroidering on her characters' backgrounds, appearances and personal qualities. At the same time, the majority of her other characters were purely fictitious.

Blakemore planned to write a great number more *Keurboslaan* books than she actually did. Originally, she wanted the series to finish with a final book in which Dr Serfontein's son – presumably Richard – would take over the school.<sup>44</sup> From what she wrote about the *Keurboslaan* series it is clear that she derived much pleasure from writing these books and that both the characters and the setting gave her joy. This is at least one of the reasons why she often tried to persuade her publishers to allow her to write more *Keurboslaan* books or to expand the series into another one:

The new Kbl. title, *Kaptein Richard*, will be posted on Monday next. You might like to call it 'Die eerste Richard Serfontein' book. There will be about five in that series. I like this one very much, but then I am always happy in the *Keurboslaan* air.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Letter to J.L. van Schaik from Stella Blakemore dated 11 September 1947.

<sup>45</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 23 November 1954.



On top of that, though, in what is quintessential Blakemore, her motives for keeping the *Keurboslaan* series and the Serfontein family alive was closely linked to the way in which producing more books could improve her financial situation:

The kbl. book is being sent off by registered letter post tomorrow... It is called *Kaptein Richard* and is either to be regarded as another Kbl book, or the first of five 'Richard Serfontein' books I am going to write. In fact, I have them all roughly drafted, but of course the market cannot take them as fast as that! I am also doing a series of Berrie Serfontein books, but these will be adventure books – not school-stories exactly. I think of calling it 'Die Berrie Serfontein Avontuur-reeks'. I have struck a patch of writing, perhaps because of the quantities of letters I have been getting lately. In any case, I must admit to be doing it with some thought of getting money for a venture – as well as for pleasure, of course.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

Blakemore's reflections on her writing indicates that the relationship between popular fiction writing and the market economy is more complex and less singular than it is often rendered in scholarship on the subject. The research demonstrate that Blakemore took her craft as a writer serious, and whilst she was acutely aware of market desires and the fact that her writing was not regarded as 'literary', she brought to her craft a certain amount of dignity and integrity. This is most evident in her relationship with her characters. In some ways, this finding challenges the binary opposition between popular fiction and high literature. Blakemore's novels display most of the characteristics of formulaic school stories. Yet, she produces rounded characters with a great amount of depth.

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<sup>46</sup> Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 29 November 1954.