

Narrating the 'nation':

Cultural production, political community and young Afrikaans readers

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¹ Information obtained from Steyn (1992:10).

² Data from Steyn (1992: 9-10) and based on articles that appeared in *Die Volksblad* on 4 April 1936, *Die Burger* on 2 December 1935, and *Die Vaderland* on 21 June 1935.

³ Malherbe 1932: 132

⁴ Ibid, p. 131-135

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between literature and society against the background of the emergence in the 1930s and 1940s in South Africa of a form of Afrikaner nationalism that was spearheaded by members of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia and a subsequent expansion in Afrikaans literary production. It addresses problems of explanation in Afrikaner nationalism by focusing attention on the question of culture, the field of imagination and the domain of everyday life. In particular, the study examines the *Keurboslaan* series - a series of schoolboy stories aimed at juvenile readers - by Stella Blakemore, and traces the production, circulation and critical reception of the twenty titles in the series. The first title in this series was published in 1941 and the series has been reprinted several times over a number of decades and as recently as 1997.

Drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson, this study illuminates the link between the emergence of print capitalism and the production of popular fiction on the one hand and nationalism on the other. Whilst this is a link that is not often explored, an analysis of the *Keurboslaan* series illustrates that the study of popular fiction can illuminate the practices through which nationalism gains popular support.

It is argued that the *Keurboslaan* series produced a narrative of the Afrikaner 'nation' in popular fiction, but that this narrative was not authenticated by the intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie who were the driving forces behind Afrikaner nationalism and its contents. It is further argued that this 'narrative of nation' circulated alongside more official narratives of the 'nation' espoused in discourses of religion, science and literature published in Afrikaans. The narrative of 'nation' in *Keurboslaan* – whilst sharing many similarities with official narratives in other discourses – but also differs from those discourses in important respects. It is argued that the popular series was influential precisely because it imagined the Afrikaner 'nation' in very different ways and on different terms from those discourses. Moreover, the form in which this narrative was produced, that is popular youth literature, appealed to readers of Afrikaans who were in search of escapist fiction. For these readers, the *Keurboslaan* series helped to give shape to and created new possibilities for interpreting the world that they inhabited.

Reading the school as a corollary of the 'nation', it is argued that the narrative of the nation in *Keurboslaan* series explores the boundaries between the self and the other

and posits the self as a danger to the self, resulting in an emphasis on the need to discipline the self. This kind of analysis also creates the space for examining in what ways ideas and identities about 'race', gender, sexuality, class and 'nation' are constructed in the texts.

Yet, the study maintains that whilst the *Keurboslaan* series contributed to creating a space in which a particular understanding of the self and the world becomes possible, and whereas the reader is not conceived of as a completely free agent that can derive simply any meaning from the text, the study and its theoretical underpinnings do not fully account for individual readers' engagement with popular texts and the ways in which reading strategies and habits can generate different, ambiguous or inconclusive meanings for readers. It is suggested that a study of popular texts and Afrikaner nationalism employing theories of reading and the reader will complement this analysis.

Key words: youth literature, children's literature, popular fiction, Stella Blakemore, Afrikaner nationalism, J.L. van Schaik publishers, apartheid, class, Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, Benedict Anderson, Louis Althusser, Charles Taylor, Michel de Certeau, organic intellectual, Maasdorp series, Keurboslaan series, sexuality, race, gender, formula books.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie ondersoek die verband tussen literatuur en samelewing teen die agtergrond van die opkoms in die 1930s en 1940s van Afrikaner nasionalisme, aangevoer deur die lede van die Afrikaner *petit bourgeoisie* en intelligentsia, en die gepaardgaande uitbreiding van Afrikaanse literêre produksie. In die besonder het hierdie studie dan ten doel om probleme wat bestaan met betrekking tot die verduideliking van die verskynsel van Afrikaner-nasionalisme die hoof te bied. Dit word gedoen deur die kwessie van kultuur op die voorgrond te bring, en deur die alledaagse en die verbeeldingswêreld te belig. Die studie handel oor die *Keurboslaan*-reeks, 'n reeks skoolseunstories, gemik op die jeugdige Afrikaanse leser, geskryf deur Stella Blakemore. Die studie speur die produksie, verspreiding en kritiese ontvangs van die tekste na. Die eerste titel in die reeks het in 1941 verskyn, en die reeks is telkemale heruitgegee, tot so onlangs as 1997.

Na aanleiding van Benedict Anderson se werk oor die nasie as verbeelde gemeenskap, fokus hierdie studie op die verband tussen die opkoms van druk-

kapitalisme en die produksie van populêre fiksie aan die een kant en nasionalisme aan die ander. Hoewel hierdie verband nie dikwels die fokus van ondersoek is nie, wys die studie van die *Keurboslaan*-reeks dat akademiese ondersoek na populêre fiksie ons kennis van die wyses waarop en praktyke waardeur nasionalisme populêre steun verwerf kan verdiep.

Die argument wat in die studie uiteengesit word is dat die *Keurboslaan*-reeks 'n narratief van nasie geproduseer het, maar een wat nie goedgekeur is deur die intelligentsia en lede van die *petit bourgeoisie* wat die beweging rondom Afrikaner-nasionalisme aangevoer het nie. Hierdie narratief van nasie het dan naas ander, meer amptelike, narratiewe van nasie gesirkuleer. Hoewel die narratief van nasie soos vergestalt in die *Keurboslaan*-reeks in groot ooreenkomste getoon het met meer amptelike diskoerse oor nasie, het dit ook in belangrike opsigte daarvan verskil. Die argument word gevoer dat die reeks populêr was juis omdat dit die Afrikaner 'nasie' verbeeld het op maniere wat anders was en wat in terme van die grondliggende aannames verskil het van die meer amptelike narratiewe van nasie wat in diskoerse van wetenskap, godsdiens en literatuur geproduseer is. Die spesifieke vorm wat hierdie narratief aangeneem, naamlik populêre fiksie vir kinders of jeugdiges, het lesers wat juis op daardie stadium 'n behoefte gehad het aan ontsnappingsliteratuur aangestaan. Vir hierdie lesers het die *Keurboslaan*-reeks daartoe bygedra om moontlikhede te vorm en te skep om die wêreld waarin hulle leef op nuwe maniere te interpreteer.

Die skool word gelees as die simboliese teenhanger van die 'nasie' en daar word daarop gewys dat die narratief van nasie in die *Keurboslaan*-reeks die grense tussen die self en die ander ondersoek, en dat die self voorgestel word as 'n gevaar vir die self, wat dan lei tot die beklemtoning van die belangrikheid van self-dissipline. Hierdie tipe analise skep ruimte om die wyse waarop 'ras', gender, seksualiteit, klas en 'nasie' in die tekste gekonstrueer word te ondersoek.

Hoewel die studie voorhou dat die *Keurboslaan*-reeks bygedra het om 'n ruimte te skep waarin 'n spesifieke perspektief op die wêreld en die self moontlik word, en hoewel die leser nie nie voorgehou word as 'n radikaal-vrye agent wat bloot enige betekenis uit die teks kan ontsluit nie, kan die studie en die teoretiese basis waarop dit gebou is steeds nie genoegsaam verduidelik hoe individuele lesers met populêre tekste omgaan en hoedat verskillende leesstrategieë en -gewoontes verskillende betekenis vir lesers kan ontsluit nie. 'n Studie oor die verband tussen populêre tekste en Afrikaner-

nasionalisme wat gebruik maak van teorieë oor lees en oor die leser, sal die argument wat hier uiteengesit is dus op besondere wyse aanvul.

Sleuteltermes: jeuglektuur, kinderliteratuur, kinderlektuur, populêre fiksie, Stella Blakemore, Afrikaner-nasionalisme, nasionalisme, J.L. van Schaik-uitgewers, apartheid, klas, Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, Benedict Anderson, Charles Taylor, Louis Althusser, Michel de Certeau, organiese intellektueel, Maasdorp-reeks, Keurboslaan-reeks, 'ras', gender, seksualiteit, reeksboeke.

I never can thank Providence enough for the Maasdorp and [Keurboslaan] characters, who found me rather than I found them. With all my faults as a writer, the characters live for us all.

Stella Blakemore, letter to Jan van Schaik dated 7 February 1959

Merkwaardig hoe al die volke wat eers nooit met mekaar in aanraking gekom het nie, hul emosionele ondervindings in byna dieselfde woorde uit.

[Remarkable how nations that have never had any contact with each other express their emotional experiences in almost the same words.]

Mr Schoonbee, *Jong dr. Serfontein*

Nationality, 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...

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (1991:6).

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

PART I:

Preface

Introduction and research design

In April 2001, reports surfaced in South African newspapers that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) had made public a list of authors and titles that it deemed unsuitable as prescribed works for schools in the province. Among the texts listed were Nadine Gordimer's acclaimed *July's People*, as well as works by Alan Paton, Njabule Ndebele, William Shakespeare, Peter Wilhelm and Olive Schreiner (Nieuwoudt 2001).

Newspapers reported that the GDE found Gordimer's novel to be unacceptable on the grounds that it was 'deeply racist, superior and patronising' (Isaacson 2001) and projected a vision of a future South Africa that never materialised (SAPA 2001). The media reports caused a huge outcry from the public, literary figures and politicians, locally as well as abroad (Rademeyer 2001). Since the first reports were very unclear about the specifics of the case, the popular impression was that the GDE debacle was part of a decision of the ANC government to ban particular texts from set reading lists for schools (Matshikiza 2001). It soon became evident, though, that some facts were overlooked in the way in which events were reported in the media. It emerged that the recommendation to exclude certain books from the set work list was made by a selection committee in the Gauteng Department of Education, comprising of experienced (and mostly white) language and literature teachers, and had not yet been ratified by the Department.

The national government was quick to point out that the report's status was unconfirmed and that the recommendations contained in the report had not been endorsed by the Minister of Education. Gauteng MEC responsible for education, Ignatius Jacobs, distanced himself from the events, stating that 'learners should be subjected to a broad variety of literary styles and traditions and [that it was] important to ensure that learners develop the ability to critically understand and evaluate what they are reading' (SAPA 2001).

The debate carried on further on radio and television talk shows and in contributions to newspaper letter pages. International newspapers, including *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, too carried stories about the incident on their cover pages or in editorials (Coetzee 2001). Some commentators raised ghosts from the pasts by

equating the recommendations of the GDE report with the kind of censorship prevalent under National Party rule (see Van Vuuren 2001) and others hinted to continuities between the present dispensation and apartheid, pointing out that three of Gordimer's books were banned by the previous government.

The kind of debate that ensued and the terms in which it was articulated are fairly familiar in the South African context, since it is symptomatic of so many debates currently taking place. While it is true that reports on the GDE set works debacle were somewhat sensationalist, it could also be argued that is characteristic of a style of journalism that is becoming the norm in South African media reporting. Debates about media ownership and questions about whose interests the media actually represent are ongoing and legitimate. Considering the report and recommendations of the GDE committee, it should be noted that this incident is inscribed in a larger social framework. South Africa's history of discrimination, oppressions and violence justified on the grounds of race and the need to remedy this legacy has marked current society with a preoccupation with issues of race and a fear of and disdain for anything that smacks of racism. It is therefore quite conceivable, though highly disturbing, that a committee comprising of experienced (and predominantly white) teachers could reach the aforementioned conclusions about the works of some respected authors. While therefore offering us an interesting snapshot of contesting and unintended consequences of public debates in the current historical moment, this is not the focus of this study, but a lens through which to examine some of the questions raised in this thesis.

Underlying arguments in the set work debate, was a central belief in what is articulated here as the power yielded by the text. In particular, then, two seemingly opposing viewpoints underpinned this debate. The first of these, exemplified by the committee's findings, is the belief that literature is somehow dangerous or corruptive; that texts displaying particular characteristics can be detrimental to a particular project (such as non-racialism or, for that matter, nationalism). The second viewpoint, voiced by most of the opponents of the GDE report, is that there exists something like good literature and that good literary texts have some formative properties that can instil in its readers particular skills or qualities (such as the ability to think critically) and values (such as human rights). Thus, the question raised in this debate is not whether or not particular texts can produce certain 'effects' on the reader, but, rather, a disagreement about what – in the context of post-apartheid South Africa – the desired effects of texts ought to be and which texts will best achieve these effects.

The furore that ensued when a committee of the GDE attempted to purge from a set list for schools 'undesirable' titles invoked South Africa's recent past. The repressive Apartheid state too subscribed to the belief in the power of the text and used extensive mechanisms to control and limit the circulation of books. Yet, the incident as well as questions arising from it are not peculiar to South Africa and have been a central feature of modern societies both past and present. Debates on the relationship between literature and society form the basis of an extensive scholarship, which takes many different forms depending on the discipline from which it is studied and includes questions on the qualities of the 'good' book; the way in which reading can develop socialisation skills; the extent to which literature mirrors society or is a mechanism of social control; the values texts display and the ways in which texts support or undermine racism, sexism and class bias; and so forth. This study speaks to this body of scholarship and attempts to explore relations between popular fiction and the peculiar form of nationalism that led to the taking of power by the National Party in 1948 and the formation of the apartheid state. The study focuses on the *Keurboslaan* series, a series of twenty titles written by Stella Blakemore under the nom de plume Theunis Krogh.

There are important differences between the present study and the debates sparked by the GDE recommendations with regard to set works. First, this is a study on popular fiction and the formula book and not of 'high' literature by acclaimed authors. Second, this study is located in a different historical period, namely the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s and the seizure of political power by the National Party government in 1948. However, the GDE debate raises two sets of questions that underpin the research reported on here.

The first of these questions pertains to a broader inquiry into the relationship between literature and society, or, phrased differently, the practice of reading and the shaping of individual subjectivities. The widely held belief in the power of the text to mould is examined and the way in which this belief can be theorised and understood in terms of a theory of reading, writing, meaning-making and identity formation is explored. It can therefore be described as a study into the 'potentialities of texts as social actors', a phrase borrowed from Isabel Hofmeyr, and the way in which the practice of reading can contribute to the creation of particular kinds of subjectivity.

There is a second set of questions raised by the GDE incident that are too pertinent to this study. These are questions about nationalism and the way in which nations are made or come into being. Evidently, for some actors in the set book debacle the important questions were which books South African children ought to read in order to turn them into good South Africans, what values define the South African nation, and, finally, which authors would best convey these values in their texts? For others, the debate was more about fears of a perceived *nationalist* cleansing of the curriculum of white authors. Both of these approaches direct us back to the question of the 'nation' and nationalism. In particular, the present study looks at the birth and development of Afrikaner nationalism and the various mechanisms through which the 'idea' of Afrikaner nationalism found popular support. Nationalism is described as 'one of the most powerful forces in the modern world' by a key text (Hutchinson & Smith 1994:3), but is a phenomenon that defies an easy definition, since the phenomenon seems to be manifested in what can be described as nationalisms rather than a single form:

The field of nationalist phenomena, which includes the growth of nations and the national state, as well as ethnic identity and community, is vast and ramified. It spills over in any number of cognate subjects: race and racism, fascism, language development, political religion, communalism, ethnic conflict, international law, protectionism, minorities, gender, immigration, genocide. The forms that nationalism takes have been kaleidoscopic: religious, conservative, liberal, fascist, communist, cultural, political, protectionist, integrationist, separatist, irredentist, diaspora, pan, etc. (Hutchinson & Smith 1994: 3).

In relation to Afrikaner nationalism, this study argues that various regimes of discourse were circulated that articulated or promoted a specific representation of the Afrikaner and that imagined the Afrikaner 'nation' in a particular way. Such regimes of discourse included the discourse of science, the discourse of the Volksmoeder (i.e. a discourse of gender), and a discourse of religion. This study asks questions about the strategies through which the nation was imagined in the discourse of fiction. Its focus is therefore not on the formation of the apartheid state, but rather on the construction of a particular subjectivity, i.e. an Afrikaner subjectivity. This study is therefore situated in the broader inquiry into the 'questions of the cultural and structural matrix in which the consciousness of ordinary South Africans are forged' (Bozzoli 1987:1) and is closely linked to the issue of Afrikaner nationalism. In particular, it explores the shaping of the consciousness of an upwardly mobile strata of white Afrikaans-speakers and the broadening and expansion of the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie during the 1940s. It

does so by looking at the connections between 'class formation and community formation' (Bozzoli 1987:8). Bozzoli argues that

[u]nderstanding community-formation in the city is thus a matter of understanding the middle class as much as the 'lower' classes; of perceiving the operation of ideology as much as of economics. What the intelligentsia has to offer depends on what is available to them – whether, for example, they are themselves immigrants, with a range of imported ideas, or whether they too have experienced local conditions, have been long urbanised, have a 'feel' for the locality' (Bozzoli 1987:33)

The study, then, intends to speak to questions about the relationship between literature and society and fiction and nationalism. Beyond that, however, three other features focus and situate the research more specifically. First, the research focus explicitly on reading popular fiction as a practice of the everyday life within the realm of leisure activities associated with the pleasure or joy of reading. Second, the study follows an interdisciplinary approach. Third, it explores the characteristics of popular fiction for children.

Many theorists have shown that the formation of Afrikaner identity was contested and fragmented (see O'Meara 1983, Posel 1991, and Alexander 2000). The processes through which the formation of an Afrikaner identity was fashioned have been well documented (see, for example, Moodie 1975, O'Meara 1983, Kruger 1991, and Hofmeyr 1987). A number of these studies highlight the role played by particular symbolic events, representations and institutions, for example religion and the institution of the church, or the centenary of the Great Trek celebration with the 1938 symbolic ox wagon trek (Moodie 1975, McClintock 1993). Diverting from this tradition, the focus of this study is on more micro-level events, the everyday and routine. Thus, the present study follows in the tradition of studies on Afrikaner nationalism with a particular focus on everyday life, such as the work of Kruger (1991) and Brink (1986, 1987).

The research topic raises particular methodological and theoretical questions, which include: How does fiction (or text in general) as a type of discourse work? What is the link between reading a text and the formation of a particular kind of subjectivity? How does one theorise social agency and the extent to which subjects are able to and do resist power relations? How is the notion of social agency linked to understandings of reading and writing? How does one measure the social impact of a text? What is the relationship between popular fiction and Afrikaner nationalism? To answer these

questions the study undertaken here speaks to and cuts across vast bodies of literature, notably that of sociology of literature, historiography, cultural studies, library and information sciences, psychology and political studies. As such, it engages debates on the tenability of distinctions between 'high' literature and popular fiction and between literature and children's literature as well as issues related to identity formation and the construction of subjectivities; educational approaches to literature; the notion of the 'good' book; the making of Afrikaner identity; accounts of the development of Afrikaner nationalism and, ultimately, literatures on the origin and nature of the apartheid state and nationalism in general, to name but a few. Hence, the scope of the study necessitates an interdisciplinary approach.

The present study explores the field of popular fiction for children, specifically the formula book aimed at the juvenile reader. It is argued that popular fiction for children share most of the characteristics of popular fiction for adults, such as the detective novel and romance. Nonetheless, children's literature as a field of study has developed a scholarship in its own right, and the study draws on these resources in addition to classical works on popular fiction.

Theoretically and methodologically this study is indebted to scholars from different intellectual traditions. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* frame this study, which investigates the way in which discourses of the nation and modernity are inscribed and circulated in the *Keurboslaan* series of Stella Blakemore. In addition, the study draws on aspects of the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci and Michel de Certeau. Central to this study is the importance of following a methodological and theoretical approach that goes beyond an internal reading of the text. Thus, the focus is on a theoretical framework that bridges the gap between Romantic studies of the author and his or her world, the text-centred (discourse) analysis approach so ubiquitous in cultural studies, and the more sociological inquiries into the production, distribution and consumption of texts, which is prominent in communication studies and sociology. It is here that Pierre Bourdieu's work is useful, as it departs from the idea that discourse analysis in itself can cast light on how texts work – that is on the way in which texts produce meaning and social effects - and instead places emphasis on studying the conditions of production and utilisation of texts in addition to the text itself. Linked to this, Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* provides us with a way in which to pose questions about the author Stella Blakemore and her world. This study is also indebted to a structuralist legacy. The work of Louis Althusser is of relevance in two ways. First, his method of symptomatic reading is the approach

used here to analyse the texts. Second, whilst acknowledging theoretical shortcomings, this study argues for a more sympathetic reading of Althusser's notion of the interpellation of the subject through discourse, which – when read together with the work of Michel de Certeau – does provide us with a fairly nuanced description of the way in which discourse (in this case, texts) work through a process of hailing *and* recognition. Bourdieu (through the notion of *habitus*) and De Certeau (through the tactics of 'making do') reclaim space for agency, but in both cases, the type of agency that they articulate is (deliberately) limited. Bourdieu's *habitus* provides for the author a field of possibilities, whilst De Certeau gives us a novel way to think about the reader, and reminds us that people are not fools. Central themes addressed by these scholars are the issue of power (Foucault, Althusser, De Certeau, Bourdieu), culture (Bourdieu and Anderson), social agency (Bourdieu, De Certeau, Gramsci), and class analysis (Bourdieu, Anderson and Althusser).

The primary research question addressed in this study is: what is the relationship between popular fiction and Afrikaner nationalism with specific reference to the *Keurboslaan* series. Secondary research questions are: How is the Afrikaner nation imagined in and through the *Keurboslaan* series? How can an analysis of the *Keurboslaan* series in relation to Afrikaner nationalism enrich present understandings of Afrikaner nationalism and existing scholarship on popular fiction in Afrikaans?

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Situate an analysis of the relationship between the *Keurboslaan* series and Afrikaner nationalism within debates on Afrikaner nationalism and the Apartheid state and to examine the way in which debates on Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state have evolved in disciplines other than the literary to highlight the gaps and to show ways in which current debates can be augmented by findings from literary studies.
- Explore the relationship between nationalism in fiction through Benedict Anderson's notion of the nation as an imagined community through an analysis of the strategies through which the texts in the *Keurboslaan* series imagine the nation and by comparing those strategies with ones employed in other regimes of discourse.

- Follow in a particular tradition of studying the cultural domain in terms of the everyday and the ordinary, and to highlight the way in which this kind of approach can provide a different take on existing theory.
- Theorise the relationship between literature and society through making use of specific notions of social agency, power, and ideology.
- Examine popular children's fiction as an area of academic study.
- Link analyses of the production and dissemination of texts to textual analysis as part of a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature.

The study comprises of five parts. The structure of each of these parts is briefly outlined below.

Part I: Preface

Part I comprises of the Introduction and Chapter One. The Introduction outlines the aims and objectives of the study, whilst *Chapter One* introduces the *Keurboslaan* series and its fictional setting, provides a brief summary of some of the story lines in selected titles and presents the main characters.

Part II: Theoretical Reflections

Part II grounds the study theoretically and includes three components, on Afrikaner nationalism, popular fiction and children's literature respectively. *Chapter Two* provides an overview of debates on the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state and includes a section on the work of Benedict Anderson, which traces the relationship between nationalism and texts. *Chapter Three* focuses on popular fiction and the methodological problems encountered in this field. *Chapter Four* offers a brief overview of the academic field of study of children's literature and its history. In addition, an overview is provided of the formula series, the school story and the way in which children's literature has been studied in South Africa.

Part III: The making of the Keurboslaan series

Part III is dedicated to issues around the production of the *Keurboslaan* series, and includes an overview of the Afrikaans publishing industry and reading public, a discussion on the reception of the *Keurboslaan* series by critics, and an overview of the life and thoughts of the series' author Stella Blakemore. *Chapter Five* traces the social history of the period in which the *Keurboslaan* series is published. Among the developments discussed are those in the field of Afrikaans literary production, the development of the Afrikaans publishing industry, and the political climate following the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 as well as the social phenomenon that became known as the 'poor white' problem. *Chapter Six* centres on the way in which the *Keurboslaan* series was produced, disseminated and received by critics and the public. *Chapter Seven* examines the biography of Stella Blakemore, the author of *Keurboslaan* who wrote under the *nom de plume* Theunis Krogh, and her motivations for writing the series.

Part IV: Discourse in Keurboslaan

Chapter Eight explores the different ways in which the *Keurboslaan* series played a role in imagining the nation and focuses on the way in which the self is presented as a danger to the self in the discourse of *Keurboslaan*. *Chapter Nine* comprises of a comparison between the *Keurboslaan* series (an example of a discourse of fiction) and selected volumes from the *Tweede Trek* series (an example of a discourse of science) in order to show how these discourses employed different strategies for articulating a largely similar discourse. Particular attention is paid to the discourse of sex, sexuality and the body.

Part V: Synopsis

The concluding section of the study summarises the main findings, allude to the limitations of the study, and indicate fruitful avenues for further research.

The decision to focus on the *Keurboslaan* series was motivated by a number of factors, including its popularity. Written by Stella Blakemore, who also authored the *Maasdorp* series for girls, these were the first formula books for children in Afrikaans and found wide popular acclaim. Though both series remained popular throughout the rest of the century, by the 1950s they had been overtaken in popularity by Topsy Smith's *Trompie*

and *Saartjie* series. The *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* series were published in a very interesting period in terms of South African history and were among some of the first children's books to be written in Afrikaans. Whereas it is true that *Maasdorp* was more popular than *Keurboslaan*, at least in terms of sales figures, the decision to focus on the series for boys was based on the fact that both boys and girls read the latter while only girls read the former. The high sales figures for the *Maasdorp*-series can, in part, be ascribed to the fact that one of the titles in the series, *Allegra op Maasdorp*, was prescribed for schools for a number of years. Finally, the persona of the author, Stella Blakemore, and her complex relationship with South Africa proved to be intriguing and worthy of a dedicated study in itself.

Two more caveats are required to ensure conceptual clarity before the argument is presented in the remainder of the chapters. The first is that the term nation as employed in this study, unless otherwise stated, generally refers to the notion of a political community, rather than to the specific form of nation linked to the process of industrialisation and the emergence of the nation-state. The second is that the terms 'youth literature', 'juvenile fiction' and any others terms used to refer to the target readership of the *Keurboslaan* series are understood to be part of and subsumed within the broader rubric 'children's literature', which is more frequently used in this study.

Chapter One:

Stepping into *Keurboslaan's* world

Introduction

This chapter offers an introductory overview of the book series that is the topic of this study. In particular, the chapter reviews the publication history of the series, introduces the setting and founding history of the Keurboslaan College for Boys as portrayed in the narrative, and present central characters in the series. In addition, summaries of the narrative plots of a selection of titles in the series are included to demonstrate the narrative structure and general thematic of the series in order to provide readers of this study access to the world of *Keurboslaan*.

Characteristic of the *Keurboslaan* series is the way in which the different volumes in the series together form a self-enclosed and self-referential world held together through the passing of time, linkages and connections between family relations across generations, and a set of chore characters.

Setting and founding history of the Keurboslaan College for Boys

This study concerns itself with the *Keurboslaan* series, a collection of children's books published between 1941 and 1971 in Afrikaans by J.L. van Schaik publishers in Pretoria. The *Keurboslaan* series is one of very few examples of the boarding school story genre in popular fiction for children written in Afrikaans. The author of the series was Stella Blakemore, who published the novels under the *nom de plume* Theunis Krogh. *Keurboslaan* books proved to be so popular that the series was reprinted several times over a number of decades and as recently as 1996 and 1997 six of the titles in the series were published in omnibus form in two volumes. Blakemore was also the author of a series of children's books about a boarding school for girls called the *Maasdorp* series. The *Maasdorp* series was perhaps even more popular than the *Keurboslaan* books and was published under her own name.

Keurboslaan College for Boys, described in the novels as the first and only Afrikaans private school for boys, is a fictitious institution situated on the outskirts of an equally fictitious small town called Keurboslaan. The town is said to lie on the highveld in the

mountainous area that used to be called the Eastern Transvaal in close proximity to both the South Africa-Swaziland border and the Komati valley. According to the novels, the little town is renowned for its beauty, peacefulness and fresh, humid air (Krogh 1945:25). The school's students are mainly drawn from Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand. As Keurboslaan tradition dictates, all pupils meet in Johannesburg at the start of each term from where they travel by train to the town of Breyten and from there another few hours by bus before they reach the school.

The *Keurboslaan* series has as its central character the enigmatic doctor Roelof Serfontein, the school principal, who is not only extremely attractive and from one of the most distinguished Afrikaans families in Johannesburg, but also widely respected for his remarkable achievements. These include matriculating at the age of thirteen, obtaining two PhDs simultaneously from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, representing his country on national level in sport, and being a world-acclaimed and many times translated novelist who publishes concurrently in Afrikaans and English.

The school's founding history plays an important role in the narrative and is often referred to in the texts. The College was originally established by the eccentric Mister Schoonbee, an intellectual and a dreamer who understood very little about the demands of school management but felt that he had to create an opportunity for Afrikaans speaking boys to attend a good school in which teaching takes place through the medium of Afrikaans. Under Mister Schoonbee's management, the school was poorly resourced, struggled to survive and produced exceptionally poor results. Yet, despite these failings, parents were reluctant to move their children out of the school, because of their commitment to the cause of a private school for Afrikaners and a concern that the school should not be forced to close:

Die seuns wat by hom op skool is, is almal die kinders van professionele mans of ryk boere wat werklik verlang om te sien dat hierdie een Afrikaanse privaat-skool nie ten gronde sal gaan nie, en dus maar die hoë skoolgeld betaal en hul seuns jaar-in en jaar-uit daar hou, ofskoon die jaarlikse uitslag by die Junior-sertifikaat en Matriek alles behalwe bevredigend is. Dit het inderdaad byna nooit gebeur dat iemand in Matriek slaag nie (Krogh 1945:26).

[The boys who are with him at school are all children of professional men or rich farmers sincerely wishing to see that this one Afrikaans private school does not go down, and who are prepared to pay the high school fees and

keep their sons in the school, year in and year out, even if their junior certificates and matric leave much to be desired. In fact, hardly anyone has ever passed matric.]

In *Jong Dr. Serfontein*, Oscar Wienand, a senior student at the school, explains that the parents of Keurboslaan pupils felt that they had to support the school despite the many problems simply because it was the only Afrikaans private school in the country (Krogh 1945:11). In the revised edition of this title, the reluctance of parents to move their children to better schools is explicitly tied to the fact that the school was established as a project to provide quality schooling in Afrikaans to children of 'volksleiers'.⁵ Moving one's children to another school was seen to be an acknowledgement that the project had failed, which would expose Afrikaners to mockery from English speaking South Africans. Wienand articulates this concern as follows:

Dit [die skool] bestaan al 'n tiental jaar en dit gaan net agteruit. Daar was altyd 'n soort privaatskool hier vir plaaslike mense se paar kinders, maar met die pad na Mosambiek het meer mense gekom, en toe die provinsiale skool hier op die dorp ontstaan het, het meneer Schoonbee opgedaag en dié plek gekoop om dit 'n kosskool vir 'seuns van die volksleiers' te maak. Maar hy's 'n ou dromer, ou Skootjie, en my pa sê hy't dit aangepak sonder die geringste benul van wat dit kos om so iets aan die gang te hou... Ons ouers meen hulle moet volhou omdat die doel so goed was en hulle wil nie hê die Engelse moet ons spot nie (Krogh 1980:11).

[The school has been in existence for a few decades but it is deteriorating. There has always been a sort of private school here for the locals' kids, but with the road to Mozambique more people came, and when the provincial school was established in town, Mr. Schoonbee came and bought this place to turn it into a hostel catering for the sons of the leaders of the nation. But he's an old dreamer, old Skootjie, and my dad says he tackled it without having the faintest idea how to sustain something like this... Our parents feel they should persevere because of the good for which it was intended and because they don't want the English to make a mockery of us.]

Given that that the school's historical trajectory frames many of the narratives, the founding history of the school is summarised in brief below.

⁵ 'Volksleiers' can be translated as 'leaders of the people', in this case it is meant to refer to 'leaders of the Afrikaner people'

In *Jong Dr. Serfontein*, chronologically the first novel in the series though it was only the sixth book to be published, the principal of Keurboslaan College for Boys, which has sixty boys enrolled, is Mr Schoonbee. The state of affairs seems to be dismal, with the boys being described as unkempt and dirty and examination results as disastrous. Reasons given for the school's poor academic record are poor discipline and incompetent teachers, both consequences of a lack of funds. Since Keurboslaan is a private school, it cannot afford to pay teachers more than half of what they are generally paid in government schools. Moreover, the school does not have a pension fund. As a result, the school does not attract the best of the teaching corps and the staff comprises of teachers that are either under-qualified or unqualified or have health problems of some sort or are unable to secure employment in a government school. Mister Schoonbee, the principal, is not a practical man, and therefore not in a position to resolve any of the school's problems. When readers are first introduced to him, he is a seventy-five year old man dedicated to completing his life work, which is a book based on his own research about the myths, legends and fairytales of the nations of the world and the remarkable similarities between stories told in different countries and by different peoples. Given that Mr Schoonbee is no longer able to implement the necessary changes at the school - and perhaps never has been able to do so - and with facilities rapidly falling into disrepair, it is evident from the first few pages of *Jong Dr Serfontein* that some kind of intervention is urgently needed. The person who unexpectedly arrives to step and carry the load is a young man named Roelof Serfontein.

In *Jong Dr Serfontein*, readers are introduced to Roelof Serfontein who has just returned from Europe. In all the books in the series space is devoted to a description of his appearance. He is always portrayed as tall and very attractive with narrow hips, broad shoulders, dark eyes and dark hair:

Hy is nog langer as Martin – ses voet twee duim. Hy het die breë skouers en smal heupe van 'n atleet, en dis verstaanbaar, want hy wy daaglik minstens drie uur aan swaar liggaamsoefeninge en enige soort sport waarvoor daar geleentheid is. Volgens sy aanbiddende susters het hy, om Leonie se eenvoudige uitdrukking te gebruik, 'die pragtigste gesig in die wêreld!' Mens moet hom liefhê om so 'n woord as 'pragtig' in verband met daardie fyn, ernstige gesig, met die besliste mond en swart oë wat sy medemens half-reguit en -vorsend, en half-afgetrokke aankyk, te kan gebruik. Dis die gesig van iemand wat nooit enige menslike swakheid sal verrai nie. As daar so 'n swak is, sal hy dit verborge hou – minder deur

persoonlike hoogmoed as deur 'n eerlike oortuiging dat niemand hul oor sy privaatsake hoef te interesseer nie (Krogh 1945:7-8).

[He is even taller than Martin - six foot two. He has the broad shoulders and narrow hips of an athlete, which is not surprising given the fact that he spends at least three hours each day working out and doing any kind of sport that comes his way. According to his doting sisters, he has, to use Leonie's simple expression, 'the most beautiful face in the world!' One has to love him in order to use a word such as 'beautiful' to describe his delicate, serious features, with the firm mouth and the black eyes that look at you half directly and piercingly, half detachedly. It's the face of someone who will never give away any sign of human weakness. If there were such a weakness, he would conceal it - not so much through personal pride, but through an honest conviction that no one has to take an interest in his private affairs.]

Yet, despite this attractive exterior, there is something about the expression on his face that hints to the fact that he is an intensely private person with a quick temper. His expression is described repeatedly as strict with lips pressed closely on each other, and danger lurking in his eyes:

Sy swart oë is lui en versluier, maar weerlig skuil skuil agter die luiheid en nie veel is nodig om daardie weerlig te laat blits nie (Krogh 1958:6).

[His black eyes are sluggish and veiled, but lightning lurks behind the sluggishness and it doesn't take much to make that lightning flash.]

His achievements are remarkable, to say the least. The eldest son of a university professor, he grew up in Johannesburg where he matriculated at the incredible age of thirteen and went on to study at the University of the Witwatersrand before going to the United Kingdom to complete two PhDs, simultaneously, in law and philology from Cambridge University. In his youth he played for both the rugby and cricket national teams. Moreover, he is a world acclaimed and many times translated novelist and writes educational texts in his spare time (Krogh 1961:5). He speaks more than twelve languages, excluding dialects (Krogh 1947b:27), among them English, Afrikaans, Russian, Portuguese, Swazi and German, and worked as a journalist in Europe before circumstances led him to take up the position as headmaster at the Keurboslaan College for Boys. His American godfather, P.F. Maxim, a friend of Professor Serfontein, Roelof's father, met the young Roelof only once when he was eighteen years old and was so impressed by his friend's talented

son that he bequeathed him the Maxim fortunes. After Maxim's death, Roelof Serfontein became a multimillionaire philanthropist. Through wise investment strategies he has multiplied the Maxim fortune a number of times and uses it exclusively for worthy causes. He is a lover of classical music and opera, and is very knowledgeable in this field. At Keurboslaan, he teaches Latin, Greek, Afrikaans and English to the senior classes in addition to his duties as principal (Krogh 1947:81, Krogh 1949:26).

Despite these achievements, though, Roelof Serfontein is portrayed as a troubled individual. His relationship with his father had always been strained for his father tended to mistake his son's severe shyness for pride. Though he had always been a quiet and enormously disciplined individual, a serious love affair with a world-renowned Russian opera singer, Wanda Svoboda, who left him to get married to his best friend, the pianist Arthur Spaulding left some scars and led him to withdraw into himself even more. Serfontein, a teetotaler, is portrayed as a highly-strung individual who finds it difficult to eat almost anything and struggles to sleep at night. He is a chain smoker who mainly survives on a diet of strong coffee and strenuous exercise and is troubled by severe headaches from time to time. When he is stressed or overworked he tends to be enormously ill tempered.

One of eight children, Roelof Serfontein comes from a prominent and influential, though not entirely affluent, Johannesburg family. His seven siblings are all talented, although none of them can measure up to the incredible Roelof. His brother Adolf is a teacher and has completed a number of higher degrees, while his younger brothers, Edward and Martin, are both medical specialists. Martin, a brain surgeon, is the head of a clinic and hospital in the city and Edward, an orthopaedic surgeon, is his partner. Roelof's twin brothers, Frans and Emil, have completed their MSc degrees in botany and are lecturers at the university. Evelyn, his elder sister and the eldest of the Serfontein children, worked as a paediatrician before she got married and his youngest sister, Leonie, studied art in Europe and then took up a position as art teacher at a prestigious school for girls in Cape Town.

The question then is how and why a talented man such as Roelof Serfontein would be persuaded to take up the position of principal at a struggling Afrikaans private school for boys? The explanation is offered in the chronologically first book in the series, *Jong Dr. Serfontein*. Arriving back from Europe after completing his studies and selflessly working as a journalist for a few years to financially support his friend

Arthur Spaulding and his wife (Wanda Svoboda, Roelof's former fiancé) and the two Spaulding children, Roelof Serfontein receives the shocking news that Wanda had died. The news throws him off balance completely, so that he forgets to attend a meeting at the University that his father had set up for him to explore opportunities of securing a position at the University. His father sees his son's failure to honour the appointment as yet another demonstration of his arrogance and the two Serfonteins have a terrible row. In a state of shock, Roelof Serfontein flees from his parental home to the mountains of Keurboslaan, a place where he had once as a young boy spent a couple of days camping with his father and brothers. The trip made an important impression on him. That is partly because he felt very attracted to the kind of natural beauty and climate of the area, but also because this trip marked one of the very few occasions where he and his father managed to get on somewhat better. Thus, disorientated, confused and close to a nervous breakdown, he makes his way to this place of his youth. It is on one of Keurboslaan's mountain slopes that same evening during a rainstorm that Mister Schoonbee and Roelof Serfontein first meet. Mister Schoonbee had just returned from a visit to the solitary hut on top of the mountain where an old Swazi man lives. He had hoped that this man would tell him a number of original Swazi fairytales for his book, but this did not happen. On his way down, his torchlight falls upon the silhouette of a drenched stranger. The first encounter between the two men cements both an intellectual and emotional bond that develops into a unique friendship:

[Mr Schoonbee] 'Het jy ooit die verhaal van Marda, die dogter van die bergkoning, en Lodi, die gees, gehoor? Hierdie nag en die reën, en alles saam en jy daar onder die boom, kon 'n voorstelling daarvan wees!'

[Roelof Serfontein] 'Dis die Sweedse verhaal', antwoord 'n diep stem asof die eienaar ook niks vreemds in die hele affêre vind nie. 'Daar is 'n ander een, byna dieselfde, in Bulgaars.'

[Mr Schoonbee] 'Ja, en soiets kom ook in Indië voor. Mërkwaardig hoe al die volke wat eers nooit met mekaar in aanraking gekom het nie, hul emosionele ondervindings in byna dieselfde woorde uit. Dis waarop ek in my boek probeer wys. Die moeilikheid is, hoe verder 'n mens op die saak ingaan, hoe verder *wil* jy ingaan, sodat die werk nooit 'n end kry nie' (Krogh 1945:27).

['Have you ever heard the story of Marda, the daughter of the mountain king, and Lodi, the spirit? Tonight and the rain, and everything and you there underneath the tree could have been a presentation thereof!'

'It's the Swedish tale', a deep voice says, as if its owner doesn't find anything peculiar about the whole scenario either. 'There's another, almost similar, Bulgarian tale.'

'Yes, and there's something like it in India. Remarkable how nations that have never had any contact with each other express their emotional experiences in almost the same words. That is what I try to illustrate in my book. The trouble is, the further you delve, the more you want to, which means there is no end to the work.']

Mister Schoonbee takes Serfontein down to the school where he nurses him back to health after Serfontein suffers a complete nervous breakdown. In these hours, a deep friendship develops between the two men. When Roelof had sufficiently recovered to be able to talk about his future, Mister Schoonbee invites him to come to Keurboslaan as a schoolteacher for a couple of months until he has regained his strength and decides what to do about his future. Roelof Serfontein accepts the offer to the total dismay of his family, in particular his father. At this point he had not yet inherited the Maxim millions nor published his first novel (it had been completed but had not yet been sent it to the publishers). Serfontein comes to Keurboslaan, where Mister Schoonbee places him in charge of the school while he himself withdraws from all school affairs. The following couple of months see significant but positive changes for the school that lead to its complete transformation. Dr Serfontein instils a strict regime of discipline, starts fixing up and rebuilding some of the facilities, sacks a number of incompetent teachers and make improvements to the curricula. Yet, his work is hampered by a continuous shortage of funds.

A few months later his godfather dies and he unexpectedly inherits the Maxim fortune, turning him into an instant millionaire. He is also informed that his first novel has been accepted for publication. Since Mister Schoonbee was a very old man, Roelof decides that he want to spend part of the money on taking Mister Schoonbee on an extensive trip to Europe in search of fairytales, which had been Mister Schoonbee's lifelong dream. Given that money problems were something of the past, Dr Serfontein felt that he had put the basic structures in place at the school so that he could now invest money into upgrading the facilities and appointing competent staff and then hand over the school to someone else to manage. Serfontein thus started making arrangements to appoint a new headmaster for the school. However, just before finalising this process, Mister Schoonbee suffers a massive stroke. Though he

regains full consciousness, it becomes clear that the state of his health is too delicate for him to travel and the planned trip to Europe is cancelled. It is at this point that the young Doctor Serfontein has to make an important decision. Mister Schoonbee warns him that should he decide to stay on at Keurboslaan until the time of Mister Schoonbee's death, he would never be able to leave the school, as that is the kind of hold the school and the Keurboslaan environment tend to have on one. Roelof Serfontein's decision to stay on permanently as headmaster of the College forms the foundation of the twenty novels in the series. Mr Schoonbee's book, *Feëverhale van alle Nasies*⁶ is published posthumously (Krogh 1947b:158).

Character development and human relations as central problematics in the *Keurboslaan* series

Even though the *Keurboslaan* stories are formulaic and therefore predictable, as a writer of popular fiction Blakemore's strongest asset is her ability to create endearing, true-to-life, unique and utterly believable characters. Much of the narrative is told through dialogue and Blakemore generally succeeds very well in providing each of her characters with a distinct appearance, a unique way of expressing themselves, adequate depth, and a few quirks and idiosyncrasies. Whereas the story line in each of the books is important and the plots - though often implausible and exaggerated - are fairly tight and exhilarating, these are not the most important elements in each of the books. In this respect, Blakemore certainly deviates from the formula of modern day mass-produced popular fiction series for children. All the *Keurboslaan* books have at the core a concern with human emotions and relationships and the ways in which emotional bonds between people are forged and challenged. Given that the central character in this series is Dr Roelof Serfontein, the stories therefore revolve around his relationship with others. These relationships form the backbone of all of the narratives and can be categorised into seven groups.

First of these is the unique friendship that developed between the inscrutable Dr Serfontein and Mr Schoonbee, founder of Keurboslaan College for Boys, before his death. Mr Schoonbee came close to playing the role of a father in Roelof Serfontein's life, and, perhaps with the exception of his relationship with his wife, Helen, this is the only one of his relationships where the power balance does not hinge to Roelof's side. Unlike the relationship between Roelof Serfontein and his wife, which is marked

⁶ Fables of all Nations

by a fairly equal distribution of power, in the case of the relationship between Mr Schoonbee and Roelof Serfontein, Roelof is always the one who has to seek Mr Schoonbee's company and time.

The second set of relationships that runs like a golden thread through the *Keurboslaan* stories is the friendship between Dr. Serfontein and two of his pupils. Oscar Wienand – who later becomes Dr Serfontein's financial manager based in the United States and marries his youngest sister, Leonie – was already a senior pupil at Keurboslaan College for Boys when Roelof Serfontein first arrived and took over the school. As a consequence, Wienand was not susceptible to the type of disciplined behaviour that Roelof tried to instil in the school. Nonetheless, he succeeded in striking up a very unusual friendship with Roelof Serfontein, characterised by playful interactions, much like that between two brothers. Eugene Krynauw was sent to Keurboslaan as a young boy of ten, after his mother had died during the birth of his youngest sister. Krynauw's father was so deeply hurt by his wife's death that he became wary of intimate personal relations with his children. Through a sequence of events the traumatised boy is helped by Dr. Serfontein to deal with his grief about his mother's death and his father's rejection. Despite the age difference, a special sympathy developed between the headmaster and his pupil. The friendship survived during Eugene's difficult years as an adolescent and young man struggling to get to terms with the sacrifices he had to make in order to retain the friendship of a complex personality such as Dr Serfontein, and he became one of the Serfontein's family's most loyal and closest friends.

A third relationship, perhaps the most important relationship portrayed in the series, is that between Roelof Serfontein and his wife. Helen Bielefeld came to Keurboslaan as a young woman of twenty to fill in for the headmaster's secretary who had to undergo an operation. Her youth despite, Helen had suffered a great loss. She had married young and she and her husband worked as journalists in Europe. She returned to South Africa after her husband and her baby died from illness in Switzerland. Having gone through this traumatic experience, Helen decided never to stay in one place for an extended period of time and to avoid developing close emotional bonds with any persons for fear that she may lose them once more. Despite this undertaking, she is not an embittered or cold person and quickly establishes warm relationships with all the Keurboslaan staff and pupils. Helen is one of very few people, if not the first, not to be intimidated by Dr Serfontein's temper or by his genius. When he asks her to marry him, she initially refuses and Roelof has

difficulty persuading her to accept the risk that close relationships entail. They get married when Helen is in her early twenties and Roelof thirty-eight (Krogh, date unknown, page 30).

A fourth set of personal relationships dealt with in the *Keurboslaan* series are interactions between Roelof Serfontein and his family. His relationship with his father had always been difficult and strained. His father strongly disapproved of his talented son's decision to become the headmaster of Keurboslaan, and as a result he vowed never to visit the school. This decision had an effect on the whole family and even though Roelof's relations with his siblings were much warmer, they avoided his school for many years. The relationship between Roelof and his father thawed a bit as they both grew older and though it could never be described as close or intimate, some understanding did develop between them. Of all his siblings, Roelof felt closest to his younger brother Martin, the brain surgeon. Yet another family relationship that features prominently in the series is Dr Serfontein's relationship with his niece, Tessa. Tessa is the daughter of Roelof Serfontein's elder brother Adolf and his English-speaking wife Coralie. When Coralie's baby son died she suffered such emotional trauma that she began rejecting her young daughter, Tessa, for the fact that she was a girl and not a boy. Coralie became intensely jealous when she felt that her husband was paying too much attention to Tessa. Tessa ran away from home to her uncle Roelof and he subsequently adopted her. Of course, all the various Serfontein siblings send their children to Roelof's school, with the result that many of the boys in the school are Serfontein relatives.

The fifth category of relationships that characterise the *Keurboslaan* series is linked to the nuclear family. Relationships between Dr Serfontein and his six children – Josef, Richard, Berrie, Dian, Laetitia and Lavrans, are well covered in the texts. These relationships feature very prominently in the last seven books in the series. In particular, the relationship between Roelof Serfontein and his three eldest sons receives much attention. Josef, the eldest, though good-natured, is impulsive and often rebellious, which leads to serious conflict between himself and his father. Berrie, the third son, is a very expressive and demonstrative child and the only one of the children to expressly demand of his father to tell him how much he loves him. Though Berrie is perhaps not as brilliant as his older siblings, he is very popular in his family and at school. The most interesting and difficult relationship, however, is the one between the principal and his son Richard, who is so similar to him that their relationship is fraught with misunderstandings.

In the sixth place are relationships between Dr Serfontein and his students and staff, many of whom are also former pupils, and between staff and pupils among themselves. Among the most prominent of these relationships is that between the headmaster and young Flip Venter and Flip's friends Bertrand Spaulding – son of the headmaster's old friend Arthur Spaulding and former fiancé Wanda Svoboda - and Geer. All three of them later return to Keurboslaan as teachers, where their hero-worshipping of Dr Serfontein continues. Other prominent characters are Tonie Wilke, Mr Burgers, the young and inexperienced mister Dempers, Mr Papenfus, Mr Gerritson and the school matron, Mrs Mostert.

Finally, the series is marked by some very interesting relationships between Roelof Serfontein and a range of characters with emotional and psychological problems, many of them criminals of some sort. Among these characters are the four boys that he admits into his school from children's reformatories, Verryne, Logan, Loggerenberg and Alberts. Also included is Wentzel Elsenach, a boy who grew up in the bush with virtually no contact with human beings because his father kept him isolated. Then there are the young Lourens Joubert, who suffers from megalomania, the kleptomaniac Karl Goosen, and the troubled André Smit. The most intriguing of these relationships are undoubtedly the relationships between the headmaster and two dangerous, sought-after criminals - the youth criminal Glennis, and Jan Fiskaal - a notorious and dangerous bandit.

Story lines and narrative structure in selected titles in the *Keurboslaan* series

Unusual for series books is the fact that in the *Keurboslaan* texts time is not suspended and the passing of time is in fact emphasised. In each of the books in the series, close attention is paid to the school calendar, so that it becomes impossible for the author to 'keep' her characters fixed in a particular time period. Schoolboys grow up; they leave the school, study at University and are heard of again when they send their own children to Keurboslaan. When Roelof Serfontein started at Keurboslaan he was a young man in his twenties. In the last book in the series he is already in his sixties.

The structure of each of Blakemore's *Keurboslaan* novels is fairly similar. The plots in the books are generally more complex than those of most other series books for children, as most of the books in the series have a main plot and a number of sub

plots that are developed in great detail. In some of the books there are more than one main plot (see, for example, *Die Serfontein-kinders* and *Die Kroon van Keurboslaan*) whilst sub plots in the novels usually number at least four. However, in all her novels one gets the distinct feelings that both the main plot and the many sub plots are not quite at the centre of the narrative and that what is really foregrounded is the relationship between the headmaster and other characters.

Story lines are fairly tight, though often highly implausible and fairly repetitive. Nonetheless, the novels display a peculiar charm and the stories a certain authenticity, which is the hallmark of Blakemore's writing. In this section a brief outline of the story lines of thirteen of the twenty volumes in the series is given.⁷

Jong Dr. Serfontein [Young Dr Serfontein]

This book tells the story of Keurboslaan College for Boys' founding history and how it came about that Dr Serfontein became principal of the school. Roelof Serfontein comes to Keurboslaan in a state of shock and meets Mr Schoonbee, the school principal. A unique friendship develops between the two men, and Mr Schoonbee asks Roelof to stay on as school principal. On finding conditions in the school in a completely unsatisfactory state, Dr Serfontein sets about to change that in a very short period of time. He starts by making changes to the teaching corps. He sacks two teachers, Mr Austin and Mr van As, who he feels cannot be of any use to the school given their behaviour, which included encouraging students to smoke, telling crude jokes in the staff room, and engaging in some lewd (but unspecified) behaviour and taking pupils along on these excursions. An unqualified teacher, Mr Lamprecht, is instructed to select courses from UNISA's yearbooks and to enrol immediately if he

⁷ In all cases attempts were made to use the first published version of the title. In three cases this was not possible. In the case of *Die Kroon van Keurboslaan* (originally published as *Die Kroon van die Skool* by Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel) a copy of the Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel (APB) book was located, but the page on which the publication date is printed had been removed. Since APB did more than one reprint of this book, it could not be established whether the copy referred to in this study is the first edition or one of the later reprints. This title was reprinted by J.L. van Schaik Publishers in 1956, so it is certain that the copy used in this study predates 1956. With regard to the title *Rugby op Keurboslaan*, an original version of the book could not be located. It was decided to use the final manuscript, which has revisions by both Stella Blakemore and J.L. van Schaik's reviewer made on the typed copy. The title was published in 1956 and from the correspondence between Blakemore and her publisher there is no indication that the publication of this title was delayed. It can therefore be safely assumed that the manuscript dates from 1955 or 1956. In the case of *Keurboslaan stuur Speurders*, it was impossible to find a copy of the original title (*Die Skool stuur Speurders*) published by Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel. The publication date of the first edition of this title is unknown, but the second print of the first edition was published in 1949. As a copy of this reprint could not be located either, the first publication of this title by J.L. van Schaik in 1958 was used.

wants to stay on at the school, while two elderly teachers are accommodated in non-teaching posts (as accountant and individual music teacher respectively). Dr Serfontein then introduces changes in the school routine by instituting compulsory sport activities, introducing physical education and study periods, and changing the diet, meal times and sleeping arrangements. At first, his reforms are met with resistance from the boys, but after a few confrontations, in some cases involving corporal punishment, he wins their loyalty and support. Two schoolboys – Booyens and Oelofse - are sent away from the school because the headmaster feels that they do not have a positive influence on the others and are incapable of reform. Nonetheless, they are referred for psychological treatment. With Mr Schoonbee's consent and against Wienand's advice, Dr Serfontein borrows money from the Jewish town attorney, Mr Davis, against the expected royalty payment for his first novel to upgrade facilities at the school. Mr Davis, a shrewd businessman, tampers with the contract, and the school's existence is threatened when the sum of money needs to be paid back to Davis earlier than agreed. The crisis is averted by the resourcefulness of Oscar Wienand, a senior pupil, who had befriended Roelof and employed unconventional methods to raise the required funds. When Dr Serfontein is informed that he has inherited the Maxim fortune, he decides to spend a substantial amount of money to develop the school. When his planned trip with Mr Schoonbee to Europe is cancelled after Mr Schoonbee's stroke, Roelof Serfontein decides to stay on permanently as headmaster of Keurboslaan College for Boys. The story is framed by the budding friendship between Roelof Serfontein and his youngest pupil, Eugene Krynauw, Roelof's love for and concern about Mister Schoonbee, and his comfortable and brother-like relationship with his rebellious pupil Oscar Wienand.

Keurboslaan se Eerste Kaptein [Keurboslaan's First School Captain]

Dr Serfontein's first novel, *Valhalla*, is acclaimed by the literary establishment as the master piece of the past ten years. But Mr Schoonbee's health is ailing and Dr Serfontein spends much time at his bedside. Wienand is appointed as Keurboslaan's first school captain. One of the youngest pupils in the school, Eugene Krynauw, who is devoted to the headmaster, accidentally takes a briefcase belonging to Mr Davis, the town attorney - who has had a very strained relationship with the school - because he thought it belonged to Dr Serfontein. Krynauw is too scared to admit to his wrongdoing and becomes withdrawn and quiet. Amid a lot of schoolboy pranks, tension builds up yet again between Mr Davis and the school and Mr Davis threatens to expose in newspapers the fact that a Keurboslaan pupil stole his briefcase.

Rumours spread by Mr Davis reaches the University in Johannesburg where two of Dr Serfontein's brothers and his father hold positions and the publicity is very damaging to the school. In the town of Keurboslaan, Wienand meets an elderly Afrikaans man, Mr Wessels, who receives a pension from the Anglo-Boer War and who has had to borrow money from Davis because his wife is ill and he could not afford the medical treatment. Wienand's investigations show that Mr Davis had been charging many old people at interest rates far above the legal norm. Moreover, Mr. Davis sells the loan documents to debt collectors in Johannesburg, who come and claim their debts with no regard for the personal circumstances of the debtors. When Mr Davis tries to impound the house and meagre possessions of the family Wessels because they are unable to repay their debts, the headmaster arrives on the scene and loses his temper. He literary almost kill Mr Davis, but at the last moment sanity prevails and he punches Mr Davis neatly with the fist. Dr Serfontein threatens to kill Mr Davis if he ever tries again to charge poor people exorbitant interest rates and appoints Mr Wessels as school caretaker. When Eugene Krynauw discloses the facts about the stolen briefcase, Wienand searches the brief case and finds all the loan documents, which can be used as damaging evidence against Mr Davis. The school is thus saved from impending ruin yet again, as Davis is forced to retract his allegations. Dr Serfontein is a highly strung personality and when he receives a set of lists and figures from a junior member of staff and finds many mistakes, he loses his temper completely and gives the young man a very severe scolding. Mr Schoonbee overhears this and tells Roelof that he had disappointed him with his behaviour. Dr Serfontein does not know how to deal with personal conflict and therefore does not apologise. Eugene Krynauw, who was asked by Wienand to keep an eye on Dr Serfontein, phones Wienand at the University and asks him to come through to Keurboslaan to remedy the situation. Mr Schoonbee's health is very delicate and everyone is concerned that he may die before reconciling with Roelof. Wienand pleads with Mr Schoonbee to forgive Roelof, arguing that the headmaster had apologised to the young man that he had scolded and that Mr Schoonbee was taking his punishment of the young Dr Serfontein too far. Mr Schoonbee is subsequently reconciled with Dr Serfontein and dies peacefully in his sleep a few days later.

Keurboslaan se Struikrower [Keurboslaan's Bandit]

A dangerous bandit, who has on more than one occasion held up people and taken their belongings, plagues the Keurboslaan surrounds. The police are of the opinion that it is only a matter of time before this criminal kills someone. In Johannesburg, Dr

Serfontein is introduced to Captain Alwyn, who informs him that he is coming out to work with the police on the case of this bandit, known as Jan Fiskaal. At one point, the headmaster also falls prey to this criminal. Whenever there is an interaction between Jan Fiskaal and Roelof Serfontein, spectators later remark about the special tension in the air that characterised the moment, almost as if Serfontein exerted a kind of influence over the criminal and as if the criminal was drawn to Serfontein's personality. Whereas most people instantly dislike Captain Alwyn, the police officer, Dr Serfontein is far more tolerant with Alwyn than is his general disposition towards strangers. Jan Fiskaal manages to undermine discipline in the school by spreading false rumours about the headmaster's morality and leading one of the school's more troubled pupils, André Smit astray. Against the headmaster's explicit instruction, Smit goes to Greylingdrift, a notorious gambling spot owned by Sarnovitch. Eugene Krynauw unexpectedly ends up with Smit at Greylingdrift. Here, Jan Fiskaal, who has a cunning ability to imitate other's accents and way of talking, pretends to be Dr Serfontein and tells Krynauw in the dark that neither of them should find themselves in a place with such a reputation and that the best they could do is never speak about it again. This incident deeply shatters Krynauw's trust in Dr Serfontein. Through a series of events, it becomes clear that the headmaster had always known that the bandit Jan Fiskaal and Captain Alwyn was one and the same person. As a young man, he had been wrongly accused of and convicted for theft. He had to serve a prison sentence and by the time his innocence was proved, both his parents had passed away. A special bond developed between the headmaster and the bandit, and the headmaster – with the consent of influential members of the police in both South Africa and the United States - assisted Jan Fiskaal in the end to escape police capture and to flee to the United States where he opened a clinic for the rehabilitation of youth offenders with funds provided by Dr Serfontein. Smit is held back one year as punishment for his behaviour, whilst the relationship between the headmaster and Eugene Krynauw is mended.

Die Hoof van Keurboslaan [Keurboslaan's Headmaster]

Flip Venter, a young youth offender, escapes from the office of the probation officer. Through a chance encounter with another boy, he comes onto the idea to go to Keurboslaan in this boy's place. Of course, the headmaster quickly uncovers this state of affairs, but he decides to keep quiet and give the boy a chance to find and prove himself. Eventually, strongly influenced by Dr Serfontein's example, Venter comes clean and is fully accepted as a Keurboslaan scholar. He is also reconciled

with his stepfather, whom he never wanted to accept because he felt that he had taken his own place in his mother's life. In the same book, André Smit goes through a difficult time, because his friends all are in their final year of school and prefects, while he has had to stay a year behind. As a result, he returns to Greyling'sdrift, where he is lured into playing cards with Sarnovitch until he owes him a lot of money. In an attempt to win back more money in order to repay Sarnovitch, Smit slips out of school every night to play cards until he wins. The headmaster goes to collect him at Greyling'sdrift and ends up in a fistfight with Sarnovitch. During the same period an escaped black prisoner tries to set the school alight in a way that would most definitely also have meant killing himself, but the young Flip Venter manages to fend him off.

Keurboslaan se Peetvaders [Keurboslaan's Godfathers]

Dr Serfontein agrees to admit a scholar for a test period. Wentzel Elsenach was brought up by his father, a religious fundamentalist, in the bush and has had very limited contact with people. He survived from catching small animals and made himself clothes from their skins. He had never learnt to clean himself and can only read the Bible. He is also not used to speaking and becomes violent and aggressive when he interacts with other people. He was found by a local reverend, a brother of one of Keurboslaan's teachers, and that is how the case came to the attention of the headmaster. From what the boy had said, it could be deduced that his mother had died when he was still a very small boy and that he grew up with his father. His father became ill and left to his own devices. Elsenach is taken in by the headmaster, who manages to subdue him through his magnetic personality and persuades him to follow orders. Flip Venter and Eugene Krynauw are appointed as his godfathers. A few months later, Elsenach's father arrives back at the house of the reverend claiming that he wants his son back. It is clear that he is a very dangerous man with serious psychological problems. Dr Serfontein is called in and he once again has to make use of his strong personality to subdue the disturbed and dangerous man until his brothers (both medical specialists) arrive from Johannesburg. With the help of his brothers it is determined that Elsenach is not disturbed after all but that an accident a few years earlier (the wheel of an ox wagon ran over his head) caused some nerves in the brain to press against each other. This is what caused the man's violent spells. The headmaster's brothers agree to perform the required operation and take him to their clinic in Johannesburg. Here, Elsenach informs Roelof Serfontein that his wife is still alive, but that he had chased her away and threatened to kill her in one of his

violent rages so that she had to flee from him. Dr Serfontein finds the mother and the family is reconciled.

Avonture op Keurboslaan [Adventures at Keurboslaan]

The restless André Smit is once again involved in trouble and this time makes acquaintance with two shady characters named Fiske and Brady, who lead him to the notorious and strictly forbidden Greylingsdrift for a third time. Unfortunately, André had accidentally mistaken Eugene Krynauw's blazer for his own and had left it at Greylingsdrift. While Eugene now finds himself standing accused of breaking one of the strictest school regulations, out of loyalty to his friend he refuses to tell Dr Serfontein that Smit was the culprit. Even though Dr Serfontein and all the others know that Krynauw is not guilty, Dr Serfontein decides to expel him from school. For Eugene, this is a bitter blow, as he feels that the headmaster is trying so hard not to display any personal feelings towards him or do him any favours, that he gets penalised more severely than any other person in the school simply because of his friendship with the headmaster. It is during this period that Dr Serfontein's niece, nine-year old Tessa Serfontein, arrives at school and declares her decision to come and stay with her uncle. The headmaster's investigations reveal that there are indeed tensions between Tessa and her mother, Coralie, and that Coralie blames Tessa for not being a boy after she had lost her son. Dr Serfontein feels that his brother's role in the whole affair has been less than satisfactory and thus adopts Tessa. Tessa is an emotionally demanding young girl, but secretly everyone at Keurboslaan is relieved about her arrival, as she forces her uncle to eat more regularly and sleep more often. Krynauw is readmitted to the school, but relations between him and Dr Serfontein remain strained. Dr Serfontein refuses to appease Krynauw, whose attitude he regards to be immature. Krynauw comes to the realisation that it will always be difficult to be the friend of someone like Roelof Serfontein and that he must be prepared to make sacrifices if he wants to maintain this friendship.

Twee Nuwe Seuns op Keurboslaan [Two New Pupils at Keurboslaan]

Three new boys are accepted into the school. One is Tonie Wilke, the son of Wienand's sister who had died in a car crash. The second pair is Everard and Bertrand Spaulding, sons of Dr Serfontein's British friend and international musician Arthur Spaulding and his late wife Wanda Svoboda - the Russian opera singer who was the headmaster's fiancé before she eloped with Spaulding. The boys had been

at school in Britain for short periods, but have travelled with their father on his world concerts for most of their lives. Their father is concerned about the influence of such a lifestyle on his sons and is especially worried about the behaviour of his youngest son. The three boys soon become part of school life with all its ups and downs. As boys, they are also inclined to disobey the school rules, but the young Spaulding refuses to be punished by the headmaster. Dr Serfontein gently persuades Bertrand to accept corporal punishment from him. This book also tells the story of the young and inexperienced Mr Dempers who does not manage to be firm with the boys. In turn, the boys take advantage of his kindness and makes him the victim of their pranks. Tonie Wilke manages to befriend the difficult and neurotic Mrs Coralie Serfontein, who had rejected her daughter because she was so hurt by the loss of her son.

Die Kroon van Keurboslaan [Keurboslaan's Crown]

It is Eugene Krynauw's final term at school. Roelof Serfontein sends away the school secretary, Miss Conradie, to undergo surgery in his brother's clinic. The school has to find a replacement secretary and Roelof Serfontein employs the services of Mrs Helen Bielefeld, a widow who had lost her husband and baby due to illness when they were working in Switzerland as journalists. Helen makes her presence felt at Keurboslaan and soon wins the trust of the headmaster's niece, Tessa, who is living with him permanently, the school matron, Mrs Mostert, and schoolboys and staff alike. She quickly picks up on the deep sympathy that exists between Roelof and his pupil, Eugene Krynauw. An exceptional quality of Helen's, which everyone remarks upon soon after her arrival, is the fact that she is not intimidated by the headmaster's prestige or his dark moods. He finds her even temper, efficiency, and strong will unsettling. In the meantime, the schoolboys plan a schoolboy prank to adapt the script of the operetta that they have to perform at the end of term to rid themselves of the embarrassment of having to appear in a classic Greek drama. When a contagious disease spreads through the town of Keurboslaan, there are fears that the school may be affected too. A tense period follows during which almost half of the boys fall ill. When the crisis is over, it is Helen who realises that the headmaster's stern exterior and his order not be disturbed is in fact his strategy for disguising the fact that he has fallen ill too. Together Helen and Krynauw together nurse him back to health, though there are times when they fear for his life. It is during this period that Krynauw realises that some emotional bond is developing between Helen and the headmaster. Just when everything at the school seems to return to normal, a

young black chief living in the mountains surrounding Keurboslaan receives a vision – brought on by malaria and encouraged by his witchdoctor - which convinces him that he is to free his people from white oppression. The witchdoctor tells him that the way to achieve this is to slaughter a 'white goat' (a young white child). When two young Keurboslaan pupils are subsequently captured by a drunken group of black men, Helen, Krynauw and Dr Serfontein hear their screams and are on the scene to help. They manage to free the two children but are themselves captured. During the tense hours during which they are almost certain that they will not survive, Krynauw overhears Dr Serfontein asking Helen to marry him. It emerges that he had asked her earlier, but that she had refused as she had vowed after the death of her first husband and baby never to get involved in an intimate relationship again for fear of losing someone she loves once more. Krynauw and Helen manage to escape by following the strategy outlined by Roelof. As they are fleeing they see the headmaster being killed. It is only then that they realise that it had been his plan all along to free them in exchange for his life. As it turns out, they were mistaken in what they saw and Roelof managed to survive the ordeal. Roelof and Helen, to everyone's surprise and excitement, go ahead with their wedding plans and Dr Serfontein asks Eugene Krynauw to be his best man.

Spanning op Keurboslaan [Tension on Keurboslaan]

Dr Serfontein is ill and he is trying his level best to hide this fact from his wife, who was so traumatised about the loss of her first husband and baby that it was only with great difficulty that he managed to convince her to get married again. His best efforts despite, Helen Serfontein is only too aware of her husband's condition. Despite their own feelings of despair, staff members and pupils all become involved in the efforts to keep the fact of the headmaster's illness away from his wife, which leads to a number of misunderstandings. To protect his wife, Dr Serfontein withdraws into himself and announces that he will have to go away on business for an indefinite period. For Helen this is the ultimate proof of the graveness of his condition. At his brother, Dr Martin Serfontein's clinic, Dr Serfontein is diagnosed by the world-renowned Danish scientist Dr Nordstrom with a terminal illness and is given three months to live. Dr Serfontein writes a letter to Advocate Krynauw, Eugene's father, to inform him of his condition and to ask him to start preparing his son for what was to come. By accident, Krynauw opens this letter. Krynauw decides to inform the Serfontein family and Dr Serfontein's financial manager, Oscar Wienand. The following weeks are some of the most difficult times ever experienced by those close

to the headmaster, and the strained relationship between Helen and Roelof becomes a further source of anxiety. It is Dr Martin Serfontein who discovers that Dr Nordstrom's wife, Ada, had died two years earlier from the same condition that he diagnosed in Roelof Serfontein. His wife's death traumatised him to such an extent that he became neurotic. Martin Serfontein establishes that Roelof Serfontein suffers from a problem with his digestive system that will need only minor surgery and not from a terminal illness. The headmaster and his wife are reconciled and their first child is born at the end of that year. They ask Krynauw to be their son's godfather.

Die Serfontein-kindere [The Serfontein Children]

This book tracks the relationship between Dr Serfontein and his children. Dr Serfontein is a very reserved person and while he loves his children deeply, his relationship with them is very formal and he very seldom touches them. Dr Serfontein deliberately keeps some distance between himself and his children as it is his greatest fear that by openly displaying his love he will tie them to himself and the family in a way that will deny them their freedom. On the Serfontein family's annual trip by cruiser from Europe, the eldest of the Serfontein children, Josef and Richard, befriend the outgoing Karl Goosen. However, it is their parents that notice that something is amiss with the boy. In an informal discussion with the boy's parents they are informed that Karl is their adopted son. Though they explained that he had given them much pleasure in the past, they claimed that he had started showing signs of kleptomania. The Serfontein couple suspects that there is something more to the story and they happen to come across an incident where Mrs Goosen shouts abusive comments at the son. After establishing that Mrs Goosen suffers from a psychological condition, Dr Serfontein offers to take Karl Goosen in as a pupil at Keurboslaan. While the Serfontein children are very fond of Karl, the first term at Keurboslaan proves to be a difficult time for all. The relationship between Dr Serfontein and his second eldest son, Richard, is especially strained, in part because they are so alike and Richard is too young and inexperienced to know how to conduct a relationship with his father. Mr Venter, a Keurboslaan teacher, ends up in a fight with Dr Bickard, a retired doctor who is also an alcoholic, after the latter made a snide comment about Dr Serfontein's character. The story gets round and some of the schoolboys, among them Dr Serfontein's eldest son Josef, decide to take revenge on Dr Bickard by breaking into his laboratory and setting all the animals free. As a result of these developments, the Serfontein children have little time to spend with Karl and he feels increasingly isolated. His kleptomania re-emerges and he

takes some money from the school matron's office. Richard, who realises that they have neglected Karl, undertakes to help him to put the money back. However, they are caught in the act of putting the money back and as a result Richard stands accused of stealing money. Unfortunately, this event took place on the same day that Richard for the first time managed to overcome his shyness and expressed his love for his father. Since this is the first time that Richard has had to receive punishment from his father, he finds it very difficult, more so because he feels that he is being punished precisely at the moment that he and his father have developed rapport. He requests to be sent away to another school. His father agrees, but Richard is so unhappy when he is sent to Grant's College that Eugene Krynauw calls Dr Serfontein and asks him to come through to Johannesburg to sort out things with his son. Richard and his father manage to talk things through and they both return to Keurboslaan. In the meantime Tessa, Dr Serfontein's niece, decides to leave her husband, Dr Eugene Krynauw, because he is spending too much time at the hospital and too little time with her. When Karl Goosen admits to having stolen the money, Dr Serfontein locks him up for a day in the school sanatorium without speaking to him. Dr Serfontein's son Josef is so aggrieved about his father's attitude towards Karl, which he regards to be unjust, that he throws a bunch of papers on his fathers' desk into the fire. As it turns out, the papers were the final manuscript of Dr Serfontein's latest novel. Actually, Dr Serfontein never planned to send Karl away and only kept him in the sanatorium one day so that he could have enough time to understand the severity of what he had done. To make matters worse, Berrie, the third Serfontein son is knocked over by Dr Bickard in a freak motor car accident, and it is only through the skill of Dr Krynauw that his life is saved. It is in these difficult times that Krynauw and Tessa are reconciled and Dr Serfontein starts re-writing the novel that was destroyed in the fire.

Kaptein Richard [School Captain Richard]

Dr Serfontein's second eldest son, Richard, is the new school captain. After the difficult period he had been through a few years earlier, he and his father have developed a very close understanding. This year, Dr Serfontein has decided to take in as a kind of sociological experiment four boys with troubled backgrounds who have been identified as juvenile delinquents. Loggerenberg, a large boy, initially struggles with his aggression, but manages to bring it under control. While Loggerenberg and Verryne seem to be adapting well to school life, the other two are finding it more difficult. The young Alberts, who was a member of the infamous Glennis gang, feels

especially traumatised about being away from Glennis, to whom he is very loyal. Logan, who has been abused by his grandparents in whose care he grew up, is a very fragile boy who suffers from nervous tension. Glennis, the leader of the Glennis gang, comes to Keurboslaan in search of Alberts and introduces himself to the headmaster as Benton. He is employed as a gardener at the school and while he believes that no one knows who he really is, both Dr Serfontein and Loggerenberg are aware of his true identity. Loggerenberg takes it upon himself to look after Alberts, who has yet again come under Glennis' spell. Alberts discovers that he would love to learn to play the violin and he is torn between his desire to stay at Keurboslaan where he will be able to follow this dream and his loyalty towards Glennis. Glennis, in the guise of Benton the gardener, is in a position to influence events at school and starts blackmailing Logan. As a result, Logan takes something from Richard's cupboard. When Richard happens to walk in on this scene, Logan successfully manages to place the stolen item in Verryne's pocket. Dr Serfontein expects of his son, who is also the school captain, to act as if he thought that it was in fact Verryne that had stolen the item, even though he and his father know that it had been Logan. Richard complies but is very angry at his father about what he considers to be unnecessary shock treatment for Verryne. After a series of events, a final confrontation follows when Glennis and Alberts manage to capture Verryne and Richard into a secret cave underneath the rock pools where they plan to extort money from Dr Serfontein in exchange for his son's life. Loggerenberg and Logan arrive on the scene and so does Dr Serfontein. In the end, all the boys show courage and bravery. For Alberts the most difficult part is to betray Glennis, but Dr Serfontein convinces him that Glennis, who sometimes suffers from severe headaches and dizzy spells, that disorient him, is in need of medical treatment and that if Alberts really cares about Glennis he would leave him in Dr Serfontein's care.

Gevare op Keurboslaan [Danger at Keurboslaan]

Berrie Serfontein, Dr Serfontein's third son, is going through a difficult period. Though he is well-loved by his family and friends, he somehow feels that he is less brilliant than his other siblings. He overhears a conversation between a strange man and his cousin, Gys Thiessen, in which the stranger, Mr Schuyler, threatens to reveal a secret about Gys' past and about Dr Serfontein if Gys does not pay him an agreed amount of money. Berrie had always known that Gys was not his aunt's own son, but now he realised that Gys was indeed the son of the infamous bandit, Jan Fiskaal, who operated in the Keurboslaan region many years ago. Berrie had heard many

stories about Jan Fiskaal before, but this was the first time that he is confronted with the claim that his father was close to Jan Fiskaal and actually helped him to escape from the custody of the South African police. Berrie is determined to protect what he sees as his father's honour and thus decides to take on Mr Schuyler himself. He is so preoccupied with his own dilemma, that he does not heed adequate attention to a new school regulation that no one is allowed near the cave because there is quicksand. He spins a story to Mr Schuyler about a cave in the vicinity of Keurboslaan where a treasure is hidden and eventually manages to convince the stranger that there is some truth to his story. He takes the man to the cave and lowers him into the cave. His plan is to hold Mr Schuyler captive until he signs a note saying that he admits to having blackmailed Gys Thiessen and that he agrees to leave Keurboslaan after which Berrie will free him. Unfortunately, the man is caught in the quicksand and Berrie realises that he will be responsible for a man's death. Richard arrives on the scene to help him and soon thereafter Richard's friends Ruysenaer and Willemse, and later the four boys, Logan, Verryne, Loggerenberg and Alberts. Still, they are unable to free Mr Schuyler. It is only with the help of Dr Krynauw, Dr Serfontein and Towenaar, Dr Serfontein's horse that they finally manage to pull Mr Schuyler out alive. The headmaster is very angry about what he regards to be his son's irresponsible behaviour. It is only when Mr Schuyler's jacket is recovered from the cave that the truth comes out. Dr Serfontein assures his son that the assistance he had provided to Jan Fiskaal took place with the full knowledge and support of the South African police.

Misverstand op Keurboslaan [A Misunderstanding on Keurboslaan]

Once again the school suspects that Dr Serfontein is very ill. This time the confusion arises from a conversation that the school's secretary, Barbara Venter, overhears in the headmaster's study. Dr Serfontein had just taken on a new writing assignment, this time to write the history of the world in several volumes, and Dr Krynauw teasingly asked him whether he thought that he would live long enough to finish the project. To this, Dr Serfontein replied that he was not a prophet that could predict such things. Helen Serfontein was present during the playful conversation but Barbara did not know this. Barbara, together with her brother Flip Venter and his friend Bertrand Spaulding, both of whom were former pupils that returned to the school as teachers, decide to tell Richard about his father's illness. Once again they are determined that word of Dr Serfontein's illness does not get round to Helen. Unfortunately, Dr Krynauw is away on business, so no one can establish the true

state of affairs. In their eagerness to keep things that may upset him away from the headmaster, many things go wrong. Josef returns home from abroad where he had met a young Afrikaans girl who danced in a club because she had no money. He felt protective of her and asked her to return to South Africa with him. However, when she is questioned at customs he announces that they are engaged. Because of his father's illness, he does not want to tell him about this dilemma and has to hide Amanda's presence from Dr Serfontein. Richard and his friends, in turn, have rescued two British pilots - who were accused of negligence after the plane they piloted crashed and they used their ejector seats to escape - from an angry crowd at the airport. However, after having done that they realise that they had no strategy in place to get the pilots back to their home country. At the same time, the schoolteachers are trying to take over disciplinary matters so that the headmaster does not overextend himself. Things go wrong and they have to take some of the pupils into their confidence and tell them about Dr Serfontein's illness to explain their strange conduct. Josef and his fiancé, Richard, a few of his friends and the two pilots end up on Dr Serfontein's farm in Swaziland. Here they find themselves in a dangerous situation when an angry mob congregates in front the house looking for a white woman missionary who they feel had betrayed them and who they wanted to kill. By that time, things had gotten so far out of hand that Dr Serfontein is informed of the true state of affairs. He has to take his own plane and rush to the aid of his sons and their protégées. Dr Serfontein manages to save the day and clear up the confusion about his health. In any event, he decides not to write the planned history volumes.

Conclusion

Keurboslaan's world is shaped by the figure of its main character, Roelof Serfontein, and the features of the landscape surrounding Keurboslaan. The books in the series span, in narrative time, a period of at least forty years. Situated in the countryside, away from the city, Keurboslaan College for Boys is presented as an enclave founded upon a specific ideal to provide quality schooling in Afrikaans to the sons of leaders of the 'volk'. While the stories are often predictable, implausible and repetitive, they foreground the development of relationships between people over many years. This is supported by the depth and roundedness of Stella Blakemore's characters.

PART II:
Theoretical Reflections

Chapter Two:

Revisiting Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state:
New avenues for inquiry

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the nature of Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state, framed within Benedict Anderson's notion of the nation as an imagined community. It is argued by many scholars that the South African experience of apartheid was exceptional. One of the mechanisms by which to counter a focus on exceptionalism and its reductionist implications is to insert debates on Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid within a broader inquiry about cultural forms of nationalism with a specific emphasis on the construction of identity and the invention of the nation. A reading of Afrikaner nationalism through this lens is aimed at identifying new avenues for inquiry that will be explored in the broader study.

Benedict Anderson: Postulating the nation as an imagined community

For a number of reasons, theorisation on the emergence and nature of nationalism before the 1980s has been very limited. In part, nationalism presented an anomaly to Marxist thinkers, but nationalism also had no great thinkers closely associated with its 'idea' and as such had no intellectual 'champions'. Depending on their theoretical approach, scholars often regarded nationalism as a specific expression of or an aberration from another ideology, i.e. a type of fascism or liberalism. Developments in the late 1970s, for example the wars in Cambodia and Vietnam, produced new interest in the subject of nationalism. In the 1980s, nationalism came back onto the agenda as an area for serious scholarly investigation. The most important works to emerge during this period are, arguably, that of Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (originally published in 1983), and Eric Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1788* (1990). The demise of statism in the former USSR and DDR at the end of the nineteen eighties and the subsequent political turmoil in those regions resulting in a number of ongoing conflicts with a nationalist focus saw increased interest in the subject of nationalism in the early 1990s. The resurgence of nationalism in many present day conflicts, as well as nationalist tendencies evident in the north such as the closing down of the public sphere in the Unites States of America as well

as tightened anti-immigration policies and move to rightwing politics in Western Europe have made the need to come to grips with the phenomenon all the more poignant.

In *Imagined Communities* (1991), Benedict Anderson's central problematic is how the concept of the nation and nationality can be understood from the perspective of culture. Anderson's analysis 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 the imagery of the structure of the novel, the role he allocates to print texts, and the emphasis he places on language - specifically the vernacular and the national print-language – are closely connected to studies on the production, dissemination and reception of literary texts. Not only do many of the constructs and themes in Anderson's work derive from or reminds us of literary studies, but also his method of enquiry adds a further element of depth to this association. Anderson makes use of historical data in combination with interpretations of various forms of creative imaginings – both in written form (the book, the novel) and visual representations (the painting, the icon).

Part of Anderson's substantial influence on studies on nationalism can be ascribed to the deceptively simple way in which he postulates the nation as an *imagined community*. In his influential study on nationalism, Benedict 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).

According to this definition, the nation as entity is thus constructed or crafted. However, Anderson warns that communities are therefore 'to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (1991:6) He outlines the attributes of his definition of the nation as follows:

[I]t is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (1991:6).

and

The nation is limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind.

It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.

Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings (1991:7).

The first question that arises then, is what the theoretical and analytical implications are of a theory that postulates the nation as an imagined community. Anderson disagrees with Gellner's assertion that all nations are invented – read here as fabricated, or as false - as, for him, such a notion implies that there do exist 'true' communities (as opposed to 'fabricated nations', a notion which he is strongly suspicious of) (1991: 6). For Anderson, there are no 'nations' that have not been invented in a process of creative formation, but equally, only the smallest of communities could possibly claim to be authentic rather than imagined.

The argument Anderson espouses in *Imagined Communities* is summarised in brief. Nations and nationalities first emerged in the eighteenth century. To understand this development, nationalism should be located not in terms of political ideology, but rather in terms of the large cultural systems that preceded or predated its existence. Anderson identifies two such cultural systems, namely the religious community and the dynastic realm. The point is that the relevance of nationality - unlike age, which is regarded as an attribute of each person, but which does not amount to much more than an analytical expression - as an attribute of a person is generally accepted as self-evident and constitutive. Anderson therefore sets out to answer the question on what it was that gave these cultural systems their self-evident plausibility and to identify the central elements that played a role in the decomposition of those very systems.

Anderson identifies three factors that opened up the possibility to start imagining the nation, albeit in a very limited sense. First, is the demise of the religious community, which was effected in part by the development of the printing press and book printing as it undermined the notion of the sacred language – used in religious texts - that united the religious community and opened up the opportunity to produce texts in other languages than the ‘sacred’. The religious community was further eroded by the ‘discovery’ of the ‘other’ – the existence of other civilisations -, which threatened the notion of being at the centre of the cosmological order. Second, the legitimacy of the ‘sacral monarchy’ came under pressure in Western Europe during the eighteenth century and had to be actively defended – providing evidence that the legitimacy of the sacral-monarch was no longer self-evident after the developments in France in 1789. A third development Anderson identifies as a contributing factor that opened up the space for imagining the nation was the development of a sense of ‘homogenous, empty time’ as opposed to the ‘mediaeval conception of “simultaneity along time”’ (1991:24). According to Anderson, the latter was exemplified in the development of new forms of imagining, namely the novel and the newspaper, both of which employ the form invoked by the word ‘meanwhile’, i.e. the principle of simultaneity, or an understanding that different processes are taking place parallel to each other in calendrical time. On the convergence of these factors, Anderson comments that

[t]he slow, uneven decline of these interlinked certainties, first in Western Europe, later elsewhere, under the impact of economic change, ‘discoveries’ (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications, drove a hard wedge between cosmology and history. No surprise then that the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power, and time meaningfully together. Nothing perhaps more precipitated this search, nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways (1991:36).

These developments made it possible to start thinking of or imagining a community of persons framed within ‘horizontal-secular, transverse time’ (1991:37). However, Anderson argues that it was the convergence of capital and print technology, together with what he calls ‘the fatality of human linguistic diversity’ (1991:43), that provided the building blocks from where to start imagining a specific form of community, the modern nation. In this process, language occupied a central role. In his analysis, Anderson tracks the expansion of print-capitalism in the search for new markets, moving it

beyond the boundaries of Europe. Initially, from the fifteen hundreds, books were published in Latin. Eventually, after a period of hundred and fifty years, this market was exhausted. The process of printing books in the vernacular thus commenced. This process was aided by 1) the fact that Latin came to acquire a more esoteric quality as writers influenced by the Humanist movement aspired to meet stylistic achievements of the ancients, 2) the Reformation and the close alliance of Protestantism with print-capitalism, and 3) the emergence and spread, albeit slowly, of particular vernaculars as 'instruments of administrative centralization' initiated by strongly positioned monarchs.

Anderson warns that the notion of vernacular should not be confused with the idea of a national language, but should rather be seen as a language of the state. A major development was the transformation of these vernaculars and idiolects into a smaller number of print-languages. Various idiolects were combined into single print languages, thereby enlarging the market for the print-capitalists. Anderson argues that the emergence of these print-languages laid the basis for the development of a national consciousness in three ways. First, the development of print languages resulted in 'unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars' (Anderson 1991:44), that is, larger groups of people started to belong to exclusive language communities. Second, the development of print languages gave languages a certain kind of 'fixity', as the printed book is a permanent fixture of language in time and space. In turn, this contributed to the standardisation of the language and helped to develop a sense of antiquity for the language, which Anderson argues is central to the idea of the nation. Third, print-capitalism 'created languages of power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars [as] [c]ertain dialects inevitably were "closer" to each print-language and dominated their final forms' (Anderson 1991:45).

Anderson argues that three 'versions' of nationalism can be distinguished. His approach is innovative – and perhaps revolutionary – in the sense that he situates the origin of nationalism in the 'new world'. He then shows how this first understanding of nationalism is modularly applied in Western Europe and then exported to the third world for the 'last wave' of nationalisms. According to Anderson, the first version or variant of nationalism developed in the new American states of the late eighteenth century as these states were the first in which the possibility to imagine the nation was realised. He acknowledges the economic interests that in part motivated the anti-metropolitan resistance from the colonies, as well as the influence of Liberalism and Enlightenment thought. However, he suggests that it is not the resistance to the

metropolises that is significant, but the fact that this resistance was moulded in a 'national' form, and not in any other:

What I am proposing is that neither economic interest, Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could, or did, create in themselves the kind, or shape, of imagined community to be defended from these regimes' depredations; to put it another way, none provide the framework of a new consciousness – the scarcely seen periphery of its vision – as opposed to centre-field objects of its admiration or disgust. In accomplishing this specific task, pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole printmen played the decisive historical role (1991:65).

Nationalist movements in Europe arose in the period 1820-1920. For Anderson, two aspects of the European nationalisms that emerged distinguish them sharply from the movements in the New Americas. The first is the central role that a *national* print-language played ideologically and politically⁸, and second is that these nationalisms could be modelled on something else – either the nationalisms of the new Americas, or, after 1789, that of the French Revolution and its subsequent history. The point Anderson makes is that it was in this period that it became possible to aspire to being a nation, i.e. the process of becoming a nation rather than the nation being the particular end product of a process. What is more, it became possible to copy the model of the nation and adapt it to different contexts. The period is characterized by the close links between a nation and a 'private property language' (1991:68). For Anderson argues that the period of exploration and conquest from Europe had a profound impact on the way in which Europeans thought about language. By the end of the eighteenth century, the comparative study of language had commenced. From these discoveries, it became clear that, for example, the Indic civilisation was older than that of Judaea; that Hebrew was not uniquely ancient; and – with the discovery and deciphering of hieroglyphics – that there were numerous antiquities besides that of Europe. All of this served to confirm and deepen the notion of homogenous, empty time. With philology, the comparative study of grammar and language families, it became possible to reconstruct proto languages that have not existed for many years. Through philology, the status differentials that existed between languages were equalised – all languages were equally worthy of study. Anderson shows how, in the nineteenth century, this process of claiming the national print-language was closely associated with the work of numerous academics – grammarians, lexicographers, philologists, and litterateurs –

⁸ Anderson points out that speaking and writing in Spanish and English were never an issue in the New World.

compiling dictionaries, grammars and so forth. Their efforts were pivotal in shaping the nationalisms that emerged in the 19th century.

Anderson draws attention to the fact that these professionals, the philologists, grammarians, and others, were bound up in production processes for the print market, and therefore linked to the consuming publics. As a result, he introduces an element of class analysis by posing a question about who constituted the consuming public. First, he points out that, in the context of high illiteracy rates in Europe, the consuming public had to comprise of the reading classes. In turn, the reading classes comprised not only of the old ruling class, landed notables and so forth, but also – importantly - of the rising numbers of 'rising middle strata of plebeian lower officials, professionals, and commercial and industrial bourgeoisies' (Anderson 1991:76). Anderson argues that the notion of reading classes refers to entire families:

In the most general sense: the families of the reading classes – not merely the 'working father', but the servant-girded wife and the school-age children (1991:75).

The event of reading, the existence of a shared print language, and the new possibilities these offered for members of the bourgeoisie to 'picture' other members of bourgeoisie and their activities made it possible for the bourgeoisie to become the first class to achieve a kind of class solidarity on an 'imagined basis' (Anderson 1991:77).⁹ Of course, the scope of the imagined community was limited by the extent to which members of that class had access to the specific print language. There was, however, still one problem that stood in the way of opening up the consumer markets for the works generated by the new professionals. At the time, Europe was marked by the fact that the geographies of dynastic empires did not correspond to vernacular geographies. An increase in trade, literacy, communication and the deployment of increasingly sophisticated state machinery led to a drive 'for vernacular linguistic unification within each dynastic realm' (Anderson 1991:77-78) and subsequently to the notion of language-of-state in Europe. These were highly political processes, as the selection of a vernacular in a particular geographic domain could benefit those who already used that language as a print language. These processes provided the clientele for the lexicographers. Anderson (1991:78) states that it was 'not surprising to

⁹ Of course, members of aristocracy and noble classes were 'linked' to each other through kinship and other blood relations.

find very different bodies of customers according to different political conditions', but that the most typical of these formations

was a coalition of lesser gentries, academics, professionals and businessmen, in which the first often provide leaders of 'standing', the second and third myths, poetry, newspapers, and ideological formulations, and the last money and marketing facilities (1990:79).

The extent to which the masses (the peasants, the poor, the illiterate) bought into the kind of nationalism championed by the petty bourgeoisie varied greatly from region to region, depending on specific local conditions. However, Anderson concurs that 'as literacy increased, it became easier to arouse popular support, with the masses discovering new glory in the print elevation of languages they had humbly spoken all along' (1991:80). Thus, Anderson concurs with Tom Nairn's statement (quoted in Anderson 1993:80) that '[t]he new middle-class intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite the masses into history; and the invitation-card had to be written in a language they understood', even though he points out that the middle-class intelligentsia were not in all cases the host of the party. However, for Anderson a more pressing question is why it was that this type of nationalism seemed so attractive that the masses were willing to accept the invitation and that various strategic alliances were able to issue it. The answer to this historical oddity, he believes is to be found yet again in the power of the printed word. The argument Hobsbawm (1991) outlines in *Nations and Nationalism since 1788* is that the French revolution, which today is regarded as an event of enormous significance, was in fact not a 'thing', a planned intervention, in the same way as many subsequent revolutions were fashioned. There were, in fact, no central leaders or organising centres. Through its representation in printed text, a series of actions - sometimes chaotic and often disassociated - that together produced certain historical changes, became fashioned into a historical event, concept and, later on, model, on which subsequent 'revolutions' could be based. Therefore, the print text made a particular kind of piracy possible that enabled various groups to model their nationalisms on that of the French Revolution, and to adapt and mould the model to local conditions. In the same way, the independence movements in the Americas became immortalised as structured events – and yet more models - through texts, so that a range of options and models became available for pirating.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, dynasts in Europe were presented with a problem in the form of intra-nationalist movements that had arisen as a result of

capitalism and because of the 'elephantiasis' of dynasts themselves. Many of these dynasties adopted print vernaculars as language of the state. However, these languages did not corresponded to the range of languages that were spoken within the broad territory of the dynasty. The work of the philologists created the space to equate a language to a particular group (or imagined community) and to argue on that basis for an authentic space of their own. In response to these developments, the dynasties reacted by claiming particular national identification for themselves. The Romanovs, for example, claimed the national identification of Great Russians and the Hanoverians that of Germans. This gave rise to what Anderson refers to as the emergence of 'official' nationalism – which he defines as 'the willed merger of nation and dynastic empire' (1991: 86). He explains that this form of nationalism developed in response to linguistic-nationalism – and, would in fact have been impossible to imagine without these movements. The notion of official nationalism was an attempt by dynasties – although not exclusively – to forge a merger between two types of authority – the one ancient and the other modern. The aim of official nationalism was to prevent the exclusion of dynastic and aristocratic powers from popular imagined communities (1991:110). The way in which these developments were effected is through a process of homogenising the languages spoken in a specific territory. Examples are forced Anglicisation or Russification, using mechanisms such as school policy. Anderson shows that 'official nationalism concealed a discrepancy between nation and dynastic realm' (1991:110).

Anderson makes a similar point about the official nationalism pursued in the name of imperialism. On the one hand, there had been in place policy to homogenise the people of the empire, such as in India where Anglicisation mechanisms were in place. On the other, however, there remained a tension between nation and dynastic realm, which meant that Indian nationals would never become English. Anderson says that the reason for this tension should not merely be sought in racist attitudes and that one should be mindful that this very contradiction was partly rooted in the fact it was only in this period that nations (i.e. English, French and Spanish) were starting to emerge in the heart of where the empire was operating from.

After the First World War, with the establishment of the League of Nations in 1922, the concept of the nation state became hegemonic. Moreover, the concept of a nation-state came to carry a distinct political content. The twentieth century saw a wave of nations emerge, mostly from former colonies in Africa and in Asia. Anderson argues that these nationalisms were often spearheaded by the bilingual middleclass

intelligentsia from the colonised geographies, who, because of the tensions between nation and empire had been given privileged access to travel to and sometimes study in the capital city of the imperial power. Yet, at the same time, they were excluded from both the powerhouse of colonial capitalism and from being regarded as citizens of the imperial nation. It is this group, according to Anderson, that was the first to start thinking of themselves as nationals. As was the case with the Americas, the print-language that drove the wave of nationalisms in most cases were European, derived from the language-of-state of the former colonial powers and their 'Russification' policies. Anderson reminds us that

[I]t is always a mistake to treat languages in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them – as emblems of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dances, and the rest. Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities. After all, imperial languages are still vernaculars, and thus particular vernaculars among many. If radical Mozambique speaks Portuguese, the significance of this is that Portuguese is the medium through which Mozambique is imagined... Print-language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language per se (Anderson 1993:133-134).

The wave of nationalisms that emerged in the post-colonial moment was different from previous forms of nationalisms in three ways. First, more than any other form of nationalism that preceded it, models of the nation-state about which information was now widely circulated in print form shaped this wave of nationalism. Moreover, the concept of the nation-state and its attributes, as a normative form, was disseminated through the formal education systems that the colonial powers established in the colonies. Second, the development and spread of capitalism and its associated technologies opened up the space to move beyond print language in imagining communities. Third, these nationalisms were made possible by the legacy of colonial rule. Through formalising and making official the (arbitrary) borders of the colonial state, collecting information and classifying the population and everything as well as a type of 'political muzeuming' - it became possible to replicate this state (Anderson 1993: 184-185). In many ways, the establishment of the colonial state was a modernist project, which was both premised on and made possible by scientific progress:

For the colonial state did not merely aspire to create, under its control, a human landscape of perfect visibility; the condition of this 'visibility' was that everyone, everything had (as it were) a serial number. This style of imagining did not come out of thin air. It was the product of the technologies of

navigation, astronomy, horology, surveying, photography, and print, to say nothing about the deep driving power of capitalism (Anderson 1993:185).

In a chapter entitled, *Patriotism and racism*, Anderson explores the relationship between nationalism and racism. He argues against the position taken by 'progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals', who 'insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism' (Anderson 1993:141). Rather, Anderson suggests that there is another position from which to formulate questions about the nation, which is the understanding that nations have the ability to instil a kind of love that can only be compared to love for the family. The love for the nation is often expressed in a range of cultural products, from poetry to folk music. The question Anderson poses, is what is it that makes it possible to love the nation or to be prepared to die for the nation. For Anderson, one's nationality, like skin colour and gender, is not a matter of one's own choosing. Thus, nationality is a fatality, but 'precisely because such ties are not chosen, they have about them a halo of disinterestedness' (Anderson 1993:143). Anderson puts forward a controversial preposition in arguing that racism and the nation are not congruent. Racism, he argues, is often rooted in ideologies of class. As such, racism is most often an intra-national problem rather than a cross-border problem. A defining attribute of the nation or nation-ness, Anderson contends, is that it accepts the principle of naturalisation, insofar as even very insular societies acknowledge that it is somehow possible to become part of the nation. This he sees as evidence that the nation is conceived of in language, and is not defined in terms of blood (i.e. race).

Anderson's argument, though persuasive and compelling in most instances, is weak in the sense that it underestimates the material realities in which those very imagined communities operate. Bozzoli (1987:6) agrees with Anderson's contention that all communities are in a sense constructed or imagined, yet she is mindful of the fact that these communities are at the same time also real and embedded in particular material realities. Anderson's project is hampered by his intention to counter what he regards to be a mainly European trend to pathologise nationalism. Perhaps the true failure of Western intellectuals is the tendency to pathologise other nationalisms, particularly those in Africa and in the East European block, whilst failing to recognise their own nationalisms (French nationalism, English nationalism, etc.). As such, they are therefore unable to interrogate the effects of these nationalisms. Anderson provides us with a very powerful metaphor that can be used analytically to examine the events of the 1930s and 1940s in South Africa and the kind of nationalism it produced. It is

therefore a pity that Anderson is not able to extend this metaphor to explain the form of nationalism we found Apartheid South Africa. Afrikaner nationalism constituted a particular form of nationalism where the concept of the nation and the physical borders of the nation-state did not correspond. Alternatively phrased, in the case of Afrikaner nationalism, the nation was indeed an imagined community. Whilst there was something that constituted a South African 'nation' – defined in terms of citizenship and the geography of the nation state – there was another 'nation within the nation' (defined this time in terms of 'race' and linked to the right to vote) and yet another 'nation' that also referred to itself as the 'Afrikaner volk'.

South African exceptionalism theses and critiques

It has been argued that the experience of apartheid and the form of the South African apartheid state were exceptional, lacking similarities with any other forms of state. The case for South African exceptionalism has been made from different ends of the political spectrum to explain peculiarities in South Africa's historical trajectory, in particular the *development and nature of the apartheid state*. More recent theories invoking South African exceptionalism that are found, among others, in transition theory and theories on Africa are also pertinent and are therefore briefly discussed. The reasons why scholars have opted to look at the South African apartheid experience through the lens of exceptionalism are many and varied. Primarily, notions of exceptionalism are instrumental in disrupting and breaking down the idea of historical continuities and therefore politically powerful, but exceptionalism theses are also used to explain deviations in practice from theoretical models without having to rethink the model itself, another strategy that carries political weight.

The most vociferous argument for exceptionalism as an explanation for the particular form of the apartheid state has been advanced by liberal authors, whose accounts dominated the debate on the origins and function of the apartheid state until the 1970s. The central premise of their argument was that the apartheid state was dysfunctional to capitalism, and that the discriminatory and racist nature of the state derived from racial beliefs and frontier prejudices held by the Afrikaner (Worden 1994:66). In the 1960s, communist thinkers too presented a case for exceptionalism, which they termed 'internal colonialism' (or 'colonialism of a special type' and 'settler colonialism') to explain the racially discriminatory, repressive nature of the apartheid state. The notion of South African exceptionalism has been strongly contested and four critiques are discussed. The first of these emphasises South Africa's colonial past and the linkages

and continuities between the colonial state and the apartheid state. A second critique examines the similarities between South Africa's apartheid state and other post-colonial states. The third critique comes from neo-Marxist quarters and challenges the notion of South African exceptionalism by demonstrating through structuralist Marxist class analysis that apartheid was not an aberration, but rather a strategy for building an industrial economy on cheap migrant labour. A fourth critique, also from revisionist quarters and essentially a variant of the previous understands the apartheid state as the product of an exceptional form of capitalist development and therefore as a variant of a fascist state. At the heart of critiques of exceptionalism theses is the claim that the racial dimension of the apartheid state has been overemphasised. This, it is believed, has obscured or masked the links and similarities between the South African state and state forms elsewhere, thereby limiting the insights that could be gained from a comparative perspective.

It should be noted that most academic texts in Afrikaans on the apartheid state and Afrikaner nationalism have been written from a 'nationalist' and culturalist perspective. O'Meara (1983:4) remarks on the fact that this body of literature in the majority of cases 'self-consciously' seeks to construct a kind of mythology, political and cultural, around the phenomenon of Afrikaner nationalism. The nationalist perspective has been severely criticised, not merely because of questions about the theoretical underpinnings of the work, but in many cases also the factual basis and therefore legitimacy of the conclusions drawn. Much of the Afrikaans writing on the subject is heavily imbued with a kind of culturalism, with no attempts made to contextualise this notion of culture as self-explanatory and given, or to link it to other social categories such as class. Indeed, the Afrikaner nationalism portrayed in much of this writing created around it its own mythology. Worden (1994:87) alludes to the way in which the idea of the unity of the Afrikaner 'volk' is emphasised in this mythology:

Born on the old Cape frontier, trekking away from the British in 1836, surviving attacks by hostile Africans in the interior, defending themselves against the British in the 1870s and again in the South African War, suffering maltreatment in British concentration camps, rebelling against South African support for the British cause in the First World war, partially triumphing in the 1920s under the Hertzog government which made Afrikaans an official language, reacting against the English-dominated Fusion government of Hertzog and Smuts in the 1930s and early 1940s, finally winning the election of 1948, and – the ultimate achievement – breaking from the Commonwealth and establishing a republic in 1961.

Whilst interpretations of the events mentioned in the quotation above may vary, that these events did in fact take place is not in dispute. Rather, it is the silences in this mythology that are of interest. For example, the different experiences of people from different classes and regions are ignored (Worden 1994:87), and, of equal importance, no attention is paid to the resistances from within, such as Afrikaans workers in the Garment Workers Union (Brink 1987), the trade union movement and its opposition to the state (Alexander 2000) or Afrikaners who fought on the British side in the First World War. The 'canonised' texts on Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state have therefore mostly been in English and first emerged from a liberal tradition.

A group of theories, termed by Mamdani (1999) and Simson (1980) as 'economist', explains the origins and/or function of apartheid by exploring the relationship between capitalism and apartheid.¹⁰ It is in this tradition that liberal and pluralist authors explain the origins of the apartheid state as the outcome of a combination of a brand of nationalism and frontier prejudices espoused by Afrikaners, who won political power in 1948, and a sophisticated industrialising economy based on minerals developed by the British. Liberalism as an ideology posits that there exists a positive association between industrialisation and democracy, and, following from this, that democracy thus is a necessary consequence of industrialisation. Based on this assumption, most liberal scholars then understand the apartheid state, based on white supremacist rule, as an exception to or aberration from this model. The conclusion most liberal authors reach is that, because of this perceived 'irrationality' of the apartheid state, the internal contradictions cannot hold and, hence, that apartheid would eventually be replaced with a democratic system of governance. Ralph Horwitz's book, *The Political Economy of South Africa*, published in 1967 is perhaps the best example of the liberal thesis on apartheid. Sarakinsky (1996: 288) summarises the liberal position on the functionality of the apartheid state as follows:

There is an essential contradiction between racism and capitalism. Racism is dysfunctional to the rational development of an industrial economy.

Restrictions on the mobility of black labour (influx control) and the reservation of jobs for whites make no economic sense.

¹⁰Posel (1991: 9) argues that this debate, which has generally become known as the 'liberal-revisionist' debate, is better understood as comprising two questions rather than one. She distinguishes between the apartheid design and apartheid practice, i.e. the implementation of apartheid policies. For Posel, the two questions that underpin this debate are: (1) What is the impact of capitalist development and dominant class interests on the design and objectives of apartheid, and (2) what is the degree of compatibility between capitalism and the way in which apartheid policies are administered in practice.

Posel (1991:9) argues that the liberal position on the origin and function of apartheid was not necessarily as uniform as might have been perceived by revisionist scholars. The liberal position was later somewhat modified and has become more nuanced. Writing in 1985, Merle Lipton concedes that apartheid cannot be explained simply as the outcome of racism or capitalism. However, principally she retains the original liberal argument by asserting that apartheid was the outcome of the *political* power of Afrikaners, and that the form of political power came under pressure only in the mid-1960s when a generation of Afrikaner industrialists had emerged for whom apartheid policies no longer made 'economic sense'. In support of this position, she states that 'the strength of ethnic ties, the institutionalisation of apartheid, and time lags before changes in interests fed into the political system – as well as deep divisions among the opposition – enabled the Afrikaners political establishment to maintain its power base and hegemony' (Lipton 1985:365).

Another type of exceptionalism thesis emerged from communist and Marxist theorists. A theory of 'internal colonialism' was developed in the 1960s, the general gist of which is that South Africa is an exceptional example of a form of colonialism where the colonisers (white South Africans) colonised the (black) indigenous people of the land. What made this type of colonialism exceptional, according to the theory, is that both the colonised and the colonisers shared the same geographical space, i.e. occupied the same land, South Africa. This theory, which was espoused in *The Road to South Africa*, a document of the South African Communist Party published in 1963, drew on Lenin's theory of imperialism, but modified it to accommodate this peculiar feature of South African society (Sarakinsky 1996:289). Greenberg (1980:20) points out that Lenin's position emphasises "lagged" development - the belief that "backward" areas would ultimately catch up and escape "national" concerns', thereby indicating that this kind of approach is underpinned by the view that South African exceptionalism, with the focus on race, is a deviation that will inevitably be overcome. A theoretical approach similar to that of the SACP underlies the work of Bunting (1986), *The Rise of the South African Reich*, and Simons and Simons (1983), *Class & Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*. The latter argues that 'South Africa uniquely demonstrates that a dominant racial minority can perpetuate social rigidities and feudalistic traits on an advanced and expanding industrial base' (Simons and Simons 1983: 618). However, though these theorists can be classified as supporting an exceptionalism thesis insofar as they tried in the first place to account for the unique racial basis of the apartheid state, the authors have also attempted to link this unique South African phenomenon to a general model of fascism. O'Meara (1983:10) criticises this approach for (1) using the term

fascism as a 'descriptive devise' rather than an analytical concept; and (2) developing theory that rests on a 'racial polarity' that treats 'class and race as independent factors in South Africa'. O'Meara shows that the link to fascism was made by analogy in an attempt to place the South African situation in a framework that made sense, and not the outcome of a rigorous theoretical analysis.

From the 1970s a group of theorists, who became known as revisionist historians or neo-Marxists emerged. Simson (1980:2) claims that '[u]ntil the 1970s, scholarly analysis of the apartheid system and South African history in general had scarcely been undertaken by Marxists. It was commonly thought that Marxism was incapable of throwing light on the South African society where 'race struggle' rather than 'class struggle' was the obvious determining factor". The revisionists used structural Marxist analysis to challenge the claim of South African exceptionalism advanced by the Liberals, introducing class analysis and theories of accumulation to demonstrate how apartheid fitted with capitalist development. Whereas Liberal theorists have argued that apartheid was dysfunctional to capitalism, a fact that they believed would necessarily and inevitably lead to its demise, neo-Marxist theories attempted to show that the racism entrenched in the apartheid state was functional for the development of capitalism. Though the work of this group of theorists was not homogeneous, O'Meara (1983:2) points out that these authors:

reject the liberal notion of a fundamental contradiction between the racist apartheid policies of Afrikaner nationalism on the one hand and a supposedly inherently colour-blind capitalist economy on the other. On the contrary, despite some deep differences, the various authors have all sought to situate the analysis of the South African social formation squarely within the context of the processes of capital accumulation and the class struggles through which it takes place.

Simson (1980:30) argues that Marxists focused on the weakest aspect of the liberal analysis to show how apartheid played a key role in the 'expansion of monopoly capitalism' with specific emphasis being placed on the 'labour repressive side'. Within the broader Marxist school of thought, he distinguishes between two approaches. The first of these comprised of a group of thinkers who gave preference to the economic and structural determinants of the apartheid state's labour policy. The second group, according to Simson, comprised those who focused on the class struggle (Simson 1980:30-31). To the first group of revisionist scholars belong Harold Wolpe, Martin Legassick, Frederick Johnstone, and Stanley Trapido. Wolpe, in particular, amended

the theory of 'internal colonialism', employed earlier by, among others, the SACP, to focus on the functionality for capitalist development of a 'prolonged unevenness' in a model of 'colonialism of a special type' (Greenberg 1980: 20-21). The revisionist position was later modified and expanded, influenced in particular by the work of Nico Poulantzas, by Rob Davies, David Kaplan and Dan O'Meara (Posel 1991: 11, Simson 1980:32). Bonner, Delius and Posel (1993:1) stress the fact that "the early revisionists gave an essentially functionalist explanation for apartheid, which interpreted state policies as emerging simply in response to capital accumulation".

Among these revisionist historians were a number of scholars who attempted, by making use of comparative methodology, to underline the similarities between the apartheid state and various fascist states. The most comprehensive and rigorous of this work was undertaken by Howard Simson. Simson recognises the shortcomings in earlier attempts by the left to link the apartheid state to fascism. His argument is summarised by O'Meara (1983:11) as: "[a] theorisation of fascism as an 'exceptional capitalist state form'... presented as a series of watertight social laws about the character of the class struggle, the crisis confronting monopoly capital, and the alliances formed by the petty bourgeoisie". Simson (1980:33-35) criticises, in particular, Heribert Adam's *Modernizing Racial Domination*, which concludes that apartheid cannot be equated with fascism. Simson contends that Adam would have reached a different conclusion - one that matches his own - if only he had used class and not race as unit of analysis. Simson (1980:204) finds that:

the former [Afrikaner fascism] closely correspond to the latter [National Socialism] in all four respects. The most significant qualitative difference between the fascism resides in their national settings. Afrikaner fascism takes place in a multi-national/racial society, while European fascism occurred in 'homogenous' nation s tates.

Simson's position is challenged by O'Meara (1980:11) for a lack of 'historical specificity' and for using a method of analysis that O'Meara terms 'verificationist analysis'. These points are taken up in the concluding comments to this section.

Two critiques to the notion of South African exceptionalism both stem from South Africa's colonial history. The first of the two emphasises continuity between the form of state under British rule and the apartheid state. The second, developed by Mahmood

Mamdani, also takes colonialism as starting point, but focuses more on the break with colonialism, i.e. the post-colonial state.

Yudelman, in his important study on the emergence of modern South Africa, focusing on the period from 1902-1939 and the link between state and capital, argues that the difference between the colonial state and the apartheid state might be regarded as a difference of degree rather than a difference of kind. He makes a particularly strong argument against the notion of South African exceptionalism. Yudelman rejects the Marxist and neo-Marxist interpretations of the apartheid state as representing and being shaped by the interests of capital. For him, the relationship between the state and capital, both during the period of British rule after the South African Anglo-Boer war and under Nationalist Party rule, is symbiotic. Yudelman concludes that South Africa, so often seen as deviant and exceptional, 'in many ways, is the precursor and model of development in the "advanced industrial societies" rather than their flotsam' (Yudelman 1984:1). Magubane, arguing strongly against the way in which the race/class debate has unfolded in South Africa, states that 'racist ideas and the type of state which followed from its assumptions arose from the engagement of imperial entrepreneurs and their political allies with practical problems of accumulation, and necessarily reflect the will to commit economic, political and social acts against those construed as "inferior"' (Magubane 1996:357). Magubane focuses on the ideology of social imperialism as an explanation for what has happened in South Africa, and as way of understanding the form of the apartheid state. Magubane's main argument is that the consequence of South African exceptionalism theses is that what has happened in South Africa has been studied in isolation, without seriously looking at the way in which South African history interfaces with what was happening elsewhere in the world, in particular in other dominions.

Mahmood Mamdani renders another powerful critique against the notion of South African exceptionalism in his work *Citizen and Subject*. Mamdani's argument is that the apartheid state, if one looks beyond its racialised form, mirrors and exemplifies the form of the post-colonial state in Africa, that is, according to Mamdani, the bifurcated state. For Mamdani, a striking characteristic of the post-colonial state in Africa is its de-racialised nature. This de-racialisation masks what Mamdani calls the actual form of the state, namely a bifurcated state, where the urban population is governed as citizens and the rural population is ruled as subjects. Mamdani argues that analyses of the racialised structure of power in South Africa under apartheid have hitherto masked the

similarities between the South African system of homelands and forms of traditional rule in other African states.

From this first part of the discussion, a number of initial conclusions may be drawn. The first conclusion, then, is that the apartheid state was not exceptional, and that it certainly did not lack similarities with other forms of state power. The basis for this conclusion is the sheer weight of the critiques to the exceptionalist position discussed here, and the valuable insights derived from these. This does not mean that elements of the apartheid state were not unique, and that these elements need not be analysed. Yudelman (1984:5) reminds us that '[t]he fact that [South Africa] is not deviant does not mean that it is therefore typical. Its importance from a comparative perspective lies more in the additional dimensions it can give the so-called typical state than in the degree to which it conforms to the typical'. It is therefore not argued that the critiques against exceptionalism have made a convincing and conclusive argument that, for example, the apartheid state was indeed a type of fascist state or a model of the post-colonial state. It is that these scholars have sufficiently demonstrated that the apartheid state needs to be interpreted in a broader framework. Moreover, critiques of exceptionalism theses have taken the debate forward and have opened new avenues for analysis and understanding. Perhaps the strongest contribution by the various schools that set out to demystify South African exceptionalism theses has been to show that by theorising exceptionalism, one might overlook (or intentionally hide) factors that show how a particular local experience is linked to occurrences in world history and the world economic system. Following from the first conclusion, the second modifies or contextualises that argument. If it is argued that the notion of exceptionalism results in an overemphasis on race as a category for analysing the apartheid state, or masks or hides other categories, what then is the status of the various critiques of that position? It is the contention of this author that none of the critiques presented can in their own be regarded as sufficient to encompass and explain the origin and function of apartheid. The second conclusion therefore is that the arguments set out here remind us of the limitations of meta-theory in general, and model-building in particular, in explaining social phenomena. A third conclusion pertains to a matter of methodology. Peter Alexander (1997) argues that

Although exceptionalism, of whatever variety, embodies an implicit comparison (usually with an ideal type), there is a danger of exceptionalist conclusions discouraging explicitly comparative study, thereby stifling an assessment of the importance of international processes within national histories.

A similar point, though phrased differently, is made by both Magubane (1996) and Mamdani (1999). This point needs to be clarified: attempts to classify a social phenomenon as exceptionalist or to place it within a broader framework run the risk of presenting a reductionist account of that phenomenon. There is a danger in positivist approaches to classify a phenomenon as either exceptional or linked in a broader framework through falsifying or verifying that the construct does indeed fit the model. Claiming exceptionalism is therefore not problematic as such. However, caution should be exercised when this construct is used, as arguing exceptionalism often seems to foreclose further action. As Mamdani explains, if South Africa is regarded as exceptional, the South African experience cannot be used to engage with developments in other countries, such as other postcolonial states or any others for that matter, in a comparative manner. Therefore, the notion of exceptionalism tends to paralyse political action through its failure to link the local to broader developments elsewhere in the world. There is a further political reason for why one should be cautious when presenting a case for exceptionalism, which is that locating South African events in a broader framework and demonstrating both similarities and differences between the South African experience and other experiences is part of resistance to hegemonic western models. Using Yudelman's argument, it should not be forgotten that colonies can illuminate the metropolises.

Having argued for the need to move beyond notions of South African exceptionalism, the question is how does one then frame a research project in such a way that it speaks to broader debates on postcolonialism and the postcolonial state, nationalism and fascism, and the development of capitalism? Moreover, the end of apartheid has opened up opportunities for new kinds of academic inquiry for scholars, and these opportunities need to be taken on. The politics of scholarly work and research under apartheid dictated a narrow framework of inquiry, where leftist scholars have rejected that race and class can be independent factors and have paid little attention to issues of subjectivity. In particular, many Marxists were forced into a kind of class straightjacket resulting in the situation where Marxist analyses were mainly informed by understandings of class whilst many analyses could have benefited from a wider

inquiry that took into account and engaged with other identities, including gender and race. The way by which this research proposes to move beyond the limits of exceptionalist theses on South Africa and address some of the challenges posed by post-apartheid scholarly work is to take one step back to look for the gaps in scholarly work on the apartheid state and to revisit questions that have been left unanswered or were not fully explored. In particular, then, this study examines questions of identity, race and class in relation to the Afrikaner nationalism and the power base of the apartheid state. As the research is located in debates on Afrikaner nationalism, a brief review of literature on this subject is offered below, and then some of the new questions that have been emerged following the end of apartheid, some of which this study proposes to engage with, are outlined.

Afrikaner nationalism and the construction of an Afrikaner identity

I first provide a brief overview of developments preceding the National Party victory by a very narrow margin in 1948. For this account, I rely mostly on Dan O'Meara's book *Volkskapitalisme*, which is still widely regarded as the most comprehensive account of developments in this period (see Hyslop 1996, Posel 1991).¹¹

Following the peace treaty that concluded the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 signalling the end to the two independent Boer republics, the first attempt to reconsolidate Afrikaner political power was the establishment of the Het Volk party in 1906. The National Party was established in the Orange Free State province in 1914 by General J.B.M Hertzog, and in the following year, National Parties were also formed in the Cape Colony and the Transvaal (O'Meara 1983:59). Afrikaners got a taste of political power again in 1924 when the Pact government was formed through a coalition between General Hertzog's National Party and Colonel F.H.P. Creswell's Labour Party. Hertzog managed to win the 1929 election with a full parliamentary majority, but in the aftermath of the Great Depression he entered into a coalition agreement with General Jan Smuts from the South African Party, which resulted in the 'fusion' of their parties into the United South African National Party (later known as the United Party). In reaction to the coalition between the NP and the SAP, D.F. Malan in 1934 established a splinter group from Hertzog's National Party first called the Gesuiwerde Nasionale

¹¹Posel is critical of O'Meara's notion that a single 'Apartheid-idea' was the ideological cement that bound together the Afrikaner nationalist class alliance (Posel 1991:3).

Party (Purified National Party) and later the Herenigde Nasionale Party (Reunited National Party). Malan's party wins the general election in 1948.

The election victory of the National Party in 1948 signalled the success of efforts to create Afrikaner unity under the umbrella of an Afrikaner nationalism that had been crafted from the beginning of the twentieth century. The idea that Afrikaner identity was not a given or historical inevitability is widely accepted. Scholars such as Hofmeyr (1987) have shown that there emerged from the late nineteenth century a number of loosely organised 'movements' dedicated to the creation of an Afrikaans literary tradition and, more ambitiously, a collective identity for 'Afrikaners'. These efforts were spearheaded by fractions within the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie, notably clergy and teachers, who were not benefiting from the policies of after-war Milnerism. There were various cleavages in the ranks of the group of people that would a few decades later be consolidated into the 'Afrikaner volk'. Some of these cleavages were among Dutch, English and Afrikaans speakers of 'Boer' or 'Dutch-Afrikaans' descent, another was the division between the 'landed notables' and the landless *bywoners*, while yet another cleavage was that between the North and South. Conditions in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State had always been different from those in the Cape and Natal, but the devastation caused by the Anglo Boer War exacerbated these differences and made them appear starker. It is thus clear that in the first decades of the twentieth century, there was no such thing as a single united Afrikaner identity. Moreover, from the late nineteenth century the spill over of the mineral revolution would catapult the geographical space that in 1910 became the Union of South Africa into an industrial capitalist economy. In turn, this brought about new cleavages in the ranks of the Dutch-Afrikaners as it led to the formation of a white Afrikaans speaking working class, made possible through a large movement of Afrikaners from the rural areas to industrial towns and cities.

Many scholars have commented on the nature of urbanisation amongst Afrikaners after the Anglo-Boer War (Vincent 2000, Brink 1987, O'Meara 1983, Callinicos 1987, Hyslop 1995, Hofmeyr 1987). Already before the Anglo-Boer War in 1899, many Afrikaners were forced off the land they occupied because of the mineral revolution. After the War, with the destruction of more than 30 000 Afrikaner homesteads and the large-scale loss of much of the livestock, many more landless Afrikaners (*bywoners*) and small farmers sought refuge in the cities, in particular the towns of the Witwatersrand (Callinicos 1987:219). In the aftermath of World War One, a period characterised by a depressed economy and disease amongst cattle, yet more Afrikaners streamed to the

city in search of employment opportunities. The Great Depression of the 1930s saw a fourth stream of Afrikaner migrants flowing to the urban areas. These were not the only reasons for the move to the cities. Others included the rise of commercial agriculture, which made traditional farming methods unsustainable, traditional inheritance practices of subdividing land among sons of the family - which drastically reduced the viability of the proceeds of the land to support a family - and natural disasters such as drought (Stals 1986:5-10). These and other factors, contributed to increased poverty in the rural areas, and comprised the 'push' factors. The pull factor of the industrialised Johannesburg and the surrounding towns of the Rand was the mining industry and secondary industries that sprung up around it. Of course, the migration patterns were uneven. Much of the work opportunities available in the cities depended on manual labour, which favoured the young and the strong. These circumstances altered authoritarian and paternalistic patterns in Afrikaner households in significant, if unexpected, ways.

The move to the cities in the first four decades of the twentieth century fostered the growth of a large Afrikaner working class whose interests were different from those of the petty bourgeoisie. White Afrikaans speakers moving to the cities included skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Skilled workers included those that worked on the mines as artisans and craft persons and those that took up clerical positions. However, a large number of those moving to the cities were either unskilled, or did not possess any transferable skills. Moreover, a substantial number of those that migrated to the cities did so precisely to escape conditions of utmost poverty in the rural areas. O'Meara states that by the 1920s, an average of 12 000 whites per annum were migrating from rural areas to the cities, where they came to constitute a large 'army of the unemployed, known as "poor whites"' (O'Meara 1983:26). In 1928, the Carnegie Commission was established to investigate the so-called 'Poor White Question'.¹² In 1930-32 the Carnegie Commission released its report on the so-called 'Poor White Problem'. The report highlights in particular the desperation found among whites in the rural areas, but also covers aspects pertaining to the conditions of the urban white

¹² The Carnegie Commission was established after a visit by the President and the Secretary of the Corporation to South Africa in 1927. A number of organisations, in particular the Dutch Reformed Church, approached them to provide support for a proposed investigation that would both track the nature and extent of the 'poor white problem' and propose possible remedies for the situation. In addition to funding most of the research work and carrying the reproduction and printing costs of the report, the Carnegie Corporation made available two researchers, Dr Kenyon L. Butterfield and Dr C.W. Coulter, to participate in the study. In 1932, the Commission released its report in five volumes, each respectively covering an economic, psychological, educational, medical and sociological approach (see Grosskopf 1932, Wilcocks 1932, Murray 1932, Rothmann 1932, Albertyn 1932, and Malherbe 1932).

poor. Based on data collected during 1929-1930, the report found that 17.5% of all (white) households with school-going children could be classified as very poor. The Commission used those figures to estimate that approximately 300 000 persons out of a white population of 1 800 000 fell into the category of 'very poor' (Grosskopf 1932: vi-viii). The majority of these persons were Afrikaans-speaking. By 1936, 540 000 Afrikaners were residing in cities. This figure roughly comprised half of the white Afrikaans population (Stals 1986:2). Based on a total white Afrikaans speaking population of 1,1 million in 1936, and working from the assumption that the white population figures remained fairly stable from the late 1920s to the early 1930s, it can be argued that almost a third of all Afrikaners could be classified as 'very poor' in the early 1930s.

The idea of nation as an imagined community is not new in the study of Afrikaner nationalism and various authors have made use of either Anderson's notion of the 'imagined community' and/or Hobsbawm's (1990) concept of the 'invention of tradition' (see Bozzoli (1987:6), Hyslop (1996), Hofmeyr (1987), and Hyslop (1995)). For these authors, and others, one of the main advantages of thinking about nationalism and the nation as a process of imagining is the emphasis this places on the *constructed* nature of ethnic identity and ethnicity. Bozzoli regards Afrikaner nationalism as a movement whose main features were remarkably congruent with the kind of analysis Anderson provides. For Bozzoli, Anderson's 'imagined communities' centres on ethnic communities and nationalities. Nonetheless, she asserts that all communities are in a sense constructed or imagined, yet at the same time also real and embedded in particular material realities. In analysing this, she draws on another body of literature that sees the community as a concrete reality.¹³ She regards Anderson's position as a fruitful way to analyse ethnicity since

[t]he idea of an imagined community asks us to look at community not as a solid, timeless given, but as a creation on the level of myth, and to see it in tandem with other forces. Self-conscious groups may act to create communities... Classes, consisting of real social actors, become the motive force behind the construction and myth-making involved in communities (Bozzoli 1987:7).

¹³ See Stedman-Jones, G. 1974. 'Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', *Journal of Social History* 7(4); Foster, John. 1974. *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*. London; Cumbler, J.T. 1979 *Working Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities 1880-1930*. Connecticut: Westport.

Of importance here and particularly relevant to the study is the strong emphasis Bozzoli places (also present in the work of Hyslop (1996) and Hofmeyr (1987)) on actors 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 the very myths and symbols that make it possible to 'invent a nation' and on the artefacts or products that are produced to speak to those that the creators want to endow with a particular identity. However, it is recognised that community creators do not operate in an unlimited field. Identity is fragmented and fractured along many other lines, including class, ethnicity, geography, etc. The question is therefore what strategies these self-conscious community-creators employ in order to craft myths and symbols that transcend, for example, class fractures. Another way of phrasing the question is provided by Bonner & Lodge's (1989:7) rephrasing of a question posed by Paul la Hausse in the same volume:

'the extent to which leaders [of popular political movements (eds)] (sic) had their own class agendas, and the way in which 'the common-sense ideas and the culture of [the] (sic) labouring poor set important limits' to these leaders' freedom of action, forcing them to 'negotiate within a particular [and usually regionally centred (eds)] cultural universe', if they wished to succeed.

Yet another implication of taking Anderson's imagined communities seriously is the way in which it highlights the relationship between the production of cultural artefacts and capitalism. Bozzoli argues that

every cultural institution acquires an economic character as soon as incomes are to be made from its existence – and those who survive and prosper because of their involvement in a cultural institution, find their interests taking a distinctly material form as well as a cultural one (Bozzoli 1983:22-23)

Now, at the time of the release of the Carnegie report there did exist among Afrikaners a stratum of educated professionals or a petty bourgeoisie. Lazer argues that the definition for the intelligentsia should in this case be expanded not only to include writers, journalists and academics, but also teachers, clerics, and to some extent lawyers (quoted in Bonner, Delius & Posel 1993: 21). Their fate was closely tied in with that of the Afrikaner working class, as they lacked a support base of their own. The civil service favoured the employment of English speakers and the large-scale move of Afrikaners to the cities eroded their traditional base in the country. While they had been

active in projects to uplift the white poor, this group intensified their involvement with the white poor after the release of the Carnegie report. It is this group that is generally regarded as the self-conscious community creators, the actors in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism. The petty bourgeoisie was not a homogenous group and their efforts to capture a new power base for themselves culminated in the establishment of a wide and disparate range of movements and interventions. This took place against the background of the full incorporation of Afrikaners into a capitalist economy. The most powerful of these organisations was the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB).

The Afrikaner Broederbond (AB) was established in the Transvaal in 1918. In 1921 it was reconstituted as a secret organisation. The AB was a distinctly 'urban grouping of the petty bourgeoisie' (O'Meara 1983:60). The AB came to be dominated by academics (specifically theologians) from the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in the second half of the 1920s. For most of the 1920s the organisation confined itself to operations in the cultural domain, focusing on issues such as mother tongue education, the development of Afrikaans literature, and the promotion of the use of Afrikaans as language of instruction in schools and medium of education in commerce (Pelzer quoted in O'Meara 1983:61). The establishment of the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations), known as the FAK, in 1929 constitutes an important new phase for the AB. It is clear that the AB saw itself as the patron of the FAK, and, indeed, the FAK was described as its public arm (see O'Meara 1983: 61). In the period after the establishment of the FAK, the AB not only expanded its membership, but also broadened and consolidated its influence by following a policy that encouraged the 'infiltration' of its members into key positions. This process is described by O'Meara as follows:

A picture emerges of an immense informal network of influence in all regions and all sections of the Afrikaner community, together with a powerful organisational bond forging very strong group loyalties. The vital significance of the Bond as it developed after fusion lay in the fact that through it the intellectual cream of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie was independently organised into a militant, highly disciplined body. Through the coordination and direction of the disparate individual talents of this class, and their 'systematic infiltration' into all 'key bodies in national life' where they could exercise 'quiet influence', the Bond provides a superb vehicle for the discussion, elaboration and adoption and eventual execution of what, after fusion, amounted to the independent programme of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie (O'Meara 1983:64).

Membership of the AB was on invitation only, and was exclusively white, male and Afrikaans:

This heavily petty-bourgeois membership comprised in effect the cream of the northern Afrikaner intelligentsia, and came to be regarded – and so regarded itself – as the self-chosen elite of 'Afrikanerdom' (O'Meara 1983:63).

The Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie were not unified classes either. Far from being the united force setting out to capture the Afrikaner working classes to the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism, many of the white Afrikaans-speaking members of these classes were embracing another identity. Even by the 1940s, both the Afrikaner bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie (Afrikaners in professional careers such as medical doctors and lawyers) were small in number, and, significantly, the language of the bourgeoisie was English (Bonner, Delius & Posel 1993: 22, Lazer, J. 1987). The following statistics provide some idea of the spread of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie:

By 1946 3,1% of Afrikaners were directors or owners, 4,35% were professionals or teachers and 7% were clerks (the equivalent figures for English speakers were 11,3%, 9,9% and 15, 9%).¹⁴

Many of these professionals were speaking English at work and at home and slowly became delinked from their Afrikaans and/or Afrikaner backgrounds and assimilated themselves into English culture. Stals (1986:22) explains this phenomenon among the Afrikaner elite in Johannesburg on the Rand:

[t]he small percentage of Afrikaners that rose to a more affluent level was not so many in numbers that they could become the majority in affluent neighbourhoods. Consequently, they settled in affluent neighbourhoods where English-speakers were the majority by far, and as individuals in a completely strange environment they came very strongly under the influence of the English culture and way of life. Thus, in many cases they became separated from their fellow Afrikaners [my translation].

¹⁴ (Bonner, Delius & Posel 1993:39 quoting Lazer, J. 1987, *Conformity and Conflict, Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961*. Doctoral Thesis, Oxford University, p. 96).

In his analysis of Afrikaner nationalism, O'Meara focuses on the way in which various classes and class formations within what was cast as 'Afrikanerdom' managed to build an alliance that led to the National Party victory in 1948. He therefore does not explain Afrikaner nationalism as a type of frontier prejudice common to Afrikaners – as most – at times perhaps disingenuous – interpretations of their work attribute to Liberal scholarship. Influenced by Poulantzian Marxist scholarship, O'Meara examines the relationships between capitalist accumulation, class fractions and the nationalist project, paying specific attention to the economic movement, best captured in the phrase *Volkskapitalisme*. O'Meara shows how the balance of power in Afrikaner class fractions shifts after 1948. In the 1930s, it is the intelligentsia and the petty bourgeoisie who draft the nationalist agenda. By October 1950, at the second *Ekonomiese Volkskongres*, delegates are mostly from commerce and industry. In his analysis of events, O'Meara argues that the Afrikaner bourgeoisie succeeded in shifting the contents of Afrikaner nationalism away from a socialist anti-capitalist (though probably more anti-imperial) stance to an embrace of capitalism. This, O'Meara argues, indicates that by the time of the National Party victory in 1948 the bourgeoisie had successfully displaced the petty bourgeoisie as the delegates of the 'volk' (1983:248).

Revisiting Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state: New questions

Anderson's analysis of nationalism points to the importance of a study of print texts in examining specific forms of nationalism. In particular, he shows that print-capitalism, language and the interests of the intelligentsia are joined together in the development of texts. This study has as its principal focus an examination of the role of popular literature in the construction of Afrikaner identity and the dissemination of the ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism. Revisiting the terrain of Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state with a specific emphasis on the construction of Afrikaner identity and the invention of the nation as postulated by Anderson, what then are some of the questions that need to be restated, which are the areas of inquiry that display gaps and silences, and - given the space for inquiry that has been opened up in the post-apartheid era - what are new questions that can now be posed? This question can be answered in varied and numerous ways, but given the focus of the present study, six primary fields of inquiry have been identified. These are (1) exploring in more detail the way in which ideas and ideology of Afrikaner nationalism formulated by the elite were disseminated and turned into a form of 'mass consciousness', in other words, exploring and explaining how Afrikaner subjectivities were constructed; (2) revisiting issues of class and class fractions within 'Afrikanerdom' with a focus on examining the

composition of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, exploring the upward and downward mobility between this class and other classes, and documenting contestation and resistance; (3) restating the question about what the central idea or ideas were that Afrikaner nationalism was premised upon and held together by and examining critically the preposition that it was the idea of apartheid; (4) engaging with problems of explanation of Afrikaner nationalism, in particular the national focus of most studies; (5) posing questions about the construction of identity and subjectivities, in particular looking at the kind of subjectivity the apartheid state required from its citizens and tracking the ways in which these subjectivities were produced and changed in order to answer a question about the way in which changes in subjectivity played a role in the undoing of apartheid, and (6) moving beyond the limits of exceptionalism theses to insert research on Afrikaner nationalism within present debates on ethnic nationalism and the politics of identity and debates on the construction of a new South African nation. These fields of inquiry are discussed in greater detail below.

Reviewing theoretical accounts of Afrikaner nationalism, there seems to be in the first instance a gap in terms of the way in which the process through which the ideas and ideologies of the intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie successfully permeated the consciousness of Afrikaners of all classes is explained. O'Meara articulates this challenge 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).

Drawing on Gramsci, O'Meara distinguishes between ideology on the literary level and the practical or popular. He argues that during the 1930s, through the Afrikaner Broederbond, Afrikaner intellectuals were successful in crafting the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism on the literary level, i.e. 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).

Given these divisions among the ranks of 'Afrikanerdom' and linking this to the elite's project to construct Afrikaner identity and subjectivities, it seems that not one but three questions are raised. 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 transformation of the mind and the emergence of an Afrikaner subjectivity, i.e. what is the theoretical and empirical explanations of the way in which 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?

A second field of inquiry that can benefit from further exploration encompasses the composition of various class formations within what is generally referred to as 'Afrikanerdom'. This includes revisiting issues of class and class fractions with a focus on examining the composition of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, exploring the upward and downward mobility between this class and other classes and documenting contestation and resistance from within and between class formations. One of the features of discussions about Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state has been the ubiquitous phenomenon that notions of Afrikanerdom, Afrikaners, Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state are merged, the one substituted for by the other, or simply conflated. Underpinning many, though by no means all, of these analyses is a perception of Afrikaners as monolithic *volk* whose unity is not questioned. It has been shown that exceptionalist theses on the apartheid state and Afrikaner nationalism are closely associated with analyses of the South African experience that privilege the issue of race. Most of the theoretical approaches presented above share an essentially structuralist approach to enquiries into the apartheid state. There exists too a body of scholarship that has challenged proponents of structuralist and post-structuralist approaches on the issue of agency and resistance. Bozzoli (1983:17), for example,

reminds us that ethnicity is neither unified nor monolithic, and that the same is true for culture and ideology. This begs for a return to questions about the different groups that made up 'Afrikanerdom' and to disaggregate these groups in order to uncover other and yet untold strategies for securing political power for Afrikaners in 1948. This is articulated by O'Meara as follows:

[W]ho were the differential constituents of Afrikanerdom, and what were the conditions and struggles which led to the rise of Afrikanerdom' (O'Meara 1983:8).

Bonner, Delius & Posel (1993:21-22) comment that the two aspects related to accounts of Afrikaner nationalism that have not received sufficient attention are first understandings of the petty bourgeoisie and the composition of this class and second the interaction and overlap between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class:

Questions remain about the varying degrees of economic differentiation, *patterns of upward and downward mobility*, the extent of co-residence, and the degree to which cross-cutting ties of kinship and marriage existed [my emphasis].

They make a case for a research agenda that looks at the 'contradictions and transformations [that] fostered a whole new complex of pressures and insecurities in the ranks of the white working class and the Afrikaner bourgeoisie' during the period 1935-1962. It is generally acknowledged that the architects of apartheid were members of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie. Bonner, Delius & Posel (1993:21) point out that while much research has focused on the Afrikaner intelligentsia there has not yet been a serious effort to map the composition, changing positions and consciousness of this stratum. To this one can fruitfully add the expansion of this class and the incorporation of members of the working class into this stratum.

A third field of inquiry relates to the coherence and central premises of the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism. Posel (1991) raises a question as to whether there exists evidence to support a claim that Afrikaner unity in 1948 was informed by a single apartheid idea. The investigation can be broadened by expanding the question to ask what was the central idea or ideas that held together and underpinned the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism.

A fourth area for inquiry is linked to the scope of and choice of research sites 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 such research to focus on symbolic representations and the discourse produced by and circulated among the intelligentsia, and not so much everyday and/or local discourses. Studies that have attempted to bridge this gap are those of Brink (1987) and Kruger (1991).

Fifth, a new emphasis on issues of identity opens up the space to ask questions about the subjects of the apartheid state and the nature of subjectivities that it produced. 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. To make this project successful, he argues that 'a specific kind of subjectivity was required amongst whites, comprising a non-reflexive submission to authority' (Hyslop 2000:37). He makes puts forward the idea 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 the question about the modalities of this kind of subjectivity and the processes involved in the construction of a self-referential Afrikaner world within the broader framework of Anderson's notion of the nation as an imagined communities, 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'. Hence, the relationship and interrelationships between class formation and community formation constitutes an area for further inquiry:

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 (1987:8).

Whereas much of the existing scholarship on Afrikaner nationalism focused on the state and its relationship with capital, far less research has been devoted to the study of ideology and culture. Where it is dealt with, it is often explained in crudely structuralist or culturalist terms. Some notable exceptions are studies by Moodie (1975), Hofmeyr (1987), Hyslop (1995, 1996), Bozzoli (1983), Kruger (1991), O'Meara (1983) and others. The silences are understandable. The particular repressive nature of the apartheid state and its racist policies made it extremely difficult for scholars to explore questions of race, the social construction of which is strongly linked to culture. Moreover, Marxist scholars were intent on emphasising continuities between the Union (and thus colonialism) and the subsequent development of the apartheid state, through its link with capitalist expansion (Alexander 2000). Thus, much of the work that speak to issues of race do not move beyond the point of describing what is already in existence, without attempting to explain how these subjectivities were formed. More recently questions are being asked about the undoing of apartheid and the relationship between this process and changes in the subjectivity of white South Africans (Hyslop 2000).

Finally, there is a need to move beyond the limits of exceptionalism theses and to insert research on Afrikaner nationalism within present debates on ethnic nationalism, the politics of identity, and the construction of a new South African nation to highlight the conditions and characteristics of these processes and to extrapolate from that the way in which the experience of Afrikaner nationalism speaks to present concerns and dangers.

Conclusion

In formulating the present research project, attempts were made to take into account these six avenues of inquiry.

The study explores the way in which the ideas and ideologies of the Afrikaner elite were incorporated into discourses that could speak to other classes. In this sense, the study is linked to the work of Hofmeyr (1987) and Kruger (1991) on popular

publications and focuses on the way in which the ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism were articulated in popular fiction for the youth. Chapter Five and Chapter Six outline the central processes related to the production and dissemination of print texts in Afrikaans and the role of the petty bourgeoisie in these processes. These chapters seek to answer a question about the way in which the ideologies of the elite were disseminated to other classes. In Chapter Seven, the research aims to address the second avenue of inquiry, namely issues relating to class formation, by foregrounding and examining the class position of the author, Stella Blakemore and documenting her complex relationship with other members of the Afrikaner intelligentsia. The study also examines the way in which the expansion of the petty bourgeoisie becomes a central theme in the discourse of Afrikaner nationalism as articulated in the *Keurboslaan* series. Moreover, the study explores the processes through which the kinds of discourse that were permitted to circulate were controlled and vetted and how these processes were undermined and resisted by individuals in the ranks of the intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie.

The study addresses the concerns raised by Jonathan Hyslop with regard to problems of explanation in the study of Afrikaner nationalism by focusing attention on the everyday, the commonplace and not on macro level occurrences or symbolic representations. Finally, the study is mooted in an understanding that it is necessary to move beyond the constraints of exceptionalism theses and to explore ways in which peculiarities of the experience of Afrikaner nationalism speaks to forms of ethnic nationalism prevalent today and can help us understand these processes. In addition, this study hopes to contribute to scholarship that traces continuities and discontinuities between the project of Afrikaner nationalism and the current project that is aimed at fostering a new South African nation.

Chapter Three: Studying popular fiction

In the eighteenth century, the ideology of Enlightenment claimed that the book was capable of reforming society, that educational popularisation could transform manners and customs, that an elite's products could, if they were sufficiently widespread, remodel a whole nation. This myth of Education inscribed a theory of consumption in the structures of cultural politics... But all through this evolution, the idea of producing a society by a 'scriptural' system has continued to have as its corollary the conviction that although the public is more or less resistant, it is moulded by (verbal or iconic) writing, that it becomes similar to what it receives, and that it is *imprinted* by and like the text which is imposed on it.

Michel de Certeau (1988:166-167)

There remains the literary domain, which is particularly rich today (from Barthes to Riffaterre or Jauss), once again privileged by writing, but highly specialized: 'writers' shift the 'joy of reading' in a direction where it is articulated on an art of writing and on a pleasure of re-reading. In that domain, however, whether before or after Barthes, deviations and creativities are narrated that play with the expectations, tricks, and normativities of the 'work read'; the theoretical models that can account for it are already elaborated. In spite of all of this, the story of man's travels through his own texts remains in large measure unknown

Michel de Certeau (1988:170)

Introduction

Stella Blakemore's *Keurboslaan* series can be described as popular fiction for juveniles. The narrative structure and plot in each of the twenty books are formulaic and the outcomes of stories predictable. As such, the series has much in common with other formula texts aimed at adult audiences, including the romance and detective novel. Hence, it follows that a study on the *Keurboslaan* series demands at minimum the same analytical approach and methodological tools that are appropriate to the study of adult popular fiction. In this chapter, issues related to methodology and evidence in the study of popular fiction are considered and assumptions about the relationship between popular fiction and ideology explored. In addition, an overview is provided of the study of popular fiction in South Africa, with an emphasis on projects that have illuminated the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and popular literature.

The question posed in this chapter is how one can study the cultural domain not on a macro level examining symbolic representations, cultural events and manifestations, but on a micro level with a focus on the everyday event, the mundane and the routine. This study is concerned with the relationship between literature and society on the one hand and in the historical emergence of a specific text or set of texts, the discourse it contains, the meaning(s) ascribed to it and the social implications or effects thereof on the other. Alternatively phrased, this study examines the relationship between cultural practices and broader social practices. However, since the study is pitched at a micro level of investigation, the aim is to illuminate the everyday practice of reading popular texts and not the reading practices associated with texts disseminated by the state apparatus through the formal education system or the canonised corpus. The event of reading is – in everyday practice – a solitary activity in which the reader engages with the specific text. As such, positing a relationship between literature and society invokes a micro level question about the relationship between the practice of reading and the construction of particular subjectivities. Postulating a broader relationship between society and literature, or, then, between the text and the creation of subjectivity, necessarily invokes debates on the autonomy of the author in the creation of the text or literary work; the way in which readers utilise strategies to interpret the text; the (elusive) meaning(s) of the text; and the social effects of both the event of reading and the reading of a specific text. Such an undertaking therefore requires a method of reading texts, as well as a theory of the author, a theory of the subject and the making of subjectivity, and a theory of reading. In this regard, the present study draws on the writings of Louis Althusser, Michel de Certeau and Pierre Bourdieu.

Literature and Society: Theoretical footnotes to the present study

Two debates frame this study. The first is methodological and theoretical differences with regard to texts and their meaning(s). The second relates to distinctions between literature and popular fiction. These two debates are briefly discussed and the premises of this study outlined, before a few constructs of major theorists whose work inform this study are examined.

There exists a major cleavage between approaches to the study of so-called 'literary' texts and that of popular fiction. In terms of the former, central questions are asked about the principles of the aesthetic, its conditions for existence, the way in which the value of an artistic work is measured as well as the criteria used to measure that value, and the extent to which what is regarded to be aesthetic is seen to be universal. In

terms of the latter, the question most often posed is on the relationship between the cultural product and ideology. Even though the Romantic tradition of searching the text for remnants of the author's life experiences and worldview is no longer prevalent in the study of literature, it is not unusual to find such analyses in respect of popular texts. It should be noted from the outset that this study contends that the critical project of the Frankfurt School and its analysis of the ideological effects of cultural products, including mass-market products, should be renewed and sustained. However, together with Laclau (1990:51), Bennett (1981) and others the author rejects any crude distinction made between a low culture that is regarded to be ideological and a high culture that is seen to offer prospects for liberation and social change.

Questions on the meanings of a text and the social impact of such meanings have been phrased in a number of different ways. Essentially, though, these debates have mainly oscillated between internal readings of the text and external analyses of the processes around the production, dissemination and consumption of the text. Another fault line that runs through debates on the ultimate meaning of a text and where that meaning is located is the methodological distinction between empiricist and idealist approaches to the study of literature. A choice of methodology mostly corresponds with different disciplinary traditions. Literary and cultural studies generally favour an idealist approach. Beyond the realm of literary studies, however, the sociology of literature and communication studies use empirical (and sometimes quantitative) methods to study issues pertaining to the way in which literature functions as a means of social control, the extent to which literature reflects society, and the impact of literature in shaping and constructing society. The point of departure of this study is that these kind of theoretical and methodological oppositions produce research that is unnecessarily limited and that a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of texts is preferred. This entails using a methodological and theoretical approach that transcends the kind of dichotomies outlined above. In the practice of discourse analysis two directions can be distinguished in Marxist theory, namely more structuralist and more culturalist approaches, or, phrased in other terms, scientific Marxist versus humanistic Marxist methods. Whereas the former draws on the work of the French structuralist Louis Althusser and emphasises the extent to which culture produces the subject, the latter approach gives preference to the possibilities of social agency derived from the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Whilst both theorists subscribe to the notion of an expanded state and highlight the role of the ruling class in ideological and cultural practices, there are significant and fundamental theoretical differences between them. Structuralists maintain that ideology predates history and that it produces subjects.

Theorists in this tradition argue that the domain of cultural practices can influence the economic base and that the cultural domain at times may be the dominant domain even though the economic base remains the determinant in the last instance. Structuralism has been severely criticised because its claim that ideology structures individuals into place rules out the possibility of human agency and social change. Culturalist approaches, on the other hand, highlight the potential of human agency to effect social change and maintain that culture influences social action and can change history. This kind of approach has been critiqued for being too humanistic, thus bestowing onto individuals a lot of authority and freedom, which ultimately erodes the need for collective action.

Different methodological approaches are associated with these two approaches. While structuralist analyses of ideology informed by the works of Louis Althusser start with the text, culturalist analyses often begin with social subjects and how they interact with texts. Antonio Gramsci's cultural materialism places attention on the production, distribution and consumption of culture, while Althusserian critiques are aimed at reading texts symptomatically to identify and expose the gaps and silences in the text, which are taken to be evidence of discourses that have been silenced by the dominant ideology. This does not mean that textual analyses are ruled out by a Gramscian approach. The method of reading against the grain, which is also a text-based method of analysis, is associated with a Gramscian approach. Whilst this method has much in common with Althusser's notion of symptomatic reading, it is different from that method in terms of its purpose. Reading against the grain entails using a set of tools to survey a text for ideological contradictions. These tools are also used to identify and analyse the existence of multiple and competing discourses and the relationship between readers and the popular texts they read. Central to this kind of venture is to identify the dominant meaning of a text and to find ways in which that meaning may be subverted. The purpose of reading against the grain is to collect evidence, which may include speaking to readers about the texts they read and their material realities, in an attempt to find inconsistencies and contradictions that may be exploited in an effort to change the meanings people derive from the texts they engage with. This is aimed at assisting them to build an awareness or consciousness of themselves as workers, women, or so forth in an attempt to develop an alternative hegemony.

The decision about whether to follow a more structuralist or more culturalist mode of operation in this study is an important one. The work of Gramsci certainly presents a very rewarding mode of engaging with the question of popular literature and

nationalism. A brief overview of some of his most important theoretical contributions that are pertinent to this study is offered.

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, as he wishes to develop a revolutionary working class consciousness. Gramsci rejects economic determinism in Marxist theory, arguing instead that the economic infrastructure of society is the background against which events in society take place and may therefore influence events. 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 regards 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, relegating the domain of the culture and 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' (Anderson 1980:171). Defining hegemony in this way implies that

the development of an alternative hegemony involves developing class consciousness 'where class is understood not only economically but also in terms of a common intellectual and moral awareness, a common culture' (Adamson 1980:171). In this endeavour organic intellectuals have a key role to play. From the above it is evident that Gramsci thought of hegemony as a 'mode of rule' that is the opposite of violent coercion and could be used by both the bourgeoisie and the makers of a proletarian potential state (Anderson 1980: 171). Moreover, accepting the notion of hegemony as a form of rule draws attention to its *cultural form* or orientation.

The decision of which approach to use essentially hinges on (1) the method of analysis employed in this study, (2) the extent to which the author agrees or disagrees with the different embodiments or notions of agency offered by the theorists, and (3) the way in which the practical operation of ideology in popular texts can be explained or illuminated by the different theoretical frameworks. This study explores both the discourse in the *Keurboslaan* texts and the processes of production and distribution of the texts, and employs both text based or discourse analysis techniques and empirical data on the production, circulation and consumption of the *Keurboslaan* series. Yet, whilst it does offer an account of the critical reception of the series, it does not include any reader studies. In terms of method it is therefore indebted more to Althusser than to Gramsci. Given that the study is framed by the notion of the everyday, the notion of agency present in Gramscian analysis is felt to be too strong in a domain where De Certeau's notion of tactics seems to be more appropriate. While he does not present an adequately nuanced theory of the subject, and by implication of the reader and the author, Althusser's account of the way in which the subject is hailed in discourse through a process of interpellation is believed to be a fruitful way of asking questions about popular literature, provided that is it used together with theories that illuminate the subject. Based on these factors, the method of analysis in the present study is derived from Althusser, whilst Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual is employed in Chapter Seven. Whilst Anderson offers an enormously useful analytical framework for interpreting and making sense of the production, circulation and consumption of texts as a practice closely associated with the birth of the nation, albeit constituted as imaginary, there are a number of other approaches that underpin this study. The study combines the method of a structuralist theorist, Louis Althusser, with a theory of reading drawn from the work of Michel de Certeau and a theory of the author and the reader as espoused by Pierre Bourdieu. In this attempt to straddle culturalist and structuralist approaches, it is hoped that Althusser's structuralist notion of the way in which ideology *interpellates* the subject will be tempered by Bourdieu's concept of

habitus and De Certeau's concept of *tactics*, thereby retaining the notion of agency, albeit in a limited sense. The contributions of these three theorists are discussed briefly below

Louis Althusser: The interpellation of the subject and symptomatic reading

Althusser argues against mechanistic Marxism and its exclusive focus on the economic and takes on as his project to restore to Marxist thinking its scientific base. He is particularly interested in cultural practices and ideology and the mechanisms through which the ruling class in society *describes* their society or, alternatively phrased, *creates a particular self-image of society*. Thus, he believes that through ideology it is possible to create for an individual a self-image that is not derived from the economic base – such as the self-image of a worker – but to create a different way for individuals to understand themselves, their material conditions, and the way in which they relate to the world.

In his well-known essay, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', first published in *La Pensée* in 1970, Althusser espouses on his theory of ideology and the interpellation of the subject, which is pertinent to this study. Althusser asserts that classic Marxist theory of the state needs to be expanded to incorporate not only the distinction between state power and the State Apparatus, but also a broader understanding of State Apparatus that includes both the Repressive State Apparatus (that which was originally thought to comprise the State Apparatus *per se*) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). According to Althusser, the Repressive State Apparatus encompasses government, bureaucracy, the army, the police force, and the judicial and penile systems. Ideological State Apparatuses, on the other hand, as defined by Althusser are 'the religious ISA (The system of different Churches); the educational ISA (the system of different public and private "Schools"); the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties); the trade-union ISA; the communications ISA (press, radio, and television, etc.); the cultural ISA (Literature, Arts, sports, etc.)' (Althusser 1977:137).

The differences between the two forms of state apparatus that Althusser identifies are evident. First, the Repressive State Apparatus is a single entity that comprises of different components, whereas Ideological State Apparatuses are scattered and plural. Second, the Repressive State Apparatus is part of the public domain whilst Ideological State Apparatuses belong to the private domain. Third, the Repressive State Apparatus

operates primarily through the use of violence (i.e. repression) and only secondary through ideology, whilst Ideological State Apparatuses use ideology as method of operation, with only a secondary and minor role allocated to repression or force. Althusser's argument for an expanded definition of the state is that the state is inevitably linked to the ruling class:

The distinction between the public and the private is a distinction internal to bourgeois law, and valid in the (subordinate) domains in which bourgeois law exercises its 'authority'. The domain of the State escapes it because the latter is 'above the law': the State, which is the State of the ruling class, is neither public nor private; on the contrary, it is the precondition for any distinction between public and private... (Althusser 1977:139).

Both the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses are inextricably tied to the ruling class. This forms the foundation of Althusser's broad definition of the state. Althusser argues that the ruling class are the holders of state power *and* of power over the Ideological State Apparatuses through its ideologies:

Given that the ruling class in principle holds State power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class fractions), and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept the fact that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses insofar as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses, precisely in its contradictions (Althusser 1977:137-138).

Whilst Althusser's accepts that there are inconsistencies and contradictions in and between the ideologies that circulate in the ISAs at any given point in time, he argues that these ideologies are bound together and singular in purpose by virtue of the fact that they operate within the framework of the ideology of the ruling class:

If the ISAs 'function' massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely the functioning, insofar as the ideology by which they function is always in fact unified, despite its diversity and its contradictions, beneath the ruling ideology, which is the ideology of the 'ruling class' (Althusser 1977:139).

For Althusser, then, ideology is 'a "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' (Althusser 1977:152). Nonetheless, he argues that ideology too has a 'material existence' (1977:155). This denotes that ideology has a realistic component, an element of truth, since it is embedded in and

speaking from a present reality. At the same time, though, ideology has a component that is comprised of ideas, imaginations, myths, and images.

The practice of ideology transforms the way in which a subject relates with his/her real life conditions of existence. Althusser asserts that 'all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects' (Althusser 1977:162). According to Althusser, ideology moulds, transforms and equips individuals to deal with the conditions of their existence through a process that he terms 'interpellation'. A subject is hailed as a subject through the material practices of ideology - which is circulated by discourse - to take up a particular subject position. In other words, ideology constructs the subject, a process that Althusser explains as follows:

I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' (Althusser 1977:162-3).

To make explicit the way in which he understands the process of interpellation, Althusser provides the analogy of an individual walking down a street. When the individual is called upon or hailed - (through a verbal call - Hey, you there! – or a whistle) the individual turns around one hundred and eighty degrees, because he/she *recognised* that 'it was really him [sic] who is being hailed' (Althusser 1977:163). Thus, Althusser emphasises the moment of *recognition* as central to the process of being hailed as a subject. Althusser explains that people are '*always already* subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition, which guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects' (1977:161-162). What Althusser means here is that even though his analogy rests on the principle of chronology - in practice this is not the way in which the hailing of the subject functions, since 'in reality these things happen without any succession... [t]he existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing' (Althusser 1977:163).

Althusser's structuralist approach is problematic in a number of ways. First, it offers a very limited theorisation of the subject. Second, and linked to the first critique, competing discourses, which have the ability to produce different self images, circulate in society. Whilst Althusser argues that there needs to be a dominant self image, he

does not adequately explain why some people are hailed as subjects by certain discourses and others not. Third, given the slimly theorised subject Althusser leaves no space for any notion of agency, even in a limited sense, and as a result he rules out the potentiality of agency to effect social change. Finally, Althusser – and here he finds himself in the company of other Marxist scholars such as the Frankfurt School and George Lukács – maintains a sharp distinction between Art (or then literature) and popular fiction. In his *A Letter on Art in reply to André Daspre*, he distinguishes between 'authentic art' and works of an average or mediocre level' (Althusser 1977:204).

Despite the major criticism of Althusserian cultural critique, in cultural and literary studies the Althusserian practice of symptomatic reading is widely understood as a method of analysis that counters some of the major criticisms against Althusser and provides a productive strategy for posing questions about the way in which texts shape the world in which their readers live. Althusser's theory of symptomatic reading (Althusser 1970: 28-29) is a form of ideology critique. Kotsopoulos explains that symptomatic reading is an 'interpretative strategy that searches not only for the structural dominants in a text, but, most importantly, for absences and omissions that are an indication of what the dominant ideology seeks to repress, contain, or marginalize' (Kotsopoulos 2002: 3). It is a way of reading that has as its purpose the uncovering (or deconstructing) of the textual unconscious. Through a symptomatic reading of a text, unconscious practices are laid bare and can be turned into words that can be critically examined. The notion of symptomatic reading is derived from medical terminology and implies that the peculiarities that the reader identifies in the text are symptomatic of something else, in other words that the symptoms of the texts point to something else that is more difficult to capture and that lies beneath the surface:

It is in this sense that symptomatic reading treats the text as symptom, locating the marks of the text's 'dis-ease' relation to itself, reconstructing the problematic concealed by reading from the dominant discourse (Strickland 2001).

Symptomatic reading as a practice involves scrutinising the text for disruptions, which may include a change of tone, an inconsistency or a contradiction, a chance remark or even a turn of phrase that seems to be ill fitting in the specific context. These disruptions or inconsistencies are identified and related to what is going on in the larger culture. Symptomatic reading is therefore premised on the assumption that a text

presents a certain 'problematic' that can be resolved through this reading practice. At the heart of the practice of symptomatic reading is an inquiry into the ideological. Ron Strickland explains the way in which symptomatic reading is embedded in an investigation into ideological frameworks in the following way:

Symptomatic reading is based on the assumption that meaning is the effect of particular power/knowledge relations – that meaning is produced in discursive conflict, not inherently or authoritatively given. No text, therefore, can be read in isolation. All texts are implicated in particular ideological frameworks and systems of reading. To read symptomatically is to reconstruct the conditions that enable the text to make sense within these frameworks. The symptomatic reading makes visible the suppressed discourses, the naturalized (hence invisible) power relations, the system of exclusion which allows the text to make sense in particular ways (Strickland 2001).

As a result of its focus on the ideological domain, the practice of symptomatic reading aims to uncover the extent to which different groups in society's interests are served through discourse. Whilst a text could have competing meanings, there usually is a dominant meaning that is directly available to the reader:

Finally, the symptomatic reading should strive to show what interests are served by the way in which 'meaning' is produced and by the kinds of meaning that are most readily available and/or desirable to us – meanings which seem 'natural' or 'obvious' (Strickland 2001).

Strickland (2001a) argues that in terms of epistemology, the reader practising symptomatic reading is not the idealist subject that is associated with other ways of reading such as close reading, since he or she knowingly occupies a subject position located within a theoretical discourse that interrogates the discourses of the dominant ideologies offered in the text. It is the self-conscious awareness of his or her discursive position that enables the symptomatic reader to construct the text's ideological framework and to identify its silences and absences. As a result, whereas close reading implies interpreting the text on its own terms, symptomatic reading requires an epistemological break between the text and the reader. The strategies associated with the practice of symptomatic reading, include, but are not limited to, the following list:

Some of the ways in which symptomatic reading can proceed include: interrogation of the text's situatedness within literary and/or other discourses; critiques of the ideological functions of particular texts in the various moments

of production and reproduction; analyses of the reader's [subject] positioning in relation to the text (Strickland 2001).

The practice of symptomatic reading is employed in Chapters Eight and Chapter Nine to analyse the discursive frameworks of the *Keurboslaan* series. This study is, however, indebted to Althusser beyond his method of reading, and draws on both his definition of ideology and his notion of interpellation, despite some of the criticisms of his position espoused earlier. It is argued here that a softer reading of Althusser's notion of interpellation provides a constructive way of describing and understanding the mechanism through which ideology work, provided that the notion of interpellation is enhanced with a stronger theory of the subject that can explain why some subjects are hailed through discourse and others not. A softer reading of Althusser's notion of interpellation posits the process of hailing the subject through discourse not as a recruitment of the subject to adopt a specific set of beliefs, but rather as a call to understand him- or herself and their relations to the world in a specific way, or as a *way of being in the world*.¹⁵ Returning to Althusser's definition of ideology, this study is based on an understanding of ideology as 'a "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' (Althusser 1977:152) that has a 'material existence' too (1977:155).

Michel De Certeau: Reading as a practice of everyday life

The French theorist Michel de Certeau's work is situated in a tradition of scholarship on the nature and experience of the everyday life. His approach nestles in the way in which people 'make do' in their daily lives, the extent to which they engage with rules in a creative way, and the way in which they fashion their own lives through their practices. The second volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life* published in English (1998) appeared originally as *Arts de faire* (The Invention of the Everyday), which signals the way in which the everyday is not simply that which is given, but that it is a set of practices that is actively constructed, modelled, and produced. The social is seen as analogous to a system of language, with the practice, the competence of speaking, language in use, juxtaposed against that. De Certeau therefore distinguishes between *rules* and *practices* and *strategies* and *tactics*, in much the same way as relationship between *langue* and *parole* is presented. Theoretically he therefore offers an argument about the importance of the study of the everyday and of the tactics through which people make do, subvert, and invent their being in the world through everyday

¹⁵ This phrasing has been derived from Ivor Chipkin.

practices. Hence, Deborah Posel argues that De Certeau helps to 'debunk the romanticism of resistance that characterises so much of social science scholarship', by bringing to the foreground for inquiry the mundane, the commonplace, the humdrum of everyday life and focusing on strategies people use to manoeuvre around.¹⁶

On the question of methodology, he does not produce a finite answer, but hints to the gaps, the silences, that which remains elusive, escapes our grip and hinders our ability to understand. De Certeau does not assume that individuals possess the ability to provide the sole interpretation of their lives. He therefore points to the need to use a wide range of methodological tools and interpretative and explanatory methods. To decipher meaning, to make sense of these micro level practices and their relationship to the macro level, thus requires a sophisticated and comprehensive approach, which, almost by definition, makes it an interdisciplinary undertaking.

De Certeau's notion of agency – and it needs to be emphasised that he does not use this term – is a limited one. The individual can at most temporarily disrupt the social framework by 'playing' the rules: taking a shortcut through a park where there is no footpath; riding 'black' on a train; picking up loose bricks from city pavements and carrying it home to build a porch. De Certeau's interest lies in the routine, the daily, the micro level activity, and not in the historical moment or heroism of individuals. He therefore offers a limited understanding of the possibilities of social action and of the ways in which people 'make do' to secure their livelihoods.

De Certeau provides us with a different way into the question about the practice of reading and the reading subject. This is an ethnographic approach to the practice of reading, which he describes as ethnography of reading. In a chapter entitled, 'Reading as Poaching', De Certeau argues that the domain of art remains exclusive, whereas consumers are being captured by the mass media, namely television, newspapers and books. De Certeau challenges the assertion that consumption, i.e. the act of reading, is a passive activity:

By challenging 'consumption' as it is conceived and (of course) confirmed by these 'authorial' enterprises, we may be able to discover creative activity where it has been denied that any exists, and to relativize the exorbitant claim that a certain kind of production (real enough, but not the only kind) can set out to produce history by 'informing' the whole of a country.

¹⁶ Deborah Posel, notes from lecture, November 2001.

De Certeau restores to the reader, the ordinary reader that reads everyday texts, a certain ability for creative imagining. This can be thought of as tactics used by readers in the event of reading. Creative reading strategies may include the reader turning first to the end of the book to read the end, before turning back to the first page to commence with the book, or the reader who skips descriptive paragraphs, or perhaps the reader whose eyes jump over the names of characters, so that in the end she can recall the narrative, but not the names of any of the characters.

De Certeau outlines three *moments* in the practice of reading that is of relevance for this study. First, De Certeau (1988: xxi) sees in the idiosyncratic reading habits (or practices) of the reader – such as those outlined in the preceding paragraph – evidence that the act of reading, the moment of reading, is a *productive* moment and comprises a silent production:

In reality, the activity of reading has on the contrary all the characteristics of a silent production: the drift across the page, the metamorphosis of the text effected by the wandering eyes of the reader, the improvisation and expectation of meanings inferred from a few words, leaps over written spaces in an ephemeral dance.

The second moment – which takes place simultaneously with the first and the third – is the moment of forgetting, moving on, delving further into the text whilst something becomes lost, some of that which has been read stays behind and is never recovered. He articulates this moment as follows:

But since he is incapable of stockpiling (unless he writes or records), the reader cannot protect himself against the erosion of time (while reading, he forgets himself and he forgets what he has read) unless he buys the object (book, image), which is no more than a substitute (the spoor of promise) of moments 'lost' in reading.

The third moment is the moment of invention, when the reader inserts something of himself/herself into the practice of reading so as to make the text more familiar and ultimately more meaningful:

He insinuates into another person's text the ruses of pleasure and appropriation: he poaches on it, is transported into it, pluralizes himself in it like the internal rumblings of one's body. Ruse, metaphor, arrangement, this

production is also an 'invention' of the memory. Words become the outlet or product of silent histories. The readable transforms itself into the memorable: Barthes reads Proust in Stendhal's text, the viewer reads the landscape of his childhood in the evening news. A different world (the reader's) slips into the author's place... This mutation makes the text habitable, like a rented apartment.

Working with the analogy of language, De Certeau argues that just as in the act of speaking, the speaker inserts something about her own history and background - through the accent, turn of phrase - the reader reads and at the same time inserts something of herself and her world into the text and its meaning.

It is then from understanding these *moments*, that one can start making some conclusions about the way in which De Certeau's thoughts can be used to understand the way in which reading *works* and the extent to which the practice of reading can be described as producing certain effects. If reading is conceived of as both poaching and leaving something (of oneself and one's world) behind, whilst at the same time the act of reading is not exercised under conditions of suspension of time, but, on the contrary, is closely linked to the passing of time (as the reader reads, time passes and some of what has been read is lost and forgotten), then this could help us make sense of Althusser's notion of the interpellation of the subject. Remnants of the experience of reading a particular text lingers long after the text has been read. These remnants cannot be distinguished from the experience of reading. It could be argued that this contributes to broaden the world or to co-produce the world in which the reader lives.

Anderson makes a clear argument about the importance of the written text in itself in creating an imagined community on a number of levels. Yet he does not explain the event of reading and its effects. De Certeau's understanding of the way in which people read as a practice similar to the practice of walking through the city, is not a meta narrative of agency. Rather, it is a reminder about the importance of focusing on the way in which ordinary people 'make do' given particular constraints and limitations, and a warning not to see those constraints and limitations as a process that 'informs' subjectivity in a one-way transmission:

But whereas the scientific apparatus (ours) is led to share the illusion of the powers it necessarily supports, that is, to assume that the masses are transformed by the conquests and victories of expansionist production, it is always good to remind ourselves that we mustn't take people for fools (1988:176).

Given the problematic addressed in this study, De Certeau's approach is useful in three ways. First, his notion of the everyday experience frames this study and offers a theoretical base for studying the practice of reading popular literature. Second, he allows us to move beyond the dilemma Althusser left us with, which is the impossibility of human agency. He offers a nuanced notion of human agency, without slipping back into an overemphasis on the power of human agency. Third, his approach is useful in overcoming the limits of the method of symptomatic reading that this research employs. A symptomatic reading of oppositional practices in texts remains an intellectual endeavour. Whereas this type of approach forces the interpreter to self-consciously acknowledge his/her subject position in order to expose the ideological workings of the text, it tells us nothing about the way in which the ordinary reader approaches the text. De Certeau draws our attention once again to the importance of trying to make sense of specific practices and the way in which meaning is generated through those practices from the view of the participants.

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 other, and does not limit his scope of enquiry to canonised 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. Bourdieu's work is 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 comprehensive in analysing the social. In terms of what he calls the literary field, Bourdieu stands critical of both internal, discourse analysis methods of analysis as well as of 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 (1989:xvii).

While Bourdieu's broader project speaks to the objectives of this study on numerous levels, his theoretical contribution is used in 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. Bourdieu's defines *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'. 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* is 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 has no representative content, but 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)

From the above extract it is clear that the *habitus* 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.

Returning to the field of literature, it should be clear that 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 De Certeau complement each other and address some of the concerns with Althusserian cultural critique. De Certeau highlights the creativity of consumption, exemplified in the tactics of readers. In doing so, he offers both a limited notion of agency and a possible theoretical model to explain why not all subjects are hailed by the same discourse. Bourdieu, whilst too concerned with restoring agency, provides the sophisticated and complex notion of *habitus*, explained as a field of possibilities, which illuminates both the space in which the author and the reader operate and construct meaning. Through the notion of the *habitus* it becomes possible to explain not only why some individuals are hailed as subjects through discourse and others not, but also why and how individuals are hailed as subjects by specific discourses among competing discourses.

Popular fiction and ideology: The case of formula books

At the heart of Marxist approaches to the study of literature are questions about ideology and power. Nonetheless, Marxist criticism, particularly where it concerns the study of popular fiction, has often been less than emancipatory and has not pushed the boundaries of theoretical assumptions about the relationship between literature and society. In his seminal article of 1982, entitled 'Marxism and Popular Fiction: Problems and Prospects', Tony Bennett articulated what he regarded to be the problem with Marxist approaches to the study of literature, and, in particular, the relationship between Marxism and popular fiction. Whereas he had no intention of construing a Marxist approach to popular fiction he wanted to debunk the very distinction between so-called 'high literature' and popular fiction. Why is it, he asked, that Marxist literary criticism seemed to generate the same list of texts that was produced by textual and other mainstream approaches to literature as examples of 'good' literature, with the only difference being that Marxist critics produced a different set of attributes that they felt made these canonised texts superior. The result of this, he argued, was that Marxist literary criticism effectively upheld the canonical tradition and legitimised the existing canon. He pointed out that this phenomenon could be explained in part by the fact there was a paucity of theory that was able to move beyond the idea that good literature can emancipate us; whilst analyses of popular texts started and ended with

the assumption that popular texts and their contents are merely ideological. It is here that Bennett's project intersects with the one outlined in this thesis.

Debates in cultural studies and literature have shifted significantly since the publication of Bennett's article. However, since the study of popular fiction is not confined to those disciplines and is often an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary undertaking, an understanding of popular texts as purely ideological still underpins much of the research in this area. In many of those disciplines where scholars have shown an interest in the way in which the study of popular fiction can explain or illuminate other social phenomena, including political science and education, the idea that 'good literature', 'high literature' or 'canonical literature' is formative whilst popular fiction is corruptive still goes very much unchallenged.

This study is located within the ambit of the relationship between literature and nationalism, a field that has seen many contributions - if not mainly - from the disciplines of political science, history and education. Here the relationship between popular fiction and 'high literature' is often not adequately theorised or is explained along sometimes crudely structuralist lines. The following extract from the introduction to *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* is exemplary of this approach:

Popular fiction is one of the ways in which society instructs its members in its prevailing ideas and mores, its dominant role models and legitimate aspirations. It both reflects popular attitudes, ideas and preconceptions and it generates support for selected views and opinions. So it can act – sometimes simultaneously – as a form of social control, directing the popular will towards certain viewpoints and attributes deemed desirable by those controlling the production of popular fiction, and as a mirror of widely-held popular views.

Popular fiction has been peculiarly potent because it feeds the imaginative life of the reader, and this may have more immediate, more emotional and arguably longer lasting impact than any number of school lessons, political speeches or church sermons. It provides a sediment in the mind, which it requires a conscious intellectual effort to erase. Since the majority of people are not intellectuals, it follows that only a minority will for a variety of reasons make this effort (Richards 1989:1-2).

While the questions posed by someone like John Cawelti, namely '[h]ow do literary formulas affect human behaviour?' and 'what is the process through which cultural selection of formulas take place?' (quoted in Yanarella & Sigelman 1988:8) are

therefore similar to the ones posed in this study, the theoretical framework within which those questions are presented here is rather different. Similarly, whilst the work of Yanarella and Sigelman (1988) is of interest to this study, the authors fail to adequately explain how popular fiction 'works'. In *Political Mythology and Popular Fiction* (1988), Ernest Yanarella and Lee Sigelman outline an approach to the study of popular fiction from a political sciences approach that is based on the literary scholarship of John Cawelti. Their methodology is not empirical but hermeneutic. Underpinning their work is the idea of a network, which is reminiscent of Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Thus, they see popular fiction as a form of repression (censorship, setting the parameters of what may be said and what not), and - at the same time - a repression not through the use of violence, but consent. They are interested in popular fiction - in particular literary formulas - from a political science perspective, because

buried within these genres and formulas is a deep lode of images, symbols, and myths that shape the cultural and social world that we Americans inhabit and that define the limits of the culturally and ideologically permissible in our society (Yanarella & Sigelman 1988:9).

It is precisely the way in which popular texts are able to mirror and construct the cultural and social world that 'nations' inhabit that is explored in this study but in a context where the mechanisms through which texts 'work' are explicitly theorized, with acknowledgement of the role of readers and recognition of their reflexive abilities. In this respect, the present study is indebted to Elisabeth Radway's work. Radway's *Reading the Romance – Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (1991), has become canonical for anyone interested in popular fiction. Against theorists such as Cawelti, who she argues '[reifies] human process itself and... [accords] extraordinary and pre-eminent power to the commodities produced and used within such processes, rather than to the human activities themselves' (1991:6), she writes about the importance of keeping possibilities open for social agency. Her contribution is important for the following reasons. First, she emphasises the need to study not only the text, but also the industry and processes that produce those texts, the reader of the text, and the event of reading. Second, she is interested in human behaviour and combines empirical anthropological research that is rooted in the premise of reader-response criticism that meaning is not to be found in a text but is 'an entity (that is) produced by a reader in conjunction with the text's verbal structure' with textual analysis, a method that she calls ethnography of reading (1991:11).

Radway contends that the event of reading is quite separate from the process of attributing meaning or of interpreting the text. Her study of American readers of popular romance highlighted the fact that women regard not only the text and its meaning as important, but also consider the *event* of reading to be significant as an experience of pleasure, an escape from a particular reality and as social event in a family context. Moreover, she showed that women readers are generally aware of the fact that the story lines in the romances they read are improbable, but that they nonetheless feel that the portrayal of the world in which the actions of the characters are rendered is congruent with their own. As a result, they gain a strong belief in the autonomous reality of the fictional world. Due to the assumed equivalence of the two worlds, things that readers learn about the fictional world are thought of or interpreted as 'fact', 'information', or 'knowledge' - that is as practical know-how that can be applied to the world of a day-to-day existence (Radway 1991:188). Arguably, the most important part of Radway's study is her point that '[t]o understand just why this occurs and how it might later affect the reader's attitude toward behavioural propositions about the romantic action itself, it will be necessary to trace the *interaction between textual properties and reading strategies* [my emphasis]' (Radway 1991: 188-189).

A number of very strong studies have emerged in recent years on the relationship between literature and nationalism. Many of these, for example the excellent *When Russia learnt to read* (Brooks 1985) goes beyond mere textual analysis and include research on the production, dissemination and reception of popular texts. Yet, a problem encountered in some of these studies is that the distinction between popular literature and 'high literature' is taken as given or, phrased differently, the two concepts are viewed to be referring to two clearly distinct domains. For example, in her study on literature and nationalism, Corse (1997:130) argues that popular culture literature lacks a national symbolic value because the economic value of these texts supersedes their symbolic value. Underlying this statement is an assumption that the production of popular texts is governed by market principles only. While she acknowledges that this approach is problematic and that there is evidence that this distinction is being challenged (for example, Canadian concern about the predominance of American television programmes on Canadian channels, and the high sales figures and commercial success of prize-winning, and therefore canonised, texts) her research does not venture into this domain (Corse 1997:166). She explains the relationship between literature and nationalism in terms of the high literature/popular literature divide. She places emphasis on canon formation and shows that the criteria for selection of texts into the 'national' canon include a criterion of uniqueness or

distinctness, a definitive quality that makes this the work of a nation. Popular texts, on the other hand, Corse argues, have a homogenising quality, as opposed to the distinctness of work of 'literature'.

While this study concurs with the broad outlines of her arguments, it is the symbolic value of popular texts and the way in which these are inserted into the process of nation building at crucial points that is the focus of the present research. Corse's project is hampered by its scope. While this enables her to offer an impressive account of the relationship between literature and nationalism, particularly in the United States and Canada, it is proposed here that it is in the nooks and crannies of nation formation at points where the commercial production of popular fiction and the national project intercedes that some of the interesting aspects of the relationship between popular fiction and nationalism are illuminated.

The binary opposition of high literature and popular fiction is in most instances not very useful. Whilst there may be differences in the production, distribution and dissemination of texts of particular kinds, the boundaries are porous. Moreover, conceptually, the terms 'high' literature' and 'popular fiction' are each attached to a set of assumptions about the way in which texts of this kind work. The reason why such a distinction is untenable is because it offers an explanation of the way in which texts work that is completely independent of the reader.

South Africa, Afrikaans literature and the study of popular fiction

The study of Afrikaans literature, particularly within the Afrikaans academic community, historically displays two weaknesses. The first, which is a lack of a socio-historical tradition, is described by Marianne de Jong in her work, *'n Ander Afrikaanse Letterkunde*, as follows:

It is a remarkable phenomenon that since its emancipation around the thirties, Afrikaans Literature has not produced any social theoretical literature descriptions of note... Existing literary histories up until the work of J.C. Kannemeyer confirms this phenomenon. At the same time, the way in which Afrikaans literary history is presented is one of the best illustrations of this absence of a socio-historical and socio-political conscience. History is presented as a collection of data, organised into ingrained literary categories such as realism, naturalism, genre distinctions, smaller and larger literary figures, etc.

A second weakness is the low priority that has been given to research on popular fiction in Afrikaans. Research on this topic was almost non-existent before the 1990s, and there are virtually no studies on socio-historical dimensions to the production, dissemination and reception of popular fiction in Afrikaans. The end of communism in Eastern Europe and the former USSR in the late 1980s and political developments in South Africa that brought about the fall of the apartheid government roused a new interest in the study of popular fiction, and by the mid-nineties the study of popular fiction in Afrikaans had gained some momentum. Unfortunately, one of the legacies of the lack of a social-historical tradition and the specificity of historical events that sparked the interest in this field is the prominence given to and narrow focus on text-based studies of race and racism in much of the recent scholarship on popular literature in South Africa. While these studies are of importance the findings that projects defined in those terms can yield are limited. Many of the more interesting questions, in particular about the relationship between nationalism and literature and the more complex questions about the relationship between literature and society are still largely left aside.

Studies that do engage with issues of nationalism, the construction of identity and Afrikaans texts are those of Hofmeyr (1987) and Kruger (1991). Isabel Hofmeyr's work, which is discussed in Chapter Five, is a socio-historical study of the production and dissemination of Afrikaans books in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In particular, her research highlights the close links between class formation and the invention of ethnic identity. Lou-Marie Kruger (1991) examines the relationship between Afrikaans women, Afrikaner nationalism and popular texts through a life history of Mabel Malherbe, the editor of a popular magazine called *Die Boervrou* (later *Die Boervrou*), and analyses of articles that were published in this publication. Kruger analyses extracts from the magazine to show how new identities were constructed and crafted for Afrikaans women through discourse. She argues that the discourse of *Die Boervrou* was both a gender discourse and a nationalist discourse. Through a biography of Mabel Malherbe's life, she shows that women were instructive in writing themselves out of the discourse of Afrikaner nationalism and creating the myth of the 'volksmoeder', which was intended to keep women out of the political arena and the workplace.

Despite the paucity of research on popular fiction in South Africa with specific reference to popular fiction in Afrikaans, the area of study has received attention with regard to

popular fiction in English across a wide range of disciplines (see for example Stotesbury (1990) and Stiebel (1992)).

A scholar that also works with the notion of the imagined in relation to popular fiction and ideology in the South African context, although he does perhaps not phrase his research focus in these terms, is Paul Rich. Rich (1983) looks at the popular fiction writer John Buchan's novel, *Prester John*, to illustrate the links between the narrative and Milner's moral legitimisation of white supremacy and rule. Rich argues that the novel can be seen as a strategy for the wider ideological dissemination of Milnerism onto a popular level. He roots the novel in its genre, the popular colonial novel, and, in particular, he shows how the novel closely resembles the key strands of Milnerism and thereby contributes to the construction of a world in which racial discrimination is legitimised. As in many other studies of popular fiction, Rich attempts to illustrate how racial stereotypes are embedded in the narrative. However, he goes much further than merely to state these racial portrayals and attempts to link these to the broader political imperatives of Milnerism, which were closely linked to the interest of mining capital. An important theme in Rich's analysis is the way in which the idea is constructed in the novel of a united white identity that would overcome the division between the English and Afrikaners. This is very much in line with Buchan's own thinking. Rich quotes Buchan as having said that: '[t]he hope of breaking down the racial barrier between town and country... was always near to Milner's heart' and that Milner wanted to 'see the Dutch share in the urban industries and men of British stock farming beside the Boers on the veld'. The construction of 'whiteness' had to mask perceived 'racial' differences between the British and the 'Boers, whilst still retaining the hierarchical relationship where the balance of power is imagined to be on the British side.

Rich does not attempt to explain how literature works, that is, how *Prester John* shapes the consciousness of its readers. He does, however, provide some evidence to support his claim that it is important to consider the ways in which *Prester John* may have contributed to the construction of 'whiteness' and support for Milner's political ideals in the consciousness of readers. First, he argues that the novel has been widely read. Based on the facts that *Prester John* had been made available in cheap Nelson reprints and was reprinted a number of times, he argues that it has had a wide saturation and is still widely read. Second, he argues that the mode of *Prester John*, seen here as the colonial novel in popular form, is being carried forward by modern day authors such as Wilbur Smith. In this way, *Prester John* perhaps constituted the beginnings of a tradition. Third, he argues that the discourse of popular fiction, in this case *Prester*

John, is of equal significance as more 'official' discourse found in newspapers, in this instance an article that appeared in *The State*:

Buchan's novel... can be seen to embody in a popular idiom many of the features of the Milnerite ideology that went into the making of the South African state... In this sense, the novel was as important in the ideological underpinnings behind the South African Union in 1910, the year of the novel's publication, as, for example, *The State* and its rather bland argument for Union as a means to create white unity in the face of a united African 'uprising' (Rich 1983:427)

Another study of popular fiction in English that has been undertaken in the South African context and is of relevance to the present study is *Popular Romance and the Women Reader* by Sarah Nuttall (1991). Nuttall offers a theoretically well-grounded account of ways in which South African women read popular romance. Drawing on Radway, she argues against models of institutional reading such as the notion of the interpretive community developed by Stanley Fish. Rather, she focuses on ways in which women readers engage with the more recalcitrant features of text. Along with Radway, she is interested not only in the meaning of a text for the reader but in the event of reading and the significance that holds for the reading subject. She explores the different ways in which readers read and thereby construct meaning. Nuttall is interested in the relationship between women and reading and argues against the hegemonic idea that women read popular fiction as a result of false consciousness. Nuttall thus explores the way in which women readers *make* meaning and investigates the extent to which their readings of a text are marked by oppositional practices - though she acknowledges that these may be limited. Nuttall focuses specifically on the women reader and the experience of reading as a woman, as she feels that gender as a component of analysis is often sidelined in favour of analyses around class and race. She argues that through reading popular romance, women learn to 'read men'. Through this experience they are then able to retroactively interpret men's behaviour and as a result of this do not insist on a change in behaviour. This is exemplified in the following extract based on interviews with women readers:

Both women think that characters in books are 'not at all similar' to people they meet in real life, and they find that heroines' reactions and feelings towards people and events are not like theirs at all. They find, however, that heroes' emotional response to heroines resembles their experience of the way men relate to women. It is difficult to know how to interpret this. To see men as similar to heroes in books is both to see them as a source of escape from

the self, or of a mending of a fragmented self and to see their responses and actions as proceeding according to an identifiable pattern, as predictable. The message in romance stories incorporates both aspects: if women learn to read recurrent male responses properly (which is what romance reading teaches them to do) then they can create the possibility of their own happiness through a successful relationship with a man (Nuttall 1991: 54--55).

She raises the possibility that in cases where the perceived reality of readers differs too sharply from the fictional world of the popular text, readers could conceive of the text as 'dangerous'. In one of the interviews she conducted, a women reader alluded to the similarities between the use of alcohol and reading in that it allows one to escape a reality whilst making one reluctant to return to it.

New questions

The discussion in this chapter raises a number of questions pertaining to the relationship between literature and society that this study seeks to illuminate. These are (1) whether the notion of popular fiction as a singular and self-explanatory construct that is dominant in literature is tenable; (2) in what ways reader studies or even a theory of reading and the reader as well as a theory of the writer can enhance textual studies and studies on the production, distribution and consumption of texts; (3) the extent to which the relationship between discourse, power and popular fiction has been adequately contextualised within a general understanding of the relationship between discourse and power and the sources of power; and (4) what the links are between popular fiction and nationalism.

Popular fiction and in particular formula books are generally treated as a singular category of literature that is self contained and self-explanatory. This genre of literature is defined by the fact that it is the opposite of high literature. In few studies on popular fiction does one find an understanding of the relationship between high literature and popular fiction as a continuum where the most complex, layered and idiosyncratic texts are on the one pole that is referred to as high literature and the most formulaic, general and one dimensional texts are situated on the other pole which is called popular fiction, with a range of points or nodes on the continuum, including a space in the middle where it becomes difficult if not impossible to identify a text as showing either more literary qualities or more popular fiction qualities. This is an assumption that this study wishes to challenge.

Whilst it is impossible and most probably undesirable too to turn any and all engagements with texts into interdisciplinary undertakings, a scrutiny of literature on the topic shows that both textual studies and studies on the production, dissemination and consumption of texts are hampered by the fact that these phenomena are scrutinised in isolation, that is without offering an adequately nuanced theory of the reader and of writing. Whilst reader studies are certainly important and should be encouraged, this does not imply that all studies on literature or popular literature needs to include such a component. Rather, it is suggested that an explicit theorisation of reading and writing will assist to situate and contextualise findings of studies with another kind or a different focus in broader debates on the relationship between literature and society.

There seems to be a difference of opinion about which of high literature or popular fiction are more likely to be associated with and contribute to forms of nationalism. This debate has its roots in part in the one-dimensional way in which the difference between high literature and popular fiction is commonly understood. Whilst Anderson has shown how popular literature, include newsletters and newspapers, can create a community of readers, Corse argues that popular culture literature lacks a national symbolic value because the economic value of these texts supersedes their symbolic value. Thus, there seems to be scope for examining a specific case to explore how this debate can be taken further.

Studies of popular fiction are frequently underpinned by the idea that popular fiction is tighter controlled by the establishment and less independently 'produced' by the author than high literature. Given that popular fiction is usually discussed within the framework of an assumed dichotomous relationship between popular fiction and literature, popular fiction is regarded to be one of the mechanisms through which 'society instructs its members in its prevailing ideas and mores', in the words of Richards (1989:1-2). Since popular fiction offers itself as an easily accessible and readily available terrain of study, many studies on popular fiction - while acknowledging that popular fiction is only one of the mechanisms through which ideology is disseminated - fail to carry this understanding through in their analysis and interpretation of the relationship between popular fiction and ideas. In other words, studies seldom interpret the practice of reading popular fiction and particular texts within an understanding of the other practices of daily life through which discourse is circulated, including in the case of children's literature the family and the education system among others. The danger in these approaches is that popular fiction becomes reified as *the* terrain in which

ideology is disseminated. It is therefore necessary to interrogate and problematise the relationship between popular fiction and power, both in relation to the similarities and differences between the poles of popular fiction and literature and with regard to its embeddedness within everyday life and the many other practices through which discourse gets circulated.

Conclusion

This study claims that there exists a link between everyday practice and reading popular fiction, and that popular fiction can be examined through the theoretical lens of the everyday life. Furthermore, it has been argued that the *Keurboslaan* series shares the characteristics of popular fiction formula stories and that the same methods of analysis that are applicable to the study of popular fiction for adults can therefore be applied in the study of the *Keurboslaan* series.

At the heart of this enquiry are questions about the relationship between literature and power and the way in which the act of reading a text is perceived to 'work'. On the one hand there is the approach to popular fiction that argues that the practice of reading popular fiction produces sediment in the brain, which readers are not consciously aware of and which only very few individuals, in their role as intellectuals, can challenge and scrutinize (Richards 1992, Richards 1989). On the other hand, there is a devoted group of academics undertaking reception studies who regards the individual's reflection on his or her reading practices and habits as sufficient to explain the meanings derived from the practice of reading and their effects. While the first approach generally produces accounts of popular fiction as restrictive and instructive, the second approach focuses on the way in which readers derive pleasure from the practise of reading and use agency to subvert the intended meanings. It has been argued here that both these approaches suffer from certain shortcomings that make it difficult to answer the questions posed here. A claim that popular fiction, figuratively speaking, can leave traces of sediment in the brain, whilst works of 'high' literature do not, has to be treated with deep suspicion. This kind of approach does not offer an adequate account of the differences and similarities between so-called works of popular fiction and literary works or of human agency. Yet, readers' accounts of the way in which they read and derive meaning, while useful and informative, is based on the assumption that the subject has access to and is able to articulate the way in which he or she derives meaning as well as the results (or effects) of that process. In doing so, these scholars draw on a unified subject, which no longer exists in the social

sciences. It was therefore argued that three shortcomings characterise most studies on popular fiction.

The first of these shortcomings is the failure of some scholars to embed the study of popular fiction in a theory of reading and writing. Both textual analyses and reception studies can benefit greatly from an articulated theory of reading and writing. It is difficult to gauge the implications of either a reception study or textual analysis unless the understanding of agency pertaining to both the reader and the writer is made explicit. A second shortcoming is that few studies on popular fiction provide a nuanced understanding of popular fiction. Generally, popular fiction and literature are seen as two separate entities, and not as variants of writing located on a continuum. Third, while scholars acknowledge that popular fiction is but one of the mechanisms through which discourse is circulated and power relations constituted, this understanding is often not reflected in analyses of popular fiction, resulting in popular fiction being elevated to status where its powers to mould are overstated and where it is not located within the broader sphere of power relations.

This study highlighted the limitations in the dichotomy between internal and idealist readings of the text and more empiricist and external readings of the text. It has therefore argued for a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of popular fiction. Theoretically, the study subscribes to the definition of ideology offered by Althusser and a soft reading of his theory of the interpellation of the subject through discourse. This is, however, enhanced with a theory of agency through De Certeau's notion of *tactics* and Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*. In addition, the importance of reader studies such as those by Elisabeth Radway is emphasised.

In recent years there have been excellent and extensive studies on the relationship between nationalism and popular fiction. Yet, a problem encountered in some of these studies is that the distinction between popular literature and 'high literature' is taken as given or, phrased differently, the two concepts are viewed to be referring to two clearly distinct domains.

Mapping the field locally, it has been shown that there is a lack of a socio-economic tradition in Afrikaans literary history writing and that studies on popular fiction in Afrikaans are sparse. From the early 1990s, interest in the study of popular fiction in Afrikaans grew substantially. Yet most of these studies have no theory of the subject, power or agency. As a result these studies either embrace the reading of

popular fiction because of the meanings it holds for its readers or scrutinise texts for evidence of racism and sexism. While there are some good studies on the relationship between fiction and nationalism, such as those by Hofmeyr (1987) and Kruger (1991), these are often not located in the field of literature. The weakness of this body of literature is that it does not include reader studies or explain how texts 'work', i.e. a theory of reading. Popular fiction has received more attention in South African studies in English.

Chapter Four:

Selected themes in the study of children's literature

Introduction

Given its target audience, any study of texts aimed at children needs to speak to the debates and concerns - though incomplete and fractured along disciplinary boundaries - that characterises the field of academic study generally referred to as children's literature. Here it should be noted that the *Keurboslaan* series is closely associated with a specific genre within the field of children's literature, namely the school story. In this chapter, the field of inquiry generally referred to as children's literature is defined, the *Keurboslaan* series is located within the field of children's literature, and an overview of the history and academic study of the phenomenon is provided. Finally, the school story genre is considered and developments in the study of children's literature in South Africa are discussed.

Defining the ambit of children's literature

There exists a specific category of literature (or fiction) that is not in the first instance organised and classified in terms of genre, as other literatures are. This is the category of literature for children. This category of literature is defined and classified in the first place on the basis of an attribute of its *readers* - namely their age - and not the attributes of the text (Hunt 1990:1). It should be noted from the outset that both the distinction between adult and non-adult fiction (or adult fiction and fiction for children) and the various categories within the latter are, if not completely arbitrary, often overlapping, blurred and contested. So one can distinguish, for example, categories such as young adult fiction, youth or juvenile fiction, children's fiction, young teens, and even categories based on age, such as 'seven to ten year olds' (Nikolajeva 1996:7). It is only within each of the categories mentioned above that attention is paid to the issue of genre, which forms the second classification mechanism. Genres distinguished in children's literature include school stories, family stories, fantasy, and adventure stories (Butts 1992:xiii). There are more examples, such as animal stories, mysteries, detective novels, thrillers, and series books. There is a third mechanism through which children's literature is classified. This is according to a distinction between children's 'Literature' and fiction for children. In the academic study of children's literature, this form of classification - which is similar to the distinction between popular fiction and

high literature – is sometimes phrased as the difference between the 'good book' and the popular, or the prize-winning book (and, by implication) the non-prize winning book.

Now, the very classification of children's literature (and the sub-categories within the broader rubric) on the basis of age is problematic. This problem is articulated by Hunt (1994:5), when he states that '[c]oncepts of childhood differ not only culturally but in units as small as the family, and they differ, often inscrutably, over time'. Hunt therefore suggests that one uses an understanding of childhood and the social meanings attached to this concept to bring one closer to a definition of children's literature. In defining the notion of childhood, Hunt emphasises that it refers to the part of the cycle of life that the 'immediate culture' regards the individual to be free from responsibilities and receptive to socialisation and moulding through the process of education. It is this understanding of childhood as the formative years that explains the anomaly that children's literature is defined in terms of its readers.

Based on the above discussion, it is then argued that children's literature can be defined as literature written for and circulated among children, which is, for that reason, imbued with particular social significance and therefore scrutinised, censored and controlled in particular ways. The basis on which this scrutiny takes place is far ranging – from character development and richness of language to correspondence to reality and aesthetic quality. In the main, however, debates about children's literature, its domain and its meanings centre on an underlying question about the normative framework that these texts embody and propagate.

This is no watertight definition for a category of literature that is very fluid and that is challenged in a number of ways. First, there are many examples of texts that belong to more than one category or that defy the very notion of genre and category altogether. Examples are Sue Townsend's *The secret diary of Adrian Mole aged 9 ½* and comics. Second, some texts are appropriated by specific audiences even though they had clearly not been written in the first instance with that audience in mind. Take here, for example, the recent phenomenon of the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling, which has been widely read by adults. Other examples are *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, which is read and loved by children and adults alike, and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which was not written as a children's book in the first place, but was claimed as such by scores of young readers (Dixon 1978:75). Third, some children's books are not only written *for* children but also *by* children. Finally, readers themselves resist and challenge the categories that comprise children's literature. It is the notion of childhood

and scholarship on the phases of childhood that have led to the fragmentation of children's literature into various categories, each purporting to cater for the intellectual, psychological and emotional needs corresponding with that particular phase of childhood, such as puberty and adolescence. Yet, individual readers show different reading preferences, habits and abilities, which are reflected in the way in which they choose what to read and at what point in their development cycle they access particular works.

The conceptualisation of children's literature as educational and formative has provided us with interesting ways in which the parameters of the category are challenged. It is a practice followed in South Africa and many other countries that prescribed works for the last few years of school are not drawn from the category of children's literature but from general literature. It is perhaps indicative of one of the other contradictions so often referred to in debates about children's literature: the idea that children's literature is not 'good' literature and that children therefore need to be exposed to 'good' literature before they exit the formal education system. So, for example, in the last ten years, set works for Matric pupils in Afrikaans have included *Kringe in die bos* by Dalene Matthee, *Ons wag op die Kaptein* by Elsa Joubert, and Karel Schoeman's *By fakkellig*. None of these texts can be classified as children's literature in terms of the criteria set by the definition we proposed above, as they have not been written with children as the target audience in mind. It is maintained in this study that the boundaries of the category of children's literature, which is a constructed entity, is porous and contested. Hence, the way in which the concept is defined and employed in this study is provisional and open to change.

The decision to use the broader category of children's literature in this study, rather than employing, for example, the notion of juvenile or youth literature, which perhaps seems more appropriate given the thematic of this study, is deliberate and arises from the concern not to fragment the field of study further with imprecise, even if perhaps justifiable, sub-categories.

Children's literature: Its historical emergence and its rise as a terrain for academic study

Children's literature comes of age

There is a dimension to the study of children's literature that is often neglected or glossed over. This is the fact that children's literature, as it exists in its current form (admittedly, a form that changes and gets challenged constantly) has not always existed. Stories, one can argue, have always been part of the social fabric of communities. In their oral form, stories are told in many communities where they are passed on from generation to generation. Through this process the story is constantly amended as each narrator attempts to contextualise and localise the narrative. The emergence of print technology and the rise of capitalism, however, made possible a new type of story, one aimed particularly at children and one that could be reproduced in the same form indefinitely.

Literature for children as cultural products inserted into a market economy emerged much later than general literature, and when it did in the eighteenth to mid-eighteenth century¹⁷, it was closely linked to pedagogical theory and emerging forms of education. Butts (1992:x) and Richard (1992:2) argue that the production and dissemination of children's books were linked to at least three developments. First, ideas on the nature and importance of childhood as espoused by philosophers and scholars such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau influenced the production of children's books. This was influenced in part by scholarly work on the different development phases in the life of the child, such as adolescence and puberty. Second, the spread of education from the eighteenth century through the Sunday School Movement and the subsequent development of formal education systems driven by the state, through mechanism such as legislation¹⁸ stimulated the development of books for children. Thus, discourse on literature for children was from the outset influenced by concerns relating to pedagogy, such as the educational benefits of reading and the role of reading in identity formation and socialisation. Third, technological innovations in the printing and publishing industry (underpinned by the spread of capitalism), made the production of books for children possible.

¹⁷ In the Anglophone world, the children's book was first produced in the mid-eighteenth century (Hunt 1990:1)

¹⁸ An example of such legislation is the passing of the Forster Act in Britain in 1870, which established free elementary schools.

Influenced by intellectuals of the day and the need for general schooling, the production of children's literature was grounded in an understanding that this kind of text had profound abilities to mould children in particular ways and to produce a certain kind of subject. The production of literature for children could in many ways be conceived of as a class project, launched by the intelligentsia and aimed at educating the children of the lower classes. This was possible because of the way in which print technology profoundly influenced the way in which literary markets developed and continue to develop. In her study of the American and Canadian mass-produced paperback fiction market, particularly romance fiction, Radway (1991) traces historical developments in the printing and publishing industry. She argues that specific advancements in technology had an influence on the way in which both the book as a 'product' and the market for this product have evolved. For example, throughout the colonies it was common practice for owners of printing presses (who were often publishers too) to ask authors to pay a flat fee for the production of a book. The author would still be entitled to royalty payments based on the sales of the publication, but the initial fee was a way for printer-publishers to hedge themselves against the risk of poor sales. On the one hand this meant that authorship was limited to those who could raise the capital to pay the flat fee. This included members of the intelligentsia but also societies and organisations, such as religious and women's groups. The system of initial payment meant that to a large extent control over the published work then resided in the hands of the author. It was therefore possible for individual authors and organisations to produce children's texts with particular formative qualities.

Radway argues that subsequent developments in print technology (such as the development of new machinery, perfect binding, synthetic glues) as well as other technological advancements that supported the marketing and distribution of books gradually caused a shift from author risk and control to a situation where greater risk was being taken by publishing companies, but with a subsequent loss of control for the author. Print technology made it possible for print companies and publishing houses to play an active role in the business of commissioning and controlling the production of books, and the increased sophistication of marketing and distribution channels opened up the opportunity for these professionals to actively create the markets for their books.

Children's literature as a field for scholarly inquiry

In line with its historical roots, the academic study of children's literature has traditionally been closely associated with understandings of children's literature as pivotal with regard to in the socialisation and education of children. Corresponding to this, a substantial component of scholarly work on children's literature is located within the disciplines of educational studies and library and information sciences. The primary concern of most of debates on children's literature in these disciplines is not the literariness of these works, but rather the values that the texts are said to transpose; the extent to which reading a particular text enables or disables younger readers to progress to works of high literary quality; the role of reading in the acquisition and mastering of language structures; and ways in which the habit of reading can be fostered among children.

Educational interest in books and the practice of reading among children despite, Peter Hunt argues that 'although a great deal of work has been done on mediating books to children in the classroom, there is a lack of any extensive theoretical discussion of the links between children's literature and education' (Hunt 1992: 14-15). The lack of adequate theoretical models about the way in which children's literature works is a problem encountered in studies on children's literature from various disciplinary angles of incidence. Three factors can be regarded to attribute to this state of affairs.

First, there seems to be general consensus among scholars in this field about the crucial role that children's literature, more so than other literature, plays in societies:

There can be no question that the texts in this area are culturally formative, and of massive importance educationally, intellectually, and socially. Perhaps more than any other texts, they reflect society as it wishes to be (Hunt 1990:2).

As a consequence of this general agreement, the theoretical basis for this assumption either remains unchallenged, or is generally not coherent or is simply not raised as an issue for debate. As a result, the mechanism through which this type of literature functions is often implicitly (or explicitly) understood to be a non-nuanced structuralist understanding that a text transmits an unambiguous message to its reader and that this message is constitutive of subjectivity.

The second reason advanced to explain why the claim that children's literature possesses particular formative qualities is taken on face value in many studies in the field relates to the very accessibility of this area of study. This can perhaps be regarded as a unique feature of academic inquiry into children's literature and in part the reason why scholars from such different disciplinary backgrounds study children's literature:

Children's literature and children's literature criticism attract people who often have a strong interest in children's books based on a conviction of personal knowledge and experience of children, childhood, or reading... Children's literature criticism is about saying: 'I know what children like to read/are able to read/should read, *because I know what children are like*' (Lesnik-Oberstein 1994:1-2).

All social theorists have had a childhood and all of these childhoods involved some engagements with texts. The experience of childhood thus becomes a form of empirical study or ethnographic research on being a child. The accessibility of the field is of concern to theorists such as Hunt (1990) as well as Lesnik-Oberstein (1994), with the former even tentatively raising the question of standards. The idea of childhood as an ethnographic case study results in what can be described as a common sense approach to the study of children's literature: as certain books are fondly remembered by the now grown-up academic and he or she feels that reading those books have had a profound influence on his or her personal development, it is taken as a theoretical assumption that children's literature is formative. Note here, that the assumption that children's literature may be formative is not what is being challenged. Rather, it is the way in which this assumption, based on the individual experience, is elevated to the level of theory that is suspicious. This kind of un-theorised approach also presents a methodological dilemma, which is frequently present in studies of children's literature. Nuttall (1991:42) describes this kind of methodological trouble as the coupling of two assumptions, namely the idea that the subject provides the unity and the limit of experience on the one hand, with the idea that what we consciously know is the determinant of meaning and history. It is this idea that underpins scores of empirical studies into reading where readers' accounts of the experience of reading are regarded to 'speak for themselves' (Nuttall 1991:41).

Third, the study of fiction for children has always been regarded as an interdisciplinary undertaking that is not lodged in a particular discipline. As such it has remained a fairly disparate and incoherent body of literature. A prominent scholar in the area of children's literature, Peter Hunt, argues that the fragmentation of the field is

problematic for a number of reasons. First, it makes the question of publication and sharing of research difficult. Second, there is a dispute about control or primary affiliation in terms of the disciplines. Various disciplines, including psychology, information and library sciences, education, political science, sociology, and language and literary studies lay claim to the field of study. Third, it has left us with an area of study that is 'rich but unstructured' (Hunt 1990:7) and very wide. At its best, Hunt argues, '[c]ontemporary criticism of children's literature... is eclectic, using new techniques, rereading and remapping old territories, and exploring new ones' (Hunt 1992:11).

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the academic study of children's literature, a wide range of questions animate research in the field. Common among these are the relationship between the popular children's book and the 'good' children's book and the extent to which reading the former negatively impacts on future reading habits; the way in which reading popular children's literature affects the ability of the reader to appreciate texts that are thought to be of a more aesthetic value; and the extent to which reading popular texts forecloses the possibility that the reader will move on to other forms of literature (Greenlee *et al* 1996:216-225). Other popular research questions relate to notions of 'good' literature and encompasses questions about the use of and complexity of the language and structure of the narrative (Dixon 1978a: 57), the extent to which character development takes place in the text and to whether the reader gains access to the way in which characters think and not only to what they do (Greenlee *et al* 1996:217, Dixon 1978a:65). Yet another question is the extent to which different types of children's books meet the different psychological needs of the developing child. It is, for example, argued that formula books, because of their predictable narrative single set of characters, provide the reader with a sense of security. An increasingly popular approach to children's literature is to explore the ideological content of the texts and to identify the 'values' that are 'transmitted' by the text. As is the case with the study of popular fiction, ideological readings of children's books are popular for studying the relationship between literature and phenomena such as nationalism or imperialism and a number of works have been written on these topics, including, for example, the relationship between literature and British colonialism (see Dixon 1978, Macdonald 1994, Richards 1989, etc). Ideological readings of texts entail scrutinising texts for evidence of sexism, racism, and class bias, as the following extract on Enid Blyton's books demonstrate:

First of all, male characters simply appear much more frequently, both in the text and in illustrations, and appear in more leading roles. Also, everything goes to show that, in these books, girls are more restricted than boys in physical activities. Girls tend to hold mummy's hand, to be more attached to the house, to be standing at the bottom of the tree or looking on. Boys range further, with daddy or their friends. They are shown climbing and indulging in interesting and active games. Their clothes are usually less restricting, of course, and people don't bother much so much if they get dirty. As far as attitudes go, girls are usually shown as unimaginative, placid, inward-looking, concerned with trivialities, docile and passive. Girls often just *are*. Boys *do* – they invent, plan, think, about their future careers and are confident, outgoing and give instructions (usually to girls) (Dixon 1978:2).

As is the case with popular fiction, many of these studies take as a point of departure a rather instrumentalist approach, choosing to focus on the 'purpose' of literature for children and the way in which it functions. Many such studies, undertaken in both South Africa and internationally, are characterised by a peculiar understanding of the communication process, implicitly (and at times even explicitly) giving preference to an understanding of children's literature as transmitting information, including ideas and values, in a one-way process to the readers of these literatures. This is exemplified in the following quotation from an article on series books:

[h]istorically, children's literature critics have also paid attention to the explicit or implicit *messages* of the book [my emphasis]' (Greenlee et. al. 1996:217).

What is seldom questioned is the way in which children read. John Mackenzie, in the introduction to *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*, states that

[I]t is now recognised that juvenile literature acts as an excellent reflector of the dominant ideas of an age. The values and fantasies of adult authors are dressed up in fictional garb for youthful consumption, and the works thereby become instrumental in the dissemination and perpetuation of particular clusters of ideas, assumptions and ambitions (Richards 1989:vii).

Despite shortcomings in the field, there is a sense among scholars that children's literature as a field of academic study is being consolidated and gaining credibility as a worthwhile academic project (Hannabuss 1999). Recent developments are a new interest in literature for children from the point of view of literary studies as well as the emergence of a literary criticism of youth literature. The latter development is novel as

previously the 'perception that children's literature is not *lesser* but *different*, however, was rarely made' (Hunt 1990:2).

Children's literature as popular fiction: Series and formula books

Greenlee et. al. (1996) contend that series books have always been popular. Already in 1920, a study by Wheeler found that half the number of books read by girls between eleven and fourteen was series books. Previously, Enid Blyton made history with the sales of more than 600 titles of her children's books, including *Famous Five*, *Nancy Drew*, *Secret Seven* and other series. In 1978, Dixon (1978: 56) reported that, among British authors, it was only Agathie Christie and Shakespeare that had been translated more often than Blyton. No doubt, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series will set a new standard. The popularity of the series book can in the first place be ascribed to the fact that the existence of a series makes the selection of a book much easier for the young reader. Since he or she knows that if they enjoyed reading the first book they are likely to enjoy other books in the same series as much, they are likely to choose another title from the same series. In the second place, series books are popular because the contents of these titles are so closely tailored to the dreams, hopes, desires and experiences of children of the particular target group (Greenlee et. al 1996).

A more recent phenomenon is the emergence of the syndicate series book, examples of which are the *Sweet Valley* and *Baby-Sitters Club* series. Local examples of this kind of literature in Afrikaans are *Reënboogrant* and *Grillers*. Syndicate series are similar to popular soap operas on television in the sense that for each of these series there is a central organising structure, which could be a single 'author' or a group of persons that is responsible for drafting plot outlines and keeping track of character development. Many other authors are then employed to write the various titles in the series, following the master structure closely. Syndicate series often comprise of more than one hundred titles, which is sometimes organised into sub-series, corresponding to the age and social development of the target group, so that readers can 'graduate' from one to the next as they grow older and their interests change.¹⁹ Not all best selling multiple title series are, however, syndicate books. In 1996, it was estimated that R.L. Stine's *Goosebumps* series books had sold more than ninety million copies. Stine reportedly writes two books every month (Greenlee et. al 1996:216).

¹⁹ The local *Reënboogrant* series, for example, is sub-divided in three parts – maats, tieners, and studente.

The school story genre

Literature suggests that the school story is principally a feature of the Anglo Saxon world, originating in Britain, more specifically England, and reaching out to encompass the British colonies and dominions and the United States of America (see Mangan 1989:174, Richards 1989). While Jeffrey Richards's approach to popular fiction raises some methodological questions, given that his position is enormously reductionist and based on the premise that the text can singularly inform the subjectivity of the reader, his account of the history of the school story genre in children's literature is excellent and of relevance for this study. In an article entitled, *The School Story*, he traces the development of this particular genre in children's fiction.

The first and best-known example of the school story is Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, a semi-autobiographical account of the author's schooldays, published in London in 1857. Richards argues that the phenomenon of the school story is closely associated with the ethos of the Victorian public schooling system, with its emphasis on religion and self-restraint. According to Richards, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* exemplified the three pillars of what was to become the image of the public school: 'the socialisation of the schoolboy, the inculcation of manliness and the religious awakening' (Richards 1992:3). *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was strongly influenced by the figure of Dr Thomas Arnold, who was appointed as the headmaster of Rugby in 1828. Under his leadership, the school was transformed and remodelled into a 'respectable institution' of the kind that 'became uniquely among all western educational systems a place to train character' through a Christian education (Richards 1992:3, Mangan 1989:179). Now, the type of public school portrayed in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and the subsequent body of school stories that was to follow, was a sanitized and reformed model of the pre-Arnoldian public school, which Richards describes as 'self-governing boy republics, tribal, turbulent, brutal and often drunken'. While the school portrayed in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was undoubtedly modelled on Dr Arnold's Rugby and was strongly influenced by the Arnoldian reforms, it also carried the stamp of Hughes' personal preferences and ideas (Richards 1992:2-3). Consequently, the public school portrayed in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, which was to become the prototype on which virtually all other fictitious schools in that genre of literature were to be based, did not so much reflect the 'real' public school as it did create that image of the public school in the minds of generations of readers:

It recalled, recorded and mythified the Rugby of Dr Arnold, creating a selective image of Arnoldianism that was to be highly influential and was to eclipse the somewhat different reality. But onto his image of Arnoldianism, Hughes grafted other ideas dear to himself and not associated with Arnold especially: the ideals of Christian Socialism, Carlylean hero-worship and a strongly marked English nationalism (Richards 1992:3).

The birth of the school story genre cannot be disassociated from Victorian England and the aims of the Evangelical movement to purify and sanitise the urban slums and industrial areas of England. At the same time, the period from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s marked the heyday of the ideology of imperialism. It was the combination of the Evangelical movement and the imperial impetus and ideology that came to define the school story genre. For the promotion of both causes, the evangelical ideal of the Christian education and the imperial notion of chivalry and bravery, called for instruction of the youth and children's literature became the vehicle for this instruction:

The aim of juvenile literature was clearly set for a century. It was both to entertain and to instruct, to inculcate approved value systems, to spread useful knowledge, to provide acceptable role models (Richards 1989:3).

The boy's papers in which many of these school stories were published were set up by the Religious Tract Society to counteract what was known as 'penny dreadfuls', which were cheaply produced and widely circulated newspapers carrying fiction targeting boys and containing adventure and other stories featuring crime and violence. There were many of these boy's papers, including the original *The Boy's Own Paper*, which was launched in 1879. This was followed at the turn of the century by *Chums* and *The Captain*, which in turn were replaced in popularity by *The Magnet* and *The Gem* in the late Edwardian period. In the 1920s *The Wizard* and *The Hotspur* became popular and remained influential until the 1950s (Richards 1989:5).

Richards argues that though these papers were popular at different periods and the popularity of the one usurped the other, what these papers had in common was 'a commitment to gentlemanly ideals and imperial values' (Richards 1989:5). Now, an interesting point made by Richards is that though the contents of the penny dreadfuls and of the publications of the Religious Tract Society were very different, with the latter avoiding unnecessary descriptions of crime and violence, the ideological content of the two types of publications was remarkably similar, the difference being one of style and form, rather than content:

In fact, many of the 'dreadfuls' were suffused with racism, patriotism, and crude imperialism, which will have played their own part in cementing the Empire into youthful consciousness. It was elements like these, toned down and cleaned up, that found their ways into approved boys' books (Richards 1989:4).

Hughes' *Tom Brown* became the canonical text on which other school stories for boys would follow. In the tradition of Hughes, the contributions by Talbot Baines Reed in the weekly *Boy's own paper*, which was launched in 1879 by the Religious Tract Society, gained enormous popularity. In his footsteps followed P.G. Wodehouse and Frank Richards. Richards was a most prolific writer and created more than one hundred fictional schools between 1894 and 1961, including the well-known Greyfriars and St Jim's, in the weekly papers for boys *The Magnet* and *The Gem* (Richards 1992:9). What the stories by all these authors had in common was that a public school setting formed the backdrop against which the narratives unfold.

Richard argues that since nothing much happens at schools, or rather, given that there are strict parameters that determine what is possible within the highly structured and routinised school life, a set of incidents and themes became characteristic of all school stories. Talbot Baines Reed, for example, seems to have used a limited register of events and characters, which were repeated in many of his stories. Isabel Quigley explains this as follows:

The stolen exam paper, the innocent wrongly accused, the suffering, proud loneliness and final triumph, the boating accident, the runaway lost in the storm, rescued by the boy that he had wronged and brought back to the school half dead (Isabel Quigley quoted in Richards 1992:5).

Richards points out that these plots were not only characteristic of the work of Talbot Baines Reed, but also cropped up in the books of the successful school story writer Frank Richards, and many others. The structure of the schoolboy book story seems to be generic:

A boy enters school in some fear and trepidation, but usually with ambitions and schemes; suffers mildly or seriously at first from loneliness, the exactions of fag-masters, the discipline of masters and the regimentation of games; then he makes a few friends and leads for a year or so a joyful irresponsible and sometimes rebellious life, eventually learns duty, self-reliance, responsibility

and loyalty as a prefect, qualities usually used to put down bullying or over-emphasis on athletic prowess; and finally leaves school, with regret for a wide world, stamped with the seal of an institution which he has left and devoted to its welfare (E.C. Mack quoted in Richards 1992:6).

In the end, the school story tends to be very formulaic and the range of events and characters limited. In Richards's own words, school stories are about 'japes and scrapes, soccer and cricket, study teas and practical jokes, and Dickensian Christmas hols...'. Still, these stories proved to be enormously popular. Richards (1992:10-12) offers four explanations as to why this genre of fiction was so popular. First, he argues that the school stories that became so popular had a quality of timelessness inherent to them. He describes the school setting as 'a world of unchanging patterns and eternal verities' (Richards 1992:10). In many of these stories, the characters remained fairly fixed in space and time. Hence, in many of these stories a school term could last indefinitely and stretch over many books, or, in other cases, the lead characters could stay in Form III long enough to cover a few titles. Even in those series where pupils do age and ultimately leave the school, there is usually something about the school and its structures that remains eternal, and, at the same time, outside of time. A second reason advanced for the popularity of the school story genre according to Richards is that the stories featured 'a whole range of rounded and convincing boy portraits'. This is particularly true of the stories by Frank Richards, for example his popular *Greyfriars* series, which profoundly influenced school story writers after him. A third reason is the strong theme that friendship plays in all the books, and, finally, Richards believes that school stories are popular precisely because of their idealisation of school life.

The last point is of interest from the point of view of the class basis of the readership of school stories. Whilst school stories were originally written by the privileged elites themselves having been educated at public schools and the stories ostensibly targeted boys who were about to enter that system, the largest group of readers of the genre was comprised of boys (and girls) who would never go to public schools themselves. This apparent contradiction may in part be explained by one of the characteristic features of the genre:

Studies of sub-genres of children's literature may disclose, for instance, not only the way in which society operates, but the way in which it would *like to be perceived operating* [my emphasis] (Butts 1992:xii).

The genre of public school stories that found such a mass appeal among young readers portrayed an idealised form of school life, which did not correspond to the reality of being at a public school. The contradictions between their own schools and the establishments described in the books were large and looming for boys who were not able to attend public schools. Yet, those born from the upper classes, where it was almost obligatory to attend public school, could not do else but recognise that their experience of being in school did not conform to the experiences of the fictional characters in the stories and that their schools, though showing some resemblance to those fictional schools such as Greyfriars, fail to encapsulate completely the powerful image of fictional public schools. Thus, in principle all readers were reading about schools that they would never attend. Thus, it is not surprising that readers of *The Gem* and *The Magnet* were mostly drawn from the lower middle class and upper working class. The relationship between the fictional world of the text and the realities of growing up in working class slums in Salford is powerfully explained by Robert Roberts and is well worth quoting here at length:

Even before the First World War, many youngsters in the working class had developed an addiction to Frank Richards' school stories. The standards of conduct observed by Harry Wharton and his friends at Greyfriars set social norms to which schoolboys and some young teenagers strove spasmodically to conform. Fights – ideally at least – took place according to Greyfriars rules: no striking of an opponent when he was down, no kicking, in fact, no weapon but the manly fist. Through Old School we learned to admire guts, integrity, tradition; we derided the glutton, the Americans and the French. We looked with contempt upon the sneak and the thief. The Famous Five stood for us as young knights, *sans peur et sans reproche*. With nothing in our school that called for love or allegiance, Greyfriars became for some of us our true Alma Mater, to whom we felt bound by a dreamlike loyalty... Over the years these simple tales conditioned the thought of a whole generation of boys. The public school ethos, distorted into myth, and sold among us weekly in penny numbers, for good or ill, set ideals and standards. This, our tutors, religious and secular, had signally failed to do. In the final estimate, it may well be found that Frank Richards during the first quarter of the twentieth century had more influence on the mind and outlook of young working class England than any other single person (Robert Roberts quoted in Richards 1992:13)

The school story found resonance in the empire and former British territory. Research about the way in which this genre conformed to or departed from the British model - which became the prototype of school stories - is fairly limited. J.A. Mangan (1989) has done some research on the school story in Canada and Australia. Mangan's research

focus is the extent to which the games-playing culture and focus on athletic prowess that underpinned the ethos of the Edwardian and Victorian public school – which found literary expression in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* - had filtered through to schoolboy fiction produced outside Britain. While he is able to show that the school story genre of fiction for boys gained popularity in both Canada and Australia and that local authors attempted to customise and contextualise the school story in the setting of the colonies, he succinctly captures the dilemma facing such authors in the task of replicating the school story. Precisely because of the emphasis on elitism characteristic of boarding school fiction, it was difficult to convince a British readership of the viability of school stories set in the colonies. Likewise, colonial audiences compared localised version of the school story with the British 'prototype'. Hence the perception existed that there was something like an authentic public school story and that this had to bear the stamp of the English public school system. Brenda Niall articulates this dilemma as follows:

Writing Australian public school stories was a difficult balancing act. To keep too close to the British model was to be merely imitative, yet the genre demanded, and its readers expected stylized characters, situations and even language. It was unlikely that British boys would want to read about the tuck-shop at St Virgil's; and Australians too, might well prefer Greyfriars to Geelong as a place of football-filled heroics, or dormitory escapades. The school story needed the genuine 'made in Britain' label (Brenda Niall, *Australia in the Looking Glass*, Melbourne, 1984 p. 152, quoted in Mangan 1989:179).

Public schools after the reforms in the early nineteenth century, which were in part informed by the Evangelical movement, remained fairly static until the end of the Second World War. According to Richards '[t]hey remained institutions which sought to give their pupils moral training, to develop self-restraint, a proper sense of values and preparation of the exercise of power, whether as officers, administrators or statesmen (Richards 1992:14). However, the end of the empire and imperialism as well as the aftermath of World War II rung in changes in the ethos and function of public schools in Britain, which had an impact on schoolboy fiction. Richards (1992:15) contends that the death of Frank Richards also brought an end to the peculiar English public boarding school story, which came to define this genre. Though school continued to play a role in children's fiction, increasingly, writers were concerned with 'the everyday scene and with the experience of the majority of their readers' (Marcus Crouch, quoted in Richards 1992:15). Crouch links this development, at least in part, to the fact that by the end of the 1960s, a change in the class composition of writers of children's literature had taken place, with a new generation of writers emerging who had not attended public

schools themselves. Stories about day schools, as opposed to boarding schools, came to dominate the genre from the second half of the twentieth century in Britain. The day school setting provided infinitely more scope for characters and events, as the setting was no longer limited to the school, but could include family, city life, co-ed schools with the possibilities of romance and sex, and so forth. Richards argues that the increasing ubiquity of television had a further impact on the school story, as television series such as *Grange Hill* became very popular in Britain. Richards contends that these television series, situated as they are in day schools and the thematic that that kind of setting provides, are increasingly taking on the characteristics of popular day time soap operas targeted at adults. Consequently, these television series are rooted in a sense of 'reality' quite different from the enclosed and idealised schools of the earlier fiction.

The study of children's literature in South Africa

Until recently, the output of the short history of academic work in the field of children's literature in South Africa, in particular on Afrikaans children's literature, has been fairly modest. The field is dominated by a small number of academics from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, most prominent among these those from library and information sciences and education. Local debates have focused in the main on discussions about the 'good book' or 'appropriate' books for children and ways in which to encourage children to read (Van der Westhuizen 1999, De Beer 1991, De Villiers & Bester 1992, Steenberg 1982); the role of fiction in the process of socialisation (Machet & Bester 1990, Van Niekerk 1992, Stiebel 1992, Mitchell & Smith 1996); the reading preferences of children (Van Zyl 1990, Snyman 1994, Verwey 1999); the field of children's literature and the debate on children's literature as popular fiction or 'Literature' (Van Zyl 1988, Wybenga 1985, Wiehahn 1991, Gouws 1995); and the appraisal of individual texts (Mitchell & Smith 1996). A fair amount of postgraduate study has been undertaken in this area on a wide range of topics, but not much of this has filtered through to academic journals.

In the last decade, though, it seems that the importance of children's literature as an area of study, in particular the socio-historical dimension of this area of literary studies, is being asserted (see, for example Jenkins, 1994) and that new avenues are being explored. For the first time there is evidence of serious academic engagement with questions around popular fiction for children and the ideological and socio-historical legacies of children's literature in South Africa, specifically in Afrikaans.

An article by Maritha Snyman, published in 1994 in the Afrikaans literary journal *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, gave new momentum to the debate on Afrikaans children's literature. In the article, entitled, 'Afrikaanse jeuglektuur: 'n herbesinning' she argues - against the orthodoxy of the time - that formulaic literature for children, such as popular series books, play a valuable role in children's development and do not discourage young readers from 'graduating' to more serious literature later on their lives. In addition, she advocates the importance of further academic study of popular youth fiction. In her article, she makes reference to a range of well-known Afrikaans series books, including *Maasdorp*, *Keurboslaan*, *Die Uile*, *Trompie*, *Saartjie*, *Soekie*, *Bienkie*, *Fritz Deelman*, and *Jasper*, arguing that these books remain the most popular texts for Afrikaans-speaking young readers. In particular, she argues that these series books should be reprinted for a new generation of young readers. Now, what is of interest about the series books she singles out for their popularity is that virtually all these have been produced before the 1970s.

Snyman's article is important and controversial in a number of ways. First, within the South African context, and more markedly in the domain of Afrikaans literature, her argument about the importance of popular fiction is novel. Second, Snyman provides some empirical evidence to support her argument, though one would have liked to see a more systematic and structured survey. Third, given that Snyman's article was published in 1994, the year of the first democratic elections in South Africa, what is ostensibly missing from Snyman's plea for series books to be reprinted is an acknowledgement or consideration of the social context in which these books have originally been produced, the values they display and their ideological contents. In short, Snyman fails to engage with the question about how texts work and what it is they do apart from the ability of series books to stimulate the habit of reading.

After the historical events of 1994, there appears to be a new interest in youth literature, with more studies devoted to the social-historical aspects of children's literature emerging. Often these studies focus on issues of representation, specifically race. Examples include a study by Greyling (1999), entitled *Die uitbeelding van apartheid in Engelse Suid-Afrikaanse jeugliteratuur*, and Miemie du Plessis's *Rasseverhoudings in Suid-Afrikaanse jeuglektuur sedert 1990* (1999). Gender representation is another angle from which children's books are scrutinized (see, for example De Villiers & Bester 1992). Attempts have been made to render a more comprehensive overview of the system of children's literature production and

dissemination (see Van Vuuren 1994). More recently, Thomas van der Walt has moved into the historical study of children's fiction, a field that seems to display many gaps (Van der Walt 2000 and Fairer-Wessels & Van der Walt 1999), and so has Maritha Snyman, who looks specifically at the history of series books in Afrikaans (Snyman 2001). However, many of these studies are exploratory (see for example Fairer-Wessels & Van der Walt 1999, Snyman 1999, Snyman 1994, Snyman 2001, Verwey 1999) and there is vast scope for more descriptive and explanatory academic work in this area.

Key questions

This brief survey of selected themes in the study of children's literature and popular formula books for children that pertain to this study raises important questions that need to be addressed in this research. These can be summarised as follows: 1) What is the relationship between the *Keurboslaan* series and the British public school story genre?; 2) With regard to children's literature, how can the way in which these texts 'work', that is, the formative qualities of texts, be explained theoretically?; 3) Based on the aforementioned question, what are the ideological contents and socio-historical trajectory of the *Keurboslaan* series and how does this analysis contribute to the debate on the merit of series books for children?; 4) How was the production, circulation and reception of the *Keurboslaan* series interlinked with other social and political developments of the time?; 5) In what fruitful ways can the literature on popular fiction and the literature on children's literature speak to each other? These questions are outlined in greater detail below.

In the first instance, it seems to be important to explore the extent to which the *Keurboslaan* series is modelled on the British public school story, exemplified by *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Such an inquiry will locate the study in a comparative framework, thereby steering the analysis away from the kind of exceptionalism thesis underpinning much scholarship on Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid. In addition, such an investigation could reveal the continuities and discontinuities between colonial rule and apartheid South Africa.

Lack of adequate theorisation of the way in which children's literature produces its attributed formative and educational effects have been identified as a central shortcoming in many studies of children's literature. It is therefore necessary to

problematise the link between children's literature and the effects it produces on society.

Whilst in recent work on popular fiction for children in Afrikaans an argument has been put forward about the positive aspects of popular formulas for children and that older series books in Afrikaans need to be reprinted, no attention has been paid to the discourses circulating in these series books or the conditions in which they have been produced. It is therefore necessary to conduct an analysis of discourses in the *Keurboslaan* series through a symptomatic reading of the texts. Such an analysis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the way in which discourse functions in the *Keurboslaan* series and the extent to which it can be argued that these discourses have contributed to the creation of a particular kind of subjectivity among its readers.

In his study of the school story genre, Richards shows how the development of this genre of fiction was inserted into larger social processes linked to the Evangelical movement in Britain. In the same vein, it is therefore important to locate the development and circulation of the *Keurboslaan* series within the historical and social context of the period and to explain if and how the production, dissemination and reception of the *Keurboslaan* series were interlinked with other social processes.

Finally, the discussion in this chapter raises a question about the extent to which the historical development of the academic study of children's literature has resulted in it being awarded a 'special status' as a field of academic inquiry that falls outside or in between disciplines and what the effects of this status are. Theorists such as Hunt welcome recent developments that have seen a change in the status of children's literature, which is now generally no longer seen as a lesser literature but as a different kind of literature. Yet, the question raised in the present study is whether it may not be useful to embed a study of children's literature fully in broader debates on literature in general and popular literature specifically when such a study is framed within the discipline of literature, as is the case in the present study. In effect, the implications of such a proposal are that the 'special status' of children's literature is temporarily suspended and that the research approach and methods employed need to comply with the requirements for the study of any literary works, including popular fiction.

Conclusion

The academic field of children's literature is varied and multi-disciplinary. As a result, it is incoherent and represents many different schools of thought and analytical and theoretical approaches addressed to the general thematic. Whereas the same tension between the 'good book' and popular fiction plays itself out in debates on children's literature, children's literature is imbued with a formative significance, which is not generally present in debates on popular fiction for adults. The educational basis for theorisation of the way in which texts socialise the young reader is often lacking in empirical, both current sociological and historical, studies of the phenomenon.

In South Africa, and in particular in with regard to Afrikaans literature, the study of children's literature is still in its infancy. There exists a paucity of research on issues related to the role of children's literature with regard class and identity formation. Moreover, there are very few studies on popular fiction for children in Afrikaans. Given the South African experience of apartheid, it is a pity that no record could be found of scholarly work on popular fiction for children produced by resistance movements, such as *Stanley Bekker en die boikot*. Studies that have been undertaken on the socio-historical development of Afrikaans children's literature are mostly exploratory. Since the field of children's literature in South Africa as elsewhere is fractured and incoherent, the scope and depth of research in this area is highly uneven and some studies, reception studies in particular, present problems of evidence as well as theoretical and methodological problems.

Yet, despite many gaps, there seems to be agreement among scholars in the field that children's literature has come of age and is now widely regarded as a valid field of academic study (Hunt 1994, Nikolajeva 1996, Van der Walt 2000, Lesnik-Oberstein 1994).

The key questions identified in this chapter are addressed in the next few chapters. Chapter Six focuses on the production, circulation and reception of the *Keurboslaan* series, whilst Chapter Five and Chapter Six aim to link the production of the *Keurboslaan* series to the historical context within which it emerges.

Two further areas for inquiry that were raised include the extent to which it is possible to draw from the literature on popular fiction in studies of children's literature and visa versa, and the way in which the relationship between text and society is theorised in

the case of children's literature. It has been argued in the previous chapter that there are a great number of similarities between the *Keurboslaan* series and popular formulas for adults, such as romance and detective novels. Hence, at the very minimum, the method and rigour of analysis applied to the study of children's literature need to be similar to that of studies of popular fiction. It is argued here that the study of children's literature may possibly benefit from being located squarely within the boundaries of the literary domain. As such, the point of departure of the present study is that the theoretical and methodological approaches of literary studies can be applied to the study of children's literature and that considerations of the special attributes of children's literature are temporarily suspended. For a theoretical explanation of the relationship between literature and society, this study draws on the theoretical contributions of Bourdieu, Althusser and De Certeau outlined in the previous chapter to explore the relationship between literature and society – in this case the relationship between the *Keurboslaan* series and the formation of Afrikaner nationalism – with a particular focus on the question of texts and the creation of subjectivity.

PART III:

The making of the *Keurboslaan* series

Chapter Five:

Setting the Scene: Writing, publishing and reading Afrikaans

Introduction

This chapter describes the social context that forms the backdrop against which Stella Blakemore's *Keurboslaan* series was published in the 1940s. The first section of this chapter is devoted to an overview of the early years of the political mobilisation around the Afrikaans language. This is supplemented with an account of Isabel Hofmeyr's study on the role of Afrikaner intelligentsia and the publishing industry in the development of Afrikaner nationalism from the late nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. The chapter further sketches developments in the Afrikaans book market, including the growth in popular fiction in Afrikaans, from the mid-1930s and the increase in demand for Afrikaans books spurred by the outbreak of the Second World War. It also attempts to provide some insight into the reading public for Afrikaans books from the 1930s. A brief overview is provided of the growth and development of a publishing industry for Afrikaans books, with specific focus on the 'nationalist' sentiments of some of these publishers and the way in which these sentiments were reflected in their business operations and publications.

Afrikaans literary production and publishing in the early years: The First Language Movement to the late 1920s

According to canonised histories of the Afrikaans language and literature - an example of which is J. C. Kannemeyer's influential work *Die Afrikaanse Literatuur 1652-1987* (1988), which was used as the primary source for this section²⁰ - the first impetus for the recognition of Afrikaans as written language or print language was provided by the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaanders (GRA), a group established in the Paarl in 1875. This came to be known as the First Language Movement. The GRA produced its own magazine, *Die Afrikaanse Patriot*. In addition to the magazine, a whole set of small publications were produced, including a history book, *Die geskiedenis van ons land en*

²⁰ This study would have benefited from an engagement with debates about the status of Kannemeyer's history of Afrikaans literature. The work of Theo du Plessis, including *Afrikaans en taalpolitiek* and *Afrikaans in beweging*, though surely not as widely circulated as Kannemeyer's, is regarded by some as historically more correct than Kannemeyer's work, and based on primary research rather than secondary sources. In order to keep this argument focused, I refer to Kannemeyer's text only, but it may be necessary to read Kannemeyer in conjunction with other literary and language histories of Afrikaans. It is possible that such cross-referencing may provide a correction on the argument presented here.

die taal van ons volk (1877), a book on the principles of the Afrikaans language (1876) and an Afrikaans calendar (from 1877). The most important figures to partake in this movement were S.J du Toit, A. Pannevis and C.P. Hoogenhout. Kannemeyer concedes that the First Language Movement was strongly opposed by Dutch intellectuals in the Cape, who either felt that English was to be used as a print language or who did not want to cut ties with Dutch tradition and cultural heritage. It should be noted that the work of the GRA was undertaken parallel to a movement for the recognition of Dutch as language of instruction in schools.

The first Afrikaans language congress took place in the Paarl on 15 and 16 January 1896. At the congress it was decided that a new grammar and dictionary of Afrikaans needed to be compiled, that a monthly publication of Afrikaans creative writing pieces needed to be launched, and that S.J. du Toit was to be encouraged in his endeavours to translate the Bible into Afrikaans. By the end of the century, Du Toit had translated and published a number of books of the Bible in Afrikaans. The outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899 practically signalled the end of this movement.

Whereas the First Language Movement was located in the Paarl, the Second Language Movement was not bound to a specific geographical location and the term is in fact a loose rubric describing a range of initiatives that was undertaken around the promotion of the Afrikaans language in the first part of the twentieth century. The Anglicisation policy that followed the conclusion of the Anglo-Boer War is regarded to be a major factor spurring a second movement around the Afrikaans language. In the peace treaty signed to conclude the war, a condition stipulated that English was to be the administrative language used in the four colonies. This stipulation, in particular, drew strong criticism from the corps of teachers at the independent Dutch medium CNO schools.

By 1905 Afrikaans was used in newspapers in all four colonies. In the same year, the politician J.H. Hofmeyr from the Cape delivered an important address, entitled 'Is't ons ernst' about the importance of retaining the Dutch language. The address was widely published and read. G.S. Preller, who argued in *De Volkstem* that while it was clear that Afrikaners lacked commitment to the Dutch language it was perhaps possible and desirable for Afrikaners to foster a commitment to their mother tongue, Afrikaans, took the debate on the issue of Afrikaans further. In reaction to this, a number of associations were established (the Afrikaanse Taalgenootskap in Pretoria, the Afrikaanse Taalvereniging in Cape Town, and similar associations in Potchefstroom

and Bloemfontein) with the aim of promoting the status and use of Afrikaans among Afrikaners.

Just more than a decade after the end of the Anglo-Boer War, the publishing industry for Afrikaans books became more established and expanded. In 1914, Hertzog formed the National Party. Shortly thereafter, in 1915, the Nasionale Pers was established. J.L. van Schaik, another publishing house, opened its doors in Pretoria in 1914. In the period 1913-1924 serious attention was devoted to literary production in Afrikaans. Strategies adopted included persuading various upstanding members of the community to publish books and to run a host of creative writing competitions. Part of this process was the production of the history of the 'Afrikaner' in print in a number of forms. The Rebellion of 1914 provided a further impetus to the celebration of the history of the Afrikaner in texts and many titles were devoted to this event. In this same period, a range of popular publications was launched. Many of these were targeted at the Afrikaans family, in particular at women. These included the magazine *Die Boervrouw* (published from 1919-1939) and *Die Huisgenoot* (originally *Ons Moedertaal*, first published in 1916).

In 1918 Afrikaans was for the first time offered as a subject at two universities. At roughly the same time, the process of standardising Afrikaans and producing dictionaries and grammars commenced. Many of these activities were located in the universities. In 1925, Afrikaans became one of the two official languages and the first translation of the Bible in Afrikaans was published in 1933. According to Kannemeyer virtually all school education for Afrikaners was through the medium of Afrikaans by 1925 (1988:43).²¹ The late 1920s saw the consolidation of a range of processes that were aimed at the official recognition of Afrikaans, the creation of a publishing industry for Afrikaans books, and the popularisation of Afrikaans among Afrikaners. These developments formed the foundation for the substantial growth in the Afrikaans book market from the 1930s.

Class, nationalism and the construction of Afrikaner identity, 1902 – 1924

The canonised account of the development of the Afrikaans language displays certain gaps, in particular with regard to recognition of the class alliance that was forged through and underpinned the language movement and the link between the language

²¹ It was not possible to verify this information, but the comments made in footnote 1 on page 126 may be pertinent here as well.

struggle and the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism. The history of the political mobilisation around the issue of the Afrikaans language in the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries speaks directly to Benedict Anderson's work on the construction of the nation, which was discussed in Chapter Two. Anderson himself inserts the story of the political struggles around the formation and recognition of the Afrikaans language within his broader account of the development of nationalism around the world:

Elsewhere in the latter portion of the nineteenth century, we find Afrikaner nationalism pioneered by Boer pastors and litterateurs, who in the 1870s were successful in making the local Dutch patois into a literary language and naming it something no longer European (1991:75).

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 or fabrication 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. She frames her research in the context of social and economic developments in the early part of the twentieth century. Theoretically, she uses Tom Nairn's (1977) ideas on the nature of nationalism to frame her research. Of significance for this study is the importance Hofmeyr attributes to the notion of the written text as a strategy for the construction and consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism and the difficulties associated with the process of manufacturing a literary culture among Afrikaners, which she highlights.

Whereas Hofmeyr concurs with most of the facts contained in accounts of the development of the Afrikaans language by pro-Afrikaans authors (see Antonissen (1955), Schoonees (1922), Pienaar (1943), Dekker (1961)) and the canonised histories of Afrikaans literature, her emphasis is on filling in the silences in these histories. She

offers a class perspective on developments in the Dutch/Dutch-Afrikaans/Afrikaans/Boer communities from the 1800s to 1920. In her analysis of these historical developments, Hofmeyr highlights the particular class agenda of those who exerted themselves for a more prominent role for Afrikaans. She suggests that the First Language movement – which she argues never possessed the tight-knit organisational unity often suggested – was primarily set in motion by lower middle class intelligentsia, such as schoolteachers and clerics, who felt marginalized because the world of commerce and government was overwhelmingly British and because funds for schooling were increasingly being channelled towards urban English schools rather than under-funded Dutch schools. In addition, Hofmeyr shows that this movement came into conflict with the propertied Dutch middle class who resisted the use of Dutch-Afrikaans.

Hofmeyr argues that by the end of the nineteenth century important changes had taken place in the social relations of kinship and family that linked the Boer community. At the time, three groups could be distinguished in the North of the country, namely the landed notables, those with tenuous land rights, and the entirely landless. Those who were landless often lived on the properties of wealthy kin as ‘bywoners’. There is evidence that some tensions arose between the ‘bywoners’ and the landed notables and that traditional lines of authority came under pressure. During the Anglo-Boer war, one in five ‘bywoners’ joined the British side and even more became ‘hensoppers’. Following the war, Afrikaners in increasing numbers moved to the cities. In particular, the urban areas provided employment opportunities for young women. Many of those moving to the cities were unskilled and poor. The result of the urbanisation was increased social problems. These developments alarmed both the urban and rural middle class. The church played an important role in taking care of the impoverished Boers in the cities.

Many groups among the middle classes were disgruntled with Milner’s post-War Anglicisation policy and feared that their own positions would be marginalized. Among these were journalists, teachers, clerics, small farmers and clerks. For example, a group of teachers and clerics were concerned about their own positions, the former because funding to (independent) CNO schools were drying up and there was little support for Dutch in the Union. These groups could not turn to the British government, nor to the wealthy farmers or to the generals after the war. Hofmeyr argues that they had to find a support base. She summarizes the developments that led to the Second Language Movement as follows:

The Second Language movement was shaped by these heteroclitic processes. In broad outline, the movement involved a petty bourgeoisie in search of a wider audience that could turn language and educational broking into a new professional avenue for a group of people who feared marginalisation.

The main focus of Hofmeyr's article is the manufacturing of an Afrikaans literary culture. An important part of her analysis is to show how an audience for Afrikaans publication was 'captured', not only among the petty bourgeoisie but also among ordinary Afrikaners, the working class. It is against this background, that Hofmeyr traces developments around the Afrikaans language in the period after the war.

By this time, Afrikaans was being used in many newspapers. As a result, persons such as G.S. Preller started to argue that Afrikaans could be turned into a professional language as it clearly had a potential readership. However, to achieve this, two tasks had to be accomplished first. The first of these was to make Afrikaans respectable and 'beskaafd' (civilised). That entailed standardizing the language. Second, the language had to be turned into a print language through the production of books and written texts. A third challenge was to get Afrikaners to read, i.e. to instil a culture of reading among Afrikaans speakers and to persuade them to buy books. Hofmeyr argues that as part of the process to transform Afrikaans into a respectable language it was necessary to create or manufacture a history for the Afrikaner. She shows how the idea of the Groot Trek (Great Trek) became institutionalised by the 1920s, whereas until the 1880s the word was not known and even by the 1910s it was common practice to refer to the movement as 'landverhuisers' (land movers) or 'emigrante' (emigrants). A range of books and publications on the history of the Afrikaner followed. The Rebellion of 1914 was a symbolic event that could be celebrated in Afrikaans texts, whilst the establishment of Nasionale Pers in 1915 provided a mouthpiece for Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie to ask for language and cultural rights. Literary competitions were launched to encourage new writers to write in Afrikaans and a number of magazines, notably *Die Huisgenoot*, *Die Brandwag* and *Die Boervrou*, encouraged reading habits among Afrikaners. Many of these publications were targeted at the household, specifically women. The content of these publications had as a recurring theme the importance of reading and buying books and regularly featured (repackaged) versions of everyday life as Afrikaner cultural goods, such as features on Afrikaans architecture,

interior decorating, humour and dress. A whole industry around the creation of Afrikaner cultural artefacts was spawned.

Hofmeyr points out that Preller, in his columns in *De Volkstem*, made deliberate attempts to link the movement around Afrikaans to other nationalist movements around language, notably those in Flanders, Quebec, Wales and Ireland as a strategy for 'selling' Afrikaans as a civilised language. Another strategy used was to emphasize links between Afrikaans and Dutch, thereby perpetuating the idea that Afrikaans was a European (i.e. 'white') language and removing the stigma of 'colouredness' that had been attached to it.

At the heart of Hofmeyr's thesis is the following: After the Anglo-Boer war a growing number of landless Boers became urbanized. At the same time, certain networks of kinship and authority that had held the Boer community together became unstuck. Unskilled as they were, these poor whites in the urban areas came under the fold of the petty bourgeoisie, who undertook a process of social engineering – inspired by imperial thinking on this topic – to turn them into a working class that could be incorporated into the capitalist system. At the same time, however, this Afrikaans speaking petty bourgeoisie themselves felt marginalised and excluded from certain privileges and lifestyles that seemed to be reserved for the British. A convergence of these two concerns resulted in the invention of the nation. Thinking about these two problems in the context of an Afrikaner nation seemed to be a way to achieve both goals. Hofmeyr argues that, particularly in literature, attempts at social engineering came to take on a particular form – that of a nationalist discourse. She rejects the organic view of nationalism as categories of language and religion and shows the close links between class formation and the making of a particular ethnic identity. She summarizes this as follows:

The simultaneity of middle-class philanthropic 'intervention' and nationalist innovation is crucial to grasp since many other commentators have attributed to Afrikaners a particular propensity for being more religious and moral than the rest of society (1987: 103)

Hofmeyr's argument is persuasive. Drawing on Gramsci, she indicates that she is not arguing that the barrage of information contained in popular reading matter and literary works had the effect of creating exclusive Afrikaner identities among the working class. Rather, she concedes that the readers of those magazines and literary works in all

likelihood retained a number of other identities. However, she believes that somehow the combined impact of all the efforts had caused a ‘sediment of “Afrikanerness”’ to settle in many households.

Hofmeyr’s account is underpinned by a strong notion of agency, and the picture she sketches of the process of literary production is of a process driven by particular individuals and particular class interests. Admittedly, she concedes that the production of literature was diverse and that its very diversity would form the building blocks of the imagined nation. Nonetheless, she situates the notion of editorial control quite tightly with some of the objectives of the petty bourgeoisie. Her discussion on the invention of the ‘Volkmoeder’ discourse in particular, would seem to suggest close ties between editorial control and the ‘men of languages’. In addition, Hofmeyr attempts to define the target audience of the literary manufacturing process. She claims that the petty bourgeoisie alone could not support the Afrikaans literary industry and that they had to expand their market among the rising proletariat. For this reason, popular publications encouraged the reading classes to read.

A brief history of the publishing industry for Afrikaans books

In 1894, a publishing house was established as an outflow of the formation of the Suid-Afrikaanse Taalbond. This publishing house later became known as the Hollandsch-Afrikaansche Uitgeversmaatschappij (HAUM) (Kannemeyer 1988:31). Together with the small firm D.F. du Toit & Co, they published many of the first Afrikaans texts produced before 1900 (Steyn 1992:23). Another firm that was involved in the printing of Afrikaans texts was that of J.H. De Bussy in Pretoria, an Amsterdam-based bookstore and publishing house. This firm published the influential volume of poetry *Oom Gert vertel en ander gedigte* by C. Louis Leipoldt in 1911. Het Westen Drukkerij was established by Hendrik de Graaf and produced the newspaper *Het Westen*, which eventually became *Die Volksblad*. According to Steyn (1992:22-24) this firm, which was originally situated in Potchefstroom and later moved to Bloemfontein, published some of the most important literary texts in Afrikaans. Het Westen Drukkerij produced seventeen of the thirty-three works of prose and poetry that were published in Afrikaans between 1907 and 1915. The publishing house published works by Totius, Langenhoven, Cilliers, Cachet and Reitz, among others. There also existed numerous smaller printing houses, such as the Van de Sandt de Villiers Drukkers Maatschappij Beperkt in Bloemfontein and A.H. Koomans (Steyn 1992:23).

1915 saw the establishment of Nasionale Pers in Stellenbosch. Nasionale Pers was not the only publishers of Afrikaans books in the South, though, as, for example, Pro Ecclesia publishers, also based in Stellenbosch, had an advantage over Nasionale Pers in the schoolbook market until the thirties (Muller 1990:509). In 1917, Nasionale Pers bought all De Graaf's enterprises and thus took over both the newspaper *Het Volksblad* and Het Westen Drukkerij (Steyn 1992:25). J.L. van Schaik was established in 1914 in Pretoria (Kannemeyer 1988:43).

Kannemeyer argues that the establishment of J.L. van Schaik in the North and Nasionale Pers in the South were the most important factors in the Afrikaans literary publication in the first thirty years of the twentieth century and that in the 1930s the most important Afrikaans books were published by these two publishers (1988:43). Three new publishing houses emerged during this period. Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel was established in Pretoria in 1932, Unie-Volkspers²² in Cape Town in 1936 and Voortrekkerpers in Johannesburg in 1937. Tafelberg, originally a subsidiary of Die Goeie Hoop publishers, which was established after the Second World War by Blaar Coetzee (MP for the South African Party), was established in Cape Town in 1951 (Steyn 1992f:160). Burger Boekhandel (later Nasionale Boekhandel), an affiliate of Nasionale Pers, was set up in 1917. In the forties, A.A. Balkema and Constantia publishers were founded. These publishers revolutionised the typographical process, which resulted in an improved technical quality of books. By the 1950s a number of smaller publishing houses became active. These included Culemborg, Simondium, John Malherbe, Buren, Saayman & Weber, and Rubicon. Human & Rousseau was founded in 1959 and became a major publisher of Afrikaans books. Affiliated to this house was also Kennis-Boekhandel and H&R Academica.

Dagbreekpers and Afrikaanse Pers became one company in 1962, whilst this new company in turn amalgamated with Voortrekkerpers in 1971 to become Perskor. Tafelberg was taken over by Nasionale Boekhandel in 1959, and in 1970 Nasionale Boekhandel and Tafelberg were amalgamated under the name Tafelberg. Further consolidation in the industry took place in 1977, when Human & Rousseau became part of Nasionale Boekhandel. In 1986, J.L. van Schaik was also incorporated.

²² The latter was established to counter the Nasionale Pers newspaper *Die Burger* to provide the United Party with a mouthpiece in Afrikaans. Unie-Volkspers' newspaper, *Die Suiderstem* was launched on 8 October 1934. See Muller 1990:448).

Hofmeyr (1987) eruditely describes the way in which segments of the Afrikaans petty bourgeoisie mobilised around the Afrikaans language from the late nineteenth century. A strong element of this mobilisation was focused on the production and the circulation of texts and included the setting up of a number of publishing houses to produce these texts. There was therefore often a very close association between publishers of Afrikaans books and the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. As a result, publishers of Afrikaans books often published books that were sympathetic to or deemed necessary for the advancement of Afrikaner nationalism and did not operate solely on business principles. As a result, many of these books did not sell particularly well. Examples of such publications are the *Tweede Trek* series and the *Kennis vir Almal* series published by Nasionale Pers and the *Monument* series published by J.L. van Schaik.

The expansion of the Afrikaans book publishing industry from the 1930s and the emergence of popular fiction

It should be noted that by the mid-1930s the printing industry for Afrikaans literature was already well established. For example, according to an article in *Die Volksblad*, Nasionale Pers had printed and disseminated close to 3 million books between 1916 and 1937 (Steyn 1992:10).²³ Steyn (1992d:115) further reports that between 1937 and 1940, Nasionale Pers had printed 1 087 050 books in Bloemfontein. This figure increased to 2 191 549 between 1941 and August 1946. The table below gives an idea of the circulation of texts by the mid-1930s.

Table 1: Total print number of the most popular books printed by Nasionale Pers from 1917 - 1937²⁴

Title	Author	Number of copies printed and disseminated
<i>Uit oerwoud en vlakke</i>	Sangiro (A.A. Pienaar)	50 000
<i>Sonde met die bure</i>	C.J. Langenhoven	45 000
<i>Ons weg deur die wêreld</i>	C.J. Langenhoven	35 000
<i>Die lig van verre dae</i>	C.J. Langenhoven	30 000

²³ Hofmeyr cites a fairly similar figure. She says that in the first twenty-three years of its existence (that is 1917 – 1940) Nasionale Pers produced 1100 books of which they sold 3,274,581 copies (Hofmeyr 1987:112)

²⁴ Information obtained from Steyn (1992:10).

<i>Mof en sy mense</i>	C.J. Langenhoven	35 000
<i>Die burgemeester van slaplaagte</i>	Jochem van Bruggen	17 000
<i>Die vlakke en ander gedigte</i>	Jan F. E. Cilliers	16 000
<i>Uit drie wêrelddele</i>	C. Louis Leipoldt	10 000
Literature for children		
<i>Afrikaanse Kinderbybel</i>	W.J. Conradie	31 000
<i>Stories vir die kinders</i>	C. Louis Leipoldt	15 000
<i>Brolloks en Bittergal</i>	C.J. Langenhoven	15 000

In the war years between 1939 and 1945, the demand for books increased dramatically. This was due in part to a drop in numbers of books imported from Europe, a phenomenal rise in the price of imported books (up to 400% in comparison with a 25% price increase for local books) and the shortage of paper. However, nationalist sentiment among Afrikaners, opposition to the war and worsening relations between English speaking and Afrikaans speaking South Africans also contributed to the increase in demand (Steyn 1992d: 86-87). Steyn (1992) argues that the market for Afrikaans books had recovered by 1936 from the great decline in demand caused by the depression period. The economic position of Afrikaners was improving and this was further stimulated by an increase in salaries and a decline in unemployment as a result of the Second World War. As a result, the demand for Afrikaans books increased by 150% in the years between 1939 and 1945. The result of the growth in the industry was that publishers could print far larger quantities of the same book.²⁵ Steyn (1992d:115) reports that Sarel Marais from Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel predicted that the circulation of a bestseller in Afrikaans could go up to 25 000 by the end of the war.

An important new development that already started in the 1930s but only fully blossomed in the war conditions of the 1940s is the growth of a body of popular fiction in Afrikaans. During the same period the quality of literary works in Afrikaans steadily improved. Steyn reports that this development caused concern in the ranks of the intelligentsia about the quality of popular fiction produced in Afrikaans. An example of such a text is *Mammon se afgronde* by Roelf Britz, which was published in 1944 and of

²⁵ Hennie Roux from Die Volksblad-Boekhandel made the point that before the war publishers would print 2 000 copies of a novel. This figure went up to 5 000 by 1945 (Steyn 1992d:86).

which 10 000 copies were printed. The main concern was that the language usage and consistency in the books were poor and that the texts relied heavily on terminology borrowed from English (Steyn 1992d:101-102). Moreover, from religious circles these texts were criticised for the poor moral values they ostensibly displayed. During the same period there was also a significant increase in demand for devotional literature and the demand for Christian popular literature increased by 300% (Steyn 1992d:87). Linked to the increase in demand for popular texts in Afrikaans but also more broadly to the nationalist project of many Afrikaner oriented organisations, the need to expand the market for Afrikaans books in a more systematic and structured way and encourage the reading (and purchasing) of Afrikaans texts became a priority. In the first few decades of the twentieth century the marketing and circulation of books in Afrikaans happened through fairly conservative and established channels. These included advertisements and book reviews in the press (including newspapers such as *Die Burger*, *Die Vaderland* and *Die Volksblad*, as well as in magazines such as *Die Huisgenoot*). Another strategy was to produce a catalogue of books that could be ordered through a mail order system. In the last instance, the industry depended on the network of bookstores in the various metropolitan areas and on the publicity value of information about forthcoming books that was printed on the cover jackets of publications.

In the 1930s and 1940s, both the number of books published in Afrikaans and the number of copies printed of each title increased substantially and new mechanisms for disseminating books to the reading public were required. Steyn and Scannell (1992:491) report that the first 'book week' for Afrikaans books was organised in 1934. The event was coordinated by the FAK on a national level and by a host of Afrikaner organisations on local level. So, for example, were 'book weeks' held in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, the Paarl and other towns in that year (Steyn & Scannell 1992:491). This became a regular event that took place annually until some time in the 1950s (Steyn & Scannell 1992:491). Another development was the emergence of book schemes. The first of these was *Die Burgerleeskring*. The '*Ons Eie Biblioteek-plan*' book club was launched by Nasionale Pers through Die Volksblad-Boekhandel in Bloemfontein in 1936. By 1938, the club already had 5 000 members.

The emergence of book schemes meant that far larger quantities of titles could be printed. In addition to popular fiction, works of literature were also offered to club members at special discounts. In 1946 there was a further development in the schemes. Nasionale Pers consolidated the schemes run in Cape Town and

Bloemfontein into an 'Eie Biblioteekskema'. The way in which the books were printed from that point onwards indicated on the cover jacket that they had been especially written for the scheme. In addition, the new scheme focused more on popular fiction. As a result of the consolidation of the schemes, 14 000 books were printed of each title printed as part of the scheme. This can be seen as the first step towards the notion of series books, which offered the advantage of a captive audience.

By the 1950s there was yet again a decline in the market for Afrikaans books. The book schemes closed down, sales dropped and even the annual Afrikaans book week event did no longer take place. Steyn argues that this turn of events had been predicted by Mr M. Hutton from Unie-Boekhandel, who said that the low quality of the popular fiction and trash literature produced in the 1940s would eventually impact negatively on the sale of Afrikaans books (Steyn 1992d:115).

Locating the Afrikaans reading public from the 1930s to the 1960s

Hofmeyr (1997) argued that a publishing industry for Afrikaans books was not sustainable if it was to be supported by the petty bourgeoisie only and that the market for Afrikaans publications had to be expanded among the rising proletariat. For this reason, popular publications encouraged the reading classes to read. It was shown previously that a range of popular publications emerged in the first decade after the Anglo Boer War, and that the producers of these publications saw for themselves a role in educating Afrikaners from the lower classes and encouraged them to read. By the 1930s the Afrikaans publishing industry was well established and there was a fair number of publishers in three of the four provinces. It thus became possible to produce popular fiction in Afrikaans. It is argued here that by the 1930s the Afrikaans reading public was no longer limited to the middle classes.

Elsabé Brink (1987) paints a vivid picture of the desperation that drove many white Afrikaans families, many known as *bywoners*, i.e. not landowners, to the urban areas. However, her work also casts light on who some of these ordinary men and women were that made up the Afrikaner working class in Johannesburg. Of importance for this study, is information about literacy rates and leisure time activities she provides. The Carnegie commission, which conducted its work in 1932, found that among 562 female factory employees surveyed by the commission, 57% had attained Standard Six or a higher qualification (Brink 1987:185). In addition to the information contained in the Carnegie Commission report, the mere fact that the Garment Workers' Union had its own in house magazine *The Garment Worker/Die Klerewerker*, which was established

in 1936, is an indication of literacy levels among the factory workers (Vincent 2000: 63). In addition to Afrikaans factory workers, a forthcoming study by Bridget, which focuses on another stratum in the working class, namely shop workers or shop assistants²⁶ show that many of the shop assistants were drawn from poor Afrikaans families. Shop workers generally had to be able to speak English, and thus their general literacy levels can be assumed to be higher than that of the factory workers. Callinicos (1987) reports that, at least in the Transvaal under Paul Kruger, many Afrikaner men were employed as police officers, which also required specific levels of education.

Anecdotal evidence further supports a claim that by the 1930s and 1940s, readers of Afrikaans books included members of the lower classes. An article that appeared in the *Rand Daily Mail* of 21 May 1928 reported that: '[s]everal of the girls interviewed by the *Rand Daily Mail's* representative were refined and apparently educated".²⁷ Brink (1987) recounts the story of Mrs Minnie Burger, who had been trained as a shorthand typist but had been unable to secure this type of employment when her husband lost his job during the Depression. As a consequence, Mrs Burger took up a position in a clothing factory (Brink 1987:182). These two anecdotes are indicative of the fact that the economic situation at the time led some people to take up working class positions and that people in such positions were able to read.

Steyn (1992:12) quotes an article published under the pseudonym "Hoopvol" in *Die Burger* in 1935. In this article, the author writes that (Afrikaans) people like to read popular fiction and love stories and that one is confronted with this fact 'in ons biblioteke, huise, treine en trems' and 'in die lifts van ons kantoorgeboue'.²⁸ In 1938, *Die Vaderland* reports on a survey about reading preferences conducted amongst tram drivers, tram conductors, factory 'girls', policemen, railway clerks, and café and shop assistants. The survey highlighted some of the problems these readers identified with regard to the kind of literature that was available in Afrikaans (Steyn 1992:13). This indicates that the Afrikaans reading public was drawn from a large class base and that readers from the lower classes were well aware of what the Afrikaans literature had to offer. According to Hennie Roux, an average of 1000 copies of each new novel in Afrikaans was sold on railway stations during the war period. He further stated that during the war years, when the sale of books shot up, bookstore managers reported

²⁶ Kenny, B. Forthcoming PhD thesis, untitled.

²⁷ Quote from Brink, E. 1987. . "Maar 'n klomp 'factory' meide": Afrikaner family and Community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920s' in Bozzoli, B. (ed). *Class, Community and Conflict – South Africa Perspectives*. Johannesburg. Ravan Press.

²⁸ 'in our libraries, homes, trains and trams' and 'in the lifts of our office buildings'.

that women were the main consumers, but that lots of books were sent as presents to men on the warfront (quoted in Steyn 1992d:87).

A survey conducted by the Dutch Reformed Church in Johannesburg in the 1940s, found that the major leisure activity among young Afrikaans speakers in the city was reading. The church noted its concern about the quality of reading matter that was available to these young people (Stals 1986:35).

Whilst the above provides evidence to support a claim that by the 1930s the Afrikaans readership was no longer drawn exclusively from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, and that indeed by the 1940s the readership for Afrikaans books had broadened substantially, Anderson (1991) reminds us that the notion of the reading classes refers to entire families: 'In the most general sense: the families of the reading classes – not merely the 'working father', but the servant-girded wife and the school-age children' (1991:75). It can therefore be assumed that reading members of the working classes would have encouraged and supported their younger family members to read. For example, Brink (1987) argues that poor white parents made significant contributions to their children's education and utilised the schooling opportunities available in the cities.

The Afrikaans reading class was not situated in the metropolitan areas only. From early in the century, a system of mail orders for books was already in place to service rural areas. In the rural areas, issues of poverty and illiteracy were especially acute. One of the recommendations of the Carnegie Commission (Grosskopf 1932:xiii) read as follows:

Om die gevolge van sociale isolement te kan teëwerk is dit nodig dat die plattelandse skole, en veral die plaasskool veel ruimer voorsien word van geskikte leesstof en dat leeslus aangekweek word wat ook in die later lewe as opvoedingsmiddel sal bly voortbestaan....

[To combat the consequences of social isolation it is necessary that rural schools, and especially the farm school, be provided with much more appropriate reading materials and that a love of reading be cultivated, which will also serve as a means of education in later life...]

There thus followed a number of initiatives to expand the reading base in the rural areas and to intervene in the situation sketched above. Initiatives included the

expansion of public libraries and projects undertaken by various organisations to encourage reading, such as the development of book schemes reported earlier on.

By 1960 76,5% of Afrikaners lived in the towns (Bonner, Delius & Posel 1993:39).²⁹ Evidence presented by Lazer³⁰ (in Bonner, Delius & Posel 1993:22-23) suggests that the ranks of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie expanded in the first decade after the Nationalists came to power in 1948. He argues that whereas this period is marked by expansion in Afrikaner capital, the number of Afrikaner entrepreneurs being successful in towns and cities remained small. The proportion of Afrikaners in white-collar occupations, however, increased substantially. Added to this, a growing number of Afrikaners were employed in the civil service, not only in clerical positions but also in more senior positions for those who were better educated.

Under National party rule, the Afrikaans publishing industry boomed and public library facilities were improved and extended. By the 1960s all white Afrikaans speaking children would have had access to a public library. This is reported on in more detail in the next chapter.

Literary production in Afrikaans and ordinary readers

An issue that is not always given the necessary prominence in studies on the First and Second Language Movements and the link between Afrikaner nationalism and literary production in Afrikaans is the reaction of the (Afrikaans reading) public to the products of the cultural industry at the time. The book *Boekewêreld* (Beukes 1992), the third of a trilogy on the history of Nasionale Pers, is enormously insightful in this regard. In a chapter in this volume, Steyn (1992:3-13) traces some of the most important polemics in and around the Afrikaans publishing industry including the production of popular literature in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Steyn's argument is that already by the mid nineteen-twenties dissatisfaction was expressed by some members of the Afrikaner community about the quality and content of Afrikaans cultural goods. This was expressed in a number of ways, the most important of which were letters to the press and reviews in the media.

²⁹ This information seems to have been obtained from Lazer, J. 1987. *Conformity and Conflict, Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961*. Doctoral Thesis, Oxford University, p. 96.

³⁰ Also from: Lazer, J. 1987. *Conformity and Conflict, Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961*. Doctoral Thesis, Oxford University, p. 96.

From Steyn's article it is possible to surmise that at first, criticisms stemmed mostly from elite sections of the Afrikaner establishment, such as reviewers and literary circles.³¹ However, as the publication of texts and the production of other cultural goods in Afrikaans grew, 'ordinary' consumers of the cultural products were voicing a growing concern about the direction the industry was taking.

The turn the debate on the content and quality of Afrikaans books took is best exemplified in the furore that followed the publication and subsequent dissemination of Jochem van Bruggen's novel, *Ampie* in 1924. *Ampie* immediately received wide critical acclaim. The renowned critic P.S. Schoonees wrote in 1924 in *Die Burger* that 'if *Ampie* is not reprinted a number of times within the next few months, then Afrikaners still need to learn to appreciate a real work of art' (*Die Burger*, 8 October 1924 quoted in Steyn 1992:11). Moreover, he described *Ampie* as 'die simboliese verteenwoordiger van 'n hele volksgroep'.³² For Schoonees, the genius of the novel lies in the fact that it depicts life as it is, and not a 'cowboy' production of the imagination (*Die Burger*, 8 October 1924 quoted in Steyn 1992:11). However, the response from the broader public was far more guarded. The book was prescribed in a number of schools and a debate followed in *Die Kerkbode* (Steyn 1992:11). The problem raised by most commentators was that the character Ampie was depicted as a typical 'poor white' and that an obvious link was made between Ampie's status and that of Afrikaners in general. Steyn summarises the debate around *Ampie* as follows:

Ampie het volgens kenners soos Schoonees baie daartoe bygedra om die volksgewete oor die toenemende verarming van die Afrikaner wakker te maak. Verskeie romans, kortverhale, en sketse van die jare dertig het die armblanke as motief gehad. Teen 1935 het die publiek protes begin aanteken teen hierdie neiging in die Afrikaanse letterkunde. Baie van die boeke moes op skool behandel word, en volgens Schoonees het daar 'n gevoel ontstaan dat sulke leesstof die prestige van die Afrikaner verlaag. By opvoerings van

³¹ Steyn recounts the story of Hendrik and Mathilda Hanekom's Afrikaans Theatre Company – one of the first of its kind. In 1926 the company went on tour with the production *Oom Gawerjal se dogters en die stemregkoors*. The play proved to be enormously popular and performances were fully booked.

Responses in the popular press in the form of letters (to *Die Burger*) were mixed. Whilst one anonymous writer felt that it was a play filled with 'eg tipiese Afrikaanse humor' another stated that when calls are made to the Afrikaans people – ostensibly to support Afrikaans productions and cultural goods – the basis on which that is done should go beyond the level of sentiment and include the notion of value for money (Steyn 1992:4). However, the play was also damned by 'official' critics (such as the reviewer for *Die Burger*, Professor E.C. Pienaar). The consequence of the bad press the theatre company received was that Hanekom had to close his own company and join Paul de Groot's theatre company.

³² He described *Ampie* as the symbolic representative of a whole 'volksgroep'. The notion 'volksgroep' can be read as 'volk' group, people, or 'nation'.

die toneelverwerking van *Ampie* het sommige mense uitgestap omdat hulle gekrenk was in hul nasionale trots (Steyn 1992: 12).

[According to experts such as Schoonees, a book like *Ampie* contributed significantly to awaken the consciousness of the 'volk' to the increasing impoverishment of the Afrikaner. Numerous novels, short stories and sketches dating from the thirties had the poor white as theme. By 1935 the public started protesting against this trend in Afrikaans literature. Many of these books had to be read at school and, according to Schoonees, a feeling emerged that this type of literature lowered the prestige of the Afrikaner. At theatre productions of adaptations of *Ampie* some people walked out because their national pride was offended.]

Surveys conducted in 1935 among the readers of Afrikaans newspapers indeed confirm that the books that readers regarded as 'good' literature, i.e. 'Literature', overwhelmingly had poverty, drought and the plight of the Afrikaner as themes. In the same surveys, the most popular children's books according to readers were *Patryshulle* by E.B. Grosskopf, *Die Krismiskinders* by C.J. Langenhoven, and Grimm's fairytales (Steyn 1992:10).

Table 2: Results of informal surveys undertaken in 1935 among readers of *Die Burger*, *Die Volksblad* and *Die Vaderland* to identify the best works of prose in Afrikaans³³

	Die Burger	Die Volksblad	Die Vaderland
1.	<i>Uit oerwoud en vlakte</i> Sangiro	<i>Ampie</i> Jochem van Bruggen	<i>Ampie</i> Jochem van Bruggen
2.	<i>Ampie</i> Jochem van Bruggen	<i>Uit oerwoud en vlakte</i> Sangiro	<i>Uit oerwoud en vlakte</i> Sangiro
3.	<i>Hans-die-Skipper</i> D.F. Malherbe	<i>Hans-die-Skipper</i> D.F. Malherbe	<i>Onder bevoorregte mense</i> Marie Linde
4.	<i>Droogte</i> C.M. van den Heever	<i>Wrede Grense</i> Sophie Roux	<i>Droogte</i> C.M. van den Heever
5.	<i>Kees van die Kalahari</i> Brothers Hobson	<i>Langs die grootpad</i> C.M. van den Heever	<i>Kees van die Kalahari</i> Brothers Hobson

³³ Data from Steyn (1992: 9-10) and based on articles that appeared in *Die Volksblad* on 4 April 1936, *Die Burger* on 2 December 1935, and *Die Vaderland* on 21 June 1935.

In 1938, *Die Vaderland* reports on a survey about reading preferences conducted amongst tram drivers, tram conductors, factory 'girls', policemen, railway clerks, and café and shop assistants. The survey found that a lack of variety in Afrikaans literature, the high prices of books, gloominess, and a tendency to 'bewuste mooiskrywery'³⁴ about everyday themes were the most important criticisms against the Afrikaans books that were available (Steyn 1992:13).

There was thus a general call for popular, escapist fiction in Afrikaans and a rejection of the direction 'Literature' in Afrikaans was taking. An article by a certain 'Hoopvol' (a *non de plume*) to *Die Burger* in 1935 captured this feeling:

Hoopvol skryf feitlik elke jaarverslag van ons openbare biblioteke vermeld 'n teleurstellende gebrek aan belangstelling in die Afrikaanse letterkunde. 'n Deel van die antwoord lê daarin dat daar iets verkeerd is met 'Afrikaanse skrywers as 'n klas'. Die publiek lees die graagste van 'n 'agtermekaar kêrel en 'n mooi nooi'. Die feit staar jou in die gesig – in ons biblioteke, huise, treine, en trems en 'in die lifts van ons kantoorgeboue. Net ons Afrikaanse skrywers, op enkele uitsonderings na, het dit nog nie raakgesien nie. Hulle geliefkoosde onderwerp is die gesukkel van veragterdes en abnormales. Hulle skep hul behae in droogtes, armoede en ellende en al die ander dinge wat tot swaarmoedigheid stem' (Steyn 1992:12).

[Hoopvol (Hopeful) writes that almost every annual report from our public libraries mentions a disappointing lack of interest in Afrikaans literature. In part, the answer lies in the fact that there is something wrong with 'Afrikaans writers as a class'. The public most enjoy reading about a 'fine bloke and a pretty lady'. This fact is evident everywhere – in our libraries, homes, in trains, and on trams, and 'in the lifts of our office buildings'. It is only our Afrikaans writers, with a few exceptions, who have not noticed this fact. Their favourite topic is the struggle of the backward and abnormal peoples. They derive pleasure from droughts, poverty, and suffering **and all other things that makes one feel depressed.**]

Die Burger even devoted space to this issue in an editorial on 23 September 1935, and argued that there was a mobilisation around the issue of a more up beat Afrikaans literature, and that words such as 'sjanpanje en kaviaar'³⁵ and 'knap kêrels en mooi

³⁴ This phrase refers to a practice of writing that aims to deliberately transform everyday and mundane activities into something aesthetically pleasing through the superfluous use of (wordy) adjectives, which then tends to produce clichéd and trite writing.

³⁵ 'champagne and caviar'

nooiens³⁶ became the battle cries of this movement. This should not only be seen as a call for more popular and escapist novels in Afrikaans, but also an expression of resentment against depictions of Afrikaners as dirty, backward, and tragic.

Conclusion

Isabel Hofmeyr highlights the relationship between class, literature and the formation of Afrikaner identity in the early part of the twentieth century. She shows how the petty bourgeoisie took control of an Afrikaans publishing industry that aimed to produce a history of the Afrikaner in print. In addition, a range of popular publications were produced by the petty bourgeoisie and encouraged Afrikaners to read.

The Afrikaans reading public expanded from the 1920s to the late 1940s and was drawn from a wide class basis, including strata from the working classes. A range of initiatives by members of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie to promote reading among Afrikaans speakers marked the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, findings of the Carnegie Commission had prompted the state to invest in public library systems for the rural areas. The argument presented here is that the ranks of the Afrikaans reading class broadened substantially during the 1930s and 1940s. Three reasons can be provided to explain this phenomenon. First, members of the petty bourgeoisie needed to expand the market for Afrikaans books and therefore devised a wide range of schemes and initiatives to encourage reading. Furthermore, Afrikaans speakers streaming to the cities were very poor and investments in education were seen to be a mechanism through which to secure a future. Third, job opportunities in the cities favoured the young. Adapting to city life was difficult for many of these young people, and reading became a favourite leisure activity.

In this chapter it was shown that at the end of the 1930s – just before the first title in the *Keurboslaan* series was first published - literary production in Afrikaans found itself at an interesting crossroad. Whilst the quality of literary texts in Afrikaans had improved significantly from the early years, the Afrikaans reading public had also expanded by the mid-1930s and ordinary readers were beginning to express a need for popular fiction in Afrikaans and favoured a move away from the thematic of the poor, struggling Afrikaner characterising literary texts produced and approved by the petty bourgeoisie.

³⁶ 'fine young men and pretty ladies'

A central question in this study is who the target audience or intended readers were for books such as the *Keurboslaan* series. From the discussion above it is clear that the *Keurboslaan* series did meet the criteria of ordinary readers expressed in the media. That is, *Keurboslaan* can be described as light popular fiction. On the other hand, the series upheld 'high moral standards', which the establishment felt the kind of popular fiction that was being produced in Afrikaans at the time did not do. It would therefore seem that the *Keurboslaan* series was well positioned to appeal to both these groups.

Chapter Six:

Publication, circulation and reception of the *Keurboslaan* series

Introduction

In this Chapter, the publication history of the *Keurboslaan* series is outlined. In addition, sales figures are provided and the extent to which the series had saturated the market assessed. Finally, against the background of these developments, the history of J.L. van Schaik publishers – the firm that published the *Keurboslaan* series - is briefly sketched and the reception of the *Keurboslaan* series by critics reviewed.

Publication history of the *Keurboslaan* series

Stella Blakemore published twenty books in the first *Keurboslaan* series. Blakemore was also the author of a popular series for girls, the *Maasdorp* series. For a number of reasons, primarily Blakemore's 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, whilst J.L. Van Schaik published the majority. 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 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 3: 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 nd print (1944) 3 rd print (1946) 4 th print (1957) 5 th print (1962)
2. Keurboslaan se peetvaders	5	J.L. van Schaik	1942	2 nd print (1946) 3 rd print (1957)
3. Avonture op Keurboslaan	6	J.L. van Schaik	1942	2 nd print (year unknown) 3 rd print (1957)
4. Die kroon van die skool, (Die Lente Serie)	8	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1943*	2 nd edition (1944)
Die kroon van Keurboslaan		J.L. van Schaik	1959	
5. Twee nuwe seuns op Keurboslaan	7	J.L. van Schaik	1944	
6. Jong doktor Serfontein	1	J.L. van Schaik	1945	2 nd print (1946) 3 rd print (1955) 4 th print (1960)
7. Die Serfontein-kindere	13	J.L. van Schaik	1946	2 nd print (1957)
8. Raaisels op Keurboslaan	10	J.L. van Schaik	1947	2 nd print (1958)
9. Spanning op Keurboslaan	9	J.L. van Schaik	1947	2 nd print (1959)
10. Keurboslaan se eerste Kaptein	2	J.L. van Schaik	1948	2 nd print (1958)
11. Moleste op Keurboslaan	11	J.L. van Schaik	1949	2 nd print (1959)
12. Die skool se struikrower	3	J.L. van Schaik	1949	2 nd print (1958)**
13. Die skool stuur speuders (Die Lente Serie)	12	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1948***	2 nd print (1949)
Die skool stuur speuders		J.L. van Schaik	1958	2 nd print (1958) 3 rd 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	

* No copy of first edition could be obtained, but all available sources point to a likely publication date of 1943

- ** Now published under title *Keurboslaan se struikrower*
 *** Date of first publication could not be certified but seems likely to have been 1948.
 **** Now published under title *Keurboslaan stuur speurders* 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 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 4: 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 nd print (1980)
2. Die hoof van Keurboslaan <i>(Keurboslaan se struikrower, Die hoof van Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 nd 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 nd print (1980)
4. Die kroon van Keurboslaan <i>(Die kroon van Keurboslaan, Spanning op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1973	2 nd 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 nd print (1982)
8. Geheime op Keurboslaan <i>(Gevare op Keurboslaan, Oorwinning vir Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 nd print (1984)

Title	Publisher	First pub. date	Print runs
9. Misverstand op Keurboslaan <i>(Misverstand op Keurboslaan, Kultuur op Keurboslaan)</i>	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 nd print (1988)
10. Krisis op Keurboslaan	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 nd print (1980)
11. Ongenooide gaste op Keurboslaan	J.L. van Schaik	1974	2 nd 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 5: Titles in the *Keurboslaan Omnibus* series

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

Circulation and sales figures

It was not possible to obtain accurate print and sales figures for either the *Maasdorp* or *Keurboslaan* series.³⁷ The *Maasdorp* series was perhaps slightly more popular than the *Keurboslaan* series, based on the number of reprints of titles in the series. This can be explained in part by the fact that one of the titles in the *Maasdorp* series, *Allegra op Maasdorp*, was prescribed as a set work in schools in the 1940s and had been reprinted three times by 1948. From the 1930s to the 1960s, the market for Afrikaans books remained small, even in the boom years for the South African publishing industry during the Second World War. Hence, the number of copies printed in each print run was fairly low. In Chapter Five the sales figures of a couple of books published in Afrikaans during that period were provided and provide some comparative data.

³⁷ NALN in Bloemfontein has in its possession records of Van Schaik and J.L. van Schaik, including financial information and sales figures. However, this information has not been indexed or computerized, nor has it been organised around particular titles or series. For the purposes of this study it was therefore not possible to obtain accurate sales figures, but this researcher will attempt to locate the information in subsequent studies following from the research reported on here.

Based on information from NALN, it appears that the number of copies per print run for some of the *Maasdorp* books was low. In the case of the second book in the *Maasdorp* series, *Die jongste meisie in Maasdorp-skool*, J.L. van Schaik printed 1000 books when it was initially published in 1933 and 2000 books of a revised edition in 1954. However, this book was reprinted again in 1937, 1941, 1942, and 1944. Three of these dates fall within the war years, when book sales went up dramatically only to decline during the 1950s. The information available about the number of copies per print run is based on figures from the 1930s and the 1950s and it is likely that the print run of books during the war were substantially higher. It can therefore fairly accurately be assumed that between the beginning of the 1930s and the end of the 1950s, a standard print run for books of the *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* type was never less than 1000 and more likely to be between 2000 and 3000. If a book was selling exceptionally well, the print run could have been as large as 5000. The information available for other books in the series confirms the fact that a print run was usually 2000 books.³⁸ Unfortunately, no information was available about the average size of a print run for J.L. van Schaik's juvenile books in the 1960s.

At least four titles in the *Keurboslaan* series, *Die hoof van Keurboslaan*, *Jong Dr. Serfontein*, *Avonture op Keurboslaan* and *Keurboslaan se Peetvaders* were reprinted a number of times before the mid-1950s when the series was revised the first time.³⁹ Based on this, it is possible to calculate that at least 6000 copies of *Die hoof van Keurboslaan* and 4000 copies each of *Avonture op Keurboslaan* and *Jong Dr. Serfontein* were in circulation by the time of the first major revision in the 1950s. In addition, from correspondence between Blakemore and her publisher, it is evident that by the 1960s, the book that had sold the best was *Die Kroon van die skool*, the title under which the J.L. van Schaik book, *Die Kroon van Keurboslaan*, was first published by Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel.⁴⁰ No figures were available about the standard print run of APB books, so it is difficult to estimate how many copies of this title was produced, but it must have exceeded the number of copies sold of the other four books. By the end of the 1960s, as many as 12 000 copies of *Die hoof van*

³⁸ For example, 2000 copies of *Die Meisies van Maasdorp* printed in 1932 and again in 1954, with four print runs in between for which the number of copies are not specified. 2000 copies each is printed of *Allegra op Maasdorp* and *Juffrou Kobie* in 1954 and of *Kobie Regeer*, *Maasdorp se nuwe onderwyseres* and *Kobie en die Wonderkind* in 1955.

³⁹ *Avonture op Keurboslaan* was originally published in 1942, and reprinted in 1945 and 1957; *Die Hoof van Keurboslaan* was originally published in 1941 and reprinted in 1944, 1946, 1957, and 1962; *Jong Dr. Serfontein* was originally published in 1945, and reprinted in 1946, 1955, and 1960; and *Keurboslaan se Peetvaders* was originally published in 1942 and reprinted in 1942 and 1957.

⁴⁰ Letter to Jan van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 4 December 1957.

Keurboslaan and 10 000 of *Jong doktor Serfontein* could have been sold. Many of these copies were bought by public libraries. The possibility that these figures could be on the conservative side is strengthened by information about the large royalty payments Blakemore was receiving from the mid-1950s. Royalties were paid in two payments per annum: one in June/July and another in December/January. The available figures for that period are as follows:

- June 1955: Royalty cheque for £257.2.2.⁴¹
- July 1956: Royalty cheque for £327.0.10d.⁴²
- July 1957: Royalty cheque for £325.1.11d.⁴³
- Total royalties accrued by Stella Blakemore for book year July 1956 – June 1957: £690.13.9d.⁴⁴
- June 1959: Royalty cheque for £408.0.6.⁴⁵
- December 1959: Royalty cheque is £339.1.9.⁴⁶
- June 1960: Royalty cheque for £431/5/2d.⁴⁷
- December 1960: Royalty cheque for £160.13.3.⁴⁸
- January 1963: Royalty cheque for £200.⁴⁹

On 13 December 1957, Jan van Schaik wrote to Blakemore that '[y]our royalties this year seem to be breaking records'. He explained that this was because of the reprint of the *Keurboslaan* books and the fact that all Maasdorp books were in print.⁵⁰ In the 1970s the whole *Keurboslaan* series was modernised, abridged and published in eleven titles, two of which were altogether new books. By that time the market for Afrikaans books had matured, and it is possible that the print runs were much larger.

⁴¹ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 23 June 1955.

⁴² Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 17 July 1956.

⁴³ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 5 July 1957.

⁴⁴ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 5 July 1957.

⁴⁵ Letter to J.L. van Schaik from Stella Owen dated 26 June 1959.

⁴⁶ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 24 December 1959.

⁴⁷ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 11 June 1960.

⁴⁸ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 23 December 1960. In this letter, Jan van Schaik wrote that he was surprised at the fact that sales have not been so good.

⁴⁹ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 14 January 1963.

⁵⁰ Letter to Stella Owen from Jan van Schaik dated 13 December 1957.

A concise history of J.L. van Schaik Publishers⁵¹

J.L. van Schaik publishers is the firm that published almost all Stella 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. Johannes Lambertus van Schaik came to South Africa 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' (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. 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.⁵² In the early years his clientele largely comprised 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

⁵¹ 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 wrote the specific 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.

⁵² These stores were situated close to universities. Stores were opened in Hatfield and Sunnyside in 1959 and one in Lynnwood Rd in 1964.

Afrikaans prose works and dramas, van Schaik also published a significant body of poetry in Afrikaans.⁵³

The first children's book to be produced by this publisher was *Die kaskenades van Klein Duimpie* (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.

In a letter from Stella 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.⁵⁴ After the performance, Mr van Schaik made contact with Blakemore and suggested that she submit the play 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.

The firm was, however, never exclusively dedicated to publishing books in Afrikaans. It published numerous books in English and continued to publish books 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 *Die Volkstem*, a daily newspaper that was edited by Dr. F.V Engelenburg. Engelenburg attracted around himself a large group of enthusiastic and young 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

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ 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.

personally, and they served as a pool from which he could draw new talent for writing manuscripts.⁵⁵ 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. 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 residents of Pretoria but

⁵⁵ Interview with J.J. (Jan) van Schaik on 26 October 2001

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 [Transvaals e 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.⁵⁶

[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 and 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 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 published 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

⁵⁶ Interview with J.J. (Jan) van Schaik on 26 October 2001

Schaik's role in the publishing industry highlights the relationship between the publishing industry and capitalism. Whilst it was true that the founder of Van Schaik, 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 that the firm be bought 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).

Critical reception of Blakemore's books

The first reviews of Stella Blakemore's work appeared in the early 1930s in publications such as *Die Huisgenoot*, *Die 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. She even received some acclaim from the English press, especially for the *Keurboslaan* series, which was described by one reviewer as strongly influenced by the Talbot Baines Reid tradition (*Rand Daily Mail*, 17 May 1941)⁵⁷ Books in the *Maasdorp* series were also recommended for English speaking children (*Rand Daily Mail*, 30 March 1935). Equally, in the Afrikaans media, the school setting of the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* books was seen to be very positive and refreshing in Afrikaans fiction for children (see, for example, *Die Volkstem*, 1 February 1941 and *Die Volkstem*, 9 September 1933). 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).⁵⁸ 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 'Anglismes'⁵⁹ (see, for example, *Die Burger*, 15 April 1935).⁶⁰

With regard to the *Keurboslaan* series specifically, many reviewers were of the opinion that boys and girls would equally enjoy the *Keurboslaan* books (*Die Volkstem*, 1 February 1941). What is unusual about many reviews of the *Keurboslaan* series from the period is the extent to which reviewers seemed to be in agreement that the books

⁵⁷ Reviewer indicated as E.R.

⁵⁸ Also see 'Avontuur-verhaal', newspaper clipping, no date, no publication mentioned, no author, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

⁵⁹ (words borrowed and directly translated from English, in cases where there do exist Afrikaans words with a similar meaning)

⁶⁰ 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.

would be popular among and appropriate for school children but also adults and educators (*Die Burger*, 5 January 1933). The following two extracts from reviews illuminate this point:

Wat ek so interessant vind, is dat die skrywer daar uitstekend in geslaag het om nie net vir die kinders 'n bekoorlike boek te skep nie, maar ook onderwysers en opvoeders (*Die Volkstem*, 1 February 1941).

[What I find so interesting is that the author succeeded so excellently in writing a proper book not only for children, but also for teachers and educators.]

and

Die geesdrif, maar veral ook die duidelike strekking waarmee dit geskryf is, sal die guns van die volwasse leser ver buitekant die skoolkring verower (*Die Vaderland*, 5 April 1941).

[The enthusiasm, but also especially the evident tenor with which it is written, will conquer the favour of the adult reader far outside the school ambit.]

Moreover, the majority of reviewers chose to focus in the reviews 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. So, for example, reviewers talked about the 'message' of the books that went far beyond the story. Reviewers thought that the books displayed a healthy moral tone (see, for example, *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 March 1935 and *Die Burger*, 15 April 1935) and that they provided answers about how to deal with adolescents and, more specifically, 'problem children' (*Die Vaderland*, 13 November 1939). Reviewers often invoked scientific and pseudo-scientific terminology to explain that the series was educational, not only for the child, but also for teachers and parents:

[V]erskeie van die seuns is raak na aan die lewe uitgebeeld en daarby het die skrywer daarin geslaag om 'n duidelike boodskap te bring in verband met die behandeling van die probleem, waarvan die karakteristieke eienaardighede so dikwels deur ouers en onderwysers verkeerd vertolk word.

'n Oormaat van lewenslus, dikwels 'n geheimgekoesterde grief, 'n onaanpasbaarheid teenoor die lewe, veroorsaak dat in die vroeë jare van die kind die kiem van verbittering teenoor die lewe gelê word. Hierdie boek wys, *sonder om opsetlik didakties of wetenskaplik te word* [my emphasis], hoe die

hoof van Keurboslaan daarin slaag om 'n lewenshouding by sy seuns te kweek, wat hulle noodwendig na 'n suksesvolle lewe moet lei (*Die Volkstem*, 21 February 1941).

[Several of the boys are portrayed very close to real life and what's more, the author has succeeded in bringing a clear message with regard to dealing with the problem, of which the characteristic features are so often misinterpreted by parents and teachers.

Surplus energy, often a concealed grievance, an inability to adapt to life in general, bring about that the seed for bitterness towards life is planted in the early years of the child. This book demonstrates, *without intentionally becoming didactic or scientific* (my emphasis), how the principal of Keurboslaan succeeds in fostering a disposition towards life in the boys, which inevitably leads them to a successful life.]

Moreover, the author of the books was suspected to be someone who had written the books with a particular agenda in mind – that of building an educational system, implicitly for Afrikaans-speaking children:

Elke leser sal op sy manier egter iets uit hierdie buitengewone heldeverering haal, maar as ek my nie vergis nie, sal elke onderwyser 'n maksimum voordeel uit die deurlees van die boek kry. Dis of die skrywer daarop uit is om aan die hand van spannende avonture, waar abnormale en ondernormale leerlinge af en toe 'n rol speel, 'n *opvoedkundige stelsel te bou* [my emphasis]. Te rewolusionêr is dit gelukkig nie; hy laat mens as opvoeder egter keer op keer jou hand in die eie boesem steek. Maar is dit nie van belang dat 'n skrywer vir die jeug daar volkome in slaag om op dié manier twee vlieë met een klap te slaan nie? (Kritzinger 24 December 1941).

[However, every reader will in his way get something out of this extraordinary hero-worship, but if I'm not mistaken, every teacher will derive maximum benefit from the reading of this book. It's as if the author is intent on building *an educational system* (my emphasis) by way of thrilling adventures wherein abnormal and subnormal pupils play a role from time to time. Too revolutionary it is fortunately not; as educator, it lets one search one's heart time and again. But is it not important for a youth writer to fully succeed in, in this way, killing two birds with one stone?]

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. That information only became public knowledge much later on. 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). The following extract illustrates this point:

Hulle sal ook – en dis vir karakterbou die vernaamste van alles – onbewus besiel raak met ideale wat vir hulle van baie betekenis sal wees. In skool en huis behoort hierdie boek aan kinders voorsien te word. Ons beveel ook die boek sterk aan vir ouers en onderwysers wat meer moet weet van die lewe van die puberteitskind (*Die Christelike Skoolblad*, September 1937).

[They will also – and that is of paramount importance for character building – subconsciously become inspired by the ideals, which will have great significance for them. We also strongly recommend the book to parents and teachers who need to find out more about the life of an adolescent.]

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 *Die 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.

A last issue that is often mentioned in reviews is the extent to which both the *Maasdorp* and the *Keurboslaan* series encouraged a form of hero-worshipping. In the case of the latter, the object of this worship was the school principal, Dr Serfontein (Kritzinger 1941). Despite the overwhelming emphasis on this character and his impossible achievements, most reviewers were of the opinion that this did not lessen the reading pleasure for young readers:

Ek het vantevore al daarop gewys dat ons hier met ‘n besondere ongewone seunsskool naby die Swazielandse grens te doen het. Die awonture van die geleerde prinsipaal, wat ook ‘n kranige sportman is, word so lewendig vertel dat die jeugdige leser die onnatuurlike daarvan heeltemaal oor die hoof sien. Miskien maak dit juis die boeke by seuns en dogters so gewild (Kritzinger 1943).

[I have previously indicated that we are dealing here with an extremely exceptional boys' school near the Swaziland border. The adventures of the erudite principal, who is also a fine sportsman, are narrated so vividly that the

young reader completely ignores the artificiality thereof. Perhaps it is precisely that which makes the books so popular with boys and girls.]

Already in the early years, some reviewers made mention of Blakemore's idiosyncratic writing style. One reviewer remarked that the book *Kobie Regeer* in the *Maasdorp* series clearly did not meet any artistic requirements and in fact didn't conform in any way to the acknowledged form and structure of a story or narrative as such. Yet, the same reviewer felt that the novel was successful. Its success was ascribed in part to the fact that the author made extensive use of dialogue and the fact that she succeeded in giving each of her school girl characters an exceptional individuality (*Die Burger*, 15 April 1935). Few reviewers disputed Blakemore's unique ability to portray characters or that she was in touch with the development phases and psychological and emotional life of the school children she wrote for. One reviewer wrote that 'die skryfster ken blykbaar die skoolkind en sy tas nie dikwels mis nie'⁶¹, while another remarked that that the author possessed the ability to understand the mind and emotions of the child (*Die Burger*, 5 January 1933).

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 individualistic 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, namely the prominence of the lives, thoughts and emotions of adults in her children's books, did not go unnoticed among reviewers. 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 that together do not really add up to a story, so that the narrative is structured around an account of events (*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

⁶¹ 'The writer is familiar with the schoolgoing child and usually gets it right'. Skoolkaskenades. No date, no author, no publication. Press clipping. Reference number 2000/88/3805.4, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

churning out more volumes in the *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* series. Also, 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 be indicative of the fact that her books were no longer regarded as 'good literature' and were therefore not discussed in book reviews, and so forth. 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 (Du Plessis 2002), show that 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 the next chapter, 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 really 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. Excerpts from two review reports, the one more sympathetic than the other, will illustrate this point. In a handwritten note in the NALN Collection dated 1964, a reviewer of a new *Maasdorp* manuscript, someone who had worked on other *Maasdorp* books previously, sets out her assessment of the new manuscript:

Dialogo soms gedwonge en die taalaanwending nog op dieselfde vlak as die vorige boeke: 'n verbasende mengelm oes van eienaardige Blakemore-taal en werklik goed behoue idiomatiese woordgebruik.⁶²

[Dialogue sometimes forced and the language application still on the same level as was the case in previous books: a surprising mix of peculiar Blakemor(ish) language and some really well preserved idiomatic word usage.]

In a report from another reviewer, which is undated but signed as C.H. Hoekstra, the reviewer reports that he/she would not recommend that *De Rissies in die Stad* be accepted for publication. In particular, the reviewer felt that the author's command of Afrikaans was poor and that the manuscript read like a poor translation from German or English. In addition, the reviewer was of the opinion that the author was not competent in writing in a register suitable for children or writing dialogue that is true to the way in which children speak:

Watter nasionaliteit is die skryfster? Bepaald nie Afrikaans nie. Die hele verhaal skep die indruk van 'n uiters swak vertaling uit Duits of Engels. Frases en sinsnedes soos die volgende:

'n streek op hulle afspeel'

'voor Jan hom kan ophou, is hy by die deur'

'met 'n fyne kam deurgegaan',

sê Jan op 'n lang asemhaling' ens., ens., ens.,

is bepaald on-Afrikaans. Geen kennis van die Afrikaanse idioom nie. Taal is beroerd, getuig van 'n uiters gebrekkige kennis van Afrikaans.

Dialogo: Swak. Geen kennis van kindertaal nie.⁶³

[What nationality is the author? Not exactly Afrikaans. The whole narrative creates the impression of a very poor translation from German or English. Phrases and clauses such as the following:

⁶². Handwritten note, no date, unsigned, reference number MS 2000/95/1965, NALNL Collection, Bloemfontein.

⁶³ Typed notice, signed by C.H. Hoekstra and titled *Die Rissies in die Stad*, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

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'n streek op hulle afspeel" (directly translated from 'play a trick on them' instead of, for example, 'hulle 'n poets bak')

'voor Jan hom kan ophou, is hy by die deur" (directly from "even before Jan can hold him back, he is at the door", instead of, for example "voor Jan hom kan keer, is hy by die deur")

'met 'n fyne kam deurgegaan' (directly from "go through it with a fine toothcomb", instead of, for example "haarfyn ondersoek"

'sê Jan op 'n lang asemhaling' (non-idiomatic use of Afrikaans) etc, etc, etc,

is decidedly un-Afrikaans. No knowledge of the Afrikaans idiom. Language is wretched, proof of a highly insufficient knowledge of Afrikaans.

Dialogue: Bad. No knowledge of child's language.]

Of interest here is the fact that the first reviewer knew that she was dealing with a Blakemore text, not only because she had edited some of Blakemore's texts before, but also because the manuscript was clearly another volume in the *Maasdorp* series. In the case of the manuscript for *Die Rissies in die Stad*, this was not the case. Not only was it the first manuscript for a new series, but it was also written under yet another pseudonym. The reviewer could therefore not have known who the author was and had to evaluate the manuscript solely on its face value. On the other hand, Jan van Schaik, Blakemore's publisher, read the manuscript of *Die Rissies in die Stad* himself and accepted it for publication. He also went ahead and published another three books in the series. From this can be surmised that publishers and reviewers were more accommodating of Blakemore's work when they knew it was hers, based on the popularity of her work among children and the sales of her books. For that reason, they were prepared to substantially edit the manuscript.

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. It too commented on the

important and exaggerated role hero-worshipping play in Blakemore's books and on the explicitly sexist-patriotic tone of the *Keurboslaan* series. However, an assessment of her work leads the author of the article to the conclusion that it was Stella Blakemore and her *Maasdorp* en *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 spoilt him for ever with an irrevocable nostalgia for Afrikaans'⁶⁴ (Dick et. al. 2001:62). The authors of this article 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 is, dan keer ek altyd terug na *Maasdorp* en *Keurboslaan*, en dan verskyn my groot lewensideale en drome glashelder voor my – en skielik weet ek weer waarheen (Dick et al 2001:63)⁶⁵.

[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.]

⁶⁴ Original Afrikaans: 'hom vir ewig met 'n onhaalbare nostalgie vir Afrikaans besmet [het]'

⁶⁵ The article refers to a 'well-known journalist', but does not mention the journalist's name

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 (*Sarie*, 5 July 1995).

Conclusion

The *Keurboslaan* series was published by a publisher with close ties to the project of Afrikaner nationalism. Whereas J.L. van Schaik did publish a number of books on the grounds that it would further the promotion of the Afrikaans language and culture rather than on business grounds, the *Keurboslaan* series was not published for ideological reasons and sold well. Moreover, in the long run the firm's investment in Afrikaans books paid off as a public for Afrikaans books was successfully manufactured. This draws attention to the relationship between publishing, nationalism and capitalism as explained by Benedict Anderson.

Given that there were at the time very few examples of quality popular fiction in Afrikaans, especially for children, and that the type of publications that were starting to emerge in this genre were of very poor quality, the *Keurboslaan* series received initial approval from the intelligentsia in charge of the literary establishment and its instruments, including the media, and was welcomed despite concerns about the quality of language usage in the texts. In particular, it was felt that the texts were of educational value. By the 1960s, however, the publication of Afrikaans children's books had matured and following international trends the *Keurboslaan* series together with other series books were no longer approved by the intelligentsia. Yet, despite this lack of official approval, the books continued to sell and were reprinted in the 1970s and again in the 1980s, and revised and published in omnibus form in the 1990s. An assessment of Blakemore's legacy after her death showed that her books had made a lasting impact on generations of readers and that her *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series were instrumental in getting Afrikaans children reading.

As a result of the fact that the *Keurboslaan* series was produced as popular fiction for children and because J.L. van Schaik did not see the series as part of its commitment to Afrikaner nationalism, the series was subjected to far less control and censure from

the intelligentsia than would have been the case had it been a literary work, a schoolbook or an educational text.

Whilst the print figures for titles in the *Keurboslaan* series were low in the 1940s and 1950s, this should be seen against the background of a relatively small Afrikaans book market. It can be argued that the titles achieved a high level of saturation among Afrikaans readers if the sales figures for these publications are compared to sales figures for some of the best selling Afrikaans literary works (which were prescribed in schools). In addition, these books were available in public libraries. Work undertaken by Snyman (1994, 1997, 2001) indicates that these books are still widely available in public libraries today.

Whilst Chapter Four illuminates similarities and differences between the *Keurboslaan* series and the British public school story genre of fiction, some preliminary conclusions about the status of *Keurboslaan* as popular fiction can be drawn here. First, while it is evident that the *Keurboslaan* series was produced as popular fiction, based on the formula, it cannot be argued that it constitutes mass produced popular fiction. The series was never aimed at a mass market since the market for Afrikaans books was very tiny in the 1940s. Moreover, some of the characteristics of the *Keurboslaan* texts, for example the strong emphasis on character development, do not conform to the model for mass-produced popular fiction for children, such as the books by Enid Blyton. This may have contributed to the fact that it was never mass-produced. At the same time, from the reception study it is clear that the *Keurboslaan* series was never accepted as good children's literature either. It is evident that the series occupied an interesting space. While the series was not canonised, it also did not match up to the definition of mass fiction for children. It was not accepted by the Department of Education as good enough to be prescribed in schools, yet the series was bought by the public libraries in the provinces, which meant that it was widely available to children.

It can be argued that the *Keurboslaan* series was in part and probably unintentionally set up as a class project. J.L. van Schaik publishers were renowned for high quality production and as a result their books were generally more expensive than books produced by, for example, Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel. More significant perhaps is the fact that no reference could be found where books produced by J.L. van Schaik, including popular publications and children's books, were referred to as trash literature or low quality fiction in the same terms as books by Afrikaans Pers Boekhandel and

other publishers were often described. The print runs of all Van Schaik's children's books, with the exception of books produced for the school market, were fairly small and the *Keurboslaan* series, despite the fact that a number of titles were reprinted several times, cannot be regarded as a bestseller in mass market terms. Blakemore herself hinted to the fact that her readership was more likely to be drawn from the children of the professional classes and upper working classes in the city than from those that attended under resourced schools in rural areas and on farms.⁶⁶ Together, these factors seem to indicate that the *Keurboslaan* books would be within the financial reach of the children of the professional classes, the upwardly mobile and in particular children from the cities and that everything about the series supported the idea that the target audience was the upper classes. Yet, a well-developed public library system meant that these books were available to a far broader readership.

The successive reprints of the series (in 1959s, 1960s, 1970s and 1990s) denote that *Keurboslaan* books have been read by Afrikaans readers across generations.

⁶⁶ This issue is discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven:

Stella Blakemore⁶⁷ and the *Keurboslaan* series⁶⁸

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 wêreld, 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 lewendige 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...⁶⁹

André du Toit, *Die Vaderland*, 28 July 1972

Introduction

In Chapter Two it was indicated that two central questions posed in this study are 1) how did the Afrikaner intelligentsia manage to disseminate its ideas and ideology of Afrikaner nationalism to a wider audience across class fractures and turn it into a kind of mass consciousness?; and 2) what was the composition of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, what evidence is available about upward and downward mobility between this class and other classes, and what kinds of contestation and resistance took place within this class? In this chapter, these two questions are addressed.

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 the very myths and symbols that make it

⁶⁷ The name Stella Blakemore is consistently used in this study, as this is the name under which she is best known in this country. Blakemore did, however, use her married name, Stella Owen in official and personal correspondence.

⁶⁸ This chapter is based on a summary of my master's dissertation, entitled *Crafting popular imaginaries: Stella Blakemore and Afrikaner nationalism*

⁶⁹ Translation: '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 an open view on the world, broadminded yet still inherently one of us...'

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.

This research aims to address issues relating to class formation and the role of the petty bourgeoisie by foregrounding and examining the class position of the author, Stella Blakemore, and to document her complex relationship with other members of the Afrikaner intelligentsia. It is this group that is generally regarded as the self-conscious community creators, the actors in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism. Yet, the petty bourgeoisie was not a homogenous group and their efforts to capture a new power base for themselves culminated in the establishment of a wide and disparate range of movements and interventions. Moreover, it is recognised that community creators do not operate in an unlimited field. Identity is fragmented and fractured along many other lines, including class, ethnicity, geography, etc. The question is therefore what strategies these self-conscious community-creators employ in order to craft myths and symbols that transcend, for example, class fractures. In terms of its theoretical basis, this chapter draws on Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of *habitus* and Antonio Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual.

Stella Blakemore: A brief biography of the author of the *Keurboslaan* series

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 was Theunis Johannes Krogh, former Under State Secretary for Home Affairs of Paul Kruger's Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), and her father was a British soldier who had stayed behind after the Anglo-Boer war to become a farmer (Hazelhurst 1978:6). Percy Blakemore had married her mother, a music teacher, during the war years (*Hoofstad*, 14 June 1974:29).

As a child, Blakemore went to boarding school in Natal and admitted that she did not enjoy the experience (Van Rensburg 1975:8). After matriculating, she studied further in Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg.⁷⁰ 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

⁷⁰ 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.

Academy of Music as well as an ARCM in song.⁷¹ She then left for Germany where she studied opera at the Dresden Opera School under the guidance of Felis Petreng⁷² and at 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'.⁷³ 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).⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵ She married a Welshman and civil engineer, David Owen, in 1933 in London⁷⁶, where she was teaching and singing professionally.⁷⁷ 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. Her husband came along and took up a position in Swaziland. 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 husband worked for the British colonial service and was therefore deployed to work in 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 (later Accra, Ghana), but from the correspondence in the NALN Collection in Bloemfontein, it would seem that it was sometime in 1947.⁷⁸ Blakemore later also followed her husband to

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² Handwriting of the surname illegible, could also be Petreng, Petieng, etc.

⁷³ 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.

⁷⁴ See also photocopied document, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ Photocopied document, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

⁷⁷ Photocopied document, no date, reference number 785/78/20, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

⁷⁸ 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.

Swaziland and Nigeria. They also lived for periods in London and often travelled to Italy for holidays. In 1945 she adopted a baby girl from the Armstrong-Benin Tehuis in Bloed Street in Pretoria and in 1946 adopted a baby boy from the same home. Both children were given up for adoption by Afrikaans-speaking families. When the children became of school-going age and she and her husband were living in Kumasi in the Gold Coast, the children were sent to school in Wales where they stayed 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 and 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 when they were not living there (Van Rensburg 1975:8). 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 there 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 1956 and again in 1974, this time 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. Stella Blakemore died in the age of 85 and was buried on 26 May 1991 (*Die Burger*, 5 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. 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 more in depth further on in the chapter, Blakemore felt that she was not in a position to disclose her other interests – which included her writing in English – to the South African public. This may 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 – her publishers in South Africa - 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.

Besides the 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.⁷⁹ It could not be established exactly how many books she wrote in her lifetime. Estimates range between fifty and seventy. 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 literature for children. She wrote only one novel, *Katrientjie* that was aimed at an adult audience.⁸⁰ Her most successful books 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, whilst the *Maasdorp* series was published under her own name, Stella Blakemore. 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.

⁷⁹ Photocopied document, no date, NALN Collection, Bloemfontein.

⁸⁰ 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.

Table 6: Titles in the *Maasdorp* series

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
<i>Maasdorp</i>			
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 7: 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 8: Other titles by Stella Blakemore (excluding titles in the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series)

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
Janse Cloete Series			
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 erfporse van Janse Cloete	Theunis Krogh	J.L. van Schaik	1949
Delarey Series			
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
Blourand Series			
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 – Lente Serie no. 34/39	Stella Blakemore	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1950

Title	Author	Publisher	First publication date
8. Elfie, Apie en Carolus – Lente Serie no. 23	Stella Blakemore	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1946
Die Rissies Series			
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
Plays and Operettas			
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
Other Books			
17. Die Familie Karelse	Stella Blakemore	Nasionale Pers Beperk	1938
18. Die swaard	Annelise 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 nineteen seventies. Together with her other books, it brings the total number of original books written by Blakemore, excluding the revised, condensed 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 that were abridged and merged from the

sixteen titles in the first series, the nine titles in the *Nuwe Keurboslaan* series that were abridged and merged from the twenty books in the first *Keurboslaan* series, the translation of her novel *Katrientjie* in Zulu⁸¹ and of one of the Maasdorp books, *Juffrou Kobie*, in Dutch, as well as the words for a score of music published by Unie Publications.⁸² This brings the total list of books by Stella 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 slice of her life: Getting to know Stella Blakemore through selected letters and interviews

In the J.L. van Schaik Collection housed at the National Afrikaans Literature Museum and Research Unit (NALN), a very valuable collection of correspondence between Stella Blakemore and her South African publisher, J. L. van Schaik, and later his son, Jan van Schaik, is stored. The letters are not representative of the total period over which her relationship with the Van Schaiks stretched. In the collection there are letters from the 1930s, when her business relationship with J.L. van Schaik commenced, another selection from the late 1940s, and a comprehensive set of letters covering the 1950s up to the end of the 1960s. In the period that Blakemore lived in Pretoria, between 1935 and approximately 1947 she was able to meet with her publishers personally, and there are therefore only records of contractual agreements for that period and no letters.⁸³ Unfortunately, there are no records of her exchanges with her publishers during the crucial 1970s or later. However, when she returned to South Africa in 1974 after an absence of more than eighteen years, her visit received extensive media coverage.

Stella Blakemore was a prolific writer. Her letters to her publishers are generally written in a conversational style and sometimes contain fairly personal information. The tone of the letters she received from various persons at J.L. van Schaik, however, is far more

⁸¹ 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.

⁸² Lentelied no. 1 in A. Music by Sydney Richfield, words by Stella Blakemore. Published by Unie Publikasies c1946, Pretoria. Consists of 1 score (11p.).

⁸³ 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 she and her husband had already left South Africa 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.

guarded, restrained and formal. Countless of the publisher's letters include a paragraph or sentence to explain an unnecessary delay in responding to a letter or request from Blakemore, contributing to an impression that they were continuously falling behind in replying to the sometimes unstoppable flow of letters from their author.

The following section comprises of a summary of findings in my master's dissertation, based on a symptomatic reading of Blakemore's letters to her publisher and the interviews she granted to the South African media during her visits. Her letters offers a glimpse of the life and thoughts of a complex and perplexing figure in the Afrikaans literary scene at particular periods of her life in relation to her writing, her relationship with her country of birth, and her multiple identities as woman, Afrikaner, exile, South African, and world traveller.

At the outset of this chapter it was indicated that two central questions animated this part of the study. These are 1) how did the Afrikaner intelligentsia manage to disseminate its ideas and ideology of Afrikaner nationalism to a wider audience across class fractures and turn it into a kind of mass consciousness and 2) what was the composition of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, what evidence is available about upward and downward mobility between this class and other classes, and what kinds of contestation and resistance took place within this class? It was indicated that one of the problems of explanation in studies on Afrikaner nationalism is the level on which accounts are provided. Studies on Afrikaner nationalism tend to focus on national, macro level events and representations, which undermines the ability of such accounts to adequately explain the phenomenon of Afrikaner nationalism on the level of everyday life. In this case, it is hoped that this local, micro level study of the life of a popular fiction author will augment other theoretical accounts of Afrikaner nationalism.

Blakemore and the publishing industry

In terms of the relationship between the publishing industry and Blakemore, Du Plessis (2002) demonstrated that Blakemore's books were never conceived of as a nationalist project by its publishers or its author. Given that her books were regarded as popular fiction for children, these texts were not explicitly tied in with any of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie's literary projects aimed at promoting the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. These arguments are supported by the founding history of J.L van Schaik publishers, the firm's likely motivation for producing the

Keurboslaan series, as well as Blakemore's reflections on her personal reasons for writing the series (see Du Plessis 2002). J.L. van Schaik's involvement in producing the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series seems to have been motivated by a combination of the drive for profit and commitment to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism and thus the promotion of Afrikaans. However, based on a scrutiny of Blakemore's letters to her publisher as well as Chapter Six of the present study, it is clear that in the case of popular fiction for children, the profitability of ventures was a key concern. It was shown that J.L. van Schaik felt sympathetic towards the cause of Afrikaner nationalism and that the firm did indeed publish a number of books that served the interests of this cause despite the fact that these books were unlikely to be profitable. Yet, it appears from the correspondence between Blakemore and her publishers as well as from the interview with Jan van Schaik that the main motivation for publishing the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* books was simply profit. There was virtually no intervention from the publishers in the narrative of her books or attempts to give the books a particular political slant. On one issue the publishers stood firm, though, and that was that Blakemore could not translate the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* books into English. While the motivation informing this directive may in part have been sentiment towards the Afrikaans language, the evidence seems to suggest that it is more likely that the publishers were concerned about the reaction of a conservative Afrikaans book buying public on finding out that these series books have also been published in English and the implications that would have for sales.

The Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and Blakemore

Whilst Blakemore's class position was that of the petty bourgeoisie, Blakemore's relationship with the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie seems to have been ambiguous. Based on her letters to her publisher it can be argued that Blakemore did not embark on writing books to promote the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. On the contrary, she distanced herself on many occasions from the terrain of politics in general. Besides the overarching objective of writing to obtain an income stream, her main motivation for writing in Afrikaans seems to have been sentimental and a marker of her South African identity. Not only did she often claim that she thought in Afrikaans, but after having left South Africa writing in Afrikaans provided Blakemore with a connection to the country to which she planned to return. For these reasons, she was prepared to write for an Afrikaans market and, in order to promote her

sales, she was willing to make some changes to her manuscripts and to write her stories in a way that would be acceptable to her audience, even if she did not always agree with their sentiments. Yet, she made it clear on a number of occasions that she would have been more than prepared to have her works translated into English for a broader South African audience. Actually, in quite a few of her letters she requested her publisher to review this restriction. While she suggested more than once that she was not fond of 'the English', it does seem to be plausible to suggest that her problem with the English was largely with the British. Phrased alternatively, Blakemore seems to have had some dislike for both the British and South African English speakers who embraced a British identity rather than a South African identity. In terms of her own identity, it appears that she saw herself primarily as a South African, rather than an Afrikaner. In one letter, she states that one shouldn't marry outside one's race as she had done by marrying a Welshman, as such a union of necessity implied that one of the partners needed to leave their country behind. This implies that Blakemore understood a close relationship to exist between nation and country. The Transvaal was her heartland and she did not feel at home in Natal, where she went to boarding school and which she felt was too English for her liking, or in the Cape Province. It could therefore be argued that rather than Afrikaner nationalism, Blakemore herself was embracing a kind of South African nationalism that was rooted in her experience of living in Transvaal but moulded by her experience of living away from South Africa, where her South Africanness came to dominate over her Afrikanerness and where distinctions between white Afrikaans and English speaking South Africans became more vague. In a sense, this sentiment therefore encapsulated a world where Afrikaners outweighed English speakers in numbers but where there was not a clear distinction between white Afrikaans speakers and white English speakers and where the boundaries between the groups were fairly fluid.

Blakemore did not form part of the inner circle of the Afrikaner intelligentsia that mobilised around the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. This could be explained by a number of factors but conclusive evidence is lacking. First, Blakemore's family history would have made it very difficult for her to be included in this circle. Whilst she was described as Afrikaner royalty, she wore the taint of the enemy given that her father was an officer of the British army. This would have been exacerbated by the attempts of the Afrikaner intelligentsia in the decades following the Anglo-Boer war to revive the atrocities of the Anglo-Boer War as a strategy for advancing the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. Second, Blakemore married a Welshman, which

meant that her home language was English. Third, Blakemore was not an author of literary works in Afrikaans, but produced popular fiction for the youth, which was a marginal literature. Fourth, Blakemore's acceptance into this circle would have been hindered by her identity as a woman. While women did play a prominent role in advancing Afrikaner nationalism, Blakemore's identity as the wife of a foreigner must have made it very difficult to gain credibility. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that Blakemore herself wanted to be part of this circle. In many ways, her extensive travels and the long period she spent in various parts of Europe in her early twenties had turned her into a European cosmopolitan.

While she therefore clearly belonged to the stratum of the petty bourgeoisie, Blakemore was never a full member of the Afrikaner intelligentsia and there is evidence that many Afrikaners saw her as a foreigner. In terms of the broader white Afrikaans speaking population, Blakemore was not a very well known public figure. This was the result of the fact that she lived away from South Africa for so many years of her productive writing life, but also because her publishers were concerned about the fact that boys would not be keen to read the *Keurboslaan* books if they knew the books were written by a woman. Moreover, after she had left South Africa, J.L. van Schaik was concerned that the reading public would find out that Blakemore did not live in South Africa and was indeed 'English-speaking'. As a result, Blakemore was in a way shielded from her reading public. Hence, the impact she could make as a public figure on events in South Africa was very low.

Not only did Blakemore not belong to the inner circle of the Afrikaner intelligentsia in Pretoria, but she also clashed with members of the stratum on a number of occasions. Her outspoken, sometimes brash, manner landed her in trouble with many prominent Afrikaners in the Transvaal, an issue she comments on in her letters to J.L. van Schaik. Her disagreements with the Afrikaans language purists and the editors of her manuscripts have been well documented. Her relationship with her publishers is yet another example of an interaction with the Afrikaner establishment that did not always run smoothly. J.L. van Schaik's relationship with their author can be summarised as cautious. Whilst the relationship between Blakemore and the senior Mr van Schaik had always been strained, she developed a much closer relationship with his son, Jan. Yet, even Jan's relationship with Blakemore can be described as guarded and from the correspondence one senses that Jan saw his role principally as mediator, having to keep Blakemore away from and guarding her against the Afrikaner establishment. Finally, already in the early

years, but particularly from the 1960s onwards her work was scorned by decision-makers in academic and government circles who described it as poor quality fiction. It is therefore very difficult to cast Blakemore in the role of prophet of Afrikaner nationalism and as spokesperson for the Afrikaner intelligentsia set on promoting Afrikaner nationalism. Not only did Blakemore not belong to that circle, but also there were some enemies of hers among their ranks.

Blakemore, the project of Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaner subjectivity

Despite the fact that her books were not conceived as a nationalist project and that its author, Blakemore, was not a popular or well known member of the Afrikaner establishment, the combination of a private sector initiative, based on the expansion of the market of the Afrikaans book, and a well-travelled and at times voluntarily exiled South African writer homesick for her country of birth proved to be a powerful combination that played into the agenda of Afrikaner nationalism. It is argued here that Blakemore's books contributed to the project of 'inventing' an Afrikaner nation and thus to the development of Afrikaner nationalism in at least six ways.

First, Blakemore's decision to write popular fiction for children in Afrikaans, whilst apparently born out of two competing motivations – the fact that entry into the Afrikaans market seemed to be fairly easy given Blakemore's need to earn extra income through writing and her sentiment towards the language and country of her birth – was deeply political, at least in terms of its implications. At a time when there were dismally few examples of children's literature in Afrikaans, she started writing popular fiction. When she started the *Maasdorp* series for girls in the early 1930s and the *Keurboslaan* series in the early 1940s the market for Afrikaans books was still very small. It can be argued that Blakemore did not only fill a gap in the market, but, instead, contributed to creating a market for popular fiction in Afrikaans. In this respect, her books have contributed to the expansion of the Afrikaans book market.

Second, the popularity of the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series enticed children to read Afrikaans books. On the event of Langenhoven's death on 15 July 1932, *Die Burger* wrote in its editorial that it was Langenhoven who had taught the Afrikaner people to read through his column in *Die Burger*, 'Aan Stille Waters', his books and his literature for children (Steyn 1992:39). After his death, though, it was Stella Blakemore – together with perhaps Mikro, though his children's books targeted much younger readers – who was to become the first author of Afrikaans children's

literature that understood the charm of the formulaic series books and the popularity of series novels in English and who was able to produce an Afrikaans equivalent. After Langenhoven's death and the popularity of his *Brolloks en Bittergal* and *Die Krismiskinders*, and later E.B. Grosskopf's successful children's book *Patrys-hulle*, it was Blakemore who introduced the idea of the series book to a wide range of young Afrikaans readers, and, in doing so, expanded the market for Afrikaans books and created a captive audience lured by the attractiveness of the series book. For this reason, Blakemore's biggest contribution is often said to be the fact that she got Afrikaans children reading.

Third, through her books, Blakemore created a community of Afrikaans readers. The *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series functioned to create new kinds of communities. People who had never met each other before shared the experience of having read the *Keurboslaan* series and that became a way in which connections were made. While readers of *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* may not have known each other, they were connected through the fact that they all felt that they knew Roelof Serfontein intimately. These connections should not only be seen as transgressing space and geography, but became inter-generational connections as successive generations of Afrikaans readers came to know the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* characters. As these books were not translated from or into English, they became part of a uniquely Afrikaans imaginary world. This is a practical example of how what Isabel Hofmeyr (1987) refers to as 'a sediment of Afrikanerness' began to settle in amongst Afrikaans speakers.

Fourth, while Blakemore was not an influential public figure in South Africa and among Afrikaners it was precisely because details about the author were not widely known in South Africa that she was able to make such a considerable impact through her fiction. For example, it was indicated that reviewers of the *Keurboslaan* books were of the opinion that the author, Theunis Krogh, was trying through his books to establish an indigenous educational system. Reviewers therefore actively and strongly encouraged parents and teachers to read the books themselves as an educational experience. From the correspondence between J.L. van Schaik and Blakemore, it is clear that for a long time it was not known that she was the real author of the *Keurboslaan* books. The fictitious author therefore was received as a flesh and blood male Afrikaner who used the medium of children's literature to promote and develop his views on what an authentic Afrikaner educational system and establishment should look like. As a result, the obvious links between this

genre of fiction in Afrikaans and the school story tradition in Britain was either overlooked or not regarded as important. As a result, the *Keurboslaan* series was imbued with a status well beyond that of popular children's fiction.

Fifth, the desire of both the author and the publisher to increase the sales of her books to the Afrikaans reading public saw both parties placing a strong focus on making the books appear as 'authentic' Afrikaans texts. Blakemore, for example, assumed the identity of a man and an Afrikaner in her many letters to fans. One of these letters was used on the cover jacket of the *Keurboslaan* series. It was therefore read by the many *Keurboslaan* readers. In this letter, she explained that the *Keurboslaan* characters were based on people she knew. For a range of reasons, the firm J.L. van Schaik too was trying to pass Blakemore off as Theunis Krogh. They therefore tried to keep Blakemore away from the South African public and were in fact quite upset when it was leaked that Blakemore had been the author of both the *Maasdorp* and the *Keurboslaan* series. These combined efforts succeeded in obscuring the relationship between fiction and reality. This contributed to a dominant view that the series was written by an Afrikaner about Afrikaners and that even though the stories were fictitious they had a factual base in reality and that characters such as Eugene Krynauw and Roelof Serfontein were modelled on prominent 'real life' Afrikaners.

Sixth, returning to Taylor's notion of the social imaginary as the background against which social practices are performed and at the same time constitutive of the performance of such practices, it can be argued that Blakemore's books, in particular the *Maasdorp* and *Keurboslaan* series, in some ways produced the Afrikaner social imaginary at the eve of Apartheid and the seizure of state power by Afrikaners. The *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series reflect and represent a kind of moral order. Phrased differently, it can be argued that these series produce answers to questions about the way in which one ought to live one's life and the relationship between members of the South African political society. Given that the social imaginary is not a set of doctrines, rules or values, but rather is captured or represented by images, myths and stories of which these texts, which were widely read in the white Afrikaans-speaking community, form part. Since the scope of this study did not include an analysis of the contents of these two series, further research on this topic needs to be undertaken.

Conclusion: Rethinking the imagined community through the notions of *habitus*, the organic intellectual and the social imaginary

In terms of analysing power, Gramsci demonstrates the importance of taking into account notions of culture. This study embarked with a question about the way in which the ruling class exercises hegemony. Through his notion of the organic intellectual, Gramsci explains the way in which such intellectuals can persuade the population to share their beliefs. As part of his revolutionary politics, Gramsci therefore argues that organic intellectuals can assist to develop an alternative hegemony. This is achieved through the creation of a common culture. Faced with the erosion of their power base after the Anglo-Boer War, members of the Afrikaans-speaking intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie were faced with the double challenge of producing a counter-culture against the existing hegemony of British imperialism and acting against other organic intellectuals who attempted to foster a new hegemony on the basis of class.

The claim that Blakemore furthered the cause of Afrikaner nationalism through her writings therefore begs the question as to whether she can be regarded as an organic intellectual in Gramscian terms. In order to answer this question, we need to return to Gramsci and the evidence presented in this study.

In Chapter One, Gramsci's notion of hegemony was outlined. Focusing on cultural aspects of hegemony, Gramsci argues that political power cannot only be seized but that an alternative hegemony needs to be created in order to secure a complete revolution. Such a revolution is explained as a revolution that 'brings to power a coherent class formation united behind a single economic, political and cultural conception of the world' (Adamson 1980:171). This description seems to apply well to the phenomenon of Afrikaner nationalism, which did succeed – albeit temporarily – not in creating a coherent class formation but in bridging class divides and in uniting white Afrikaans speakers behind a single economic, political and cultural conception of the world. The question then is in what way Gramsci thought that an existing hegemony can be replaced with an alternative one. Adamson argues that Gramsci saw political change as possible through a dialectic interaction between what he termed 'organic intellectuals' and ordinary people (Adamson 1980:169). Gramsci argues that organic intellectuals emerge from the subject classes themselves and that they are successful precisely because they have themselves lived and grown up in the same environment as ordinary people:

New ideas would not be introduced or 'propagandized' as extraneous inputs into mass politics but would be integrated into the very fabric of proletarian culture, life-styles, language, traditions, etc. by revolutionaries who themselves worked and lived within the same environment. Only this could ensure the dialectical relationship between theory and practice, the intellectual and the spontaneous, the political and the social, which could lay down the foundations of an authentic *Marxist* subjectivity in popular consciousness itself (Boggs 1976:77-78).

Gramsci explains the reason why organic intellectuals have a better chance in appealing to the masses than intellectuals as follows:

The popular element 'feels' but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element 'knows' but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel. The two extremes are therefore pedantry and philistinism on the one hand and blind passion on the other... The intellectual's error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned: in other words that the intellectual can be an intellectual if distinct and separate from the people-nation, i.e. without feeling the elementary passions of the people... One cannot make politics-history without this passion, without this sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation (Gramsci 1971:418).

According to Boggs it is necessary for organic intellectuals to work from 'within' and embed their projects within the very fabric of culture, life-style and traditions. If this is the case, then the domain of popular fiction for children provides fertile ground indeed for the operations of organic intellectuals.

Returning to Blakemore, it is clear that she cannot be described in any terms as a Marxist organic intellectual. However, Gramsci did not see this as a unique feature of the Marxist project. Rather, he argues that any political movement that wishes to succeed needs to have its own organic intellectuals. The question therefore is to what extent Blakemore can be described as an organic intellectual promoting the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. To answer this question, we have to turn to Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*.

If we take the *habitus* as a person's cultural habitat, an internalised and non-self-conscious set of dispositions acquired from both acculturation and personal

characteristics, then the evidence offered in this study may be used in order to draw some tentative conclusions about Blakemore's position as organic intellectual.

There is no evidence to suggest that Blakemore consciously set out to create or foster through her writings an Afrikaner community in Afrikaner nationalist terms. On the contrary, Blakemore distanced herself from what she regarded to be politics. Yet, she explicitly commented on the fact that it pleased her deeply to write for 'her own people' in Afrikaans. She articulated a close link between her understanding of nation and country, and she did indeed promote a kind of South Africanism. However, finally, if one takes into account her motivation for writing and producing texts at such frantic speed, it would seem that her notion of community was closely linked to her language: her children, mother and the elderly Afrikaans-speaking relatives are the ones on whose behalves she felt she had to build up her financial resources. And in some way she thought of all three these groups as 'Afrikaners'.

There are many contradictions in the way in which Blakemore describes her project of writing fiction in Afrikaans. It is, however, clear that she did not use the blueprint of Afrikaner nationalism to guide her writings. The political and cultural content of her writings in Afrikaans are perhaps best explained with the help of Bourdieu's understanding of *habitus*, or the field of possibilities within which an author operates, whether on a conscious or subconscious level. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is not unproblematic in this context as he clearly distinguishes between works of literature and mass-market fiction. However, whilst it is clear that Blakemore made a conscious effort in her writings to keep in mind the preferences of her target market she also stated that the kind of writing she undertook was the best she could possibly produce and that she derived great joy from her writings. Moreover, whilst it is true that she did try to shape her writings for a specific audience, she did so based on her own interpretation of that community, filtered and understood through her *habitus*. Blakemore used a medium – that of popular fiction – that crossed class divides and spoke to ordinary people. While it is therefore difficult to describe her as an organic intellectual, since she did not seem to be self-consciously committed to fostering the Afrikaner nation, it can be argued that she fulfilled the role of the organic intellectual for the petty bourgeoisie, based on the reasons provided in the preceding section.

It is therefore argued that – in some respects – Blakemore was more successful in fashioning an Afrikaner community through her children's literature than members

of the Afrikaner establishment were in their endeavours to foster Afrikaner nationalism. Indeed, Blakemore succeeded in areas where the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie had failed. From her letters it is evident that a great deal of creativity and spontaneity went into writing her books. Yet, that her books were not part of the 'authorised' canon of Afrikaner nationalist texts, but were read by ordinary readers who had to purchase the texts or obtain them from local libraries.

In summary, the author's *habitus* is instrumental in the production of fictional texts. In turn, as Taylor illuminates, these texts have the ability to create shared social imaginaries, which is the way in which ordinary people interpret their social surroundings. As such, the notion of the social imaginary is immensely powerful. This begs questions about the ways in which ordinary readers of the *Keurboslaan* and *Maasdorp* series 'read' these texts and the way in which these texts embroidered the social imaginary of white Afrikaans speakers.

In addition, 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. In some ways, this finding challenges the binary opposition between popular fiction and high literature and invites further research.

Finally, it was argued that popular children's literature may have been one of the avenues through which the ideas and ideology of Afrikaner nationalism were disseminated to a wider audience across class fractures to turn it into a kind of mass consciousness. However, by illuminating the complex and sometimes fraught relationship between Stella Blakemore and the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie, it was shown that this kind of dissemination was not the prerogative of self-conscious community creators only.

PART IV:
Discourse in *Keurboslaan*

Chapter Eight:

Imagining and imaging the nation through the discourse of fiction

One cannot make politics-history without this passion, without this sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation

Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*

Introduction

A problem raised in Chapter Two was the need for more information about the process through which the ideas and ideology of Afrikaner nationalism as articulated by the Afrikaner intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie successfully permeated the consciousness of Afrikaners of all classes. O'Meara articulates this challenge 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 Chapters Six and Seven it was suggested that children's literature, that is, the discourse of fiction, may have been one of the mechanisms through which a discourse of Afrikaner nationalism and the nation permeated the consciousness of ordinary white Afrikaans-speakers. This chapter explores strategies that were employed in the *Keurboslaan* series that made it possible to imagine an Afrikaner nation in a very specific way through fiction. In addition, the chapter explores representations of the self and the other and the portrayal of danger in *Keurboslaan* texts.

Strategies for imagining the nation in fiction

In previous chapters it has been argued that factors such as the *Keurboslaan* series being written in Afrikaans, its publication and dissemination under the rubric of popular fiction, and its wide readership that was geographically dispersed and cut across generational divides all contributed to make it possible to begin imagining an Afrikaner 'nation'. In other words, given its insertion in the political and cultural world of South Africa in the early 1940s, the *Keurboslaan* series – in a small but not unimportant way - contributed to the process of producing an Andersonian 'imagined community' that could be moulded into an Afrikaner 'nation'. Apart from these extra-textual ways in which the *Keurboslaan* series made it possible to imagine the nation, the nation is imagined in interesting ways and through innovative strategies in the texts themselves. It is argued here that three such strategies are employed in the *Keurboslaan* texts. These are 1) privileging the imagined over the real, 2) showing and not telling, and 3) inventing the future as opposed to commemorating the past.

The 'imagined' vs. the 'real': Keurboslaan as aspirational literature

When the first volumes of the *Keurboslaan* series were written in the early 1940s, the world depicted in these texts did not reflect school life as it was experienced by the overwhelming majority of Afrikaans-speaking children in Afrikaans-medium schools. Nor did it provide a true rendition of the social and economic situation of most 'Afrikaners'. Rather, the *Keurboslaan* series presented an image of an elite and urbanized Afrikanerdom that was well-represented in the professions and had strong international networks. Yet, less than a decade before the first book in the series was published, between a third and half of all Afrikaners could be classified as 'very poor' (see Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion). Volume III of the Carnegie Commission Report (Malherbe 1932: 132-135) includes the findings of a survey among 17 000 school going children who were asked to write down what they wanted to be when they grow up.⁸⁴ The results of this survey showed that 24,4% of the boys surveyed believed that they were going to follow a career in one of the professions, whilst a survey of actual career patterns reflected that those professions were able to accommodate only 3,6% of the male population at the time. Among the girls the pattern was much the same. 33,8% of girls surveyed indicated that they saw themselves as teachers, whereas only 2,5% of the total female population were involved in teaching

⁸⁴ 'Skryf neer wat jy dink jy eendag gaan word'

work at the time. The following tables show boys and girls' career expectations as reflected in the Commission's report:

Table 9: Choice of Career by Pupils in Primary and Secondary Schools (Professions)
- Carnegie Commission Report 1932⁸⁵

Career	Boys			Girls			Total			Total (including 'Vakskole')
	Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	
Professions										
a) Clergyman	4.41	4.97	4.51				2.32	2.61	2.37	2.31
b) Missionary				1.19	2.30	1.38	.56	1.09	.65	.63
c) Teacher	8.46	17.52	10.00	32.67	39.36	33.80	19.96	27.87	21.29	20.66
d) Legal Profession	1.92	4.83	2.42				1.01	2.54	1.27	1.23
e) Nurse				10.41	17.00	11.53	4.95	8.06	5.47	5.31
f) Other	6.42	12.83	7.51	1.5	3.99	1.92	4.08	8.63	4.86	4.71
TOTAL	21.22	40.15	24.44	45.77	62.65	48.62	32.88	50.80	35.92	34.85

Table 10: Envisaged Careers of Secondary School Pupils compared to Actual Employment Patterns for Men and Women over 15 Years - Based on Carnegie Commission Report 1932⁸⁶

	Envisaged Careers: Secondary School Pupils		Actual Career Patterns: Men and Women over 15yrs	
	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Nurse		17		<1
Farmer	30%			+ 30
Clergyman	4.97		.5	
Teacher	17.52	39.36	1.35	2.5
Other	12.83			
Professions (Combined)	40.15	62.65	3.6	

⁸⁵ Malherbe 1932: 132

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 131-135

Through a range of efforts, which were discussed in Chapter Two and included the economic movement, the mobilisation by the petty bourgeoisie in Afrikaner religious and academic circles, and state intervention, the end of the forties saw a definite improvement in the so-called 'poor white' problem. Nonetheless, educational and other disadvantages were not eradicated overnight and whilst the number of Afrikaners that could be classified as 'very poor' certainly declined significantly, the majority of Afrikaners – now increasingly urbanized – formed part of working class and lacked the educational credentials that would give them access to the professions or even the upper working classes. It was only with the onset of National Party rule in 1948 that the government explicitly advanced the career trajectories of Afrikaners. These efforts at social engineering despite, by 1956 the Minister of Labour, J de Klerk, remarked that the Afrikaner was still not proportionally represented in a number of professions. These included architects, auditors, medical practitioners, radiologists and others (Stals 1986:48).

Afrikaans was officially acknowledged as a medium of instruction for primary schools in 1914 and for 'middelbare skole' in 1917. By 1917, Afrikaans was increasingly being used instead of Dutch, yet there still was a significant proportion of parents that preferred the medium of instruction in schools to be Dutch. Taking the case of Johannesburg from the 1920s to the 1950s illustrate the social stratification of Afrikaners. A grave concern of those who mobilised around language during this period was the small number of Afrikaans Secondary schools in Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand. It meant that pupils who wanted to pursue secondary schooling had to switch to English as a medium of instruction. Because of this and the difficulties this involved, many Afrikaans parents opted to send their children to English primary schools. As a result, many of these families became anglicised (Stals 1978:14-136). Thus, many professionals with Afrikaans surnames in Johannesburg during the 1930s and 1940s spoke English at home and at work. By the 1930s, Afrikaans doctors and medical specialists in Johannesburg comprised a very small minority in the industry (Stals 1986:53). In March 1939, the Christo Beyers Medical Commemorative Society, an association of Afrikaans medical practitioners in the city, was established and by the 1940s Afrikaners were becoming more established in the medical profession, though proportionally the representation of Afrikaners in the industry remained low. In 1943 a number of Afrikaners, among them medical practitioners, together bought the Park Lane Nursing Clinic (Stals 1986:54). There were only a few Afrikaans-speaking lawyers, and among their small number, some, like Mr S.A. Rissik, 'rather found a home in the English-speaking community' (Stals 1986:54).

In Chapter Two the argument that the champions of Afrikaner nationalism needed to achieve cohesion within the white Afrikaans-speaking community across class divides was outlined. One of the issues they had to resolve was the so-called 'poor-white' question. In addition to the efforts of the economic movement, the plight of 'poor whites' was taken up in religious circles and organisations such as the ACVV (The Afrikaans Christian Women's Society) began mobilising around this issue. Awareness of the 'poor white' problem was brought into the home and imaged through popular publications such as *Die Huisgenoot* and *Die Boervrou*, as well as popular scientific publications such as the *Tweede Trek* series produced by Nasionale Pers and the *Monumente* series published by J.L. van Schaik publishers. These and other efforts had two main goals: to forge a connection between white Afrikaans speakers of other classes and poor Afrikaans speakers in order to launch social upliftment programmes and to use this connection to support an economic and cultural mobilisation around Afrikaner identity.

In the 1930s and 1940s works of literature in Afrikaans literature increasingly took poverty and the position of 'poor whites' as thematic in a realist tradition, depicting marginalized Afrikaners who were dispossessed of their land. In addition, strong anti-city sentiments and a yearning to return to the land marked Afrikaans works of literature of the period:

Vanaf die ontstaan van Johannesburg het daar 'n anti-stedelike tradisie by die Afrikaner posgevat wat geslagte lank geduur het...Hierdie anti-stedelike gevoel het veral in die Afrikaanse letterkunde sterk tot uiting gekom (Stals 1978:178).

[From the inception of Johannesburg an anti-city tradition took root among Afrikaners that was to last generations. This tradition was especially evident in the Afrikaans literature.]

In Chapter Five it was shown that there was a negative reaction against this trend in literature from the Afrikaans 'reading classes', who felt that the depiction of Afrikaners as backward and poor in books such as *Ampie* undermined their status and prestige and made them feel ashamed for being Afrikaans.

Against all of this, the *Keurboslaan* series painted a picture of successful Afrikaners that were well represented in many professions - including the medical profession, finance and banking, the academy (in the social and natural sciences), and social work

– and who spoke Afrikaans at home and regarded themselves as Afrikaners. The main character in the *Keurboslaan* series, Doctor Roelof Serfontein, who is the school principal, is described as a son from one of the most distinguished Afrikaans families in Johannesburg. The eldest of eight children, he holds two PhDs, is a world-acclaimed novelist, renowned sportsman and the author of a number of educational texts. His brother Adolf is a teacher who has completed a number of higher degrees, while his younger brothers, Edward and Martin, are both medical specialists. Martin, a brain surgeon, is the head of a clinic and hospital in the city and Edward, an orthopaedic surgeon, is his partner. Roelof's twin brothers, Frans and Emil, completed their MSc degrees in botany and are lecturers at the university. Evelyn, his elder sister and the eldest of the Serfontein children, worked as a paediatrician before she got married and his youngest sister, Leonie, studied art in Europe and then took up a position as art teacher at a prestigious school for girls in Cape Town. As headmaster he presided over a school of which its former pupils almost exclusively entered the professions: as doctors and medical specialists, academics, musicians, social workers, lawyers and businessmen and theologians.

This image of Afrikanerdom was idealised and 'fictional' and did not correspond to the 'reality' as experienced by the majority of white Afrikaans-speakers. At the same time, this depiction of Afrikaners was contrary to the strategy adopted by the Afrikaner intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie to sensitise and raise awareness among all Afrikaans-speakers about the 'poor white' problem as a mechanism to encourage an Afrikaner identity across class divisions. It is through this strategy that the *Keurboslaan* series became what Martie Meiring would later refer to as the 'only aspirational literature that we youthful Afrikaners had had' (Dick et al 2001:63), precisely because it was not rooted in or reflected the social realities of the day. It is on this level that Blakemore was in touch with her readership of the 1940s and 1950s, who aspired to be teachers, nurses, medical doctors and lawyers, even though this dream would for many of them not become a reality.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ The current debate about the appropriateness of a television programme such as *Yizo-Yizo*, with its realist depiction of school life in South Africa has developed along similar lines. In public forums there are those that argue that to motivate and inspire the youth one should not confront them with the ugly realities of township school life, but present them with an idealised and aspirational depiction of school.

The representation of Afrikaners in the *Keurboslaan* series fostered a link between the Afrikaner nation and individual aspirations and desires. Membership of the Afrikaner nation was not achieved through an association with the Afrikaans poor, but through a desire to be like one of the Serfontein children or the other distinguished scholars from the Keurboslaan College for Boys.

Showing not telling

There is another strategy through which the *Keurboslaan* series ‘imagines’ the nation, which is a strategy that is specific to the discourse of fiction, since literature favours the device of ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. Despite the fact that the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism was perhaps less coherent and unified as it is often depicted, it is still useful to think of it as a programme of action, which had particular objectives and goals and certain stumbling blocks that needed to be overcome in order to realise these objectives. Some of these were the need to mobilise around the Afrikaans language and establish an Afrikaans book publishing industry and literature, expand the Afrikaans professional classes, modernise farming methods, use social science to improve the plight of the Afrikaans poor, inculcate and disseminate information on hygiene and nutrition, improve literacy levels and schooling, and so forth. In various publications, including books, newspaper articles and popular scientific publications, plans for the advancement of Afrikaner nationalism were promoted. This usually comprised of an assessment of the present situation of and problems facing the Afrikaner, coupled with a vision of what an Afrikaner nation ought to be and an outline of a programme for achieving that goal.

The *Keurboslaan* series, on the other hand, does not depict the history and struggles bound up with the formation of the ‘Afrikaner nation’. Nor does it dwell on what it is that needs to be done to turn the Afrikaner nation into a reality or to deliver the nation from impending disaster, as one of the titles in the popular scientific *Tweede Trek* series - *My Nasie in Nood* – claims to do. The *Keurboslaan* series does not set out an action plan for becoming a modern nation utilising scientific knowledge such as those found in popular scientific series such as the *Monumente* series and the *Tweede Trek* series. Rather, in *Keurboslaan*, the existence of the Afrikaner nation is treated as *a fait accompli* and its transformation into a modern, industrialised nation as already accomplished.

Instead of dwelling on the Afrikaner's mythical relationship with land and the need to help Afrikaners who had lost their farms and way of living due to drought, the Anglo-Boer War or poor farming methods adapt to life in the city, the *Keurboslaan* series depicts Afrikaners as professionals such as medical doctors, lawyers, social workers industrialists, financial managers and academics. Keurboslaan College for Boys largely draws its students from the city, and not from rural and farming communities. Though there are a few boys at school whose fathers are farmers, they are usually - as is the case with both Olivier and Smit's fathers – described as well to do and influential people. André Smit's father, for example, is also a parliamentarian (Krogh 1949:61-62). Because of the social status of boys who study in agriculture at the school, they are compelled to follow the same academic programme as the other boys:

'Landbou of te nie, hy [Dr Serfontein]sê ons moet ook die akademiese vakke aanpak. Hy [Dr Serfontein] sê die oorspronklike doel van hierdie skool is 'n professionele opleiding, sê Pienaar. 'Hy sê, selfs al is ons boere, ontwikkel boere dikwels tot parlamentslede, wat dan kennis van sulke tale moet hê' (Krogh 1961a:44).

['No matter that we study agriculture. He [Dr Serfontein] says that we need to read academic subjects too. He says that the original aim of the school was to provide professional training', says Pienaar. 'He says that, even if we are going to be farmers, farmers often develop into parliamentarians, who need to have knowledge of such languages'.]

In the same vein, the *Keurboslaan* series does not make a case for the beauty of the Afrikaans language, the need to claim a space for its use in schools, government and elsewhere, and its potential to produce literary works of great value. In the *Keurboslaan* series, Afrikaans is simply described and treated as one of the modern languages of the world, together with German, French, Portuguese, Swedish, Bulgarian and others (Krogh 1961b:35). Instead of emphasising the importance of establishing an Afrikaans literary tradition, Dr Serfontein is depicted as a world-acclaimed novelist whose works are translated in many other modern languages, with the resulting inference that Afrikaans has already been recognised as a world literature.

Ideas about the importance of cleanliness, the benefits of an active lifestyle, the need to control sexuality, the urgency of programmes to uplift the poor, the principles of social work, the proper care for those who are ill, and many other such 'knowledges', which were disseminated by the Afrikaner intelligentsia in publications aimed at

educating the Afrikaner, are, in the *Keurboslaan* series, central features of the narrative.

Yet, precisely because this discourse is ‘showed’ and not ‘told’ in the *Keurboslaan* series – because the *Keurboslaan* series does not look at the problem facing white Afrikaans-speakers in becoming a ‘nation’ but show the nation as it could be, because the discourse is spoken by fictional characters to each other and not addressed to the reader as the one that needs to be educated - the fictional version of this discourse as found in *Keurboslaan* is vested with desire and aspiration. It does not instruct the reader about what he or she should do and be, instead, it has the potential to instil in the reader the desire to become a person with the habits and beliefs of Dr Serfontein, Helen Serfontein, Eugene Krynauw or any one of the other characters.

There is another level on which the distinction between showing and telling is of interest. O’Meara (1983) and others (Hofmeyr, 1987, for example) have shown how the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia acted as community creators and spearheaded Afrikaner nationalism. Anderson (1991) explains that the role of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia is central to the process of imagining the nation. It can be argued that the *Keurboslaan* series contributed to and helped to define the public image of the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia by showcasing their lifestyles and presenting it in an idealised and entirely benign manner, that is, in a non-confrontational way. The *Keurboslaan* series presents to its readers an image of what it means to be part of the Afrikaner intelligentsia. Hence, the *Keurboslaan* series offers its readers the opportunity to identify with the characters, to become part of the elite, to experience class mobility. Thus, the *Keurboslaan* series’ portrayal of the elite seems to legitimise not only the aspiration of readers to be part of that elite but also, by implication, *what the intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie are saying* (seen as ‘telling’) in other forums and *their authority to speak*. The way in which this is portrayed in the series is illustrated in the following extract:

Was daar al ooit so ’n mooi gesin? wonder Jurie. Die gesinne wat hy ken is nie so nie. By hulle sien ’n mens net armoede en verdriet. Vir die eerste keer wonder hy of ’n mens miskien self jou lewe volgens hierdie patroon kan vorm. Natuurlik kan jy nou nooit so wellewend [sic, the intended word is most probably ‘welvarend’] wees nie, maar tog... as ’n mens dan nie meer in die knyp beland nie... as jy eendag ’n behoorlike betrekking kry... kan jy miskien ook ’n huis hê wat minstens skoon en ruim is en waar die lede van die gesin

mekaar kan toelag, in plaas van om krom en gebukkend en met moeë ooglede deur die lewe te gaan (Krogh 1956:42-43).

[Has there ever before been such a beautiful family? Jurie asks himself. The families he knows are not like this one. There one only sees evidence of poverty and sorrow. Now, for the first time he wonders whether it might not be possible to mould one's one life according to this pattern. Of course, it is inconceivable to be so affluent, yet... if one could manage to keep out of trouble... if one could one find oneself a proper job... it may just be possible to have one's own home, which, at the very least, must be spacious and clean, where members of the family can joyfully laugh with each other, instead of having to go through life crooked and bent and with heavy lids.]

Inventing the future vs. commemorating the past

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* demonstrates the way in which the publishing industry is closely associated with the invention of a tradition for the nation. This aspect has also received attention from Hofmeyr (1987) in her analysis of the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and the book publishing industry. Hofmeyr's work highlights the ways in which publishers and authors attempted to commemorate an Afrikaner 'history' and therefore mythified the migration of Afrikaans-speakers from the Eastern Cape to the North as the 'Great Trek' and celebrated the Rebellion of 1914 in Afrikaans books and popular publications. In Chapter Five it was argued that publishers who were sympathetic to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism, such as Nasionale Pers and J.L. van Schaik, invested resources into producing Afrikaner histories and literary works - despite the fact that some of these publications were expected not to be profitable - as a contribution to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. A shared history is regarded as a powerful way in which nations are forged and the creation or invention of such narratives is therefore a prominent activity in the promotion of nationalism by the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who act as community-creators.

Against this background, one of the remarkable features of the *Keurboslaan* novels is the relative silence the texts display with regard to the history of Afrikaners. It should not be inferred that the *Keurboslaan* series is set in a completely a-historical context. Rather, the *Keurboslaan* books do refer, if briefly, to the historical origins of the school and the way in which that is linked to South Africa's past and a few historical or contextual references crop up in *Keurboslaan* texts here and there. The establishment of the school as the first Afrikaans private school for boys is contextualised by a brief

explanation that parents of Afrikaans-speaking children were unwilling to move their children to another school, despite the fact that the quality of tuition at *Keurboslaan* was initially very poor, largely because they did not want to give the (South African) English the satisfaction to be able to say that Afrikaners could not make a success of their own school. In addition, the texts state that the idea behind the school's founding was to create an educational institution where leaders of the 'volk' could be educated. This account of the school's establishment seems to foreground both the Afrikaner 'nation' and its history, which is somewhat unusual for popular fiction. Yet, whilst the texts offer a 'founding history' of the Keurboslaan College for Boys that is rooted in a historical past, no other mention is made of the historical tensions that existed between South African English-speakers and 'Afrikaners'. There are also almost no references to historical events such as the Anglo-Boer War, the Rebellion of 1914, or Milner's Anglicisation policies.⁸⁸ This is particularly surprising, given that the series, through the account of the founding history of the school, sets itself up as one that speaks to and is inserted into the history of the Afrikaner. Where past events are referred to, these are not *commemorated* or celebrated as such, but are presented as a parallel to *present* circumstances, as demonstrated by the following two quotations:

'In die ou dae', sê hy koel, het die Voortrekkers, en in Amerika, hulle wat teen die Indiane geveg het, elkeen 'n laaste koeël vir die vrou gehou. 'n Baie verstandige plan as 'n mens daaraan dink, nie waar nie?' (Krogh date unknown: 214).

['In the olden days', he says calmly, 'the Voortrekkers, and in America those who fought against the Indians, each kept a last bullet for the woman. A most sensible arrangement if one thinks about it, isn't it?']

and

'Ek is nie bang nie', sê Amanda se stem. 'Ek sal gewere laai en koffie maak, soos die vrouens altyd in die ou dae tydens die kafferoorloë gemaak het.'

'Dit is geen rolprent van die Groot Trek nie, hoor!' sê meneer Bokhorst. 'Hier is gevare wat –' (Krogh 1959b:146).

⁸⁸ In the second volume in the series, a minor (and elderly) character is described as a veteran from the Anglo-Boer War.

[‘I am not afraid’ says Amanda’s voice. ‘I shall load the guns and brew some coffee, just as the women always did in the old days during the time of the kaffir wars.’

This is no movie of the Great Trek, do you understand!’ says Mister Bokhorst. Here are dangers that –’]

In both cases, the historical events referred to are portrayed as having taken place at an unspecified but long gone time in the past. The first quotation is taken from the book *Misverstand op Keurboslaan*. It refers to a situation where Roelof Serfontein’s son, Josef, and a few friends – including his fiancé – find themselves trapped on a farm in Swaziland by a mob of black people from Mozambique who are looking for a white woman missionary whom they believed had fooled them and whom they want to kill. The second quotation is from *Die Kroon van Keurboslaan* and emerges in the context of Roelof Serfontein and Eugene Krynauw’s deliberations about what they have to do with Helen Bielefeld when the three of them are held captive by a local Swazi Chief. In both instances present actions are motivated or informed by the actions of others in historical events in the distant past. The references to the past therefore serve as a repository from which to draw valuable lessons. In that context, the remark that they are not making a film of the Great Trek is an indication of both the distance between the actual event and the fictional present and the extent to which the past is replicated in the future. In one case only is the reference to a historical event linked to a more recent past. In *Keurboslaan se Eerste Kaptein*, Roelof Serfontein confronts Mr Davis, the local attorney, about his treatment of a group of poor Afrikaners, one of whom is referred to as an elderly man receiving a small pension for his participation in the ‘Driejarige Oorlog (the Anglo-Boer War) (Krogh 1948:112). From this it can be inferred that the man had to have been an active soldier during the War in 1899-1902, but whether he had been a very young man at the time of the war or whether the war took place only a few years earlier remains unspecified.

The *Keurboslaan* texts are silent too about other aspects of social reality of the time. For example, given that a large number of the *Keurboslaan* books – including the first volume in the series – were written during World War II, it is surprising that no mention is made of the war, especially given the political repercussions it had had in South Africa. It is not true that poverty and the social problems associated with urbanisation do not feature in the *Keurboslaan* series. These elements are indeed present, but both the historical and contextual references seem to be of less importance than the fictional present and future that is situated in the Keurboslaan College for Boys.

Ideologically, this emphasis on the present and future is powerful. A different application of Bourdieu's notion of *genesis amnesia* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990) may help to explain this statement. Bourdieu describes the notion of *genesis amnesia* as a strategy of *symbolic violence* exercised against oppressed groups. It comprises a systematic devaluation of culturally determined behaviour by advocating and disseminating the idea that things have always been the way they are now, and that there had been no history or preceding events that can explain or have influenced the present. Seen this way, *genesis amnesia* can be understood as a way of erasing the past in order to justify present injustices and inequalities and to homogenise behaviour, but also as a way to rule out social action based on past injustices.

Now, in the case of the *Keurboslaan* series it could be argued that the erasure or understatement of history has another function. The *genesis amnesia*, used in this context not to refer to Bourdieu's notion of *symbolic violence*, but rather to a kind of *symbolic imagining* that is present in the *Keurboslaan* texts, makes it possible to cast Afrikaners not in the usual Afrikaner nationalist romanticised narrative of a farming community with a deep love for the soil of their country who were dispossessed of their right to live from the land through the Anglo-Boer War, drought and poor farming methods and had to migrate to cities impoverished and unskilled. Rather, the Afrikaner is depicted as a modern, urbanized nation, whose people are at home in the city and global citizens.

Seen in this light, this type of symbolic imagining made possible by a kind of genesis amnesia could liberate upwardly mobile white-Afrikaans speakers from their legacy of a history of struggle and their connectedness to and responsibility for those Afrikaners classified as 'very poor' so often depicted in Afrikaans works of literature, such as *Ampie*. It was the tendency in Afrikaans literature to make a link between being an Afrikaner and being poor that readers complained about in the 1930s and 1940s. The genesis amnesia in the *Keurboslaan* series also served to counter the anti-city tradition that had become a definitive quality of being an Afrikaner and which equated the city and its associations with poverty and social ills. What is of interest here is that an aspirational view of the city was essential for the economic movement to succeed. Yet the strategies adopted by the Afrikaner intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie, in their publications and through their cultural organisations, did not take cognisance of this fact.

In addition, the device of excluding details about the relationship between Afrikaners and English speaking South Africans from the narrative and highlighting the similarities and differences between Afrikaners and the British, undermines the hegemonic account of the genesis of the Afrikaner and the strife to become a nation against English imperialism in texts on Afrikaner nationalism. Instead it poses the Afrikaner nation as equal to and on par with an English nation. For example, the model of the Keurboslaan College for Boys is juxtaposed against the model of the British school as a similar and equally worthwhile, yet distinct, tradition. Moreover, this device also serves to mask the class distinction between 'Afrikaners' and English speaking South Africans, therefore discounting the need for Afrikaners to mobilise around their perceived inferiority.

Despite the apparent differences between the way in which the *Keurboslaan* texts treat Afrikaner history compared with other texts produced by the Afrikaner intelligentsia at the time and explained by Benedict Anderson, this does not mean that the *Keurboslaan* series abandons the programmes of Afrikaner nationalism and its objective to forge an Afrikaner identity across class divides. *Keurboslaan*, with its portrayal of a majority of highly successful and sophisticated Afrikaners, represents the upliftment of the poor as a noble cause for the elite. Given that the *Keurboslaan* series focuses on the Afrikaner elite and that the majority of characters in the books are drawn from this class, the series creates the impression that the number of Afrikaners that are poor and suffering is few. Since the existence of an Afrikaner 'nation' is presented in the series as a *fait accompli*, it does not link the destiny of the elite to the extent to which they can successfully align themselves with the lower classes. Rather, the care for the poor and the downtrodden is cast not only as a worthy cause but also as an entirely achievable undertaking.

In the last instance, the lack of historical and contextual references aside from the founding history gave the books a sense of timelessness, which may in part explain why it was possible that the books were popular among many generations of Afrikaans-speakers. Positing the Afrikaner as a modern nation, situated in the present and at the forefront of international developments in science and arts, painted a picture of a nation whose strength lies in its future rather than its past.

Imaging *the self* and *the other* in the *Keurboslaan* series⁸⁹

Anderson (1993: 141-142) draws attention to the fact that nations instil a kind of love in its people and that the form this love takes is often self-sacrificing. It has been argued by some that nationalism always presupposes the existence of an 'other', an idea that Papini phrases as follows: 'in order to love something deeply you need to hate something else' (quoted in Vincent 1992: 158). The other often features as a threat to the particular nationalism. Central to the notion of nationalism are the concepts of autonomy, unity and identity (Hutchinson & Smith 1994:4) and it is the concepts of autonomy and identity that often provide the clues to who the other is. In a particular variant of nationalism, Nazi Germany, the other was defined as Jews (but also Roma, Catholics, Slavs, etc.). In African nationalism, the other often is the former colonial power. The other may be defined in a number of terms, including ethnicity, language, class, and so forth. Thus, nationalism frequently articulates the other as a danger to the self. In South Africa, the phenomenon of Afrikaner nationalism has often been phrased in precisely these terms: emerging from a fear of the other, which is defined as either the British colonisers or the black indigenous people, or both. Given the social history of the period that saw the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism, this section explores the way in which a discourse was circulated in the *Keurboslaan* series that articulated - and through this discourse attempted to counter - another danger to the project of Afrikaner nationalism – the danger of the self to the self.

Representations of the self in the Keurboslaan series

The nation always has its boundaries, its limits, its rules of belonging and there has not been a single nation in time that did not have rules for inclusion, argues Benedict Anderson (1991). The argument has been presented here that it is through the discourse of fiction too that a nation comes to be imagined and that specific strategies employed in the *Keurboslaan* texts made it possible to imagine the 'Afrikaner' nation in very specific ways. From this, it follows that if the nation can be imagined through the discourse of fiction in a text, that same text must provide us with some clues as to what the rules for inclusion into the imaginary nation may be.

⁸⁹ In writing this section, I am indebted to Achille Mbembe and Ivor Chipkin for valuable comments and suggestions for which I am very grateful.

The question then, is, how do *Keurboslaan* texts define the self and the criteria for inclusion into the nation? The Keurboslaan College for Boys' founding mandate to produce the future leaders of the Afrikaner nation ties the fate of the school to the fate of the nation. In a sense, then, Keurboslaan becomes a microcosm of the nation. This argument presented here therefore proceeds, as a first step, from analysing the Keurboslaan College for Boys as if it were analogous to the Afrikaner nation. This provides a useful entry into the question about the requirements for becoming a member of the nation.

The rules for acceptance as a student at Keurboslaan are well defined along class, race, language, and gender lines. Keurboslaan College for Boys was conceived of as a class project from the outset. A first requirement for admission therefore is that one has to be decedent from the ruling (or upper) class:

Die Keurboslaners van die toekoms moet die skool se tradisie en atmosfeer in hul opneem. Die gelde is met opset hoog. Die hoof het nou al 'n menigte liefdadigheidsinstellings vir minderbevoorregte seuns gestig. Vir sulke seuns sal iedere voorreg waarvan hulle in staat is om gebruik te maak, verskaf word. Maar Keurboslaan is vir die seuns van die regerende seksie van die land se burgers bedoel. Daar hulle van hul geboorte af bevoorreg is, begin hulle natuurlik met 'n beter kans as 'n onbevoorregte seun om later ook te kan regeer, hetsy pal in die parlement of op enige ander gebied waar 'n man verplig is om die ideale van sy volk te vorm. Wat nog meer in ag geneem moet word is dat sulke seuns sulke pligte byna nie *kan* vryspring nie. Dis dus belangrik dat hulle op 'n besondere manier opgevoed moet word om hierdie voorregte nie te misbruik nie; intendeel om hulle van die regte standpunt te beskou, sodat hulle die volk kan dien in plaas van die behoeftes van hul medemens as trappe vir hulle eie vooruitgang te gebruik. (Krogh 1948:68).

[The school's traditions and atmosphere have to become part of the Keurboslaners of the future. The fees are high and with good reason. The principal has already established a great many charity institutions for the less privileged boys. For such boys, any privilege which they are able to enjoy, will be provided. However, Keurboslaan is aimed at the boys of the ruling section of the country's citizens. Because they're born into privilege, they have a head start compared to the less privileged boys to become leaders themselves, whether stationed in parliament or in any other terrain where a man has to form the ideals of his nation. What is more, is that these boys can almost not escape such duties. It is therefore imperative that they be brought up in a manner that will prevent them from abusing their privileges; in fact, to see

these privileges in the right perspective so that they can serve their nation in stead of using others' needs as stepping stones for their personal progress.

Given that the medium of instruction of the school is Afrikaans, it follows that another requirement for inclusion is being a native speaker of Afrikaans, or at the very least, the ability to speak Afrikaans. By definition, a school for boys excludes the possibility of taking in female students and although no formal reference is made to regulations pertaining to race, the question of whether to admit a black student does not arise even once and Keurboslaan College for Boys has no black students. From this, it can be inferred that being black or female automatically disqualifies one from admittance to the school. These four criteria seems to be the minimum requirements for becoming a scholar of Keurboslaan. But Anderson argues that the boundaries set by the nation to determine inclusion and exclusion are almost always porous in some respects. He argues that there exists virtually no nation that does not somehow allow some of those not automatically awarded membership the possibility of becoming a member. In the case of admission requirement for the Keurboslaan College for Boys there is evidence of such porousness of boundaries.

In *Twee Nuwe Seuns op Keurboslaan*, Bertrand and Everard Spaulding, the sons of Dr Serfontein's best friend, the world-renowned musician Arthur Spaulding, and his late wife, Wanda Svoboda, a Russian opera singer and a former fiancé of Dr Serfontein's, are admitted to the school despite the fact that they are British nationals and do not speak a word of Afrikaans. Arthur Spaulding is not pleased about his youngest son's development in a British public school and is of the opinion that his son is in need of the kind of discipline that an Afrikaans education at Keurboslaan will provide and decides to send both his sons to his old friend, Dr Serfontein. The boys' admission into the school is conditional upon their acceptance of school discipline and their compliance with school policy about the medium of instruction, which is Afrikaans, with a grace period granted for them to acquire the language. The acquisition of the Afrikaans language and his inclusion into the Keurboslaan community prove to be significant in shaping Bertrand Spaulding's identity, because when he returns to Keurboslaan College for Boys many years later as music teacher, he regards himself to have 'become' an Afrikaner:

Anders as sy neef, ver-raai sy aksent geensins dat hy nie van kleins af Afrikaans gepraat het nie. Hy was maar dertien toe sy vader hom hiernatoe gebring het om hom onder die sorg van die hoof, met wie sy vader 'n mede-

student was, te plaas, en hy beskou homself nou as 'n ware Afrikaner (Krogh 1956:46).

[In contrast to his cousin, his own accent does not reveal the fact that he had not spoken Afrikaans all his life. He was but thirteen years old when his father brought him to Keurboslaan to place him in the care of the headmaster, who studied with his father, and he now regards himself as truly an Afrikaner.]

Likewise, his brother, Everard Spaulding marries an Afrikaans-speaking woman and even though they settle in London, he is employed in the BBC's Afrikaans Department and sends his son to Keurboslaan (Krogh 1957:37).

It would therefore seem that at Keurboslaan it is possible to be included through alternative mechanisms, and one can therefore become part of the 'self'. Yet, for some it proves to be more difficult to lose the taint of the other than for others. The Spauldings failed to comply with the language requirement for admission to the school. Arguably, this requirement is fairly easy to meet over time, once conditional entry has been granted and given that the incumbent displays a certain willingness to acquire the language. Those accepted into the school despite the fact that they do not meet the language requirement have the opportunity to integrate seamlessly into the school community. However, where conditional acceptance is granted to persons who do not meet the *class* requirement, integration into the school community is more difficult and becoming part of the 'self' remains an ongoing challenge. The way in which this ambiguity is represented in the *Keurboslaan* series is that the taint of the other is mostly linked to appearance. In Chapter One it was noted that Roelof Serfontein represents the archetypical Afrikaner male and that he even won a competition (which he did not enter at free will) in which he walked away with the title of Mr Afrikaner. He is described as tall, dark, and attractive and extremely well-built. In many of the Keurboslaan texts bystanders remark on the exceptional good looks and healthy complexions of Keurboslaan pupils, and the brightest among the Keurboslaan boys are always described as tall and athletically built. Therefore it is important to note that when boys from undesired class backgrounds may be admitted to the school under certain conditions, these boys' difference is generally marked by their appearance.

In *Kaptein Richard*, the headmaster accepts into his school - as part of a 'sociological experiment' - four boys who have been found guilty of various criminal offences and who are thus classified as juvenile delinquents. The selection requirement that headmaster passed on to André Smit, the director of his institute dedicated to the plight

of juvenile delinquents and the person responsible for selecting four boys to send to Keurboslaan, is that the boys had to be exceptionally intelligent. Thus, while these boys clearly do not meet the class requirement for admission into the school, their intellectual abilities open up the possibilities for their inclusion, even though there are a number of conditions attached to their admission, which may be withdrawn by Dr Serfontein at any time. Loggerenberg, Verryne, Logan, and Alberts, the four juvenile delinquents, are accepted into Keurboslaan, yet Rudolph Borneman, a Keurboslaan prefect, can tell by just looking at them that they are not Keurboslaan boys. His first impression of Loggerenberg is described as follows:

'n Groot seun kom die gang af. Hy is so lank soos Rudolph self. Sy arms is besonder lank, sodat sy hande byna sy knieë skrams raak. Klein oë wat onder dik winkbroue uitloer, en 'n smal voorkop, dra by om hierdie seun byna bobbejaanagtig te laat voorkom (Krogh, no date, page 33-34).

[A huge boy comes walking down the passage. He has exceptionally long arms, so that his hands almost touch his knees. He has small eyes that peeps out from underneath dense eyebrows, and, together with a small forehead, this gives the boy an almost baboon-like appearance.]

Alberts – a former member of the infamous Glennis gang - is described as having snake-like eyes (1959a:97) and of displaying a nervousness that reminds Rudolph of an animal in enemy territory (Krogh, no date, page 39). Logan, who had been abused by his grandparents who brought him up after the death of his parents and who had developed kleptomania as a result of the abuse, is betrayed by his paleness and frailness (Krogh, no date, p 39). It is only Jurie Verryne whose otherness is not revealed through his appearance, but then, since the four keep together, his association with them taints him. Importantly, Verryne is from a poor background and grew up with his mother and a large number of siblings after his father's death. Yet, he had not been into any serious crime and has only been apprehended for petty theft.

Another example is the case of Wentzel Elsenach in *Keurboslaan se Peetvaders*, a boy who grew up in the bush with virtually no contact with human beings because his father kept him isolated, who is admitted by Dr Serfontein for a test period. Elsenach was brought up by his father, a religious fundamentalist, in the bush and has had very limited contact with people. He survived from catching small animals and made himself clothes from their skins. He had never learnt to clean himself and can only read the Bible. He is also not used to speaking and became violent and aggressive when he

interacts with other people. As was the case with Loggerenberg, his appearance is initially compared to that of a primate or a wild animal. However, he is inducted into the Keurboslaan's way of doing and slowly adapts to school life. Yet, his appearance never fully becomes that of a 'normal' boy.

Whilst a further requirement for inclusion into this community is that one needs to be male, the boundaries here, too, prove to be porous, since it seems to be impossible to keep women out of the school community entirely. Yet, whilst the class criterion may be bent to allow for the admission of children from lower class backgrounds to the school under certain conditions, women are allowed to enter the world of Keurboslaan but cannot secure admittance to the school.⁹⁰ The basis on which selected women are included into the school community is either the fact that they hold positions that are regarded to be designated for women, for example, that of school secretary, nurse and matron, or because they are related to one of the (male) members of the Keurboslaan community. Yet, their inclusion despite, in most instances female characters, of which there are but a few, remain on the periphery. The inclusion of women is premised on condition that they play a particular role. A woman's role in the family is privileged above her professional role and it is standard practice that women leave their jobs after getting married or that they have no profession at all. Helen Bielefeld vacated her position as school secretary after she married Dr Serfontein, whilst the headmaster's niece, Tessa, is described as a house wife after she married Krynauw and Dr Serfontein's sister, a paediatrician, gave up her career when she got married:

Die oudste dogter, Evelyn, is goed getroud. Vroeër was sy ook kinderarts. Leonie, die jongste dogter en ook die jongste kind, bestudeer nog kuns oorsee. (Keurboslaan se struikrower: 7)

[The eldest daughter, Evelyn, married well. She was also a paediatrician earlier. Leonie, the youngest daughter and child, is still studying art abroad.]

Highlighting the conditionality of their acceptance into the Keurboslaan community, women are mostly excluded from important discussions and decision-making. This is explained by the code of chivalry towards women that underpins the Keurboslaan tradition and includes the instruction to keep difficult or unpleasant issues away from

⁹⁰ There is one exception to this statement, though. Tessa Serfontein, the headmaster's cousin, who ran away from her parents and came to live with her uncle from the age of nine, was allowed to attend classes with the boys. However, she was under the strict supervision of Ms Mostert, the school matron and was not enrolled as a pupil in the school. In hindsight, the headmaster regretted his decision to allow her to attend classes with the boys.

women, in order to protect them. For example, in the Serfontein household, family conflict is only discussed when Dr Serfontein's mother is not present (Krogh 1949b:15, Krogh 1949:186). By and large women's acceptance into the Keurboslaan community is premised on and judged by the successfulness with which they perform their role with regard to family responsibilities. The headmaster's sister in law, Coralie Serfontein, for example, is rejected because of her failure in her role as a wife and mother:

Op die familie se aanmerkings oor 'n vrou wat haar eie man se broers van oorsee laat kom sonder om hulle eers vir 'n maaltyd na haar huis te nooi en die man wat swak genoeg is om so iets toe te laat, antwoord hy absoluut niks nie (Krogh 1945b:9).

[To the family's remarks about a woman who lets her own husband's brothers come from overseas without first inviting them to her house for a meal, and about the husband who is weak enough to allow something like this, he says absolutely nothing.]

Likewise, when Dr Serfontein's niece, Tessa, complains about the long hours that her husband works, Dr Serfontein threatens to break off his relationship with her because she is not a supportive wife to Eugene Krynauw.

In the Keurboslaan world, women are generally fall into one of three categories: neurotic, impulsive and emotional; practical and sensible; or frail, quiet and brave given much suffering.

Tessa Serfontein, Roelof's niece who comes to live with him after being rejected by her mother, is an example of such a character. She is described as emotional, flighty and overly dramatic. Another is Coralie Serfontein, the headmaster's sister-in-law, who is portrayed as neurotic, conniving and unstable. She never recovered from her son's death and rejected her daughter. An English-speaking South African, Roelof Serfontein's family held it against her that she always pretended that she was unable to speak Afrikaans (Krogh, no date, page 149).

The second category of women is generally reserved for older women who had experienced hardship in their lives. Examples include the headmaster's secretary, Miss Conradie, who is portrayed as brave in the face of being handicapped and ill. Another such woman is Mrs Austin, the wife of a former teacher at Keurboslaan who was

suspended by Dr Serfontein because of his weak character. Mr Austin allowed his family to live in poverty and squalor, yet, when his wife was dying from a terminal disease, she remained constant in her love for him. This vision of courage and honour in the moment of death was the inspiration for the main character in one of Roelof Serfontein's novels, which was acclaimed by critics as the most humane of all of his books and the best he has ever written. The mother of Wentzel Elsenach, the boy who has been brought up by his father in the bush, is another such woman. Whilst not all women who fall into this category had necessarily suffered quite as much, they are portrayed as especially sensitive and caring persons. Roelof Serfontein's mother, despite coming across as a caring and understanding individual, does not play an important role in the series. Dian, Roelof Serfontein's eldest daughter, would also fall into this category.

An interesting feature of the way in which women are represented in the *Keurboslaan* series is that women characters who fall into these first two categories are often described as having child-like qualities, or as behaving like a child, and therefore needing to be disciplined, or as inspiring protective feelings as one would feel towards a child. It is for example suggested that Coralie Serfontein, the headmaster's sister-in-law, needs a good hiding (Krogh 1949a:54), whilst Roelof Serfontein's mother's youthful sense of humour receives praise:

'Moeder', met haar skoonheid en haar jeugdige humor staan op 'n spesiale verhoog in die Serfontein-tuiste (Krogh 1949b:186).

['Mother', with her beauty and youthful sense of humour, takes in a special place on the stage in the Serfontein home.]

Miss Conradie, the headmaster's secretary, brings out protective feelings in men:

Arme klein Juffrou Conradie, die hoof se sekretaresse, met haar klein lyfie, krom en swak deur 'n vroeë swaar siekte, en haar smekende sagte blou oë, laat almal voel asof sy soos 'n klein kind opgepas moet word (Krogh, date unknown, page 8).

[With her tiny frame, crooked and weak as a result of an earlier severe illness, and her soft pleading blue eyes, poor little Miss Conradie, the headmaster's secretary, makes everyone feel that she needs to be taken care of as if she were a small child.]

The last category is reserved for women who are described as pragmatic and sensible, and not too idealistic. These women know when to withdraw from conversations and leave men alone to sort out their own problems, but they are also prepared to speak out when absolutely necessary. Mrs Mostert, the school matron, who falls into this category, is portrayed as a strong and caring, albeit strict individual. However, the reader is never provided an opportunity to get to know her. Helen Bielefeld, the school secretary who eventually marries the headmaster, also falls into this category. These women are valued, because they embody female diplomacy combined with male sensibility. In other words, they are close to being men, but do not threaten men precisely because they hold on to their female qualities. For example, Helen Bielefeld is described as follows:

Dan kyk sy op, reguit en ernstig, byna soos 'n man (Krogh, date unknown: 88)

[Then she looks up, the expression on her face straight and serious, almost like a man's.]

Women in this category are generally depicted as never having been married or as widows. Helen Bielefeld was a widow, while Mrs Mostert had never been married. Other examples are Olga Betts and her daughter, Monica. Olga was widowed and had to raise her daughter under very difficult circumstances. Her daughter Monica, who eventually gets engaged to Richard Serfontein, grew up in a community where it was thought that her mother was a prostitute. Women in this category are regarded to be such sensible persons precisely because they have not had it easy themselves. This claim is supported by the following extract:

Ek handel in hierdie gevalle nooit met die moeder nie, tensy die moeder 'n weduwee is. Weduwees is natuurlik gewoonlik taamlik verstandig, omdat hulle swaar gekry het (Krogh 1949a:54).

[In these cases, I never deal with the mother, that is, unless she is a widow. Of course, widows generally tend to be reasonably sensible, since they have had it difficult.]

Finally, the last criterion for admission to the Keurboslaan College of Boys is race. Whilst this seems to be the criterion that is least permeable, there is once again an exception. As in the case of women, black persons are allowed to enter the Keurboslaan world based on their particular role, in this case as servants, and cannot be admitted to the school. The major character representing this group in the

Keurboslaan series is called Danster Sebolai, a black man who was assigned by Mr Schoonbee to be Roelof Serfontein's personal assistant or servant and continued to serve him in this role for the rest of his life. Before the headmaster married Helen Bielefeld, Danster was the only person that was allowed to set out the headmaster's clothes and cook his food. The relationship between the headmaster and Danster is therefore depicted as one of friendship and trust, but within very specific parameters and with Danster's role clearly designated as servant. Other black persons who are permitted to enter the world of *Keurboslaan* are family members of Danster's, provided that they do not overstep the boundaries set by the relationship between servant and master. As is the case with women, black staff are also excluded from decision-making and the unwritten code of conduct requires that students and staff behave in a courteous way to black staff:

Teenoor bediendes, swart of wit, wat hulself nie durf verdedig nie, is hy altyd wonderlik sag en beleefd, hoe sy humeur ook al mag wees. Daar hulle nie mag teëpraat nie, moet 'n mens dit nie vir hulle onmoontlik maak om hulle te bedwing nie, meen hy (Krogh, date unknown, page 141).

[Towards servants, black or white, who dare not defend themselves, his conduct is always wonderfully courteous and soft-spoken, no matter how ill-tempered he may be. He is of the opinion that since they may not answer back, one should not make it impossible for them to contain themselves.]

In summary, the main criteria that have emerged for inclusion into the body of the self in the *Keurboslaan* series are linked to gender, race, class and language. However, *Keurboslaan* College for Boys was established with a particular mandate: to produce leaders for the volk. Consequently, the criteria outlined here are admission requirements for becoming a member of the future ruling class of Afrikaners. By implication, this invokes another self: the body of the Afrikaner. Whilst it has been shown that the boundaries of the self are porous in the case of *Keurboslaan*, it has also been demonstrated that exceptions are usually made on the level of the individual rather than the group and that the different criteria do not facilitate or hinder entry to the body of the self on an equal basis. While examples from the stories show that both white non-Afrikaans speakers who are willing to learn and speak Afrikaans and Afrikaners from lower class backgrounds that are regarded to be of high intelligence can in certain instances become part of the self, the participation of white women and blacks is limited to entry into this world, as opposed to admission into the body of the self, and is premised on their fulfilment of a particular role. In the case of women, this

role is primarily vested in the family and centres on their responsibility for producing the 'volk'. The exclusion of white Afrikaans girls and of white Afrikaans-speaking boys from lower class backgrounds from the Keurboslaan College for Boys is not motivated on the basis that they are not part of the Afrikaner nation. In the case of women, their exclusion is based on the specific role women have to play, namely tending to the family, the chivalric code to protect women and keep them away from things that may upset them, and particular qualities that women display – such as being emotional - that make them less suitable for positions of leadership. In the case of men from lower class backgrounds their lack of opportunity is deemed to make it less likely for them to enter positions of power, except for truly intelligent and hardworking individuals from this stratum. In other words, in both cases the need to be ruled is emphasised, which excludes these groups from the ranks of the Afrikaner ruling class but not from the body of the Afrikaner nation. Based on the premise that no-one would be admitted into the Keurboslaan school that would not also be admitted into the body of the Afrikaner nation, it would therefore seem that white Afrikaans speaking women and white Afrikaners from lower class backgrounds are automatically included in the body of the Afrikaner nation and that whites who are willing to adopt the lifestyle and language of Afrikaners may also be included, whereas there has been no evidence to suggest that black persons could in any way become part of this body of the Afrikaner nation.

Representations of the other in the Keurboslaan series

The world depicted in the *Keurboslaan* series is an Afrikaans or Afrikaner world. In other words, the *Keurboslaan* series presents South Africa as an enclave for Afrikaners. All the main characters are Afrikaners and South Africa is implicitly presented as the country of the Afrikaner nation. It is in this context that this section explores representations of *the other* in the *Keurboslaan* series. In the previous section it has been shown that the boundaries between *the self* and *the other* are sometimes porous. Non-Afrikaans-speakers, women, blacks and Afrikaners from lower class backgrounds can be permanently or temporarily incorporated into the body of the self or at least share an intimate space with the body of the self on specific conditions and with specific limitations on their participation, even though this ability to be assimilated is not shared equally among these variables. For three reasons it is not productive to argue that since women and black persons are excluded from the body of the self in the *Keurboslaan* series, and since non-Afrikaans-speakers and Afrikaners from lower class backgrounds are only admitted to the body of the self on specific conditions, they comprise *the other* in the *Keurboslaan* series. First, the earlier discussion

demonstrated that the boundaries between the self and the non-self are porous. Second, while women and Afrikaners from a lower class background were excluded from the body of *the self* defined as the Afrikaner ruling class, they are nonetheless part of the body of the self framed as the Afrikaner nation. Third, in terms of the discourse of the nation and nationalism *the other* is not simply that which is not *the self*, but is comprised of those that present a danger to the self. Following from this, a more interesting question is how the danger *the other* presents to *the self* is articulated in the *Keurboslaan* series.

Conclusion

It has been argued that the *Keurboslaan* series employs three strategies that make it possible to imagine the Afrikaner nation in a manner that sets it apart from the way in which this 'nation' is imagined in other regimes of discourse. In particular, these strategies draw on the potentialities offered by fiction. In the first instance, a fictional reality is created that purports to insert itself into the ambit of modern South Africa of the 1940s when the series was first published, yet, this fictional world of *Keurboslaan* differs in some crucial respects from the realities of the time. The series portrays Afrikaners as well-adapted to city life, playing a strong role in the professions as Afrikaners and boasting a substantial middle class. In contrast to the literary works of the period that foregrounded the plight of so-called 'poor Afrikaners', the *Keurboslaan* series celebrated the – overstated - achievements of the petty bourgeoisie and Afrikaner intelligentsia. As such, the *Keurboslaan* series can be described as a kind of aspirational literature. Second, the series uses the device of showing rather than telling. By showcasing the lifestyles and attitudes of the petty bourgeoisie and Afrikaner intelligentsia, casting these classes in a positive light and showing their aims to be entirely benevolent and in the interest of Afrikaners, the *Keurboslaan* series legitimates their role. In other word, by instilling desire in the reader to be like one of the *Keurboslaan* characters, the series authenticates the right of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia to speak on behalf of and in the interest of the Afrikaner people. Thus, the *Keurboslaan* series offers a discourse of the nation that is vested with desire. In Chapter Two the argument was presented that Afrikaner nationalism required cross-class cooperation and unity in order to succeed. In the discourse of *Keurboslaan*, the existence and future of the Afrikaner nation is not tied to the plight of the poor Afrikaners and the extent to which they can be uplifted, but to the achievements of the Afrikaner intelligentsia. As a result, this makes the mobilisation around the cause of Afrikaner 'poor whites' an entirely voluntary undertaking, and as such far more

palatable to the group of Afrikaners that complained that books such as *Ampie* undermined their status. In the third instance, the *Keurboslaan* series places the emphasis on the fictional present and invents the future rather than commemorates the past. Where historical events are referred to at all, these are generally presented as quite distant in time and serve as repository of experience from which behaviour can be replicated.

It has been suggested that the criteria for admission to the Keurboslaan College for Boys can serve as a guideline to establish who belongs to the body of the self. The criteria for inclusion identified here centred on race (white), gender (male), class (upper class) and language (Afrikaans-speakers). Nonetheless, it was shown that women, Afrikaners from lower class backgrounds, non-Afrikaans-speakers and black persons could conditionally participate in this world, albeit not on an equal basis and provided that they play a specific role. In some cases, persons from lower class backgrounds or white non-Afrikaans-speakers from the 'right' class background displaying a willingness to acquire Afrikaans could gain entry to the body of the self. Thus, the lasting image of the 'self' that emerges from this varied set of criteria, is a self that irrevocably belongs to a ruling class, as clearly set out in the school's founding history. Hence, white Afrikaans-speaking women and white Afrikaans-speakers from lower class backgrounds formed part of the body of the self provided that they do not challenge the position of the ruler.

In Chapters Four and Seven it was stated that girls tend to read books for boys, but not the other way round. In the case of the *Keurboslaan* series, this fact takes on particular poignancy. Whilst the world of Keurboslaan excluded girls from participating in the body of the self, the series nonetheless had scores of young women readers. The consequence of this is that girl readers are allowed access to a terrain that is restricted to boys. As a result, they are brought to an understanding about the way 'men are' and they can experience for themselves men's 'true nature'. Strong characters such as Helen Bielefeld suggest that being one of very few exceptional women is an achievement in itself, since women tend to be so weak and flighty. Through Helen, girl readers are offered a model of the ways in which such strong women behave in order to 'counter' men's weaknesses. In other words, by showing that strong, sensible women earn the respect of men and have an important role to play, the *Keurboslaan* series claims that it is possible for a select number of women to earn the respect of men and gain power without having to be part of the ruling class.

It has been argued that in the discourse of the nation and nationalism *the other* is not simply that which is not *the self*, but is comprised of those that present a danger to the self. In the *Keurboslaan* series *the other* is generally depicted as a foreigner or from foreign descent and the threat of *the other* is predominantly represented by men. Moreover, the way in which *the other* is depicted as well as the type of threat *the other* represents is associated with race. When *the other* is presented as white, the threat is generally embodied by an individual, whereas when *the other* is portrayed as black, the danger is represented by a group. The danger presented by the *black other* is the danger of senseless violence. The threat presented by the *white other* is one of moral corruption or character defamation. As such, the danger the *white other* represents is presented to be far more serious than the danger presented by the *black other*. Whilst the threat of violence implies the threat of death, this is portrayed as a moral death. On the other hand, character defamation or moral degeneration is presented as far more serious and threatening, since it cannot be reversed, not even in the moment of death. Thus, it can be argued that the danger of *the other* is far more threatening in the white foreigner than in the black foreigner. Yet, this already hints to the far greater danger: the danger that the self may be corrupted by the foreigner, or that the self may be corrupted by the self. In summary, the threat posed by the white foreigner is not the source of the real danger. The real danger lies in the fact that the self allows itself to be corrupted, either from within its ranks or by an outsider. The idea that the self could represent a danger to the self emerges as a strong theme in the *Keurboslaan* series. In other words, the threat is not external but internal and it is mainly presented as a lack of self control. The next chapter explores the remedy the *Keurboslaan* series offers to counter this danger.

Chapter Nine:

The Body of the 'Nation': Sexuality and Self-control in *Keurboslaan* and in the *Tweede Trek* series

Seksualiteit is nie soos menige ultra-moderne beweging wil voorgee, slegs 'n *private* saak nie. Dit is by uitstek ook 'n vraagstuk van *sosiale* en *nasionale* betekenis. Die puberteitsperiode is die aangewese tydperk om die nadruk na die sosiale en nasionale aspekte daarvan te verskuiwe

J. De W. Keyter in *Dringende vraagtekens in ons opvoeding en onderwys. Tweede Trek-reeks no. XVII, 1942, page 129*

[Sexuality is not – as many ultramodern movements want to suggest - a private matter only. It is in particular also a question of *social* and *national* significance. Puberty is the appropriate period or phase to shift the emphasis to the social and national aspects of (sexuality).]

Introduction

This chapter examines discourse on the 'Afrikaner' body as a site of control, discipline and surveillance by reading discourses on, representations of and practices associated with schoolboy bodies in *Keurboslaan* against selected chapters on the sexuality and body of the Afrikaner child from the *Tweede Trek* series, a popular science series commissioned by the Afrikaner Broederbond and published by Nasionale Pers in the 1940s. It is argued that whilst narrative and discursive strategies employed in the 'discourse of science' differ from those employed in the 'discourse of fiction', these regimes of discourse articulate largely similar ideas about the dangers posed by the body and sexuality of the Afrikaner child to the project of nation-building. However, the role of popular fiction for children in disseminating ideas on Afrikaner nationalism amongst a wide range of readers has not received much scholarly attention. It is argued here that the discourse of fiction offers interesting ways into questions about the way in which nations come to be imagined, potentially has a wide reach and diffusion, and is one of the ways in which the discourse of nationalism seeps into practices of everyday life. The argument presented here is fairly limited. It examines discourse on the body and sexuality of the Afrikaner child, with emphasis on the need for compliance with authority and self-discipline, and explores the implications thereof for the development of a particular form of Afrikaner subjectivity. The chapter focuses on practices of everyday life, specifically the leisure activity of reading fiction, and, in doing so, attempts to problematise the notion of reading for pleasure. Finally, the

chapter explores popular fiction as a regime of discourse through which ideas and ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism was disseminated to a wider audience.

The chapter comprises of a comparison between the discourse on sexuality and the body found in the *Tweede Trek* series - which was commissioned by the Afrikaner Broederbond and published by Nasionale Pers in the 1940s to follow on the centenary celebration of the Great Trek - and the *Keurboslaan* series against the background of the challenges facing the Afrikaner elite in its nation-building project. It is argued that the *Keurboslaan* series invites a reading of the fictional school as the body of the nation. In that context, it is shown that there exists a particular resonance between ideas on sexuality and the body of the child as expressed in the *Tweede Trek* series and ideas on and practices of the body found in the *Keurboslaan* texts.

Isabel Hofmeyr (1987) 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. In Chapter Five the genesis of the Afrikaans book publishing industry was reviewed. It was shown that it was only in the mid-1920s that the publishing of Afrikaans books really got momentum. Earlier, the focus was on establishing newspapers and popular magazines in Afrikaans. By the late 1930s the book publishing industry had matured, with Nasionale Pers recording sales of more than three million books between 1916 and 1937. It is during this period that the production of popular fiction in Afrikaans commences. There was a big upsurge in sales of Afrikaans books during the period of the Second World war, given that imported paper was very expensive, the number of books imported dropped sharply and because of increased anti-war and nationalist sentiments among white Afrikaans speakers.

It is against this background that attempts by the Afrikaner elite to mobilise Afrikaner unity through the circulation of texts must be understood. In its aims, the elite was facing a number of social challenges. In general, 'Afrikaners' were poor, poorly educated, struggling to adapt to life in the city, ill equipped for commercial farming, and divided in terms of class. Based on data collected by the Carnegie Commission during 1929-1930, it can be argued that a quarter of all Afrikaners could be classified as 'very poor' in the early 1930s. Given these conditions, many of the publications in Afrikaans produced by the Afrikaner elite addressed contemporary issues and dealt with the dangers and challenges facing Afrikanerdom in its strife to become a nation. The

discourse of danger had as its purpose to raise awareness among Afrikaans speakers of the plight of poor Afrikaners and to foster unity amongst white Afrikaans speakers. With regard to the mobilisation around Afrikaner nationalism by the elite through print texts, it would seem that the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism was disseminated through different regimes of discourse, each with its own truth function. For the purpose of this argument, at least three such regimes of discourse can be distinguished, namely the discourse of science, the discourse of religion and the discourse of fiction. Whilst these regimes of discourse were distinctive in terms of style, register and truth claims, all three discourses featured in popular publications such as *Die Boervrou* (see Kruger 1991) and *Die Huisgenoot*, and in newspapers such as *Die Burger*, *Die Vaderland* and *Die Volksblad*.

The discourse of religion supported the advancement of Afrikaner nationalism by giving nation-building religious content. Through the discourse of religion, links could be drawn between the Afrikaner nation and God's chosen people, Israel, thereby providing an animating historical trajectory and destiny for 'the nation'. Religion provided a foundation for the Volksmoeder discourse, which was aimed at moving women out of the workplaces and factories where they were building class alliances with black women and to remove them from positions of decision-making (see Brink 1987, 1986, and Kruger 1991). And the discourse of religion was used to support ideas about race that was to underpin the principles of Apartheid. For a detailed analysis of the discourse of religion and its relation to Afrikaner nationalism see Moodie (1979). It should be noted that a substantial part of the popular discourse of religion that was circulating in print in the 1930s and 1940s was not written by Afrikaners, but was translations of English and particularly American works. During the Second World War, no Bibles were available in South Africa and people therefore relied on Christian literature to fill this gap. Examples of texts that were translated into Afrikaans include *Die hand wat die spykers ingeslaan het* by J. Fletcher Ray, and *Die ideale vrou* by A. Lowry, both published in 1942. These books had sold 30 000 copies each by 1947. (Steyn 1992d:87).

The discourse of science functioned to legitimate and explain ideas about nationalism, race, and culture, to invent an authentic Afrikaner history, and to educate white Afrikaans speakers. Series such as *Tweede Trek*, published by Nasionale Pers, and *Monument*, published by J.L. van Schaik, were entirely devoted to educating Afrikaners about many social science concepts and ideas that pertained to Afrikaner nationalism. In addition, popular publications such as *Die Boervrou* provided information to women

about nutrition and principles of domestic science (see, for example, Kruger 1991). The popular scientific discourse was strongly influenced by Dutch, German and American social scientists.

In terms of the discourse of fiction, it was indicated that most of literary works produced in the 1930s and 1940s, especially prose, was in the realist tradition and dealt with problems around Afrikaner poverty, dispossession of land, and alienation in the city. Many of these themes are also present in popular fiction for children of the time.⁹¹

Together these regimes of discourse, though fragmented and not necessarily coherent, gave particular expression to the historical trajectory of a nationalist, modern and modernising Afrikanerdom, guided by Christian principles, driven by notions of scientific progress and betterment, that faces up to the challenges of the day.

An issue that is not always given the necessary prominence in studies on the First and Second Language Movements and the link between Afrikaner nationalism and literary production in Afrikaans is the reaction of the (Afrikaans reading) public to products of the cultural industry. In Chapter Five, it was indicated that in reaction to the publication of books such as *Ampie*, there was a general call from 'ordinary readers' for popular, escapist fiction in Afrikaans and a rejection of the direction 'Literature' in Afrikaans was taking. This should not only be seen as a call for more popular and escapist novels in Afrikaans, but also an expression of resentment against depictions of Afrikaners as dirty, backward, and tragic.

Nasionale Pers and the *Tweede Trek* series

The *Tweede Trek* (Second Trek) series, in twenty-five volumes, was published by Nasionale Pers in Bloemfontein between 1940 and 1943. Nasionale Pers was established in 1915 by a group of young Afrikaner nationalists from the Afrikaner elite in the Cape through the issuing of public shares. The aim of establishing their own publishing company was to give expression to their political beliefs, since they felt that the Dutch newspaper, *Ons Land*, no longer met their needs and because there was no other Dutch newspaper that supported General Hertzog (Muller 1990:50). Closely linked to this aim was the promotion of the Afrikaans language (Muller 1990:53). The first publication produced by Nasionale Pers was *Die Burger*, a daily newspaper

⁹¹ See, for example *Judith op Blourand*, *Chrissie en Joey*, and so forth.

circulated in the Cape. In *Sonop in die Suide*, a historical overview of the history of Nasionale Pers, it is stated that the first decade of its existence was financially difficult. For this and other reasons, preference was given to firmly establish the newspapers and magazines published by the Pers, rather than to focus on producing more books. It was only in the period after 1925 that Nasionale Pers really began to explore its role as publisher of the Afrikaans book. Financially, several of the early endeavours were not successful. Muller (1990) explains that this was because many books that did not produce any profit were published for ideological reasons and because 'Afrikaners first had to be taught to read Afrikaans with pleasure' (Muller 1990:498). Recording the history of the Afrikaner was an important priority for Nasionale Pers. By the late 1930s a succession of historical publications had been published. Many of these were biographies of Voortrekker leaders, but there were also a number of commissioned historical works on the history of the Afrikaner people.⁹²

The *Tweede Trek* series was published between 1940 and 1943. The aim of publishing this series, Muller (1990:549) explains, was far more radical than merely to record the Afrikaner's history. The FAK recommended the publication of the *Tweede Trek* series to Nasionale Pers, but did not subsidise the publication thereof. Muller argues that

[d]eur die FAK [Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuurliggame] het die Broederbond geprobeer om Afrikaners hul geledere om 'n gemeenskaplike verlede te laat saamsluit ten einde nuwe gevare beter die hoof te kan bied⁹³ (Muller 1990: 556).

He further states that

maar dit was eers met die *Tweede Trek*-reeks dat die Broederbond duidelik geprobeer het om 'n Afrikaner-republiek op 'n Christelik-Nasionale grondslag te bepleit en om eenheid onder Afrikaners te bevorder ten einde dié ideaal te verwesenlik (Muller 1990:557)⁹⁴

⁹² I use the word 'people' as a translation of the Afrikaans word 'volk'.

⁹³ '[t]hrough the FAK [Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuurliggame], the Broederbond attempted to get Afrikaners to close their ranks around a shared past in order to be better prepared to face up to new dangers'

⁹⁴ 'But it was only with the *Tweede Trek* series that the Broederbond clearly attempted to plead for an Afrikaner republic based on a Christian national foundation and promote unity among Afrikaners to achieve this goal (Muller 1990:557)

The *Tweede Trek* series was designed as popular scientific literature, and was inexpensively produced in order to make it affordable to each and every Afrikaner household. On the back cover of books in the *Tweede Trek* series, the aims of the series are described as follows:

As a consequence of the success with which our 'Own Library Scheme' was crowned, the question arose among many interested persons whether a similar initiative in the interest of popular scientific education of our 'volk' could not be harnessed. In European countries provision is made for the scientific education for those members of the community who are not in the position to enrol for a university course. In our own country, this need is strongly felt, yet the necessary initiative to provide for this need has always been lacking.

Publication of a popular scientific series in which all the questions pertinent to our 'volk' are discussed in an expert manner and which is well within the financial reach of each member of the community has always been one of the most important ways in which to provide in the aforementioned need. However, the difficulty is to find a publisher with the necessary boldness and initiative that is prepared to accept full responsibility for such an initiative.

Of significance is the title of the series, which alludes to the centenary celebrations of the Groot Trek (Great Trek). The celebrations involved a symbolic trek by a group of Afrikaners from the Cape to Transvaal with ox wagons. On its way to the North, the Trek stopped at various small towns. It became a cultural event of great significance. The title of the *Tweede Trek* series can therefore be interpreted in two ways. In the first instance, it seeks to establish a symbolic link with the centenary celebrations. A second interpretation, however, demonstrates the imperative of a second great move for the Afrikaner, a move to a republic based on Christian and nationalist foundations. Through the selection of the title and the cultural connotations that this invoked, the publishers attempted to link its contents explicitly to the mythologized and determinist history of the Afrikaner 'volk'.

Professors J. de W. Keyter, N. Diederichs, G. Cronjé, and Dr P.J. Meyer edited the series. Dr Meyer, who was also the author of the titles *Die Afrikaner* and *Ons Republiek* in the *Tweede Trek* series, later said that the management committee of the Afrikaner-Broederbond's executive council had asked him in 1940-1941 to 'cast the Afrikaner's republican striving as it was formulated by different academics and politicians in the

beginning years of the war in an ordered and political-scientific whole'.⁹⁵ The following volumes appeared in the series:

Die Afrikaner	P.J. Meyer
Ons Eerste Digtters	Dr P.J. Nienaber
My Nasie in Nood	J.D. Kestell
Die Sorg vir ons kinders en jeugdige	W.A. Willemse
Ons Volksdrag	Mej. Trudie Kestell
Die Ekonomiese Posisie van die Afrikaner	Dr C.G.W. Schumann
Die Huwelik en gesin	Dr J. De W. Keyter
Christelike en Nasionale Onderwys – Deel I	Dr E Greyling
Christelike en Nasionale Onderwys – Deel II	Dr E. Greyling
Ons Republiek	Dr P.J. Meyer
Volksgesondheid en Maatskaplike Werk	Prof. Dr J. De W. Keyter
Ontspanning en Maatskaplike Werk	Prof. Dr J. De W. Keyter
Die Afrikaanse Universiteit en sy taak in die volkslewe	Prof. Dr. T.J. Hugo
Afrikaner-Volkseenheid	Prof. Dr D.F. Du T. Malherbe
Lewensomstandighede en opvoeding van die Voortrekkerkind	J. J. Lubbe
Dringende Vraagtekens in ons Opvoeding en Onderwys	Prof. Dr J. De W. Keyter
Rasse en Rassevermenging	Dr G. Eloff
Naturelle-opvoeding en –onderwys – Deel I	Dr B. F. Nel
Naturelle-opvoeding en –onderwys – Deel II	Dr B. F. Nel
Verarming en Oorheersing	J.H. Coetzee
Ons Dokumente	Dr A Kieser
Die Bioskoop in Diens van die Volk – Deel I	Dr H. Rompel
Die Bioskoop in Diens van die Volk – Deel II	Dr H. Rompel
'n Beknopte Geskiedenis van die Hollands -Afrikaanse Drukpers	Dr P.J. Nienaber

As evident from the titles in the series, the series attempted to (1) construct a history and cultural identity for the Afrikaner nation (*Ons Dokumente, Ons Eerste Digtters, Die Afrikaner, Ons Volksdrag, Lewensomstandighede en Opvoeding van die Voortrekkerkind*), (2) give expression to the idea of an Afrikaner republic on nationalist

⁹⁵ This quotation is from Meyer's book, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie*, (Johannesburg 1984) page 51 as quoted in Muller 1990:550)

principles (*Afrikaner-Volkseenheid, Ons Republiek, Christelike en Nasionale Onderwys – Part I and II*), and (3) outline the dangers facing the Afrikaner volk. The idea of danger is most clearly expressed in the title, *My Nasie in Nood*. However, specific threats to the Afrikaner are discussed in depth in other volumes in the series. These include the danger of poverty and British domination (*Verarming en Oorheersing, Die Ekonomiese posisie van die Afrikaner*), miscegenation (*Rasse en Rassevermenging*), the crises in education (*Dringende Vraagtekens in ons Opvoeding en Onderwys*), the threat posed by black labour (*Naturelle-opvoeding en –Onderwys Parts I and II*), social problems and urbanisation (*Die Sorg vir Ons Kinders en Jeugdiges, Volksgesondheid en Maatskaplike Werk, Ontspanning en Maatskaplike Werk*.)

Of these volumes, the biggest print run was 3 050 and the smallest 1 500 (of volume number 25). The books were sold at 3s each. Muller readily admits that the books were poorly produced and did not compare favourably to the *Kwarteeu Serie*,⁹⁶ but argues that very important and topical issues were nonetheless addressed in the *Tweede Trek* series, which made it significant (Muller 1990: 516). None of the volumes in the series was ever reprinted, and it can therefore safely be assumed that the dissemination of the series was fairly limited.

Sexuality and the boy's body in the *Tweede Trek* series and in *Keurboslaan*:

The school as body of the nation

When Nasionale Pers published the *Tweede Trek* series to coincide with the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek, its overarching aims with the series were to build support for an Afrikaner republic based on Christian and nationalist principles and to unite white Afrikaans speakers under the umbrella of the Afrikaner nation. To achieve this, the *Tweede Trek* series included information about ways in which Afrikaners could improve their social condition, reviewed the Afrikaner history and cultural achievements, placed the republican striving on a 'scientific foundation', created awareness about the plight of fellow Afrikaans speakers, delineated a programme of action for the regeneration of the Afrikaner nation, and outlined key challenges facing the Afrikaner on its way to a republic. It is not suggested here that the *Tweede Trek* series gave expression to a coherent and singular position on all of these matters.

⁹⁶ A series of twelve books to commemorate the first twenty-five years of the existence of Nasionale Pers commissioned for the Nasionale Pers Quarter Century Festival. The books were written by prominent Afrikaans writers, among them Jochem van Bruggen, C.J. Langenhoven, F.E.J Malherbe and others.

Given that the volumes were written by a wide range of authors and that there was a need to produce the series at low cost in a short time, the series displays gaps and overlaps and opinions expressed in the different volumes are sometimes contradictory. Nonetheless, the series is a fair reflection of the thinking of Afrikaner intellectuals of the time on matters pertaining to nation building.

An important feature of the series is the way in which it gave particular prominence to the articulation of dangers facing the Afrikaner. In the introduction to *Dringende Vraagtekens in ons Opvoeding en Onderwys*, this emphasis on external threats is made explicit:

Waarna [in hierdie volume van die Tweede Trek reeks] gestrewe word is slegs om die mede-Afrikaner bewus te maak van die groot nasionale gevare wat daar dreig en hom tot eerlike, ernstige denke aan te spoor (Keyter 1942:6)

[What [this volume of the Tweede Trek series] endeavours is only to create awareness among the fellow Afrikaner of the immense national dangers that are threatening out there and to encourage him to candid, sober thought.]

In *My Nasie in Nood*, volume III in the series, seven such dangers are outlined: the loss of self-respect among Afrikaners; a lack of desire to work and an antipathy to manual labour; poor adjustment of the Afrikaner to the industrialised economy and modern farming methods; absence of a sense of solidarity among Afrikaners; the reality that the Afrikaner had no place in the economic life; the fact that the virtue of saving, which once characterised the Afrikaner's approach to money matters, had disappeared, and, finally, the tendency among Afrikaners to adopt lifestyles, cultural practices and beliefs that were foreign, i.e. non-Afrikaans, and that sometimes stood in opposition to the culture and worldview of the Afrikaner. In this discourse of imminent danger, the body seems to be central, both as metaphor and as site of remedy. In the introduction to *Dringende Vraagtekens in ons Opvoeding en Onderwys*, the Afrikaner volk is described as a diseased body:

My nasie in nood! En dit is nie alleen die honderduisende ongelukkiges wat in nood is nie – die ganse nasie is in nood, want die hele nasie word getref deur die ontsettend groot getal hopeloos versonkenes. Die liggaam kan nie gesond wees nie as hy ledemate het wat siek is; en as ledemate nie gesond word nie, en inteendeel in krankheid toeneem, dan sterf uiteindelik die liggaam self (Kestell 1940: 7).

[My nation in danger! And it is not only the hundreds of thousands unfortunate ones that are in danger, but it is the entire nation that is endangered, since the entire nation is affected by the large number of hopelessly sunken. The body cannot be healthy if it has limbs that are ailing; and if these limbs do not heal and, on the contrary, become even more ill, the body itself will eventually die.]

However, in restoring the nation to health, Kestell indicates that it is the hearts, minds and bodies of the youth that need to be targeted:

So is 'n deel van my nasie in nood. Hopeloos versonke. Van hulle is nie veel te verwag nie. Maar hulle kinders moet gered word (Kestell 1940: 32).

[Thus is a part of my nation in crisis. Hopelessly sunken (in the deepest state of surrender). From them not much is to be expected. But their children must be saved.]

The *Tweede Trek* series postulates a close link between sexuality and the nation. Consequently, regulation of the body and sexuality of the adolescent is regarded as an important aspect of the process of nation building. In a chapter entitled 'Sexual Education' in *Dringende Vraagtekens in ons Opvoeding en Onderwys*, volume XVII in the *Tweede Trek* series, Keyter articulates this understanding:

Seksualiteit is nie soos menige ultra-moderne beweging wil voorgee, slegs 'n *private* saak nie. Dit is by uitstek ook 'n vraagstuk van *sosiale* en *nasionale* betekenis. Die puberteitsperiode is die aangewese tydperk om die nadruk na die sosiale en nasionale aspekte daarvan te verskuiwe (Keyter 1942:129).

[Sexuality is not – as many ultramodern movements want to suggest - a private matter only. It is in particular also a question of *social* and *national* significance. Puberty is the appropriate period or phase to shift the emphasis to the social and national aspects of (sexuality).]

Matters pertaining to the sexuality and body of the child and young adult surface in many of the volumes in the *Tweede Trek* series, but is explicitly addressed in two of the volumes, namely *Dringende Vraagtekens in ons Onderwys an Opvoeding* by J. de W. Keyter and *Die Sorg vir ons Kinders en Jeugdiges* by W.A. Willemse. Whilst Willemse focuses on the body and sexuality of the girl and young woman in his contribution, the chapter by Keyter is concerned with the sexuality of the boy and young man. For the purposes of this argument, the chapters from Keyter and Willemse are read against the *Keurboslaan* series.

In summary, it is argued here that the *Tweede Trek* series attaches special importance to the sexuality of the child and the dominant discourse in this regard is the danger that the self poses to the self. Sexuality is explained as something that needs to be regulated. Undisciplined bodies and unrestrained sexual practices, in particular masturbation, are rendered as threats to the nation, whilst the need to subject the body to discipline and exercise is emphasized. The highest virtue that can be achieved is that of self-control.

There are a number of parallels between the *Tweede Trek* series and *Keurboslaan* that are explored here. As indicated in Chapter One, Keurboslaan College for Boys' founding history plays an important role in the Keurboslaan books and the school's historical trajectory frames many of the narratives. It is argued here that this founding history invites a reading of the Keurboslaan College for Boys as the body of the nation and the school's beginnings, which was outlined in Chapter One, is therefore briefly recounted.

Keurboslaan College for Boys was originally established by the eccentric Mister Schoonbee, an intellectual and a dreamer who understood very little about the demands of school management but felt that he had to create an opportunity for Afrikaans speaking boys to attend a good school at which teaching takes place through the medium of Afrikaans. Under Mister Schoonbee's management, the school was poorly resourced, struggled to survive and produced exceptionally poor results. Yet, despite these failings, parents were reluctant to move their children out of the school, because they were committed to the principle of a private school for Afrikaners and therefore wanted to keep the school going. In *Jong Dr. Serfontein*, Oscar Wienand, a senior student at the school, explains that the parents of Keurboslaan pupils felt that they had to support the school despite the many problems simply because it was the only Afrikaans private school in the country (Krogh 1945:11). In the revised edition of this title, the reluctance of parents to move their children to better schools is explicitly tied to the fact that the school was established as a project to provide quality schooling in Afrikaans to children of 'volksleiers' (leaders of the Afrikaans people). Moving one's children to another school would be perceived as an admission that the project had failed, which would expose Afrikaners to mockery from English speaking South Africans (see Chapter One).

Through circumstance, Roelof Serfontein arrived in Keurboslaan where he met Mr Schoonbee, the school principal. A unique friendship developed between the two men and Mr Schoonbee asked Roelof to stay on as school principal. On taking up his duties as school principal, Serfontein found conditions in the school in a completely unsatisfactory state. The school had very few facilities and no sport fields; the dormitories were dark and stuffy; pupils were dirty, their hair was long and unkempt, and their clothes torn. The school did not have a proper timetable or curriculum and its teachers were unqualified or under qualified. Moreover, the school lacked discipline of any kind and schoolboys were free to roam around and do whatever they liked. Since the school was understaffed, teachers were in the habit of sending boys off to bed right after a heavy early supper to free up time for themselves. Dr Serfontein sets about to change all of this in a very short period of time.

He started by making changes to the teaching corps. He discharged two teachers, who he felt could not be of any use to the school given their behaviour, which included encouraging students to smoke, telling crude jokes in the staff room, and engaging in some lewd (but unspecified) behaviour and taking pupils along on these excursions. An unqualified teacher, Mr Lamprecht, was instructed to select courses from UNISA's yearbooks and enrol immediately if he wanted to stay on at the school, while two elderly teachers were accommodated in non-teaching posts (as accountant and private music teacher respectively). Two schoolboys were sent away from the school because the headmaster felt that they would not have a positive influence on the others, but were nonetheless referred for psychological treatment. Dr Serfontein introduced changes in the school routine by instituting compulsory sport activities, introducing physical education as a subject, making study periods compulsory, changing pupils' diet, meal times, bathing and sleeping arrangements. At first, his reforms were met with resistance from the boys, but after a few confrontations, in some cases involving corporal punishment, he won their loyalty and support.

There are a number of ways in which Dr Serfontein's actions resonate with the concerns addressed in the Tweede Trek series. Outlining the dangers facing the Afrikaner volk, Keyter outlines a list of do's and don'ts with regard to the boy's body:

Dit spreek dan vanself dat een van die eerste vereistes wat nagekom moet word, dié is dat daar teen alle vorme van vertroeteling gewaak moet word. Van die eerste dag moet gesorg word vir die ontwikkeling van 'n gesonde, kragtige liggaam en besliste, goeie gewoontes. Die liggaam, en veral die geslagsorgane, moet rein gehou word, daar onreinheid prikkeling veroorsaak, die aandag daarop vestig en poginge om die onaangenaamheid te verwyder in die werk stel wat weer heel gemaklik tot perverse, seksuele gewoontes aanleiding gee. In die uitvoer daarvan moet egter gewaak word teen onnodige betasting van die geslagsorgane, iets wat heel dikwels deur bediendes gedoen word met die doel om die kind tot gehoorsaamheid aan hulle eise te beweeg. Die voedsel moet eenvoudig, solied en by die tyd en omstandighede aangepas word. Gereelde en verstandige ontlastingsgewoontes moet van vroeg reeds aangekweek en die gebruik van prikkelende stowwe soos asyn, peper, mosterd ens. sover as moontlik vermy word. Ook behoort die aandete lig en eenvoudig te wees – geen swaar maaltye soos 'n oorvloedige aandeel van patats, vleis, ens., nie – en die oorvloedige gebruik van vloeistowwe kort voor slaaptyd vermy te word. Tabak om nie te praat van alkohol nie, maar ook die bandelose geniet van lekkernye soos lekkers, koek, ens., mag onder geen omstandighede toegelaat word nie. Nie alleen word die gesonde, liggaamlike groei deur sulke omstandighede belemmer nie, maar die gewoontes van teulose toegee aan begeertes word langs daardie weg reeds vroeg aangekweek... Daar moet dus ook van die vroegste stadium af gestrewe word na die gesonde ontwikkeling van selfbeheer (Keyter 1942:119-122).

[It is self-evident then that one of the first requirements that has to be complied with is that all forms of pampering must be guarded against. From the first day onwards one has to see to the development of a healthy, strong body and positive habits. The body has to be kept clean, especially the genitals. Impurity causes irritation, which brings the attention to it, and attempts to get rid of the discomfort very easily leads to perverse sexual habits. In the execution thereof, one must guard against unnecessary touching of the genitals, something that is often done by maids in order to force the child to adhere to their demands. Food has to be simple and solid, and has to be adapted to time and circumstances. Regular and sensible excremental habits have to be formed early on and the use of stimulating substances such as vinegar, pepper, mustard, etc must be avoided as far as possible. Also, dinners must be kept light and simple – no heavy meals such as liberal portions of sweet potatoes, meat, etc – and the drinking of copious amounts of liquids before bedtime must be avoided. Tobacco, not to mention alcohol, and the unrestrained enjoyment of sweets, cake, etc must not be permitted under any circumstances. Not only does it hamper healthy physical growth, but the habit of giving in to desires is fostered early on....From the start, one has to strive towards the healthy cultivation of self-control.]

and

Die kinderkamer en die bed moet eenvoudig, lugtig en sonnig wees. Terselfdertyd behoort gewaak te word teen onnodige en ontydige in die bed lê. Onder geen omstandighede durf dit as straf gebruik word nie. 'n Gesonde, aktiewe kind vind orals middele waarmee hy homself kan vermaak en daartoe dien ook die liggaamsdele. Deur hom in die bed te hou wanneer daar geen behoefte daartoe is nie, word hy blootgestel aan die gevaar van ongesonde seksuele gewoontes (Keyter 1942:122-123).

[The child's room and bed must be simple, well ventilated and sunny. At the same time, one must guard against lying in bed unnecessarily and untimely. Under no circumstances must it be used as punishment. A healthy, active child can find entertainment for himself anywhere and that includes his genitalia. By keeping him in bed when there is no need for it, he is exposed to the danger of unhealthy sexual habits.]

In an uncanny way, the measures introduced by Dr Serfontein closely match almost each of Keyter's points with regard to the regulation of sexuality and the body. Immediately after his arrival at Keurboslaan, Roelof Serfontein starts implementing drastic measures to turn Keurboslaan College for Boys around. These include changes to sleeping arrangements and cutting down on sleeping time, the introduction of physical exercise, and changes to the diet, meal times and washing arrangements:

'Julle slaap ver te veel', kom die antwoord beslis. 'Julle gaan agtuur slaap en staan eers sewe-uur op. Geen mens van julle leeftyd het elf ure slaap nodig nie. In die toekoms gaan julle om tien-uur bed-toe. Die skool staan om sesuur op. Daar sal van half-sewe tot sewe liggaamsoefening op die speelgrond of, wanneer dit reën, in een van die klaskamers wees. Daarna stortbaaie en dan studie tot ontbyt. Van vandag sal die hoofmaaltyd in die middel van die dag in plaas van die aand gegee word. Die tyd van halfdrie tot vyf sal aan sport of liggaamsoefeninge bestee word. Dan, na die tee, word weer tot die aandete gestudeer. Daarna sal daar verder studietyd wees, met 'n halfuur se vrye tyd tot die aandgodsdiens. Die juniors sal half-nege bed toe gaan' (Krogh 1945b:51-52).

['You sleep way too much,' comes the firm answer. 'You go to bed at eight and get up only at seven. Nobody your age needs eleven hours sleep. In future, you will go to bed at ten. The school rises at six. From six-thirty to seven there will be physical training on the playgrounds or, when it rains, in one of the classrooms. Thereafter you will shower and study until breakfast. From today, the main meal will be served at noon instead of in the evening. Between two-thirty and five you will take part in sport or physical training.

Then, after tea, you will study until supper. After that there will be more study time, with half an hour spare time until evening prayers. The juniors will go to be at eight-thirty.']

These measures are introduced with great fervour, even where the practical implementation seems to be difficult. For example, cold showers, a washing method that is generally thought to be preferable to hot baths in regulating sexual practices and as a method to discourage masturbation, are immediately implemented and made compulsory despite the fact that the school had only three showers:

Toe die seuns hulle weer kry, word die laaste een, groot en klein, deur die drie onderwysers onder koue stortbaddens ingeja. Daar die skool maar drie besit, duur die hele operasie taamlik lank (Krogh 1945b:53-54).

[Before they know it, the boys, big and small, get chased into the cold showers by the three teachers. Because the school has only three showers, the whole operation lasts quite a while.]

A general school regulation is subsequently introduced that cold showers are compulsory in the mornings and that no hot baths may be taken in the evenings (Krogh 1959a: 66, 71). The changes Dr Serfontein introduces to the boys' sleeping arrangements also take on board Keyter's ideas that the child's room needs to be bright and airy:

Toe die jonger seuns later na die slaapsaal gaan, is doktor Serfontein voor hulle daar. Hy het van iewers meer lampe as gewoonlik gebring, en die yslike kamer lyk vroliker as wat hulle dit ken. Maar al die vensters, aan albei kante van die kamer, staan wawyd oop en 'n ontmoedigende, koue wind waai daardeur sodat 'n mens by die gedagte aan uitrek sidder.

Hulle kyk smekend om genade na die jong reus wat sonder medelye terugkyk.

'Hierdie vensters bly oop,' deel hy beslis mee.

'Maar, Meneer,' protester Bokhorst nors, 'ons sal koud kry!'

'Ek dink nie so nie. Maar as dit gebeur, staan op en doen liggaamsoefeninge (Krogh 1945b:57).

[Later, when the younger boys go to the dormitories, Doctor Serfontein is already there. He has brought more lamps than usual, and the enormous room looks more cheerful than they know it. But all the windows, on both

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sides of the room, are wide open and a discouraging, cold wind blows through them so that the mere thought of undressing gives you the shivers.

They look at the young giant begging for mercy, who looks back at them without the slightest hint of sympathy.

'These windows will stay open,' he tells them firmly.

'But Sir,' protests Bronkhorst, 'we're going to be cold!'

'I don't think so, but if that happens, get up and do some exercises.']

After Dr Serfontein's intervention, the dormitory rooms resembled those of a clinic, thereby taking Keyter's requirement that the boy's room needs to be simple one step further:

Die slaapkamers, elkeen met agt beddens, is blinkskoon met wit kaste en liggroen gordyne en vloermatte. Mevrou Mostert sorg dat dit netjies gehou word en dit lyk eintlik meer na hospitaalvertrekke as na seuns se slaapkamers. Groot vensters, nag en dag wawyd oop, laat vars lug deurwaai (Krogh 1942:54).

[The bedrooms, each with eight beds, are spotlessly clean, with white cupboards and light green curtains and carpets. It is Mrs Mostert's responsibility to keep things neat and the rooms remind one more of hospital rooms than bedrooms for boys. The large windows, open day and night, allow for fresh air to lightly blow across the room.]

The principle 'that all forms of pampering must be guarded against' (Keyter 1942:119) is exemplified by Dr Serfontein. Serfontein is depicted as an intensely private individual who has great difficulty expressing his personal feelings and whose personal relationships are marked by restraint. He strongly believes that a kind of distance between school principal and pupil must be retained at all times:

Wienand hoop dat die hoof wat 'n streng dissipel van selfstandigheid is en wat te veel intiemheid tussen onderwyser en leerling sien as iets wat in die sterkste mate afgekeur moet word, nie die fout sal begaan om hierdie teer persoon-tjie, wat tog nog baie klein is, te vroeg in die diep waters van selfstandigheid in te gooi nie (Krogh 1948:17-18).

[Wienand hopes that the principal - who is a devout disciple of independence and who regards intimacy between teacher and pupil as something that

should be strictly disapproved of - won't make the mistake of throwing this tender little person, still very young, too early in the deep waters of independence.]

This too applies in his relationship with his own children:

Krynauw glimlag. Hy het 'n goeie idee wat die hoof se besoek beteken. Hy sal lank langs sy seun se wiegie staan en ernstig op die slapende gesiggie neerkyk, maar hy sal die kind nooit aanraak nie. Net Krynauw wat na jare van ondervinding en meegevoel sy gedagtes byna kan hoor, weet dat hy miskien lus het om die kind op te tel. Hy sal dit in alle geval nie doen nie. Hy is vol inhibisies, meen Krynauw met jeugdige selfvertroue, en die sterkste van hulle is sy weersin in enige uiterlike bewys van intiemheid. Mens wonder hoe dit later met sy verstandhouding met sy seun sal gaan. Sal die kind die geslotenheid verstaan en dit as werklike skuheid erken, of sal hy dit as 'n gebrek aan simpatie beskou? (Krogh 1947a:35).

[Krynauw smiles. He has a strong gist of what the headmaster's visit will entail. He will spend a long time standing next to his son's cot, looking down on him with a serious expression on his face, but he will not once touch the child. It is only Krynauw that knows, based on years of experience and a deep sympathy for the headmaster that enables him to almost hear the headmaster's thoughts as if spoken out aloud, that he may have an urge to pick up his child. In any event, he will not give in to that urge. In his youthful self-confidence, Krynauw is of the opinion that the headmaster has many inhibitions, the strongest of which is his resentment of any outward expressions of intimacy. One cannot help but wonder what kind of understanding he will have with his son. Will the child understand his father's reservedness and recognise it for the shyness that it really is, or will he see it as lacking in sympathy?]

Keyter (1942) maintains that an interest in sexual matters and the body is characteristic of the deviant child:

Die gesonde, lewenslustige, aktiewe kind lewer selde uit eie beweging groot moeilikhede met betrekking tot die seksuele. Hy is te besig om al die mooie en interessante om hom heen te ondersoek en te geniet om te veel aandag daaraan te gee. Die sieklike, die onnatuurlike in homself getoë tipe en die kind met 'n swak senuweestelsel daarenteen, lewer maar al te dikwels groot en moeilike vraagstukke (Keyter 1942:119).

[The healthy, vivacious, active child seldom gives cause for concern with regard to the sexual. He is too busy investigating all the beauty and interesting

things around him to give it much attention. On the other hand, the sickly, abnormally introverted child or the nervous child too often causes serious and difficult problems.]

As remedy for 'perverse' sexual practices, the *Tweede Trek* series therefore praises the virtues of exercise, in particular swimming, and sensible eating habits.

In hierdie verband moet klem daarop gelê word dat volgens deskundiges feitlik alle seuns gedurende die rypingsjare in *masturbasie* (selfbevelekking) verval en dat baie daarmee aanhou totdat hulle 'n normale geslagslewe kan voer... Die beste kuur is 'n gesonde lewe (gebalanseerde voedsel, sport en veral swem)... (Willemse 1940:129).

[In this regard it must be stressed that according to experts almost all boys lapse into *masturbation* (self-pollution) during puberty and they continue doing this until they can lead a normal sex life... The best cure is healthy living (a balanced diet, sport and especially swimming) ...]

Whilst masturbation and other sexual practices pose a particular danger to the nation, Willemse indicates that the practices of subjecting desire and disciplining the body may translate into particular benefits for the nation. His advice to young men who say they feel a need to masturbate is as follows:

Gewoonlik maak ek dit aan hulle duidelik dat *beheersing lei tot verdieping* van die gemoedslewe en tot die *sublimasie* van die geslagsdrang in kuns en *idealisme*... (Willemse 1940:128-129).

[I usually make it clear to them that *self-control leads to deepening* of the inner life and to *sublimation* of the sexual urges in art and idealism ...]

Keyter further claims that by channelling the energies of the young body into the productive service of higher idealism through a call on the duties of the Christian faith and patriotism, the sexual desire of the young body can be transformed:

Geen angsjaende dreigemente, hetsy van godsdienstige of ander aard, wat onnodige en soms vernietigende sielskonflikte veroorsaak darf hier gebruik word nie. Dis opvoedkundig veel gesonder en by die aard en behoeftes van die periode beter aangepas om 'n positiewe beroep op die moed en manlikheid van die jongmens in diens van 'n verhewe idealisme te maak. Die moed om te lewe, om suiwer waardevol te lewe, is hier alles. Tot ontwikkeling daarvan bied die Christelike godsdiens en lewensideaal 'n besondere bron van krag wanneer dit in diens van 'n egte positiewe godsdienstigheid gestel

word. Dit is daar waar die oproep tot die stryd helder weerklank en die persoonlike voorbeeld self die weg aanwys. In die strewe om te dien, om sy plek op waardige wyse in die lewe in te neem, word die eie-ek met al sy kwellings vergeet en die aandag en energie in vrugbare kanale gelei. Daartoe kan gesonde literatuur, 'n gesonde vriendskaplike omgang met die teenoorgestelde geslag, die ontwikkeling van egte vaderlandsliefde en nasionale verantwoordelikheid en die vermyding van literatuur, rolprente en allerlei vermaak van twyfelagtige aard besonder baie bydrae (Keyter 1942:128-129).

[No fearsome threats, be it of a religious or other nature, that can cause unnecessary and sometimes destructive conflicts within the soul dare be used. Educationally, it is much healthier and conforms better to the nature and needs of the time to make a positive appeal to the courage and masculinity of the young person in service of a higher idealism. The courage to live, and to be of value, is everything. To develop this, the Christian religion and ideals offer a unique source of strength when it is put to use in a purely positive devotion. It is there that the summons to the battle echoes clearly and the personal example shows the way. In the goal to serve, to take its place in life in a worthy manner, the own-self with all its worries is forgotten and the attention and energy is steered down productive avenues. Wholesome literature, healthy platonic interaction with the opposite sex, the development of true patriotism and sense of national responsibility, and the avoidance of literature, films and any entertainment of dubious nature can greatly contribute to this.]

In addition to a healthy lifestyle and proper exercise, the *Tweede Trek* series regards the most important remedy for the dangers to the self posed by the desires of the body and unbridled sexuality to be self discipline, self-control, and self-rule:

Ook kan 'n goed uitgewerkte en taktvol gekontroleerde sisteem van selfregering 'n waardevolle bron van opvoedende invloed in hierdie jare [puberteitsperiode] wees (Keyter 1942:129).

[A well-conceived and tactfully controlled system of self-rule can also be a valuable source of educational influence in these years (puberty).]

Practices of and discourse on the body at Keurboslaan College for Boys seem to mirror the opinions expressed in the *Tweede Trek* series. Exercise is an important component of school life at Keurboslaan and Dr Serfontein introduced swimming as a compulsory activity in Spring and Summer. The school has its own Olympic standard swimming pool and two rock pools where pupils are allowed to swim naked (Krogh 1944: 20):

Die skool besit verbasend baie badkamers en stortbaddens. Elke seun kry drie warm baaie 'n week, en elke oggend 'n koue stortbad. Hulle swem ook elke dag. Dis alles verpligtend (Krogh 1942:54).

[The school has a remarkable number of bathrooms and showers. Each boy takes three warm baths a week and a cold shower each morning. In addition, the boys swim every day. All of this is compulsory.]

The school follows a sensible diet, and the headmaster disapproves of smoking, drinking and eating cake and sweets. In addition, a strong emphasis is placed on the necessity to acquire bodily self-control as a strategy for resisting attempts to 'sin' against the body:

'n Man se eerste plig is om liggaamlike ritme te kweek. Daarom beoefen ons hier soveel sport, sodat julle vroeg die deugde van 'n harde, gesonde, skoon liggaam kan leer. As julle dit eenmaal ken, kan julle nie maklik daarteen sondig nie' (Krogh 1944:103).

[A man's first duty is to cultivate bodily rhythm. That is why we do so much sport here, so that you can learn from early on the virtues of a hard, healthy and clean body. Once you know it, you won't easily sin against it.]

The importance of self-discipline and self-control is a recurrent theme in the Keurboslaan stories. In *Twee nuwe seuns op Keurboslaan*, the teacher responsible for physical training places all first team rugby players on a strict diet. The team members rebel against the strict diet and decide to confiscate a food parcel one of their members received from home. When they are caught and sent to the headmaster for punishment, the following exchange takes place:

'Dis onbevredigend om te sien dat julle so min selfbeheer toon,' gaan die hoof voort. 'Mens kry elke oomblik van die dag se vier-en-twintig uur selfbeheer nodig. Eetlus is nie die enigste begeerte wat onder beheer gehou moet word nie, soos julle self goed weet. As jou weerstand teen een soort versoeking verswak is 'n ander ook gou jou meester' (Krogh 1944:102).

[It's disappointing to see how few of you show self-control,' the principal carries on. 'One has to exercise self-control twenty-four hours of the day. Appetite is not the only desire that has to be controlled, as you very well know. If you lose your resistance to one kind of temptation, others are soon to follow.']

The particular danger of succumbing to the desires of the body is here articulated as the possibility that this may lead to lapses of self-discipline in other contexts. Here one could think of the dangers facing the Afrikaner nation outlined in *My Nasie in Nood*: the temptation to spend money rather than to save; the temptation to align oneself with foreign cultural practices; the temptation not to work; and the temptation to put the interests of the individual above the interests of the collective. The call for self-discipline is one that is often repeated at Keurboslaan:

“n Mens moet leer om jou altyd in alle omstandighede te bedwing’ (dr Serfontein in Krogh 1959a:82).

[‘One has to learn to control oneself in all circumstances’]

and

‘n Gebrek aan selfbeheersing is altyd ‘n mens se eie skuld’, sê Richard (Krogh 1956:56).

[‘A lack of self-control is always one’s own fault’, says Richard]

When the young Flip Venter tells his room prefect that he struggles to sleep at night and that his mind starts wandering when he lies in bed, he is encouraged to get up at night to do exercise and then take a cold shower (Krogh 1947b: 78). And, as an example to the boys, the headmaster displays enormous control over his own body:

Gedurende so ‘n rit ly hy aan dors soos dit by hom selde die geval is, daar hy al sy behoeftes onder uitstekende beheer kan hou (Krogh 1948:119).

[During the ride he suffers from thirst as with him it is seldom the case with him, since he has the ability to keep all his needs under excellent control.]

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the centrality of discourse on the body and sexuality in the Tweede Treks series, and therefore, by implication, to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism generally. In the second instance, the chapter attempted to show that it was in particular children who had to be saved from imminent dangers by capturing them to the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism. Through a comparison of the

Keurboslaan series with two titles in the *Tweede Trek* series, this chapter attempted to show that the discourse on sexuality and practices of the body represented in the *Keurboslaan* series were in broad brush-strokes similar to the discourse on the body and sexuality as articulated in the *Tweede Trek* series, an explicitly nationalist project. This is of importance for three reasons. First, it flags the link between the bodies and sexuality of young adults and Afrikaner nationalism. Second, it illuminates the question posed at the beginning about the ways in which the ideas of the petty bourgeoisie were disseminated into a form of ‘mass consciousness’. Third, it draws attention to the importance of children to the project of Afrikaner nationalism.

It can be argued that the *Keurboslaan* series made more significant inroads into the minds and hearts of readers than the *Tweede Trek* series. This view is supported by sales figures and the number of reprints, but more importantly, this was possible because the discourse of fiction is vested with desire. The *Keurboslaan* series became part of Afrikaner cultural goods and a collective memory in ways that were not possible for publications such as the *Monumente* series and the *Tweede Trek* series. Whilst it was not mass produced, the series was widely obtainable in public libraries and was reproduced a number of times to make it available to a few generations of Afrikaans readers. Consequently, Roelof Serfontein, Eugene Krynauw and the world of *Keurboslaan* became part of the social imaginary of children reading Afrikaans fiction. *Keurboslaan* became the imaginary model school for the Afrikaner nation and *Keurboslaan* pupils the role models Afrikaans children aspired to emulate. From book reviews of the books published at the time of publication, it is evident that the books had an audience well beyond the children it was intended for and *Keurboslaan* became the iconic Afrikaans school. It is important to consider here the space in which the *Keurboslaan* texts were read and continue to be read: Given that these books were never prescribed as set works in schools, children read them for the pleasure of reading, an everyday activity that engages the imagination in countless ways and which, on the surface at least, presents itself as a domain of free choice, though it is a choice that is mediated through structures such as the public library system.

The *Keurboslaan* series created a self-referential Afrikaner world in the imagination. It showed a way of being and at the same time the rules for and limits to belonging to the body of this nation. In this regard, the notion of self-discipline is central.

The research demonstrated that the dissemination of Afrikaner nationalist ideas on the body and sexuality through the *Keurboslaan* series was not an orchestrated

intervention that formed part of a grand plan aimed at unrolling Afrikaner nationalist ideas. Stella Blakemore was a marginal figure in the Afrikaner establishment. Whilst part of the Afrikaner elite, her ties with the other, both through her father's nationality and her marriage to a Welshman, as well as her upbringing which included a schooling in English private schools in Natal, excluded her from the ranks of the Afrikaner intelligentsia.

Yet Stella Blakemore was successful in areas where the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie had failed. Whereas the latter were trying to foster a collective Afrikaner consciousness through literary works such as *Ampie*, which portrays the life story of a so-called poor white Afrikaner, Blakemore produced popular fiction, which tapped into individual desire for social and class mobility that could be achieved within the fold of Afrikanerdom. In that sense, it can be argued that the discourse in the Tweede Trek series and in Keurboslaan was not the product of the same process, but of the same class interests.

The discourse on the body and sexuality in neither the *Tweede Trek* Series nor *Keurboslaan* is original. The *Tweede Trek* series drew on Dutch, American and English literature from the late nineteenth century, whilst the *Keurboslaan* series gave expression to many of the Victorian attitudes and ideas predominant in the English public school story on which the series is modelled.

Finally, the examination of discourse on and practices of the body and sexuality in the *Keurboslaan* series presents an opportunity to explore the question of subjectivity. If the danger to the self is the self, *Keurboslaan* presents as the remedy to that danger the notion of discipline, in particular self-discipline and self-control. It may be interesting to explore the extent to which the emphasis on self-control in Afrikaner nationalist thought fed into the development of an Afrikaner subjectivity, which Hyslop describes as comprising of a non-reflexive submission to authority' (Hyslop 2000:37).

The chapter displays a number of important gaps. To keep the chapter focused, it was decided to leave out matters pertaining to the sexuality of the girl and young women and elements of homoeroticism portrayed in the Keurboslaan series. It should be noted that the theme of the self as danger to the self could be extended much beyond the scope of this chapter and the notion of self-discipline and self-control is not the only remedy for the self that is suggested in Keurboslaan. Other remedies for the self that

are outlined in Keurboslaan include tailored punishment, surveillance, and medical and psychological treatment.

PART V:
Synopsis

Conclusion

This study on the relationship between literature and society - more specifically the relationship between fiction and nationalism – was undertaken in the field of popular fiction for children and is framed by the notion of the everyday life and approached from an interdisciplinary vantage point. It constitutes an attempt to contribute to scholarship on Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state by focusing on the cultural domain. While the scope of the study is broad, the *Keurboslaan* series is only one example of countless others through which the discourse of Afrikaner nationalism was circulated. As such, the study can make only a limited contribution in terms of its findings. However, as an interdisciplinary undertaking that engages with existing scholarship on Afrikaner nationalism, the relationship between literature and nationalism, and popular fiction for children, it is believed that the study can help to augment and problematise our current understanding of Afrikaner nationalism and speak to some of the questions posed in the fields of children's literature and literary studies. A summary of findings is presented under four rubrics: 1) The relationship between popular fiction and Afrikaner nationalism; 2) Implications of the study for understandings of Afrikaner nationalism; 3) Notes on studying popular fiction and children's literature; 4) Questions of methodology.

Reflecting on the *Keurboslaan* stories it may seem hard to imagine that these unlikely tales about the formidable Roelof Serfontein who single-handedly transformed a small town private school into a model institution for children of the Afrikaner elite should be worthy of scholarly attention. For one, the stories seem too far-fetched to be taken seriously. Moreover, they are hardly original since the format of the stories is closely modelled on the British public school story. There are many more reasons to disregard the series: the story lines are predictable; the style pedantic; the setting overly romanticized and, finally, the intended reading public for the series is children. Yet, this study has shown that the series was a vehicle for the dissemination of a discourse through which the Afrikaner nation could be imagined. The content aside, the very existence of such a series contributed to making the project of Afrikaner nationalism possible and feasible. Whilst it was not mass produced, the series was widely obtainable in public libraries and was reproduced a number of times to make it available to a few generations of Afrikaans readers. Consequently, Roelof Serfontein, Eugene Krynauw and the world of *Keurboslaan* became part of the social imaginary of

children reading Afrikaans fiction. It is hoped that the study is convincing in its claim that whilst an analysis of the *Keurboslaan* series can only provide a limited entry into the thematic of Afrikaner nationalism, it does have something to contribute to the debate and can do so in ways that are different and suggestive.

Afrikaner nationalism and popular fiction

The primary research question posed in this study is what light an analysis of the *Keurboslaan* series could cast on the relationship between popular fiction and nationalism. This research question ties in with eminent studies on Afrikaans literature and Afrikaner nationalism, notably that of Kruger (1991) on popular literature and Hofmeyr (1987) on literary texts. The research is framed by the notion of the everyday, which places it in the domain of leisure activity that is shared by Kruger's study of Mabel Malherbe and her publication *Die Boervrou*. The research is novel, though, in the sense that it opens up the field of popular fiction, and more specifically children's literature, in Afrikaans as a field for inquiry in relation to nationalism.

The work of Benedict Anderson is helpful in answering the primary research question, since it situates Afrikaner nationalism in a broader context by demonstrating the extent to which a mobilisation around texts sparked by print capitalism is a characteristic of nation building and nationalisms elsewhere. However, in the second instance, and perhaps more important, Anderson's analysis of the way in which nations are imagined in and through texts is helpful because he illuminates ways in which the mere presence of the text, as opposed to its contents, could be socially and politically meaningful and therefore powerful. In other words, Anderson draws attention to the fact that it is not only discourse circulated in texts that is of importance, but that the physical presence of the text, its materiality and its physical exchange, are other mechanisms worthy of scholarly scrutiny since those are ways in which the nation is both imagined and produced.

The production of the *Keurboslaan* series follows the trajectory of print capitalism in vernacular languages as described by Anderson. In particular, the research highlighted that the series was produced by J.L. van Schaik Publishers in Pretoria. This publishing company was closely associated with the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. Whilst the *Keurboslaan* series was predominantly published as an initiative that would produce profit, the publishing house did produce a number of texts that were not deemed to be profitable but that would advance the project of Afrikaner nationalism. The *Keurboslaan*

series was therefore produced with little intervention from the publishers, except for the directive that the series could not be translated into English. However, J.L. van Schaik's commitment to the establishment of Afrikaans as a print language paid off once the market, which it had actively tried to expand, had been established.

The study identified four mechanisms through which the *Keurboslaan* series in its materiality rather than through discourse made it possible to imagine the nation or to imagine the Afrikaner nation in a particular way. First, the very fact that it is produced in a specific language, in this case Afrikaans, becomes a significant way of imagining a community. Phrased in this way, the very act of reading for pleasure becomes invested with the political. A second way in which the imagining of the nation is given materiality is the fact that Blakemore's stories helped to capture an audience for Afrikaans literature and in doing so grew and expanded the market for Afrikaans books. Third, the individual act of reading the *Keurboslaan* stories produced a community of readers, who did not necessarily know each other, but who all felt that they knew Roelof Serfontein and his school. This community was not only constructed amongst peers, but also across generational boundaries, thereby somehow becoming part of the mythical fabric that creates communities and the social imaginary that gives such constructed communities coherence. Fourth, the physical books were shown to have conveyed its own meaning. Beautifully produced with attention paid to detail, even if the language was not always on standard, and slightly more expensive than the books produced by other publishers, the *Keurboslaan* books (and other books produced by J.L. van Schaik publishers) projected a different image of the market for Afrikaans books – and by implication its readers – by imbuing even popular texts with a status that could not easily be reduced to trash literature as was the case with many of Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel's books.

Through a comparison of the *Keurboslaan* series with two titles in the *Tweede Trek* series, the present study sought to demonstrate that the discourse circulated in *Keurboslaan* in broad brush-strokes was fairly similar to the discourse of the *Tweede Trek* series. The discourse in these two types of texts can be characterised as a discourse of nationalism and modernisation. It is argued that this similarity is not limited to the selected volumes of the *Tweede Trek* series, but will be sustained in a wider comparison of key texts on Afrikaner nationalism and the *Keurboslaan* series. It was furthermore argued that the medium of fiction meant that the *Keurboslaan* series had more impact than the *Tweede Trek* series. This view is supported by sales figures and the number of reprints. The discourse of fiction became salient, penetrated the surface

much deeper, was read by more people, and became part of the cultural goods and a collective memory in ways which was not possible for publications such as the *Monumente* series and the *Tweede Trek* series. Yet, popular books for children, or popular texts for that matter, are not the kind of texts that are usually selected as representative of authentic nationalist discourses.

Apart from the extra-textual ways in which the *Keurboslaan* series was to imagine the nation, the nation is imagined in interesting ways and through innovative strategies in the texts themselves. The first of these is through the device of the imagination, which offers the author of fiction the opportunity to rewrite the present. In other, words, the world of *Keurboslaan* initially did not correspond the real world of the 1940s. Blakemore was writing the present from the vantage point of what it could be, thereby turning the series into a form of aspirational literature. The second narrative device employed in the texts is the notion of showing rather than telling. The *Keurboslaan* texts showcased the lifestyles and value systems of the Afrikaner intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie in a most attractive way. Through that device desire could be linked to class mobility. A third feature of the *Keurboslaan* text that makes it powerful is the extent to which its focus is on narrating the future rather than the past. The *Keurboslaan* series does not portray the Afrikaner nation as a nation in progress, but as one that is already there and on par with existing nations, in particular the English. Taken together – the future that can be embraced, the lifestyles of the elite that can be aspired to, and the present that can be imagined different - these strategies produced a way of imagining the nation, which, whilst not substantially different from or dissimilar to other regimes of discourse on the nation, was different in one respect: it was a discourse vested with desire. This appealed to *Keurboslaan*'s readers, which were shown in all likelihood to have been drawn from a broad class basis.

This study has shown that there exists a link between the emergence of print capitalism and the production of popular fiction on the one hand and nationalism on the other. Whilst this is a link that is not often explored, an analysis of the *Keurboslaan* series and an overview of its production, dissemination and reception illustrate that the study of popular fiction can illuminate the practices through which nationalism gains popular support. The *Keurboslaan* series, whilst not produced as part of the authentic and authorised publications on Afrikaner nationalism, nonetheless furthered the aims of this project through its discourse and its insertion into the market for Afrikaans books.

Implications of the study for understandings of Afrikaner nationalism

This study on the *Keurboslaan* series and its relationship with Afrikaner nationalism can augment our understandings of Afrikaner nationalism in five ways. These are outlined below.

One of the questions posed in scholarship on Afrikaner nationalism is about the central idea of Afrikaner nationalism, that is, what central idea or image provided the glue that was able to cement together a group of people across geographical, class and gender divides to constitute the Afrikaner nation. Nationalism is usually associated with a strong sense of the Other. In the case of Afrikaner nationalism the, notion of the Other is generally embodied as either black South Africans and/or the British colonial power. Yet, the *Keurboslaan* series presents another possibility. Whilst in *Keurboslaan* both blacks and non-nationals (English, American and Jewish) are in different contexts portrayed as villains and therefore as dangerous to *Keurboslaan*, this is not painted as the most dangerous threat to the *Keurboslaan* community. Rather, the threat presents itself as the danger of the self to the self. The 'poor white', the sick, the alcoholic and the mentally disturbed, as well as the weak and the impulsive – these incantations of Afrikaners are very prominent in the *Keurboslaan* texts, which display a Foucauldian notion of the need to normalise these individuals. Whilst there exist an extensive scholarship on the so-called poor white problem of the 1930s and the way in which the economic movement was mooted to address this crisis, very little work has been undertaken to determine to what extent the very idea of the Afrikaner as deviant was constitutive of the social imaginaries within which Afrikaner nationalism found such popular appeal.

A second question that crops up in studies of Afrikaner nationalism is about the way in which the idea of Afrikaner nationalism was disseminated amongst the masses. This study has shown that popular fiction for children was one of the avenues through which this ideology was disseminated. This is a field that has not been examined before. However, the research demonstrated that the dissemination of Afrikaner nationalist ideas through the *Keurboslaan* series was not an orchestrated intervention that formed part of a grand plan aimed at unrolling Afrikaner nationalist ideas. This is in line with Deborah Posel's research on the making of the apartheid state, which she found to be far less a process of total social engineering as generally rendered. It was shown that Stella Blakemore was a marginal figure in the Afrikaner establishment. Whilst part of the Afrikaner elite, her ties with the British, both through her father's nationality and her

marriage to a Welshman, as well as her upbringing which included a schooling in English private schools in Natal, excluded her from the ranks of the Afrikaner intelligentsia. Still, this research demonstrated that Stella Blakemore was successful in areas where the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie had failed. Whereas the latter were trying to foster a collective Afrikaner consciousness through literary works such as *Ampie*, which portrays the life story of a so-called poor white Afrikaner – Blakemore's writings tapped into individual desire for social and class mobility that could be achieved within the fold of Afrikanerdom.

A shortcoming in studies of Afrikaner nationalism has been identified as the relatively limited information that is available on the persons that crafted themselves as self-conscious community creators, those in the ranks of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who exerted themselves to promote the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism. Blakemore has been described in this study as someone who fulfilled the role of an organic intellectual, even though she cannot be described as a self-conscious community creator. Through Bourdieu's notion of habitus, it was attempted to explain, at least in part, Blakemore's ambiguous and sometimes contradictory relationship with South Africa and Afrikaners.

Jon Hyslop raised as a problem in the study of Afrikaner nationalism the almost exclusive national focus of research in this field. Other critiques of studies on Afrikaner nationalism include the preference given to analyses of symbolic representations. This study attempted to remedy this shortcoming by examining Afrikaner nationalism in the domain of the everyday life, an area that - with a few notable exceptions - has not been explored sufficiently. This marks a shift into the private space and opens up an avenue for exploring the way in which discourse on Afrikaner nationalism became inserted into and constitutive of everyday practices, routines and habits.

Finally, this study of *Keurboslaan* presented an opportunity to explore the kind of subjectivity portrayed in the series and to question to what extent this portrayal may have contributed to the creation of an Afrikaner subjectivity that was created and fostered by Afrikaner nationalist discourse, which Hyslop describes as comprising of a 'non-reflexive submission to authority' (Hyslop 2000:37). If the danger to the self is the self, *Keurboslaan* presents as the remedy to that danger discipline, in particular self-discipline and self-control, and compliance with authority. Drawing on Foucault, it has been shown that normalisation of the deviant subject by the system and the inculcation of self-discipline and self-control, are central themes in the series. The notion of self-

discipline as presented in the *Keurboslaan* series is a total philosophy that extends to all aspects of the self, including the physical self as was illustrated through an analysis of instructions on the body in *Keurboslaan* texts.

Notes on studying popular fiction and children's literature

The scope of this study also provided the opportunity to engage with discussions on the relationship between literature and society and popular fiction and nationalism more broadly, extending beyond the frame of Afrikaner nationalism. In particular, this study found that 1) there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of popular fiction as a construct; 2) the conditions under which a text is selected and read need to be taken into consideration in accounts of both the production of meaning and the construction of subjectivity; 3) popular fiction can be a vehicle for the promotion of nationalism; 4) the social context within which a text is produced and read may be more significant and telling than the form of the texts in terms of the meanings it acquires; and 5) there are gaps in the study of popular fiction and children's literature in Afrikaans and in South Africa.

It has been argued that the notion of popular fiction is not a self-explanatory construct, and therefore should not be treated as such. It would be very difficult to argue that the *Keurboslaan* series is a prime example of mass produced popular fiction for children based on a formula such as the *Goosebumps* series. Nonetheless, the study has also shown that the *Keurboslaan* series was not canonised or incorporated into the educational system, received a mixed response from critical reviewers, and is modelled on the British public school series formula. It was therefore concluded that the *Keurboslaan* series was a type of popular fiction, but given its relatively small print run and the fact that it was written in Afrikaans, it was not archetypical of mass produced fiction. Hence, not all theoretical assumptions about mass produced fiction may apply to this series. It has therefore been suggested that rather than posing these as binary opposites, a more useful approach to popular fiction and literature is to regard these as two poles on a continuum of written texts.

Literature on popular fiction generally suggest that popular fiction is tighter controlled and subject to more processes of social sanction than works of literature, since popular fiction is supposed to reflect societal norms and values. This view has been mainly forthcoming from studies of popular fiction that tend to focus on the content of these texts and not on the conditions under which such texts are read or on its readers. This

study posed questions about the way in which popular texts are read and the conditions under which popular texts are read. Popular fiction is generally not mediated through the educational system or official institutions. Whilst these texts would be difficult to access unless the system provides at the very least tacit approval of its contents and given that modern societies have a range of mechanisms to its disposal for screening materials, the experience of selecting and reading popular texts generally presents itself to the prospective young reader as freedom of choice within the set parameters, such as the shelf dedicated to children's literature in the public library. It could therefore be argued that societal control of popular fiction is masked as freedom of choice. In addition, the study found that in the case of Afrikaner nationalism, popular fiction for children was not regarded as strategically important beyond the recognition that provision ought to be made for the production of popular fiction for children in Afrikaans. As a result, based on the *Keurboslaan* case, children's literature manuscripts seem to have been subject to far less scrutiny than was the case with other types of texts. Moreover, whereas literary production was in the hands of a group of Afrikaner intellectuals, a person such as Stella Blakemore was able to produce children's stories with very little intervention. Finally, the public debate on *Ampie* also signals dissatisfaction from ordinary people about literature produced and authenticated through official channels. These three points provide an alternative lens through which to consider the relationship between various types of literature and social control.

The two points raised above are of relevance when one considers Corse's thesis in her study of the relationship between literature and nationalism. Corse argues that the genre of literature lends itself far more than the genre of popular fiction to become a vehicle for the promotion of nationalism. That is, she argues, because popular fiction is generic, while works of literature tend to focus on the local and contextual. The relationship between nationalism and popular fiction seems to be more complex than she suggests. Her analysis is weakened in part by the fact that she treats popular fiction and literature as two entirely separate domains. *Keurboslaan*, as indicated before, does not fit neatly into the category of mass produced popular fiction, and even though it is modelled on a generic version of the school story, its addressee is an exclusive audience and the texts contain many local features. In the second instance, it has been shown that the thesis on social control and popular fiction is not always correct. In the case of the *Keurboslaan* series, the series was subject to very little interference from both the publishing house and the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie. This may be ascribed to the fact that the content generally upheld the values and principles

that these groups wanted children's literature to reflect. Whilst this may be true, it is argued here that this situation is at least partially explained by the fact that popular fiction for children was simply not regarded as enormously strategic.

It has been shown that the *Keurboslaan* series displays the characteristics of a formula book and overwhelmingly conforms to the genre of the school story, a popular genre in formula books for children. In particular, it has been argued that the *Keurboslaan* series was modelled on the version of the school story so popular in Britain, i.e. the public boarding school genre. From this it would appear that what is of interest is not so much what is different between these texts and other series books, but rather the way in which ostensibly similar texts are inserted or inscribed into a broader social process that opens up the possibility to look at its political function. This points once again to the problem with methodologies that treat the ultimate meaning of the text as located within the text itself.

Finally, the study pointed to a gap in the study of popular fiction and children's literature in Afrikaans in particular, but also in South Africa more generally. There is a paucity of good quality reader studies in South Africa, especially on popular fiction and children's literature in Afrikaans. Where such studies exist, the methodologies employed are often not very rigorous. Most research on popular fiction and children's literature in Afrikaans explores the relationship between texts and society within the parameters of white Afrikaner communities. It may be interesting to research the penetration of these texts in other Afrikaans-speaking readers and communities, as well as to second language speakers, to examine the way in which processes of meaning making and reception have unfolded. In addition, there is a tradition of protest literature aimed at children, such as *Stanley Bekker en die Boikot* that has not received much scholarly attention. It has been indicated that Afrikaans series books dating from the 1940s to the 1970s, such as *Keurboslaan*, *Trompie*, *Maasdorp* and others have recently been reprinted and are still read by Afrikaans-speaking children. More research is required to produce an understanding of the way in which present conditions and the political dispensation influence the social imaginaries conjured by these texts from a different era. In conclusion, the present study seems to suggest that there is scope for comparative study of, for example, Afrikaans, British and German children's literature to explore the relationship between children's literature and nationalism more generally.

Questions on methodology

The study raised a number of questions pertaining to methodology, since it explores the relationship between literature and society and argues, albeit in a limited way, that the experience of reading a particular set of texts (the *Keurboslaan* series) and readers' reflections on that experience contributed to the development of an Afrikaner subjectivity among readers of these texts. The study challenged the notion that the subject can be utilised as unit of analysis to access the experience and meanings connected to reading, an assumption that is prevalent in many reader studies. It was argued that it is important to remember that there are significant limits to empirical studies. But it was also shown that there are important and marked limitations to ideology critique and textual analysis, which tend to sidestep both the reader and the context of reading in favour of the text and which present tremendous difficulty explaining or theorising a causal or relational relationship between the text and the formation of subjectivity. In essence, the methodological question underpinning this study remains: How do we access the experience of reading, how do we theorise the meanings attached and derived from this activity, and how do we explain the way in which the text 'works' and shapes consciousness and subjectivity? For a positivist the problem is the necessity to isolate the variable of the act of reading a specific text, set of texts, or type of text in order to fashion a causal relationship between the event and practice of reading and the emergence of particular kinds of subjectivities. But any one person's days are filled with a multitude of 'texts' and the practice of reading becomes a metaphor for ways of looking at and interpreting the world. Hence, it is not possible to isolate the variable of the reading experience linked to a particular text. Given the split and layered subject, it is also not desirable to rely solely on the subject's (the reader) account of that causal relationship. While more interpretive approaches are able to produce rich and deeply suggestive analyses of texts, such studies are impeded by their inability to explain the way in which texts 'work' and to assign weight, or, phrased differently, to prove the significance of any one text given that that texts are inscribed in a broader social context. This makes it particularly difficult to use this kind of approach in a study that attempts to explain the relationship between texts and reality.

In order to answer a question about the way in which texts work, this study subscribes to a soft reading of Althusser's theory of the interpellation of the subject through discourse. This is, however, enhanced with a theory of agency offered by De Certeau's notion of *tactics*, which takes account of readers' abilities to subconsciously or consciously usurp or resist particular elements of texts and Bourdieu's notion of the

habitus as an explanation for the range of possibilities from which Stella Blakemore wrote. In terms of methodology, this study embraced four approaches that flow from this theoretical framework and which attempt to address some of the issues raised by the question about the way in which texts ‘work’ and to counter some of the weaknesses inherent to the approaches outlined above. These approaches may assist in pushing the boundaries of the academic study of literature and popular fiction. Moreover, these approaches may also offer a way in which the study of literature can extend beyond its boundaries and contribute to other areas of social enquiry.

In the first instance, this study is based on the assumption that when conducting textual analysis as a method of explaining social realities it is necessary to move beyond that which is obvious in the text and to embed textual analyses within a theory of reading and writing. Phrased differently, the study rejects the idea that readers assimilate everything they read and therefore become like the texts they read. De Certeau’s reminder that readers are not fools is important. The position adopted here is not one that rules out studies that are solely text-based. Rather, it is argued that such studies need to be accompanied with a fairly explicit theory of reading and writing if they attempt to explain the way in which the text reflects or bears upon social realities outside of the text. Second, the study harnessed the advantages of a broad ranging inquiry that integrates issues of production, dissemination and consumption with textual analysis. This type of approach embeds textual analysis in the conditions of production and consumption and therefore assists in the process of making sense of the way in which the text has been inserted into the social world. Third, this study attempted to link and combine literary studies with other forms of social inquiry to produce a fuller picture of the social phenomenon that is being examined. In other words, the study favoured an interdisciplinary approach as a tool for embedding the study of a literary text in its social context, enabling and facilitating more comparative research, and encouraging cross-disciplinary theory development. Thus, it has been possible to situate the present study in the theoretical framework of nationalism rather than to limit it to Afrikaner nationalism, which may have played a role in upholding notions of South African exceptionalism. In addition, it has been possible to compare the *Keurboslaan* series with other literary formulas for children *and* adults, and to locate the *Keurboslaan* series in the social context within which it is produced and consumed. And this approach fostered a process of examining current understandings of Afrikaner nationalism to explore ways in which the present study may contribute to this body of scholarship and speak to some of its theoretical concerns. Finally, this study is premised on the importance of introducing the everyday as a terrain of academic study. It has shown

that it is a worthwhile enterprise to study the everyday, following in the tradition of Brink (1987) and Kruger (1991). But a claim that the *Keurboslaan* texts contributed to the formation of an Afrikaner subjectivity can only be sustained if it is recognised that its readings constitutes but one of the sites in which subjectivity formation takes place, and that there a multitude others. The educational system, church, popular magazines and newspapers, and so forth, together produced a 'sediment of Afrikanerness' .

Limitations of the study

As is the case with studies based on archival research, it holds true for this study that neither the material nor the problem has been exhausted. In particular, the study could have benefited from statistical data relating to sales and distribution figures. Whilst reader studies and empirical research about the reception of texts were highlighted as important components of broad-ranging research into the relationship between literature and society, the present study does not include a reader study component. This was a deliberate choice to limit the scope of the research, but was also in part influenced by the fact that this is an historical study, which makes it difficult to access the experiences of readers who are removed in time and space from their first reading of the *Keurboslaan* series. As a result, there is no empirical data to measure the 'effect' or impact of the *Keurboslaan* texts on its readers and very little that reflect readers' experiences of reading these texts. Whereas the limitations of empirical studies have been pointed out, this study would certainly have been enriched by a reader study. The difficulty of adequately accounting for the mechanisms and processes through which subjectivity is produced is a general limitation in theories of culture and nationalism. While this has been theorised in the present study and methodologies were selected to address this problem, the issue has not been entirely resolved. Given the luxury of hindsight, a final remark pertaining to the limitations of this study is that a more expanded use of Bourdieu's methodology, instead of limiting his theoretical contribution to his notion of *habitus*, may have steered the research in a different direction. This avenue may be explored in publications arising from this study.

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