

THE UNHEALED WOUND: OLIVE SCHREINER'S EXPRESSIVE ART

Louise Green

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**Supervisors:
John Higgins &
Dorothy Driver**

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Abstract

In this paper I discuss the relation between Olive Schreiner's social context and the form of her fictional writing. It is not intended as an interpretation of her work but rather represents a preliminary sketch of the social and political discourses which structured her environment. I suggest that for Olive Schreiner writing is not a means of representing a given reality. Instead writing itself is a constitutive act through which she attempts to articulate a subject which expresses the conflicts and contradictions of its social and political location.

In the first section of the paper, I discuss Olive Schreiner's position as a woman in relation to the literary canon. I argue that the social discourses of femininity in the late nineteenth century attempted to exclude women from the realm of cultural and intellectual production. Looking at the work of Herbert Spencer, the influential social philosopher who used scientific principles as the basis for his ideas about social order, I analyse the way in which Olive Schreiner rewrites his theory in order to make a space for women as cultural producers.

In the second section I look at the dominant forms of the novel available to Olive Schreiner. The dominant mode of representation for metropolitan writers was the realist novel and women writers such as George Eliot found it an extremely effective way of articulating their experiences. The other significant form of writing for

Olive Schreiner was the colonial adventure story, the most popular way, in the nineteenth century, of representing the colonial space. I suggest that Olive Schreiner's rejection of both these forms and her choice of the allegorical mode, can be understood in terms of the specificity of her position as a colonial woman writer.

In the third section, I focus more closely on one of Olive Schreiner's texts, The Story of an African Farm in an attempt to illustrate how allegory allows Olive Schreiner to reorder the unstable colonial space. Both realism and the adventure novel, I argue, assume a coherent and unified self. The colonial context, I suggest problematises this sense of self as individualist agent and in the figure of Lyndall I see the limits of the reflective self as a means of interacting with the colonial situation.

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Note to the Reader

In this paper I have elected to use footnotes.

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Introduction

Slowly raising herself on one elbow, she took from the sail a glass that hung pinned there. Her fingers were stiff and cold. She put the pillow on her breast, and stood the glass against it. Then the white face on the pillow looked into the white face in the glass. They had looked at each other often so before. It had been a child's face once, looking out above its blue pinafore; it had been a woman's face, with a dim shadow in the eyes, and something which had said, 'We are not afraid you and I; we are together; we will fight, you and I.' Now tonight it had come to this. The dying eyes on the pillow looked into the dying eyes in the glass; they knew that their hour had come. (1984, 283-4)

In this famous passage in The Story of an African Farm, Lyndall confronts for the last time her image in the mirror. This final gesture completes the sequence of looks which she exchanges with herself in the course of the narrative and the eyes close. The mirror is left at the end of her story reflecting the dead face which is described as "a thing of marvellous beauty and tranquillity". No longer animated by Lyndall's look, her face becomes, finally, pure image - a "thing" or object, no longer capable of subjectivity. This marks the end of Lyndall's ceaseless attempt to engage with the reflective identities proposed by the mirror, and her desire to escape the endless repetition of self which the mirror generates. In this essay I shall argue that Lyndall's complex and ambivalent relation to the mirror can be read as a figure for Schreiner's attempt to find a mode of novelistic representation which could articulate something of her situated experiences. The structures of identity constituted by the discourses available to her offered Schreiner no space from which to articulate a

self which was not captured by the mimetic frame of reference. Schreiner's choice of the allegorical mode represents a significant departure from the dominant literary forms of representation of the late nineteenth century. In this paper, I wish to investigate this choice, analysing it in terms of the conception of self and identity proposed by Lyndall's interactions with the mirror. I argue that Schreiner's writing represents not only a resistance to the discourse of imperialism which constitutes South Africa as the space of exotic otherness, but also a contestation of the structures of identity implicit in realist representation. The unity of the reflective subject constituted by both forms could not enunciate the fractured reality of her experiences as a colonial woman.

Fundamental to this is a recognition of Schreiner's challenge to the dominant empiricist idea of expression in language. For Schreiner, expression is not the facile agency of a given subject, secure in its discourse and social positioning. Expression precedes the subject; expression is the quest for subjectivity.

Part 1: Framing Olive Schreiner's Fiction

I will begin this investigation by attempting to interpret Schreiner's extremely problematic place in the literary canon. What is it about Schreiner's writing that makes the critical response to it so ambivalent, at once affirming her potential brilliance and regretting her actual practice? In an attempt to understand this ambivalence, I have made extensive use of the valuable article by Christine Barsby, "Olive Schreiner: Towards a Redefinition of Culture". In this article, Barsby notes that "the story of South African criticism of Schreiner is ... one 'full of enthusiasms and partial regrets' (Gray,199), in which the constant refrain is of unrealised or misdirected potential" (1989,19). Even Virginia Woolf and other early feminist critics seem to regard Schreiner's own evaluation of herself as "only a broken and untried possibility" as an accurate description of her life and work.¹ It is only recently, Barsby claims, that a significant reevaluation of this interpretation of Schreiner has begun to take shape.²

Locating her own study as part of this process of

1. Barsby mentions the work of Elaine Showalter, Dale Spender, Marion Friedmann and Veneta Colby. Each, she suggests voice a "sense of disappointment, either in their wish that Schreiner had acted and written differently, or more overtly in criticism of the 'loose, formless, rambling narrative' of African Farm as a 'failure of art and technique' (Colby,62), or in the view of Schreiner as someone 'sadly underambitious' whose psychosomatic illness symbolised a 'perverse will to fail'"(1989,19).

2. Barsby refers in particular the work of First and Scott with their ground breaking biography of Schreiner. She also mentions Kathleen Blake's Love and the Woman Question, and the work of Liz Stanley, Rachel Bau DuPlessis, Gerd Bjorhovde, Sandra Gibert and Susan Gubar.

reevaluation, she begins by analysing the traditional works of criticism on Schreiner.³ Their inability to look beyond Schreiner's "failure" as a writer and her significance as an "Extraordinary Woman"⁴ leads Barsby to the conclusion that "what is at stake in these recurring images of Schreiner as a "failed genius" is the difficulty of positioning her as a woman writer" (1989,19).

Schreiner's position is necessarily defined by the specific historical and social discourses which structured her environment. An understanding of her position as a woman writer thus requires an analysis of the way in which the term "woman" was defined in the late nineteenth century. What were the real social possibilities for women, and how were these received and reworked in cultural discourse? To what extent did the dominant representations of femininity limit the inscription of women as producers of cultural meaning? Barsby writes that "the struggle of Schreiner's life and work is specifically the struggle against women's marginal position within culture" (1989,20). It seems to me that Barsby's use of the term "culture" here conflates two distinct though clearly interrelated categories. Culture can refer both to general social practices and to

3. Barsby mentions in particular Ridley Beeton, Uys Krige and Richard Rive.

4. Barsby takes this term from the work of E.P. Thompson who argues that "the female subject of biography is seen less as a significant intellectual or writer than as an 'Extraordinary Woman', whose 'moral confusions and personal crises...are always somehow more interesting than those of a man: they engross all other aspects of the subject'" (1989,19).

the specific artistic activities of a particular period. It seems to me necessary, in investigating Schreiner's relation to culture, to make this distinction.

Schreiner's position as a woman needs to be understood in relation to the social discourses and practices which structured her world, while her position as a woman writer requires an analysis of the way literary production was directed by the male-dominated canon.

In a study entitled Fictions of the Female Self, Ruth Parkin-Gounelas examines the work of Olive Schreiner in relation to that of Charlotte Bronte and Katherine Mansfield, tracing the ways in which these three generations of novelists attempted to inscribe a specifically female selfhood. Yet in all three cases the fact of their gender seemed to stand between them and their desire to assume authorship. Each felt it necessary to assert for their writing selves an independence from a specifically feminine identity. In the case of both Bronte and Schreiner this took the form of writing under a male (or androgynous) pseudonym and insisting on or trying to insist on a masculine status for their words. For Schreiner, the term "man" seemed to indicate not a biological categorisation but rather a reference to ungendered humanity. Her pseudonym, Ralph Iron, can thus be read as an attempt to refuse the gender specificity which a feminine name would imply. Bronte's choice of the androgynous name, Currer Bell, seems to indicate a desire to escape gender classifications altogether, although it is clear that for her too the

masculine was perceived as the unmarked term.⁵ Mansfield, working in the considerably less constrained atmosphere of the nineteen twenties nevertheless found it necessary to assert that she was to be thought of as a writer first and a woman after. Yet this need to speak the impersonal, objective, 'public' language of masculine discourse at once implicated them in a mode of representation which located women as silent others. Their desire to articulate the specificity of a female selfhood, the actual conditions of their existence, brought them into conflict with the discourse of the human and the universal, since feminine identity expressed a social and historical reality not a universal truth. They were thus engaged in a precarious enterprise, wishing to be evaluated without regard to their gender, while at the same time developing in their writing a critique of precisely those gendered categories which provided only an extremely circumscribed space for the articulation of women's experiences.

Romantic fiction which dealt with the suitably feminine matters of love, hope and disappointment was considered appropriate for women writers but the conventions of its form severely limited the subject

5. Parkin-Gounelas gives examples of this impulse: "I wish you did not think me a woman. I wish all reviewers belived Currer Bell to be a man; they would be more just to him", Charlotte Bronte wrote to Lewes in 1849. Olive Schreiner, with a greater imperiousness born of confidence in dealing with male intellectuals, nevertheless insisted to Karl Pearson in the mid-eighties that she was 'not a woman, I am a man, and you are to regard me as such' (1991,22).

matter it was allowed to engage with.⁶ Personal and domestic matters were considered the proper domain of women's fiction. At the same time, the fact that it dealt only with personal concerns marked it as trivial and not worthy of serious consideration. To write as a woman meant to be associated with the marginal and trivial pursuits of the romantic or domestic fiction. Their decision, therefore, to write "as men" was an attempt to evade the predefinition of their work in the terms prescribed for it by their gender and it involved them in a complex negotiation with the dominant forms of literary production in order to define for themselves a space for women's writing.

Traditional critical responses to Schreiner which characterise her as a "failed genius" can thus be understood as themselves failures to read Schreiner's writing as a struggle with dominant cultural forms. By focusing on her personality and describing her as an 'extraordinary woman', they repeat the gesture of marginalisation which Schreiner, in both her life and her fiction, tried to counter. These critical responses to

6. Karel Schoeman writes that: "As early as 1835 the American critic and feminist Margaret Fuller, author of Women in the Nineteenth Century and a friend of Emerson, referring to the distinction between the two sexes, cried out: 'I would not write like a woman, of love and hope and disappointment, but like a man, of the world of intellect and action'. Women authors of limited experience and education readily turned their hand to superficial love stories - romantic or sensational - of the kind Jane Austen parodied and George Eliot dismissed as 'silly stories by lady novelists', and Olive Schreiner later remarked, 'How many women writers there are at the present day with a touch of genius but so pitifully small' (1991, 409).

her writing can be seen as limited by their inability to recognise the way in which Schreiner was attempting to challenge the way in which women were positioned by the prevailing representations of society. The immense impact of social Darwinism meant that any rethinking of gender relations had to confront the influential reading of the biological distinction between male and female as the basis for a social division between a masculine realm of culture and feminine realm of nature. Barsby argues that for Schreiner the struggle against marginalisation takes the form of a determined effort to redefine culture in a way which transcends this nature /culture opposition.

Despite her relative physical isolation in the colonial interior during the period in which she wrote The Story of an African Farm, Undine and at least part of From Man to Man, Schreiner's interpretation of the world was shaped by the current intellectual metropolitan debates about theology and evolution. Having abandoned the religious faith of her parents at an early age, she found in the work of Herbert Spencer an alternative means of making sense of the world. Ruth First and Ann Scott write that:

Olive expressed what she had learnt from Spencer in characteristically Spencerian terms. 'He helped me believe in a unity underlying all nature,' she told Ellis: it was her formal introduction to scientific naturalism. Until then the Bible had been the only explanation available to her; now she learnt that 'all matter was alive,' that the social order reflected a deeper biological order, that progress was not an accident but a necessity - indeed a law underlying the whole of organic creation (1989,59).

For Schreiner the significance of Spencer's theory lay in its general assertion of an underlying unity which gave the universe a moral purpose.⁷ She resisted, however, the particular way in which he interpreted his scientific data, and the conclusions he came to on the questions of racial and sexual inequalities.⁸ When the social order is justified because it expresses the natural order of the universe, then the precise interpretation of the natural evidence becomes a crucial point of debate.⁹ It is around this issue that Schreiner formulates her

7. This is the main argument of Spencer's First Principles, published in 1862, and which, according to First and Scott, Schreiner read in 1871. Spencer's aim is to show how scientific laws pertaining to physical matter (the primary truths of "The indestructibility of matter, "The continuity of motion" and "The persistence of force") and to biological data can be related to human society. In the conclusion he writes that: "if it be agreed that the phenomena going on everywhere are part of the general process of Evolution, save where they are parts of the reverse process of Dissolution; then we may infer that all phenomena receive their complete interpretation only when recognised as part of these processes" (1946,496).

8. Berkman writes that Schreiner's egalitarian and integrationist political outlook meant that "she faced a quandary, one with which a minority of other late-Victorian thinkers wrestled: Was there a way to reconcile one's egalitarian and pacifist social beliefs with the seemingly anti-thetical biological insights and deductions of Darwinian research" (1989,77). Berkman also mentions Peter Kropotkin and Frank Lester Ward as other thinkers concerned with the social implications of social Darwinism's biological deductions.

9. Raymond Williams in his article "Social Darwinism" describes Kropotkin's alternative interpretation of natural data. He writes that: "Kropotkin, in Mutual Aid, in 1902, said in effect: 'Yes, let us indeed learn from the order of nature. If we look at nature we find it full of examples of mutual aid. Look at the herds of deer and of cattle. Look at the ants, look at the bees, look at all the social insects. We will find that everywhere there are examples of mutual aid.' Of course, this was co-operation within species. Most of the competitive theories had been based on a struggle between species, and then covertly applied to competition within one species - man" (1980,96).

revision of evolutionary theory in Woman and Labour.

Spencer argues that gender differences originate in a single "fundamental need - adaptation to the paternal and maternal duties". For him, the differences between men and women result "from a somewhat earlier arrest of individual evolution in women than in men; necessitated by the reservation of vital power to meet the cost of reproduction" (1961,341). In describing how this effects mental capacity, Spencer asserts that women:

have somewhat less of general power or massiveness; and beyond this there is a perceptible falling-short in those two faculties, intellectual and emotional, which are the latest product of human evolution - the power of abstract reasoning and the most abstract of the emotions, the sentiment of justice - the sentiment which regulates conduct irrespective of personal attachments and the likes or dislikes felt for individuals (1961,341-2).

Woman's capacity for reproduction necessarily places her closer to nature and the "instinctive" world of maternal nurturance. This emphasis on woman's close association with nature meant that she was perceived both as an embodiment of natural law and as a part of the dangerous and primitive forces which civilized society needed to control. Her perceived inability to conceptualize the abstract notion of justice, "the sentiment which regulates conduct irrespective of personal attachments", legitimated the regulation of her conduct by those in a more advanced position with the society. Within this scientific construction of femininity, woman's sexuality, in so far as it was directed towards reproduction, was part of the natural, biological order. Anything which

went beyond the limits set by biological function was seen as dangerous and threatening to the greater good of the human race. Woman's social duty was, for the social Darwinists, defined by the biological role she played in promoting the continuance of the race.

Schreiner's awareness of the limitations of Spencer's theory can be seen in a letter to Ellis where she explains his influence on her thought:

You ask me whether Spencer is to me what he was? If one has a broken leg and the doctor sets it, when it is set one may be said to have no more need of the doctor, nevertheless one always walks on his leg. I think that that is how it is with regard to myself and Herbert Spencer. I have read all his works since, some three or four times; now I read him no more. He helped me to believe in a unity underlying all nature; that was a very great thing. But he has nothing else to give me now (1987, 37).

What is important for Schreiner about Spencer's theory is that it provides a conceptual system for comprehending the world. The notion that there exists an underlying unity in all of nature provides a scientific source of meaning to replace religious belief. But Schreiner's interpretation of this natural order involves a substantial revision of Spencer's principles.

In Women and Labour, Schreiner analyses the way in which the development of human society has altered the social roles available to men and women. She argues that women have always historically taken part in socially useful labour other than that narrowly defined by their maternal function. Yet in a pattern which appears to repeat itself through the ages she notes that woman's labour is constantly being eroded either by technological

advances or by the subjection of large groups of people into relations of servitude.¹⁰

Modern Victorian society, the product both of industrialization and of colonial expansion, offers a prime example of a social order in which women's traditional roles have been reduced and no new field of occupation has been opened to them. She writes that: "Slowly but determinately, as the old fields of labour close up and are submerged behind us, we demand entrance into the new. We make this demand not for our own sake alone, but for the growth and succour of the human race" (1975,30). Schreiner validates her demands for women's equal access to socially useful labour through an appeal to the notion of evolutionary progress. Women must be prevented from becoming parasitic entities on the social body because this would lead to the degeneration of the race as a whole. Schreiner's notion of sex parasitism is in direct opposition to Spencer's belief that the liberation of women from productive labour in Victorian society was a mark of its advanced civilization. For Spencer the refinement of women's labour to those areas associated with her biological function meant that all her resources could be directed towards this important task. What Spencer's analysis failed to take into account was the fact that it was only in middle class

10. Schreiner writes that: "Behind the phenomenon of female parasitism has always lain another yet larger social phenomenon. It has invariably been preceded, as we have seen, by the subjugation of large bodies of other human creatures, either as slaves, subject races or classes" (1975,42).

society that women could devote all their energies to reproduction and child rearing. In actual fact, the number of women engaged in productive labour was increasing,¹¹ a fact Schreiner was well aware of. In the introduction to Woman and Labour, Schreiner expresses concern about men's attitudes towards "that vast and always increasing body of women, who as modern conditions develop, are thrown out into the stream of modern economic life to sustain themselves and often others by their own labour; and who yet are there bound hand and foot, not by the intellectual or physical limitations of their nature, but by artificial constrictions and conventions, the remnant of a past condition of society" (1975,7). The opposition between nature and society here locates nature as the source of social reform. The "artificial constrictions and conventions" of the current social order exist because it has failed to accommodate itself to the developments which have altered human society's relation to nature.

Appealing to this eighteenth century conception of nature as the basis for social reform, Schreiner argues that "mother nature" should be the sole arbiter of

11. Cynthia Russett, in her book Sexual Science. The Victorian Construction of Womanhood, writes that: "far from diminishing, the number of gainfully employed women were expanding by the year, and there was no sign that this trend would be reversed. In the light of that hard fact, any theory which identified the course of human evolution with the removal of women from the workplace was clearly more prescriptive than descriptive" (1989,145).

people's abilities. Barsby comments that:

Schreiner's reference to a gendered concept of nature reveal[s] the co-existence of ideas about women's association with nature within the concept of nature as a guide for social reform. In terms of this dual definition of nature, women are seen as closer to an ideal natural state, at the same time as their "natural" traits are deemed to threaten social progress, make them unfit for political equality and necessitate their being subject to greater social control (1989,22).

By characterising the social constraints and conventions as artificial and at odds with women's innate capacity to undertake labour beyond that associated with her reproductive function, Schreiner recuperates the notion of nature to validate her own project for social transformation. Yet in doing this she remains caught within the conventional social demarcation of the sexes which associates women with nature. Women remain in a contradictory position in relation to culture since it is contemporary culture which is perceived to impose the "unnatural" restrictions on women's activities. This identification of cultural structures as artificial, however, means that in Woman and Labour Schreiner does not take into account the constitutive effects of the social on women's subjectivity. Although her concept of sex parasitism identifies the debilitating psychological effects of economic dependence, it limits these effects to a particular class of women within society. By arguing that the cultural forms are outdated she offers a powerful motivation for their transformation. Yet there remains a significant gap between her programmatic vision for the future as expressed in Woman and Labour, and her

attempt to embody this vision in her fiction. Despite the fact that intellectually she could envisage a new order of society, her fiction is not about successful transformation but rather expresses the limits and contradictions of the available discourses on masculine and feminine identity.

This latent pessimism about the possibility of individual transformation is also evident in certain sections of Women and Labour. In her article "Virile Womanhood: Olive Schreiner's narratives of a master race", Carol Barash points out that the imagery with which Schreiner depicts her New Woman tends to refer her ultimately back to the role of motherhood. Barash compares two sections of the text in which Schreiner describes the New Woman. Initially she appears as a cathedral builder. Schreiner writes that: "It is through the labours of these myriad of toilers, each working in her own minute sphere, with her own small outlook, and out of endless failures and miscarriages, that at last the enwidened and beautiful relation of woman to life must rise". The use of the modal here suggests that the project of these cathedral builders, the transformation of woman's relation to life, is one which can only be achieved in the future. It is described in the present as consisting in an endless series of of "failures and miscarriages". In contrast to this image of women struggling towards a future transformation, Schreiner presents the "Teutonic woman", who is depicted as the leader of the womens's movement. She appears as powerful

figure precisely because of her ability to "give birth to men". Barash writes that: "Placed after images of "aborted" and "miscarried" creations, these women who can create sons compensate narratively for the imaginative births of feminist daughters who fail in the present moment" (1989,278).

Women's failure in the sphere of cultural activity - the building of the cathedral - marks the limitations of Schreiner's appeal to nature as the basis for social transformation. Women remain excluded from the successful production of cultural meaning beyond that associated with motherhood.

Schreiner's valorisation of motherhood can thus be read as an attempt to recuperate for women a significant role in contemporary society. In what sense could motherhood be extended from its narrow biological definition to include the generation of social relations implicit in the notion of mothering? In Woman and Labour, she claims that women are characterised by an intrinsic pacifism. She writes that:

Woman will end war when her voice is fully, finally and clearly heard in the governance of the states because on this one point, and on this one point almost alone, the knowledge of woman, simply as woman, is superior to that of man: she knows the history of human flesh; she knows its costs; he does not (1975,76).

In describing the specifically feminine knowledge here as a knowledge of "the history of the human flesh", Schreiner seems to be appealing to a biological conception of maternity. It is woman's maternal function

which is responsible for her greater concern for human life. This appeal to an essentialist notion of womanhood distinguished by its nurturant and life preserving disposition once again positions women according to the limits imposed by a biological interpretation of the maternal function. Yet in Schreiner's fiction motherhood is not represented as that which can provide her heroines with a fulfilling existence. In both Undine and The Story of An African Farm the heroines are forced into this role and in both cases the child almost immediately dies leaving the mother painfully scarred by the experience. Referring to Lyndall's refusal of marriage and the subsequent death of her daughter, Nancy Paxton suggests that it appears as if for Schreiner, "motherhood were too dangerous a ground on which to erect a defence of female 'equality'" (1988, 572).

It is only in From Man to Man that mothering is presented in a more positive light. Here it is Rebekah's role in socializing her children which is seen as fulfilling. Rebekah's motherhood is characterised by a desire to shape her children's consciousness in a way which is at odds with the social norms. The children are presented as the seeds of a new generation who will be able to transform society. Yet Schreiner's failure to complete this novel suggests that her vision of a new society was difficult to sustain in the face of the harsh social realities that confronted her. Barash writes that: "In all of Schreiner's heroines there are gaps between

their best vision of of a new society and their entrapment in a Victorian world of separate men's and women's spheres which mark biology as destiny" (1989,274).

Schreiner's positive representation of motherhood in Woman and Labour is part of her vision for an ideal future. Her conception of "nature" as a powerful life force which overrides social convention recuperates this term for her own purposes. It becomes her way of ordering the world in a way which escapes the restrictive social conventions of Victorian society. But by appealing to nature in this way Schreiner fails to take into account the constitutive force of the social. If nature provides the basis for the correct social order, then the particular restrictions of Victorian society appear as misinterpretations of nature, artificial constructions which can have no real hold on the "natural" self. In her fiction, however, the social always proves to be more powerful than nature. Neither Lyndall nor Waldo's deaths are given any biological or "natural" explanation. Instead the cause of death seems to come about as a result of the reaching of a final social impasse. They have reached a final point in their attempts to transcend the society which contains them and they can go no further. Barash argues that these limits in Schreiner's writing can be read as political. She writes that:

Her writing attempts to reveal necessary political change but can not embody those changes in fiction. However, such narrative limits can also be read as

political truths: stories don't change until the social order changes; the act of writing political fiction involves straining against social constructs, enabling them to change (1989,270).

For Parkin-Gounelas, the common project of Bronte, Schreiner and Mansfield to resist masculine discourse and inscribe a female subject into fiction provides a connection between these three writers which supersedes their geographical and cultural differences. She writes that "marginalisation, either social or geographical or both, tended, in fact, to go hand in hand with an authorial obsession with the inscription of selfhood. It is almost certainly no accident that two of the three women studied here were colonials and the third from Yorkshire, on the fringes only of the dominant cultural orthodoxy. All three were in a sense double exiles, both geographically and sexually "other" in the only culture they could identify as their own" (1991,23).

Marginalisation becomes the characteristic condition of being a woman in any society, and the Yorkshire countryside is perceived as being as distant for a woman writer from the cultural centre as the colonies are.

While this conceptualization draws attention to the fact that women lack access to the dominant cultural productions even within their own societies it tends to elide the particular constraints imposed by colonialism on anyone attempting to invent a sense of self outside of the prevailing discourses. Colonialism not only implies geographical distance and the consequent lack of access to the centre of political and cultural power, it also

involves specific social and historical conditions which produced a particular relation to British culture based on the discourse of imperialism. In the article, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", Gayatri Spivak argues that any analysis of nineteenth-century fiction needs to take into account the constitutive effects of imperialism on cultural representation. Spivak argues that feminist criticism which valorises the female subject in nineteenth century women's writing needs to recognise the ways in which this individualist subject is predicated upon the project of imperialism:

The broad strokes of my presupposition are that what is at stake, for feminist individualism in the age of imperialism, is precisely the making of human beings, the constitution and "interpellation" of the subject not only as individual but as "individualist". This stake is represented on two registers: childbearing and soul-making. The first is domestic-society-through-sexual-reproduction cathected as "companionate love"; the second is the imperialist project cathected as civil-society through-social-mission (1985, 244).

Spivak's analysis involves a comparison between Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre and Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea. In the first novel, Spivak suggests, it is only through the sacrifice of Rochester's first wife, the mad colonial in the attic, that Jane can assume the position of subject. The conclusion of this novel is the triumph of "companionate love" and the female individualist subject takes her place within the metropolitan social order. Rhys's novel, written in 1965, shifts the emphasis of story from Jane to Bertha Mason, tracing her history as a white creole in the Caribbean caught between metropolitan

and indigenous political and cultural forces. Spivak sees Wide Sargasso Sea as a form of limit text, one which both indicates towards the madness, both actual and political, which has to be excluded for the female individualist subject to take up her place, and yet cannot itself articulate a position for the colonial subject.

I have introduced this comparison here in an attempt to theorise the impossibility of the individualist female subject in the colonial context. In interpreting Schreiner's writing in terms of a common concern of woman writers to articulate a specifically female self, Parker-Gounelas fails to recognise precisely how problematic the very conception of self is for Schreiner. In the following section, I will argue that it is this anxiety about a self, not only female and consequently marked by gender in social discourse, but also colonial, caught between an exclusive metropolitan conception of humanity and an oppressed indigenous population, which shapes the form of Schreiner's writing.

a function of subjects, of observers - of what is desired and what needs to be known. A knowable community, that is to say, is a matter of consciousness as well as of evident fact. Indeed it is to just this problem of knowing a community - of finding a position, a position convincingly experienced, from which community can begin to be known - that one of the major phases in the development of the novel must be related (1987,17).

Although the confident realism of the eighteenth century which Lukacs describes is significantly altered by the changing social condition, the work of late nineteenth century novelists remain realist in that their concern is still to represent social reality in a coherent form. For George Eliot, society may represent a tangled web but it is still the space in which individuals enact their mutual interdependence, and the substance from which a novelist may derive a moral order.¹²

It is this conception of writing as an act of conscious interpretation which Schreiner distances herself from in a letter she writes to Havelock Ellis in 1889. She writes: "No human creature's feelings could possibly be further removed with regard to artistic work - not of course the scientific - than mine from George Eliot's. Her desire was to teach, mine to express myself, for myself and to myself alone" (1987, 154). Although in Eliot's writing, the confident claim of early realism to represent the truth through an accurate and adequate depiction of the real was countered by a growing

12. Raymond Williams refers to Eliot's frequent use of the metaphors of network, tangle and web to describe social relations. He suggests that while 'network, we might say, connects; the web, the tangle, disturbs and obscures'. Eliot's writing seem to be caught in the tension generated by these two conflicting views of society (1987,88).

Part 2: Reordering the World - Realism, Romance or Allegory?

"Compositional principles are a manifestation of an author's view of life" (1965, 140). This comment by Lukacs is made as a preface to his discussion of realist writers and their ability to successfully represent the world as a coherent totality. Unlike naturalist writers who can only observe and describe, realist writers (the example he chooses is Walter Scott), because they are in possession of a "vital ideology", are able to view "the contradictions of life in a fruitful, ordered context". For Lukacs, the goal of the realist writer is "to penetrate the laws governing abstract reality and uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society" (1980,38). It is clear that by the late nineteenth century, the social conditions which had provided the substance of the writing of eighteenth century authors like Jane Austen and Walter Scott had changed considerably. Raymond Williams argues that for novelists writing in this period perhaps the most significant question generated by the social transformations which were taking place had to do with the conception of a "knowable community". The new urban and industrial society meant not only rapid changes in the external world but also in the the way in which individuals could conceptualize their position in relation to that society. Williams writes that:

...what is knowable is not only a function of objects - of what is there to be known. It is also

sense of the unknowability of society, it nevertheless provided a definite interpretation of real social conditions. It undertook the increasingly difficult, if not impossible task of demonstrating to its readers the actual relations which underlay everyday existence. It is this promise to reveal the coherence of social reality that lends such fiction its didactic quality. Schreiner contrasts Eliot's desire to teach, with her own desire to express, suggesting that for Eliot the world existed as something known to be conveyed to her readers. While Schreiner's understanding of Eliot's project seems to miss the considerable struggle which the communication of this precariously grasped knowledge represented, her distinction between didactic and expressive art is significant. For Schreiner, the act of expression in itself is important: it is not the expression of a given, stable, self but the constitution in and through expression of a new self. The letter to Ellis reveals the extreme anxiety which Schreiner felt when exposing her writing to an audience¹³. The extremely personal nature of her writing is one of the things which distinguishes it from Eliot's ironic, impartial narrative. While Eliot may have struggled to conceive of an ordered reality within the increasingly eroded society of the late nineteenth century, she was nevertheless able to distance herself from the "tangled web" sufficiently

13. Schreiner writes: "It was like a knife in my heart today when I saw An African Farm stuck up in a window. I get to loath it when I think of how many people have read it" (1987,154).

to regard it as exterior to herself. It is this distance which Schreiner seems unable, or perhaps unwilling to maintain. Her writing self seems somehow implicated in the world she is trying to represent.

In a letter to Havelock Ellis in 1886, Schreiner writes:

Every word of it [From Man To Man] is truth to me, and more and more so as the book goes on. It could not be otherwise. That is all that can be said of it. One thing I am glad of is that it becomes less and less what you call 'art' as it goes on. My first crude conceptions are always what you call 'art'. As they become more and more living and real, they become what I call higher art but what you call no 'art' at all (1987,79).

The distinction here is between Schreiner's novel which is "truth to (her)" and "art". The term "art" here can be read on one level as simply the conventions of representation established by the literary canon, conventions which Schreiner's writing did not conform to. Yet on another level "art" can refer to the conscious crafting of the material by the artist, an act which can only be undertaken if the artist perceives herself as clearly separate from material she wishes to represent. Realist fiction establishes the world as exterior, and mediates the experiences of individuals so that they become understandable in terms of the wider historical dynamics of the time. This ordered exterior world is one which cannot approximate to Schreiner's experience of the "living and real", a phrase which indicates that for Schreiner, personal lived experience could not be separated from the exterior world. This "art" which

claims to reveal the impersonal or objective truth through showing the actual relations between things, events and people cannot accommodate Schreiner's novel which is true only in its specificity. Its truth is not general but relates to the specificity of Schreiner's experiences. These experiences, located in a geographical and social space other than that referred to in traditional realist fiction, could not be interpreted according to the kinds of relations set up by metropolitan conceptions of the real.

Karel Schoeman writes that "with the three novels she wrote in the seventies, and specifically The Story of an African Farm, which was published in 1883, Olive Schreiner became the founder, or at any rate the initiator, of a literature that was not merely written in South Africa or by South Africans, nor merely contained South African characters, scenes or themes, but in which South Africa was an essential element" (1989,413). Prior to her representation, he argues, South Africa was either described in terms transposed from a British or European setting or it was exoticised in the form of the colonial adventure or romance.¹⁴ While realism was the dominant literary form for metropolitan writers representing their own context, England, the most popular way of

14. Schoeman describes how Pringle and other early poets attempt to name the Southern African landscape in the conventional terms used to write about British and European landscapes (1991,414-420). He also suggests that "as a land of potential adventure, Africa lent itself to youth literature, and since it was also a missionary country it offered the wherewithal for a very effective blend of entertainment and edification..." (1991,417).

representing her colonial empire was the adventure story or colonial romance.

Writing about the distinction between the social-psychological or realist novel and the adventure novel, Bakhtin notes that the difference lies in the relation of the hero to the social whole. In the classic realist account, he suggests, social relationships form the stable basis determining all plot connections.

The hero is assigned to a plot as someone fully embodied and strictly localized in life, as someone dressed in the concrete and impenetrable garb of his class or social station, his family position, his age, his life and biographical goals. His humanness is to such an extent made concrete and specific by his place in life that it is in itself denied any decisive influence on the plot relationships (1984,104).

In the adventure novel, the hero is constituted in an entirely different way. In this genre "all social and cultural institutions, establishments, social states and classes, family relationships are no more than positions in which a person can be eternally equal to himself. Problems dictated by his eternal human nature - self-preservation, the thirst for victory and triumph, the thirst for dominance or for sensual love - determine the adventure plot" (1984,105). For the popular writer, the suitability of the adventure novel to the colonial situation is precisely its reference to the notion of an eternal human nature. It is this notion which can provide fictions about colonial Africa with a means of representing an encounter with a space in which stable social relationships do not appear to exist. The

"eternally human" hero can leave behind the cultural and social institutions of British society and confront the otherness of the alien environment without ever losing his sense of himself. In fact the adventure narrative functions to consolidate the sense of an autonomous self through representing the hero as able to function outside the boundaries of his social network.

For Schreiner, as a colonial woman, there were problems associated with the discursive fields generated by both the realist and the adventure novel form. The social-psychological novel of the kind being produced by George Eliot could draw on the notion of a historically situated and relatively stable community in which the characters were located according to commonly known class and religious divisions. Colonial society, made up of settlers from a variety of different countries, classes and religions lacked the relative homogeneity of an English town such as that represented in Middlemarch.¹⁵ Furthermore, it had only a short and fragmented history which was unable to provide an adequate basis for a sense of a colonial social identity. Graham Pechey remarks that a homology can be posited between "the discontinuities in the great Text of colonial culture and those in the text of African Farm itself" (1983,66). These discontinuities in colonial culture meant that

15. Willaims writes that in Middlemarch: "George Eliot refers to the real processes within this sort of society - the steady rise and fall of families - as 'those less marked vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse and begetting new consciousness of interdependence'. This is a changing but still knowable community" (1987,90).

Schreiner, from German and English missionary parents, living within a fragmented community, occupied an uneasy relationship with the stable society presumed by the social-psychological novel. While English society provided a model of class and gender divisions, it could not adequately encapsulate the heterogeneity of the colonial population.

In her preface to African Farm, Schreiner identifies two methods of depicting reality:

Human life may be painted according to two methods. There is the stage method. According to that each character is duly marshalled at first, and ticketed; we know with an immutable certainty that at the right crisis each one will return and act his part, and when the curtain falls, all will stand before it bowing. There is a sense of satisfaction in this, and of completeness. But there is another method - the method of the life we all lead. Here nothing can be prophesied. There is a strange coming and going of feet. Men appear, act and re-act upon each other and pass away. When the crisis comes the man who would fit it does not return. When the curtain falls no one is ready...What the name of the play is no one knows (1984,27).

While Schreiner's claim is also to a form of realism, it is not a mimetic realism which satisfies us by reconfirming our sense of the world as ordered according to understandable and familiar sets of relations. Instead it offers the disturbing incompleteness of a body not whole and firmly situated in the world, but fragmented, unexplained and in flux, articulated in the image of the strange coming and going of feet. The novel itself thus does not claim to mirror the world in so far as mirroring involves the production of a accurate, completed picture which presents for the reader an

already known world of stable social relationships. It is the strangeness of the real, and its resistance to the ordering process of a realist narrative that she emphasizes. It is an act which cannot be named, in which the actors lack stable identity, and in which the plot cannot be predicted. The discontinuities in her narrative are the discontinuities of the form of life she is trying to articulate.

The narrative that she does offer in African Farm is one which she needs to defend because it does not conform to the expectations produced by its geographical location. The "kind critic" whom she quotes in the preface "would better have liked the little book if it had been a history of wild adventure; of cattle driven into inaccessible 'kranzes' by Bushmen; 'of encounters with ravening lions, and hair-breadth escapes.'" The appeal of the adventure novel, the form which dominated narratives about South Africa, lay in the fact that it mapped onto the alien and exotic terrain of the "kranzes" a familiar discourse of metropolitan encounters with the wilderness. The colonial real would have become readable and comprehensible as a space in which western man might reconfirm his own position of dominance, since the adventure story is always one in which the hero triumphs finally over a hostile environment. At the same time, Paul Rich points out, 'while realism tends toward a scientific world view in its observation of outward and worldly social forms, romance has a regressive and primordial tendency of looking towards inward

psychological states and worshipping the heroic and the marvellous" (1986,122).

While the representation of South Africa in the colonial romance might not have been considered "true", its effect was to consolidate a conceptualization of Western man in terms of a notion of "eternal humanity". Whereas the adventures themselves might lack grounding in reality, the claim to truth of these novels lay in their psychological investigation of the self. The fantasied confirmation of the integrity of an autonomous and self-sufficient man created an identity which was not dependent on established social relationships. Precisely because colonial society lacked a homogeneous and stable character, the heroic adventurer was able to use the colonial space as one in which to authenticate the notion of an eternal human nature. But this notion of the eternal human nature of the heroic adventurer is one which excludes women entirely since confirmation of that self is to be found in the traditionally male activities of self-preservation and struggles for victory and domination. Rich writes that "in its strictest form, the romantic ideal can have no place for the autonomy of the female mind which had an ambiguous and ultimately threatening status" (1986,124). The women in adventure stories always remain to the side of the main action, as goals to be reached or threats to be overcome. There is no room for them to occupy the position of subject since they are by definition not part of eternal humanity, but rather elements in the social network which the men

escape in order to rediscover themselves. Schreiner
 comments in response to the suggestion that her novel
 would have been more appealing if it been an adventure
 romance that "such works are best written in Piccadilly
 or the Strand". [Implicit in this remark is an awareness
 of the extent to which such a discourse is dependent on a
 particular positioning of the writer in relation to the
 colonial reality.] To write such a narrative presupposes
 the writer's emotional distance from the strangeness of
 that reality. The author, like the adventurer, must
 inhabit a stable and familiar social space which he can
 temporarily leave behind in his fictional exploration of
 the exotic and the unknown. It is this social space that
 provides him with a discourse which constitutes colonial
 Africa as other and strange and at the same time
 penetrable and conquerable. Refusing to adopt the
 metropolitan discourse of adventure and conquest,
 Schreiner was confronted with the necessity of finding a
 mode of representation which can maintain the strangeness
 of the familiar reality of "the scenes among which [s]he
 has grown". It is her actual familiarity with South
 Africa which prevents her from being able to read or
 write it in the terms provided by the colonial adventure
 story. For Pechey, the discontinuities of the novel, its
 reversal of categorical expectations, can be related to
 Schreiner's refusal to reproduce the dominant discourse

about South Africa. He argues that:

To return this text to its colonial historical locus is to see that these various scandals (aesthetic, ethical, and religious) have as their basis a yet more fundamental cultural reversal which is at bottom political. In this reversal priority is conferred upon the colony rather than the metropolis - the second rather than the first term of the colonial relationship. The "strange" place is home. Where one starts from. The exotic is the familiar; both in space and time the movement is from the farm towards what is called civilization rather than from civilization to the savage hinterland of contemporary colonial romance (1983,3).

These reversals mark Schreiner's resistance to the forms through which colonial space had been inscribed and generates a mode of representation which attempts to avoid the implications of both the realist and the adventure novel forms.

Schreiner's awareness of the distinction between her writing and the dominant conventions of literary production of the period can be seen in a letter to Ellis in 1886. Schreiner writes:

You seem to say "I will call 'art' only that artistic creation in which I clearly see the artist manufacturing the parts and piecing them together; when I cannot see that, though the thing be organic, true, inevitable, like a work of God's, I will not call it art..." This touches what seems to me a weakness and shallowness in your mode of criticism. It is very valuable that the two kinds of art should be distinguished, but not that one be called art and the other not art. It would be better to call one artificial and the other real art. But that wouldn't be just. I should rather call the one organic and the other inorganic. (1987,79)

With the notion of "organic" art Schreiner attempts to define a mode of artistic representation which derives its form, not from contemporary literary conventions but from a correspondence with the natural order. Arguing

that the initial stages of the creative process were largely unconscious, she asserted that the material which emerged was already associated with a particular form. The conscious art of writing lay in ensuring that the material text provided an accurate representation of her initial vision.¹⁶ The unconscious is thus located as the origin of a natural truth, as inevitable as a "work of God's". For Schreiner, this truth is not a personal or subjective truth because the unconscious is not a product of the individual mind. It is rather the natural force which allows people to move beyond their individual consciousness. Drawing on an interview with Schreiner's friend, Arthur Symons, and the discussion between Rebekah and Drummond on art in From Man to Man, Berkman asserts that:

Though the substance of an intuition is construed from an artist's lived experience...it represents more than the artist's particular life. The ability to dream, hear, see objects unknown to the artist's actual life arises from "the accumulated life of his race, of the millions of human creatures who have been his ancestors," to which he adds his unique ability, organically connected with the entire complex of human experience, to paint the future. (1989,202)

The unconscious is thus conceptualized as both a natural and a social force which unifies the diversity of individual experience. Since organic art, for Schreiner, represents an expression of unconscious material it acts

16. This is discussed in Berkman, (1989,198-206). She writes that "Schreiner was certain that creative flashes sprang primarily from unconscious processes" (1989,199) and goes on to explain how Schreiner, in a letter to Ellis, describes an incident which "provides new strange evidence of that double consciousness which I'm sure exists in the brain, at least in mine."

as a means of transcending individual consciousness and revealing the links which bind human society. The form or style of the writing is structured by the inner constraints of the unconscious material. The heterogeneity of styles of writing in her novels, particularly African Farm and From Man to Man, is thus explained, in Schreiner's terms, as the result of structuring force of an unconscious, unifying principal within human society.

The mode of representation which for Schreiner seems to most adequately fulfill the requirements of this double vision, both actual and discontinuous, transcendent and unified is the allegory. In African Farm, there are two actual allegories which break the continuity of the narrative progression. Parker-Gounelas argues that in addition to this "the novel itself can be read as one long sustained allegory, woven out of the tangle of its elements. Deeply buried behind the stories of Lyndall, Em and Waldo is a narrative about gender conditioning as Schreiner knew it, and a specific programme for the solution to the problem of sexual polarisation" (1991,102). For Parker-Gounelas, the figure of Gregory Rose provides the focus for an imaginary resolution of the conflict engendered by the social construction of sexual difference. She writes that "in Gregory, the new womanly man, Schreiner embodies her view of how a transformation in male attitudes could bring about a new era in human relationships" (1991,105). Apart from the curious way in which this interpretation

emphasis of the novel from an investigation of female agency (the inscription of female selfhood) to the assertion of the transformative power of male attitudes, it is hard to identify where in the allegorical structure she finds evidence of the "new era of human relationships". Surely not in the relationship between Em and Gregory Rose after his transforming experience of being a woman. Em's conversation with Waldo does not seem to indicate that their relationship represents the "utopian" expression of transformed human relationships:

"Why is it so, Waldo, always so?" she said; "we long for things, and long for them, and pray for them; we would give all we have to come near them, but we never reach them. Then at last, too late, just when we don't want them any more, when all the sweetness is taken out of them, then they come (1984, 296).

It is her marriage to Gregory Rose which has come too late, when it no longer represents the fulfillment of her prayers. It is difficult to see where in this painful representation of loss Parker-Gounelas finds the "fantastic, utopian conception" she attributes to Schreiner.

Irene Gorak, in an article entitled "Olive Schreiner's Colonial Allegory: The Story of an African Farm", presents a rather more complex reading of African Farm as an allegorical text. Gorak offers her reading of the novel as an investigation into the possible recuperability of allegory in progressive social narrative. She argues that: "at the back of Schreiner's novel lurks a half-examined link between allegory and colonial occupation: the first a trope based on parallels

between different orders of experience; the second a kind of nightmare comparison, proceeding by physical as well as verbal expropriation, between two cultures, a "higher", colonizing power, and a "lower", less developed culture, to be attacked, absorbed, emptied, and cast aside" (1992,56). For Gorak, both allegory and colonialism involve two distinct fields of experience which are brought together in a systematic ordering of relations.

In the novel, all the characters are involved in the process of producing stories or images which engage with the dominant discourses of the metropolitan culture. The colonial writer, caught between the metropolitan culture on the one side and indigeneous culture on the other, finds herself unable to sustain a singular interpretative strategy. Gorak writes that:

European settlers mirror the ideals of a parent society in an environment that undermines their code of dress, work, and behaviour, their moral and religious pieties. Partially adapting to local conditions, the same settlers also mirror their new environment, borrowing the long-evolved adaptive behaviour of the native people - the shoes they wear, the materials for their houses, crops raised and animals herded - even as they impose on those people their own imported valuations" (1992,62).

The use of the image of the mirror here seems incompatible with Gorak's own analysis of the partial and fragmented relationship the colonial writer has with both the parent society and the culture of the indigeneous communities. The action of the mirror is to reflect indiscriminately whatever comes before it. It is incapable of selection. Mirroring became the metaphor

for realist representation precisely for these reasons. Gorak goes on to argue that in African Farm, the allegorical meanings coexists with literal meanings. Waldo, Lyndall and the other characters are allegorical figures but also "suffering, and separated bodies", whose pain is not alleviated by the spiritual resolution they figurally indicate. According to Gorak:

The figural centre of Schreiner's fiction is the body, often the female body, a mountain trodden by alien species and stamped into a bewildering variety of sizes and shapes. In African Farm, the topiary world of the female body merges into the world-influx of the colonial farm. Both attract dominating powers ignorant of the real needs of the territory claimed. Both propitiate cultural interests formulated and fed elsewhere. As the colony stand to the metropolis and the allegory stands to the encoded truth, so the female stands to the male (1992,67).

Gorak's interpretation thus goes beyond that offered by Parker-Gounelas since it attempts to show how, through the use of allegory, the novel constructs a double narrative. She reads it as representing simultaneously an account of women's oppression and of colonial domination. Yet in the final sentence, Gorak seems to be asserting a more complex relation between the allegorical form of the novel and the material it represents. By suggesting an analogy between the relationship of colony to metropolis, allegory to encoded truth and female to male, she seems to be suggesting that the allegorical form itself figures the unequal power relations evident in the other two relationships. For Gorak, allegory relates two separate fields of experience in a hierarchical way, making the tale or fable secondary to

the truth which it encodes. At the same time she seems to be suggesting that in allegory, as in the colonial/metropolitan or female/male relationship, it is impossible to maintain an absolute separation between the two domains of meaning.

In Catherine van Dyke's reevaluation of the trope of allegory she observes that it can be defined as realist according to an older definition of the real "not as imitative or commonsensical but as substantial, in Platonic terms".¹⁷ It deals not in the appearances of reality but in a hidden, transcendent reality which it indicates indirectly through fable.¹⁸ Angus Fletcher argues that:

Allegory perhaps has a "reality" of its own, but it is certainly not the sort that operates in our perceptions of the physical world. It has an idealizing consistency of thematic content, because, in spite of the visual absurdity of much allegorical images, the relations between the ideas are under strong logical control (1965,105).

According to Cherry Clayton, it is this aspect of allegory which appealed to Schreiner. In the introduction to a collection of Schreiner's short fiction she writes:

Allegory offered Schreiner a traditional way of approach to abstract truth, a way of transcending



17. Stephen Barney quoted in Van Dyke, (1985,39).

18. Plato argues that the artist can deal only with appearances: "the poet knowing nothing more than to represent appearances, can paint in words his picture of any craftsman so as to impress an audience which is equally ignorant and judges only by the form of the expression" (1941,331) Fletcher argues that Plato's tendency toward allegory "can perhaps be ascribed to a major need in the Platonic system, for permanent images to convey the fixed idea with which the dialectical argument is going to operate"(1964,99).

individual lives and propounding what she saw as universal principals and ethical imperatives (1986,8).

Schreiner's desire to represent "abstract truth" can be understood both in terms of her relation to the metropolitan culture and her uneasy position as a woman writer. Through asserting a human or universal truth underlying the apparent world, Schreiner could transcend the fragmented and often indecipherable reality of the colonial environment. The allegorical trope, with its ability to maintain two separate levels of meaning, could be used to derive a systematic order from the chaotic details of individual experience. It provided the crucial means of connecting contradictory cultural discourses with an underlying system of natural relations. At the same time as allegory provided Schreiner with a means of transcending the local and allowing her access to the metropolitan culture it also afforded her an entry into the traditionally masculine realm of conceptual debate. Allegory offered her the possibility of transcending the particularity of her social position as a colonial, woman writer allowing her to take up the authoritative role of mediator, revealing through her writing universal human truths rather than merely mirroring her own conditions of experiences.

Yet in order for allegory to fulfill its ordering function it is essential that the two levels of meaning on which it operates remain separate. The unambiguous truth of the revelation must be kept apart from the fictitious, indeterminate fable in which it is encoded.

Van Dyke argues that this is precisely what allegory ultimately cannot achieve. She writes that "if a text says one thing it also means that thing: we cannot separate speech from meaning. Thus if it says one thing and means another, it both says and means two things. And unless we are linguistic schizophrenics or willing to ignore half of what we read, a text which says and means two things must say and mean one complex thing"

(1985,42). Van Dyke's argument posits a single complex meaning for allegorical writing in which the two levels of meaning are combined. In African Farm it seems rather that the universal meaning is constantly being troubled or undermined by the text itself. Her characters refuse the allegorical transmutation from agent to image, and the landscape, while promising a logic of its own, nevertheless contains elements which signify a historical world of pain, struggle and contradiction. The symbolic life of the allegorical form is at variance with the material world it represents.

Part 3: Colonial Allegory and the Limits of the Self

In discussing the nature of allegory as a semantic device, Fletcher argues that it characteristically expresses conflict between rival authorities. He writes that "At the heart of any allegory will be found this conflict of authorities. One ideal is pitted against another, its opposite..." (1965,22). In African Farm, the narrative articulates this conflict of authorities at number of different levels. Most overtly, the novel represents the conflict between an old order based on religious belief and the new order of evolutionary science. This conflict is represented in the most manifestly allegorical sections of the text, the chapter entitled "Times and Seasons" and the tale told by Waldo's stranger. Yet beyond this very conscious desire to reorder people's perception of the world, the novel enters into conflict more covertly with two other authoritative systems. In the first part of the novel, Bonaparte Blenkins can be read as a figure of invasion, expression the arbitrary rule of violence and self-interest which characterised the colonial enterprise. In the second part of the novel, Lyndall's interaction with the mirror seems to articulate the limits of identity as a means of social transformation and the ultimate failure of the individualist self in the colonial context.

Referring to Coleridge's distinction between symbol and allegory, Fletcher explains allegory's traditional

association with reason:

With Symbol the mind perceives the rational order of things directly, by an "unmediated vision", without any logical extrapolation from the phenomena of our material world, whereas in allegory there is always (as Coleridge sees it) an attempt to categorize logical orders first, and fit them to convenient phenomena second, to set forth ideal systems first and illustrate them second...One need not necessarily be aware of one's own private motives in constructing such ideal systems, but one does need to have a conscious, highly organised view of the interrelationships that bind the system into a unity (1965,18).

For Coleridge, allegory involves a highly conscious mode of analysis, in which an authoritative ordering of the world is challenged by the presentation of an alternative "ideal system". In the novel, the allegory of the hunter represents such a challenge of the traditional ordering of the world. It depicts the act of individual transformation from a religious doctrine of faith to a mystical striving after truth.¹⁹ In the fable which the stranger tells, the hunter has to leave the community which he is part of in the "valley of superstition" and go on alone, resisting the temptation of the "twins sensuality" who try and divert him in "the Land of Absolute Negation and Denial", to climb the mountains of

19. In the chapter "Times and Seasons" a similar movement seems to be in operation although the "truth" here is not depicted as an abstract goal but rather as the discovery of a natural order. After examining the internal organs of a gander, the narrator comes to the conclusion that: "This thing we call existence is it not something which has its roots far down below in the dark, and its branches stretching out into the immensity above, which we among the branches cannot see? Not a chance jumble; a living thing, a One" (1984,153). The truth here is embodied in the relation which exists between all natural phenomena. The material world indicates beyond itself to a hidden order.

"Dry-facts and Realities" at the top of which lives the bird of truth. Although the hunter fails to reach the bird his endeavour is justified because he has carved a path which will enable others to come closer to truth. At the point of death he comments that: "Where I lie down worn out other men will stand young and fresh. By the steps that I have cut they will climb; by the stairs that I have built they will mount...They will find her, and through me! No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (1984,168). The fable contains a clear evolutionary message. Individual mortality is transcended by the progress of society as a whole and this progress is achieved through the submission of the material world of hard facts and realities to an ordering principle. Scientific investigation rather than superstitious belief is represented as the means by which the ultimate "truth" may be discovered and the moral meaning of humanity's existence revealed. For Waldo's stranger, religious order is replaced by a moral order which is bound by natural laws. Nature rather than society is perceived as the source of moral consciousness, since, the stranger argues, "the inexorable 'thou shalt and shalt not' are carved into the nature of things" (1984,171). The scientific investigation of natural phenomena is perceived to constitute the real basis for a moral consciousness. This interpretation of the social Darwinist application of biology to social organisation reveals Schreiner's conscious revision of this theory in terms of her

egalitarian and pacifist social beliefs. The "all-knowing self" becomes "the one judge which deals eternal justice", suggesting that the exterior figure of God is replaced by an innate moral conscience within.

The allegory of the hunter thus expresses the conscious conflict between an interpretation of the world based on religion and one based on a form of scientific naturalism. Although this new science is empirical it also indicates beyond the material data towards underlying principles. Nature replaces God as the ultimate authority, and acquires an almost mystical status. This opposition between a doctrine of faith and one based on empirical research represents perhaps the most significant ideological conflict of the nineteenth century. The religious subject, constrained by external laws of conduct and threatened by justice after death is succeeded by the individualist subject who is answerable only to a personal moral conscience. The allegory of the hunter can thus also be read as tracing the emergence of the individualist subject, the self searching for a personal meaning within an alienated world.

Yet within the novel as a whole the allegorical mode operates also within the more material conflict between the colony and the metropolis. At this level allegory operates not as a conscious replacing of the one order by the other, but rather as an unconscious attempt to symbolize the colony in terms other than those prescribed for it by the metropolis. Coleridge's distinction between symbol and allegory disappears if allegory is

perceived not as a series of conscious correlations between two systems but rather as trope of transformation which brings together two opposing discursive fields. As Van Dyke has argued, the "movement of meaning" in an allegorical text involves a constant interaction between the different levels of signification.

In African Farm Waldo's stranger articulates a conception of art in terms of the traditional definition of allegory:

"How did you know it?" the boy whispered at last. "It is not written there - not on that wood. How did you know it?"

"Certainly," said the stranger, "the whole story is not written here, but it is suggested. And the attribute of all true art, the highest and the lowest, is this - that it says more than it says, and takes you away from itself. It is a little door which opens into an infinite hall where you may find what you please" (1984,169).

Here true art is conceptualized as having the power to indicate beyond itself to "an infinite hall". Art's importance lies in its ability to suggest something other than itself, an infinite significance from the finite material of the work. The stranger asserts that "there is nothing so universally intelligible as truth" (1984,169), suggesting that an essentially human truth, bound by its connection to nature, provides a connection between people which exceeds social divisions. Art provides access to a reality which transcends cultural barriers. For Schreiner, art, conceptualized in these terms became a way of relating the fractured colonial reality to the transcendence of a universal human truth.

Yet in the novel, there seem to be certain elements which resist this universalizing impulse. In the first part of the novel, the figure of Bonaparte Blenkins can be read as the counterpoint to the hero of an adventure romance. Bonaparte Blenkins can be seen to link the colonial farm to metropolitan interests. Gorak writes that:

[Schreiner] equates colonization with unsettlement, and traces colonial unsettlement, not to the depredations of the surrounding natives, nor even to the greed of the colonists, but to cultural contradictions within the parent society. At one point, Blenkins moves, with the lightening quickness of the trickster figure, from a tale of colonial life as hairbreadth escapes from wild animals to a quintessential fable of colonial capitalism. "There is Africa, a struggling country; they want capital; they want men of talent...I brought eight thousand pounds worth of machinery - winnowing, ploughing, reaping machines....Got to the Cape. Where is the ship with the things? Lost - gone to the bottom!" (1992, 63).

It is Blenkins' ability to generate convincing narratives and manipulate existing ones which enables him to assume control over the inhabitants of the farm. The first three chapters in which Blenkins appears, entitled "I was a stranger, and ye took me in", "Blessed is he that believeth" and "Sunday Services" all refer to the discourse of Christianity which he manipulates in order to undermine Otto's authority on the farm. Otto's belief, and his trusting acceptance of Blenkins's stories make him an easy victim. While Otto and Tant' Sannie are taken in by Blenkins, Waldo, Em and Lyndall are not, yet are powerless to prevent his schemes. Constrained by physical force, their resistance can only be a refusal of

his narratives of legitimation. After Waldo has been whipped and locked in the fuel-room, Lyndall releases him:

A flush rose to her face; she opened the door quickly, and walked in, went to the nail on which the key of the fuel-room hung. Bonaparte and Tant' Sannie sat there and saw her.
 "What do you want?" they asked together.
 "This key," she said, holding it up, and looking at them.
 "Do you mean her to have it?" said Tant' Sannie in Dutch.
 "Why don't you stop her?" asked Bonaparte in English.
 "Why don't you take it from her?" said Tant' Sannie. So they looked at each other, talking, while Lyndall walked to the fuel house with the key, her underlip bitten in.
 "Waldo," she said, as she helped him to stand up, and twisted his arm about her waist to support him, "we will not be children always; we shall have the power too, some day." (1984, 126-7)

The first part of the novel is characterised by a combination of black humour and violence. The humorous spectacle of Blenkins in no way detracts from the horror of the violence that he inflicts, both physically and psychologically. Its force lies not in its realistic representation of the actual conditions of colonialism but rather in the way it explores the complex interaction between narrative and violence in Blenkins' arrogation of power. He finds in Africa, like the hero of the romance, a space of relative freedom in which stable social relationships do not exist. The isolation of the farm from established structures of civil society makes it an ideal domain for an individual to enact the fantasy of self-fulfillment through heroic acts of conquest. But

Bonaparte Blenkins, unlike the hero of the adventure story is represented as overtly opportunistic, manipulating the inhabitants through a combination of often contradictory narratives of colonial legitimation and violence. Blenkins represents the traveller from the parent society not in the metropolitan's terms as a heroic figure of eternal humanity but as an agent of exploitation, constituted by the diverse stories he tells to justify his assumption of power. Although Blenkins is finally defeated by his own opportunism, and disappears from the narrative in the second part of the novel, he serves to focus the nature of power in the novel, not as a form of absolute authority but as strategic control.

The other figure in the novel who seem unable to transcend the specificity of her position, is, of course, Lyndall. If Waldo is linked through a form of universal consciousness to the animate natural order, Lyndall remains entirely within the limits of a social consciousness. This distinction between them is made clear early on in the novel.

"And the wild buck have gone, and those days, and we are here. But we will be gone soon, and only the stones will lie on here, looking at everything like they look now. I know it is I who am thinking," the fellow added slowly, "but it seems as though it were they who were talking. Has it never seemed so to you, Lyndall?"

"No, it never seems so to me," she answered.
(1984, 50)

Lyndall's unequivocal answer to Waldo's question seems to institute an absolute division between the way each are situated in relation to the world which is reinforced

later in the novel. After her return from boarding school, Lyndall asks Waldo whether he takes an interest in "the position of women". His equally unequivocal negative reply suggests that the two positions marked by these two characters are incompatible. Waldo's interest in the universal mysteries of the world preclude him from a concern with the particular social conditions of women. According to Barash, Schreiner considered both Lyndall and Waldo to be representations of herself²⁰. This divided expression of the self seems to suggest that the social reality of her gender conflicted with her belief in the unifying power of the natural order. Waldo's death, unlike Lyndall's death which is marked by the fear of the "Grey Dawn", is preceded by his recognition of the meaningfulness of nature:

Ah, to live on so, year after year, how well!
 Always in the present; letting each day glide,
 bringing its own labour, and its own beauty; the
 gradual lighting up of the hills, night and the
 stars, firelight and the coals! To live on so,
 calmly, far from the paths of men; and to look at
 the lives of clouds and insects; to look deep into
 the heart of flowers, and see how lovingly the
 pistil and the stamens nestle there together, and to
 see in the thorn-pods how the little seeds suck
 their life through the delicate curled up string,
 and how the little embryo sleeps inside (1984,299).

Waldo's final reconciliation is with a natural order but significantly one which excludes "man". It represents a final retreat from the social world and ultimately an ending point for Waldo as subject. In the text both Lyndall and Waldo, as individual subjects seem to reach a

20. Carol Barash writes that "Schreiner told her two brothers that the two central characters, Lyndall and Waldo, were both herself..."(1989,272).

final barrier, a point beyond which they cannot go. I have suggested that figure of Bonaparte Blenkins, can be read as the reversal of the heroic adventurer. In a similar way, I wish to suggest that Waldo and Lyndall, mark the limits of the individualist subject of the realist text in the colonial situation.

The problem of both mimetic realism and the adventure story is not only that they cannot represent the discontinuities of colonial reality. In both forms although in different ways, the central element in the narrative is the constitution of a coherent and unified subject. The knowing subject of realist discourse and the invulnerable subject of the colonial adventure are both constructed according to a principle of reflection. If the realist text claims to reflect the world as it is, the adventure story operates in the realm of wish-fulfillment to produce an image of fantasied wholeness and autonomy which reproduces the child's first encounter with him/herself in the mirror. In his account of Lacan's analysis of the constitution of the individual as subject, Stuart Schneiderman describes the mirror stage as the first moment at which the child comes to recognise his/her own self as a separate entity in relation to the exterior world. He writes that:

The child does not merely see his image in the mirror. He sees the image surrounded by the world of objects. The world is certainly integrated with the ego; the ego as image at its centre. This integration is effected only at the cost of a misapprehension: the ego may be thought of as the subjective centre of the world; in fact it is the first object of the child's look.

We must add

that when the child first recognises his image in the mirror, he greets the discovery with jubilation. He is transfixed by the image; he is fixated, even captured, by its immobility as well as its wholeness. In a sense the child will invest his image narcissistically because it responds or appears to respond unfailingly to his cues. This is again a misapprehension of the fact that he himself has been captured within the field of the mirror. (1980,4)

This fantasied relation of identity with the image in the mirror is one which is inevitably interrupted by the child's accession to language, but the mirror image remains as a model of the ego function. Read in these terms realist fiction can be regarded as engaging the knowing subject in a structure of fulfilling misrecognition. The place of the knowing subject is confirmed through an organisation of the real which places the reader, like the child in the mirror, at the subjective centre of an integrated world. The adventure novel, operating at the level of fantasy, involves a misrecognition of a different kind. In the image of the autonomous and invulnerable hero the reader can find a reconstitution of the unified self. The fact that this hero is conceived of as representing the "eternally human" makes it possible for the reader to reconfirm his/her own self through a fantasied identification with the protagonist. The otherness of the colonial world makes it an ideal space for the working out of these narcissistic wishes for a reality which will respond unfailingly to the will of the ego. The reader is thus in both cases confirmed as subject through reference back to the moment of perceived wholeness which the imaginary

represents. In refusing both realist and adventure forms, Schreiner can be read as attempting to resist the structures of identity implicit in any narrative which operates within the field of the mirror. These structures position the subject within a reflective relation to the world and to itself and in doing so constitute identity within a closed circle of recognition. Yet to escape this capture and articulate a subjectivity outside the terms of recognition determined by the historical and social frame of reference involves a confrontation with the very possibility of subjectivity itself. In the novel, the difficulties of escaping this reflective subjectivity are articulated through the figure of Lyndall.

Lyndall, whose final gesture is to meet her own eyes in the mirror, seems to be at once captured by the mirror and at the same time empowered by it to constitute a self outside of the identities prescribed for her. In her conversation with Waldo about the position of women, Lyndall comments on the process whereby the young girl comes to see herself in the way prescribed for her by society. Having been prevented from going out to play, she watches from inside the house:

Afterwards we go and thread blue beads, and make a string for our neck; and we go and stand before the glass. We see the complexion we were not to spoil, and the white frock, and we look into our own great eyes. Then the curse begins to act on us. It finishes its work when we are grown women, who no more look out wistfully at a more healthy life; we are contented (1984,189).

Unlike the Lacanian mirror in which the child misapprehends itself as whole and finds itself situated at the centre of an integrated world, Lyndall's child, already subjected to language, finds in the mirror not an imaginary wholeness but rather the fragmentation of gendered identity. She begins to see herself in the terms set out by those around her - 'the complexion we were not to spoil' and 'the white frock'. The image of feminine identity which the mirror returns is one which is defined in terms of appearance rather than action. The curse which consigns them to their position is the one which prevents them from making a distinction between image and self so that they finally become what they are expected to be. The action of looking in the mirror is presented as an alternative to the world of action represented by the boys playing out of doors, and its function at this point is normative, encouraging the child to recognise herself in the terms set out by the society. But there is another look operating in this extract which does not contribute to the certification of feminine identity. The child looks into her own eyes and establishes a relationship with herself which is one of doubleness not identity. This doubleness becomes central to Lyndall's own resistance to identity imposed by the image of femininity:

The large dark eyes from the glass looked back at her. She looked deep into them.

'We are all alone, you and I,' she whispered; 'no one helps us, no one understands us; but we will help ourselves.' The eyes looked back at her. There was a world of assurance in their still depths. So they had looked

at her ever since she could remember, when it was but a small child's face above a blue pinafore. 'We will never be quite alone, you and I,' she said; 'we will always be together, as we were when we were little.' (1984,242)

The use of the definite article rather than the personal pronoun to introduce the phrase referring to the eyes causes a radical and disturbing division between Lyndall and her reflected eyes. Kathleen Blake notes that this absence of the personal pronoun in Schreiner's descriptions of Lyndall's relation to her body is a common feature and one which can be contrasted with the treatment of Waldo who is not subjected to the same depersonalisation. She suggests that: "The choice of 'its' for 'her', 'the little figure' for 'her little figure', let alone her proper name, implies separation, objectification, a view of woman not as a self-integrating entity but as a collection of unpossessed parts, not 'I' enough to personalize the pronouns" (1983,219). Yet in the passage quoted above the reflected eyes which meet Lyndall's eyes in the mirror provide a "world of assurance". Lyndall, alone because her desires place her outside the social order, completes herself with this look, gaining from it the reassurance that she requires to embark upon the action of redefining her position in relation to the normative social reality. It is a doubleness which enables her to escape the static identity prescribed for her by a femininity defined by a complexion which is not to be spoiled and a white frock. Looking into her own eyes becomes a way of not seeing her

image as it has been constructed for her by her position as a woman.

Yet at the same time as this gesture makes it possible for her to resist the discourse which positions her as simply image, it also excludes from her gaze, a world both geographical and social in which she could orient herself. If the mirror is conceived of as returning not only the image of the person before it but also placing that person in relation to a visible world, present to consciousness through the agency of perception, Lyndall's refusal to look further than her own gaze displaces her from any relation to her immediate surroundings. This alienation from the landscape both geographical and social locks her into a relation which can only ever contain herself. At the old German's grave, after she has agreed to leave with the stranger, she says "'I am so tired. There is light, there is warmth,' she wailed; 'why am I alone, so hard, so cold? I am so weary of myself! It is eating my soul to its core - self, self, self! I cannot bear this life! I cannot breath, I cannot live! Will nothing free me from myself?'" (1984,241)

Resisting the version of reality she inhabits by refusing to situate herself within its visible frame reenacts the powerlessness of women in relation to the world which surrounds them. In her conversation with Waldo she makes the distinction between man and woman

precisely this aspect of their social construction:

We all enter the world little plastic beings, with so much natural force, perhaps but for the rest - blank; and the world tells us what we are to be, and shapes us by the ends it sets before us. To you it says - Work! and to us it says Seem! (1984,188)

Work while it does not ultimately provide Waldo with a way of redeeming his world, nevertheless offers a mode of interaction with the environment which is, or could be, productive.²¹ In contrast to this interactive position, women are given the role of appearing, their visibility in the eyes of others becoming what defines them.

Lyndall in attempting to organise a space for herself outside the bounds of the constraining social order meets her own eyes in the mirror and addresses them. She finds in this doubleness the space to conceive of a self which would be able to "fight", to resist the position to which she has been assigned. Yet to do this she has to become both the "I" and the "you" of her discourse. If, as Benveniste implies, it is precisely in this contrast between persons that a consciousness of self becomes possible Lyndall's position is a precarious one. Not only does she exclude from her discourse the possibility of a real interlocuter, thus evading the challenge of the colonial reality, she also becomes a subject only by virtue of the contrast she has set up

21. Waldo's sheep-shearing machine, although it is crushed by Bonaparte Blenkins before it can be completed, does offer him a meaningful way of interacting with the world. His striving ends in nothing not because the machine is inherently unproductive but because Waldo is subject to the physical tyranny of Bonaparte Blenkins. (1984,106-107)

with herself; being both "I" and "you" she can only ever speak in the enclosed space of her own self.

In his discussion of Lacan's theory of consciousness, Manfred Frank writes that "the true subject has to do with articulation; and the function of the imaginary subject consists in permeating in the space of fiction the primal separation that consciousness experiences in articulation. The wound inflicted by the symbolization of the je, is imaginarily healed in a vision, indeed, in the image of the moi that is identical with what it faces" (1989, 300). In Schreiner's novel the image of the "moi" does not fulfill the function of an imaginary recuperation of the fractured "I". Lyndall's relationship to her image in the mirror is not one of identity but rather one of difference, since through looking into her own eyes she opens up a discursive space in which she attempts to redefine her position as that of subject. The "moi" is not identical with what it faces but is divided by the surface of the mirror reproducing the split which it was meant to conceal. In the text, the mirror does not offer the possibility of an imaginary identification which would constitute the subject as whole but rather reveals the doubleness of the reflective subject. This doubleness, while it prevents the constitution of an imaginary subject, cannot in reality transform the imaged self into the subject of articulation since it remains within the logic of the mirror. The impossibility of Lyndall's position is thus that she remains captured by a reflection which divides

her without allowing her to adopt the position of subject of articulation. She cannot speak precisely because she cannot escape the imaginary realm of the mirror although she refuses its identities. In her conversation with Waldo she says in response to his suggestion that she should speak that "I will do nothing good for myself, nothing for the world, till someone wakes me. I am asleep, swathed, shut up in self; till I have been delivered I will deliver no one" (1984,196). A third term is needed in order for her to be able to break this reflective relation and transform herself from image/self into subject.

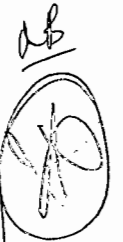
Conclusion

The conception of the self proposed by Lyndall's interaction with the mirror is at once divided, and liberated through this division and trapped, caught within the logic of the imaginary. Her directed gaze does not allow the mirror to reconstitute her as a unified whole. She sees only the eyes, not the completed body framed by its material surroundings. The mirror's surface remains present as the line of division which splits the image from what it reflects.

On one side of the mirror there is thus the material body. For Schreiner this is not, as Spencer would have it, the body as machine, fulfilling its biological function. Nor is it the invulnerable body of the adventure hero or the embodied self of the realist narrative. It is instead a body fragmented and incomplete, subject to pain, distortion and destruction. On the other side of the mirror the image promises to bring together these divided parts.

The text's refusal to allow the mirror to fulfill this promise, to heal the divided self through the fantasy of wholeness, suggests that this imaged self has no place in the material reality Schreiner is representing. The reality she depicts, as she comments in her preface to African Farm, is a world in flux, something which is neither predictable nor wholly explicable. Schreiner's choice of allegory can thus be read as an attempt both to maintain and transcend the fractures of such a project.

Like the reflection in the mirror, the hidden meaning in allegory promises some ultimate truth, some revelation which will transform the pain and fragmentation of material reality. The actual text of the fable, like the material body, needs to be subjected to an interpretative logic, in order for it to reveal its secret coherence. In order for the allegorical truth to be decoded, it must like the mirror image be decoded according to some logic of recognition. Allegory, unlike the realist or adventure mode, acknowledges the division which the act of representation introduces but it wishes to grant to the underlying meaning the power to recuperate the fabled text and the world it represents. Yet as I have argued, in Schreiner's allegorical writing the material world refuses to be subordinated to some underlying unity. Its resistance marks her narratives as acts of struggle in which her own self is deeply implicated. Schreiner's writing can thus be read as an attempt to forge through expression a position for the colonial subject which could not be found prior to expression. For Schreiner, writing is not a means of healing the fractures of the real. Instead, I would argue it represents a struggle to symbolise a new and as yet undeciphered social, political and geographical configuration, a form of cognitive mapping which is not the establishment of fixed borders but the recognition of a world in flux.



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