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**From Narrative to Severed Heads: The Form and Location of White
Supremacist History in Textbooks of the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Eras. A
Case Study**

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
Master of Philosophy (History Education)

School of Education
Faculty of Humanities
University of Cape Town
2005

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

31/03/2005

Abstract: *This dissertation reveals the enduring willingness of South African history textbooks to legitimate white supremacy. During the apartheid era, a historiographic mythology bearing the stamp of officialdom was propagated by history textbooks. This mythology constituted the era's "white history" - that version of history which serves to legitimate white supremacy in South Africa.*

Though in specific instances the old mythology has been forsworn, white history survives in the post-apartheid textbooks. The tenets of white history are now delivered individually and indirectly by way of severed heads (primary or secondary sources) that, once recovered and reassembled by student learners, constitute the familiar grand narrative.

Two historiographical myths promulgated during apartheid are taken as emblems of white history and adopted for the purposes of study as units of analysis. Their form and location are then traced through one prominent publisher's history textbooks of the apartheid and post-apartheid eras.

The demonstrated survival of white history in post-apartheid history education is traced to the white stipulations placed upon the post-apartheid curriculum during the reconciliation process. The contemporary trend of progressivist education enabled the phenomenon pedagogically through emphasis on a zealously learner-centred, interactive approach.

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Preface

As a North American student of history I developed an interest in how particular interpretations of my nation's history have been invoked in defence of governmental policies such as ethnic cleansing, racial segregation, imperial conquest, and genocide. With the final defeat of the civil rights movement this interest shifted to the way in which a new spirit of multiculturalism was implemented in defence of the capitalist system, illegal military intervention into foreign and sovereign states, and *de facto* empire.

The pursuit of these interests has imbued me, as a critical analyst, with a healthy scepticism toward liberal-multicultural, or 'multi-perspectival,' approaches to history teaching, specifically in regards to their actual willingness to serve the cause of social redress. One must never draw simple equivalences between the North American and the South African context, but there are lessons to be learned from the experience of multiculturalism in the United States that could only benefit the South African academy.

This study thus hopes to provide some indication of the lengths to which post-Apartheid South African history textbooks of a liberal, multicultural persuasion will and will not go to redress the acknowledged wrongdoings of the nation's past and challenge the enduring economic status quo of white supremacy.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Overview

Previous studies have identified Apartheid era history textbooks as instruments of ruling ideology propagation. As Chisolm notes: “South African history textbooks [were] goldmines for those interested in how the status quo is legitimated through ideology.”¹ Such a pedagogy was of necessity to the oppressive Apartheid system if it would sustain and reproduce itself.

Marianne Cornevin delves further into the nuts and bolts of the ideology propagation process. She identifies ten ‘myths’ (author’s term) integral to Apartheid historiography that served to legitimate the contemporary status quo.

That history which serves the capacity of legitimation for the ordinate stake held by whites in South Africa is here termed ‘white history.’ During the Apartheid era, the mythology identified by Cornevin served as a particularly forthright manifestation of white history.

The political transition experienced by South Africa in the early 1990's witnessed the official end of Apartheid. Yet many integral and tangible elements of white supremacy remain unchallenged or hardly altered in the post-Apartheid era. If, then, the official history of the Apartheid era legitimated the contemporary status quo, and important elements of that status quo remain extant, a study tracing the whereabouts of that official history through South Africa’s political transition should undoubtedly prove heuristic.

For if the inordinate stake held by whites in South Africa has not been redressed, and if the political and economic clout wielded by whites remains disproportionate, then it stands to reason that a history once used to legitimate their stake in South Africa would not be decisively done away with. Rather, white history should at least partially survive in one adapted form or another. A study of the particulars of its survival and transfiguration could only benefit current scholarship on

¹Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 134

post-Apartheid South African history education.

This dissertation is a partial attempt at such a study. Two of Cornevin's ten myths are taken as units of analysis for use in this case study. Their manifestations and permutations are traced through history textbooks of the Apartheid and post-Apartheid eras.

Maskew Miller Longman has been a long standing hegemonic school history textbook publisher for the Cape Province. A diachronic study of its textbooks may serve as a powerful indicator of the manner and degree to which South African history education has accommodated the tenets of white supremacy over the last twenty years.

1.2. Inordinate Political Influence Wielded by Whites at the Time of Reconciliation and Demands Placed by Them upon a Post-Apartheid History Syllabus.

What is hailed as "the miracle of 1994" was the culmination of a series of concessions made by the ascendant African National Congress (ANC) to the outgoing Apartheid government while negotiating the terms of the new democracy. In his recent account of these negotiations Hermann Giliomee claims that "what the whites wanted" from the new democracy was something different from a pure, one person - one vote system. According to Giliomee, many felt that such a democracy would constitute "simple majoritarianism," and effectively "replace one kind of racial or ethnic hegemony with another." To avoid such a situation, Giliomee claims whites approached the negotiation process with the hopes of building a democracy "in which the interests of the black majority and white minority were balanced, in which matters were decided by a large degree of consensus."²

That the interests of 85% and 9% of the population should be *balanced* constitutes a peculiar type of democracy. According to Hermann Giliomee, South African whites ascribed a detailed and definite role to national history in the new, *balanced* type of white-anticipated democracy. In that white-demanded history,

²Giliomee, Hermann. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. University of Virginia, Charlottesville: 2003. Pg. 636. (Giliomee does not elaborate on the term 'white history,' and it is thus not entirely clear what he means. Yet there seems little reason to suspect that his definition of the term would be fundamentally incongruent with mine.)

“white and black histories were [to be] integrated rather than having a one-sided interpretation imposed from above.” The author is quick to contrast this “integrated” history to a much-feared “ANC authorized version [that] replaced white history.”³ Giliomee was not writing specifically about textbooks, but it is textbooks that recount the national history of nations. So it is to textbooks that this study turns to see if white stipulations have been realized.

1.3. Changes in Dominant Pedagogical Theory Concurrent with South Africa’s Political Transition.

1.3.1. The ‘New History.’

Any diachronic study of South African history textbooks must take into account the vastly different pedagogical approaches undertaken by textbook writers of the Apartheid and post-Apartheid eras. Apartheid era history teaching method exemplified the Freireian concept of ‘banking pedagogy,’ “in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only so far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.” According to Freire, the only benefit afforded students by such an education lay in “the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store.”⁴

In fact, critiques of traditional, top-down pedagogy preceded Freire by centuries.

Michel de Montaigne, writing in 1575, prefigured the Brazilian educator’s critique uncannily:

“‘Tis the custom of pedagogues to be eternally thundering in their Pupil’s ears, as they were pouring into a funnel, while the business of the pupil is only to repeat what the others have said: now I would have a tutor to correct this error, and, that at the very first, he should, according to this capacity he has to deal with, put it to the test, permitting his pupil himself to taste things, and of himself to discern and choose them, sometimes opening the way to him, and sometimes leaving it open for himself; that is, I would not have him alone to invent and speak, but that he should also

³Giliomee, Hermann. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. University of Virginia, Charlottesville: 2003. Pg. 636

⁴Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum, New York: 1970. Pg. 53.

hear his pupil speak in turn.”⁵

British ‘new history’ also preceded Freire’s work, and marked the earliest formidable attempt made at supplanting the old method in history education. Of all the early documents which formulate and propose the ‘new history,’ P.J. Rogers’ The New History: Theory into Practice is the grandest in scope. Therein, the author argues that the discipline of history is a distinct way of knowing. Though quite different from other academic subjects, Rogers considered history comparatively pedestrian in its concept and method. Rogers asserted that “Unlike Physics, History is continuous with, not distinct from, general human experience.” Just as there was “continuity between the concepts met in historical enquiry and those encountered in general experience,” proper scholastic exploration of these concepts best equipped pupils with beneficial critical thinking faculties.⁶

The ‘new history’ would devise a new structural pedagogical approach in order to meet these lofty goals. The most pedagogically irreverent aspect of this approach was its fervent slant “against adoption of a traditional, chronological syllabus... in favour of a more radical, discontinuous course structure.”⁷ Proponents argued that the chronological approach “embraces the mistaken assumption that historical education consists of the pupils coming to possess a definite and extended body of information.” They believed it was not the content but “the procedures [that] make history a discipline,” therefore, “study that neglects them can hardly count as history.”⁸ Proponents’ new focus on methods was advanced as antithetical to a chronological approach, which by design “resulted in a superficial coverage of a formidable mass of content.”⁹

In place of chronology, ‘new history’ “emphasises the complexity of causation

⁵de Montaigne, Michel. “*Of the Education of Children.*” 1575 Essays. Translated by Charles Cotton. <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/montaigne/montaigne-essays-1.html#II>.

⁶Rogers, P.J. The New History: Theory into Practice. London: 1978. Pg. 9

⁷Shemilt, Denis. History 13-16 Evaluation Study. Holmes McDougall, Glasgow: 1980. Pg. 4

⁸Rogers, P.J. The New History: Theory into Practice. London: 1978. Pg. 19

⁹Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 27

in human affairs.”¹⁰ Indeed, the bulk of student work would involve “questions about causation, about why events happened and also about the factors which prevented or delayed change. Central to any understanding here, is the realisation that causation in history is never simple but compound.”¹¹ Thus, ‘new history’ sought to explore in detail the social relations at work within a given time period of human experience, rather than ice skate through its entirety. Such an approach “does not set out to cover in detail the mass of content usually demanded. It is more ambitious because it gives pupils the opportunity of sampling in some depth a range of historical content and adopting a wide variety of approaches to history.”¹²

Causation was to be understood by reconstruction, which ‘new history’ proponents considered integral to their craft. Such was “the nature of history, which is fundamentally a ‘reconstruction’ of a past which has vanished apart from the traces of it which fortuitously remain.”¹³ Reconstruction, it was asserted, is what differentiated historical practice from fiction or free invention.

Two principal methods, as identified and advocated by ‘new history’ proponents, were to be inculcated in schools as aides to reconstructive practice. The first of these was interpretation of evidence. ‘New history’ practice emphasised the application of “the great variety of types of historical evidence available for the study of ancient, mediaeval, and modern history.”¹⁴ Evidence, understood as “both primary and secondary sources... documents and artefacts, buildings and works of art... pictures... and the very ground upon which we walk,” was at the forefront of ‘new history’ method. Dispossessed of chronology, history in schools became “not a coherent body of knowledge... [but] a heap of materials which survives from the past

¹⁰Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 12

¹¹Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 39

¹²Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 19

¹³Rogers, P.J. The New History: Theory into Practice. London: 1978. Pg. 12

¹⁴Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 21

and which historians can use as evidence about the past.”¹⁵

Yet evidence was just a starting point. Sources were considered “mere dust and dry bones until teachers and pupils make them come alive.”¹⁶ Therefore, “analysis of historical evidence”¹⁷ was a key skill inculcated under ‘new history’. As “different things [are] “evidence” for different kinds of enquiry, [and] different ways of handling them are necessary,”¹⁸ it followed that analysis of historical evidence was “different from much of the analysis undertaken in other subjects.”¹⁹ Much of this involved identifying and tracing “elements of bias.”²⁰ Students were trained to consider “the purposes and the prejudices of a writer of a contemporary document.”²¹ Pupils would also learn to judge the relevance and importance, the relative ‘weight’ to afford multiple sources, which were often times incongruent.

The second technique ‘new history’ proponents deemed integral to the process of reconstruction would become the most controversial module of the ‘new history’. What they dubbed ‘Empathy’ became a major political target of the British Thatcherite Right. One could hardly expect the contention that “history involves some attempt to rethink the past, to re-enact it and to empathise with the people concerned in any past situation,”²² would incite such fervent reaction.

Considered “a vital part of the reconstructive process,” Rogers defines

¹⁵Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 36

¹⁶Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 36

¹⁷Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 40

¹⁸Rogers, Peter. ‘*History - The Past as a Frame of Reference.*’ In: Portal, Christopher (ed.) The History Curriculum for Teachers. Falmer, London: 1987. Pg. 6

¹⁹Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 40

²⁰Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 38

²¹Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 38

²²Schools Council History 13-16 Project. A New Look at History. Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 15

empathy as “to identify with the character under study... not only in the contextual senses but also in the personal sense of seeing things as Cromwell or Nelson or Hitler did.”²³ In a social sense, to engage in empathic practice a student was to “empathize with the ideas and motives of his predecessors and to reconstruct frames of reference within which those ideas and motives can seem both rational and justifiable.”²⁴ By way of this empathetic method, students were “to seek to understand from inside the situation under study.”²⁵ In the classroom, students were to be “set exercises which ask them to consider the viewpoints of the various characters or sides of any situation and of people with whom they may not naturally feel sympathy.”²⁶

Imaginative reconstruction was thus possible by the weighing and interpretation of evidence on the one hand, which itself involved empathy, conjoined with empathic projection on the other hand, a process which itself was limited within the boundaries of reason by congruence with available evidence. In this way, the two components of imaginative reconstruction supported and checked one another. Imaginative reconstruction was to be applied to a particular moment in time. This undertaking was labelled an in-depth study, resulting in “a coherent account of an event or period of the past.”²⁷ In-depth studies would “increase pupils’ self-knowledge and awareness of what it means to be human by concentrating attention upon the ideas and beliefs, values and attitudes, of people of a different time and place.”²⁸ The ‘new history’ would be constituted by a number of these in-depth studies, thereby aiming for depth of understanding into the human experience in different historical manifestations, rather than the traditional chronological approach, which aimed for relatively shallow understanding of an epic timeline.

²³Rogers, Peter. ‘*History - The Past as a Frame of Reference.*’ In: Portal, Christopher (ed.) *The History Curriculum for Teachers.* Falmer, London: 1987. Pg. 13

²⁴Shemilt, Denis. *History 13-16 Evaluation Study.* Holmes McDougall, Glasgow: 1980. Pg. 5

²⁵Schools Council History 13-16 Project. *A New Look at History.* Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 41

²⁶Schools Council History 13-16 Project. *A New Look at History.* Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 41

²⁷Schools Council History 13-16 Project. *A New Look at History.* Holmes Mc Dougall, Edinburgh: 1975. Pg. 40

²⁸Shemilt, Denis. *History 13-16 Evaluation Study.* Holmes McDougall, Glasgow: 1980. Pg. 5

Colloquia held in 1995 consisting of “textbook writers, academics, and publishers,”²⁹ focussing on “school history textbooks for a democratic South Africa”³⁰ concluded that “textbooks should be structured as inter active learning materials,” and that, “source materials in books... can be used to enable the construction of a narrative by students.”³¹ Participants of the colloquia further resolved that “empathy... and moral commitment are important aspects of the learning of history,”³² decreeing: “historical understanding should develop empathetic understanding, emotional and moral commitment with the past.”³³

These colloquia seem to reaffirm the basic principles of ‘new history.’ And yet, the notion that narrative must not be provided but only assembled by students from provided fragments seems a peculiar interpretation of the format. Many proponents of the ‘new history’ felt that the format should develop student awareness of the value of narrative and the use of narrative in history.

As we shall see, the pedagogical approach adopted by the post-Apartheid Looking into the Past series is a severely zealous, generally unhedged incarnation of ‘new history,’ one influenced by a ‘from-to’ progressivist trend prominent in South African educational circles at the time of its writing.

²⁹Siebörger, Rob. “*The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation.*” In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research.* S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 1

³⁰Siebörger, Rob. “*The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation.*” In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research.* S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 1

³¹Siebörger, Rob. “*The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation.*” In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research.* S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 6

³²Siebörger, Rob. “*The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation.*” In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research.* S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. 5

³³Siebörger, Rob. “*The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation.*” In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research.* S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 2

1.3.2. The Rise of Progressivism and how its Implementation Crippled 'New History.'

Pedagogical trends stressing interactivity and learner-centeredness came to prominence among anti-Apartheid circles of the South African intelligentsia in the 1970's. These trends are often lumped together under the nebulous term 'progressivism.' The exact meaning of 'progressivism' is a matter of contention even amongst its foremost proponents. Yet its divergent threads hold at least one common thread, a "pervasive chiasm... the original one best system was, in progressivism's founding gesture, exposed as a fraud, and the promised progressive future depended on a complete and total replacement of the old in all its manifestations."³⁴

Muller's 2002 article points to a contemporary "celebration of progressivism in South Africa," from whose fervour emerged a 'from-to' approach. According to this approach "everything in the first column was politically and educationally bankrupt while everything in the second column represented the inauguration of redressive social justice."³⁵

Maskew Miller Longman harked to this trend in the early 1990's in an effort to anticipate the educational policy as yet to be announced by the ANC. Their effort proved quite apt; the ultra-progressivist C2005 later promulgated by the ANC adopted and further galvanized precisely this pedagogical trend. Looking into the Past harkens emptily to the devices formulated by proponents of the 'new history,' implementing them in an inert form to a broad-sweeping degree, doing away with nearly all heretofore seen textbook conventions.

The result is a super-interactive textbook, one that tells no story but scatters pictures, questions, and various fragments of differing stories across the palette. Indeed, it seems all we have in the textbook is a scrapheap of evidence, source materials, and severed heads to empathise with. Even though the word 'history' is etymologically derived from the Greek word 'historia,' which implies 'narrative,' one would never guess this from looking at the new textbooks, who have dispensed themselves of the obligation to disseminate historical narrative.

³⁴Muller, Johan. "Progressivism Redux: ethos, policy, pathos." in Kraak, A. and Young, M. (eds.), Education in Retrospect. Pretoria, HSRC: 2002. Pg. 60

³⁵Muller, Johan. "Progressivism Redux: ethos, policy, pathos." in Kraak, A. and Young, M. (eds.), Education in Retrospect. Pretoria, HSRC: 2002. Pg. 61

With the obliteration of narrative, what rises in its stead is a hodgepodge of maps, pictures, and critical thinking activities replete with severed heads. If, then, narrative is obliterated by the new textbooks, and the old narrative of 'white history' can thus not be told by the text, what happens to white history?

Looking into the Past fractures the narrative of white history into its component parts. Disassembled thus, the components are confined to the critical thinking exercises. Therein, they are issued by the many severed heads who proliferate in the textbook. The format, then, not only reiterates the familiar tenets of white history, but protects them from critical consideration from the scant authoritative text (those passages of the textbook that tell us authoritatively what happened and what is true) provided by the textbook.

The fact that the component parts of white history are spared authoritative consideration has tremendous ramifications. It effectively means that when the severed heads talk none are presented by the textbook as more 'right' or 'true' than any other. What we have in the exercises is thus no more than a melange of disparate yet 'equally true' conjecture. They are simply a 'play of differences,' a collage of different colours flashed on a screen. They tell us nothing more than the fact that there are different colours and opinions in the world.

It is further of note that as progressivist pedagogy transfigures the elements of 'new history' it also cripples them. For severed heads scarcely constitute 'sources' or 'evidence,' as stipulated by 'new history;' when the heads are those of historical figures, it is not made clear whether the words they issue are actually theirs, translations, or characterising dialogue wrought from the author's own imagination. Furthermore, there is no genuine 'detective work' to be had here. There is simply the noting of difference. There is no cross-checking of different opinions against facts capable of rendering them true or false. What is intended to be interactive, then, has actually become the most passive and languorous pedagogy imaginable. The student simply watches colours flashing on a screen.

An example may illustrate the point concisely. What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities³⁶ is one example of 'new history' pedagogy implemented in the South African context. This textbook

³⁶National Education Crisis Committee. What is History? A New Approach to History for Students, Workers, and Communities. Skotaville, Johannesburg: 1987.

comprised:

...exercises such as a comparison of newspaper articles to establish which is the most reliable source; contrasting the attitudes of different observers at Sharpeville; questioning the difference that leaving out evidence can make and reconciling three different interpretations about what happened in Soweto in 1976.³⁷

If What is History? were to see its pedagogy so progressivised as that of the new Maskew Miller textbooks, two things would change: Firstly, it would consist of almost nothing but such exercises. Secondly, the exercises would become so inert that they could hardly in good faith be called exercises. The hypothetical progressivised textbook would comprise:

...exercises such as a comparison of newspaper articles to establish that newspapers say different things; examining the attitudes of different observers at Sharpeville to see if they are similar or different; looking at evidence and examining three different interpretations about what happened in Soweto in 1976.

The question put forth by Siebörger toward 'new history,' "Where does it [the exercise] leave one?" can thus be directed at the zealously progressivist version with condescension; for "if it [the purpose of the exercise] is simply to be able to recognise one's own version from a number of competing versions, not much has been achieved."³⁸

The inertia of their exercises notwithstanding, the learning of history from the new textbooks remains active in one critical sense. For the student who intends to glean a historical narrative from the many scattered fragments therein must actively choose which of the sparring fragments to recover and assemble into his or her constructed narrative. Should this student be a white supremacist, he need not fear; the familiar tenets of white history will always be provided.

The components of white history can thus be recovered from critical thinking activity boxes as truths by student readers and reassembled into the grand narrative of

³⁷Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History." In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 27

³⁸Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History." In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 27

white history. In other words, as student readers construct their own narrative from the scattered fragments, those who wish to do so can choose those fragments derived from white history and reassemble them into the old, white supremacist grand narrative.

The political implications of such an approach are manifold. For instance, such an approach accords with long held liberal views on “the function of history education in democratic societies: views should be expressed in all their plurality while actively interpreted by a critically engaged student populace.”³⁹

Furthermore, the incorporation of white supremacist historiographical conventions into critical thinking activities where they are brought into juxtaposition with revisionist or Africanist accounts means that white history survives and remains above authoritative criticism. Such a pedagogy may realize the “integrated” history identified by Giliomee as “what the whites wanted” from post-Apartheid history.

It would appear, then, that all is well. The grievances of the abdicating white political power structure are propitiated while fragments of some new, insurgent history meant to please all others are represented by their own severed heads.

Yet the capacity of this particular approach to “transform school history so that it can recover from the ravages of Apartheid education,”⁴⁰ remains dubious. For the shallow neutrality achieved by spilling out various contentions in a play of differences clearly does little to correct the damage done South African blacks by centuries of denigratory, inculcated history. What, then, must an effective rehabilitative effort include?

In the case that a black history is called for to remedy the injustice done by centuries of white history, as some scholars contend, then the potential of the new textbooks to put forth a meaningful black history via the progressivist method must also be considered. Are severed heads enough? These considerations shall be taken up in a subsequent chapter.

³⁹Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. 2005. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 7

⁴⁰Siebörger, Rob, and Vigilieno, Elito. “*The Status Quo in Curriculum Development in South Africa*.” in History Education Group (ed). *History Matters*. Heinemann-Centaur, Cape Town: 1993. Pg. 11

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1. The Current State of Textbook Research

2.1.1. Current Scholarship on Textbook Research Methodology

In an article on textbook research methodology Jason Nicholls reminds textbook researchers that “little work has been done in terms of setting out clear generic guidelines for analysing texts. While pioneers of textbook studies... have done much to develop the field there is little explicit discussion in their work of the precise instruments used to conduct textbook research.” Yet Nicholls’ conclusion, that “methods for textbook research are fundamentally underdeveloped and in need of further research,”⁴¹ is contentious.

The notion that helpful general methods for textbook research can be abstracted from the field rests on the dubious assumption that history textbook research share some sort of common cause, and that the similarities of all history textbook studies outweigh the similarities of any particular study to other forms of literary or textual research.

Falk Pingel is sceptical of such assumptions, contending that “often our questions and aims are more specific and we [ourselves] have to... refine the instruments to be used in the study.”⁴² Therefore, rather than elaborate a comprehensive general methodology for textbook research, Pingel “emphasises the complexity of textbook research and the need for researchers to consider all eventualities during their preparation to conduct a project.”⁴³

⁴¹Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 1

⁴²Quoted in: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 5

⁴³Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information

Pingel's primary imperative is the definition of a textbook sample. As "there are few things more important than a precisely defined sample... the type and quantity of textbooks to be analysed are essential considerations for analysts wishing to generalise on the basis of research findings."⁴⁴

Pingel then identifies "two major concerns in textbook research." The first of these is "the pedagogical implications of the text... how are textbooks used by teachers and received by students?" This study does not examine the ways in which a textbook is handled in the classroom. It only concerns itself with pedagogy insofar as content is delivered via pedagogy *within the textbook*. This study, therefore, falls into Pingel's latter category: that major concern which is "the content of 'the text itself.'"⁴⁵ Field research is predictably unhelpful for such a study, unless textbook content is cross-checked against empirical data that is not yet collected or written down.

Insofar as the reading of the textbook is concerned, Pingel distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative methods. While careful to stress "the complimentary nature of both quantitative and qualitative techniques," Pingel notes that "different methods reflect different purposes."⁴⁶ Nicholls notes elsewhere in the essay that "a positivist/empiricist flavour [is] not necessarily conducive to researchers of, say, ideology in textbooks,"⁴⁷ and as this author does not deem quantitative methods appropriate for any question of meaning, qualitative methods have been adopted for this study.

"With qualitative methods of textbook analysis," writes Nicholls, "depth presides over breadth. As such, the results tend to be richer with regards to

Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 3

⁴⁴Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 3

⁴⁵Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 5

⁴⁶Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 3

⁴⁷Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 8

understanding the way that information is presented in a text.”⁴⁸ Pingel notes different qualitative approaches to textbook analysis: 1. Hermeneutic analysis, 2. linguistic analysis, 3. cross-cultural analysis, 4. discourse analysis, 5. contingency analysis.

Nicholls mentions some forms of qualitative textual analysis omitted in Pingel’s list: disciplinary or historiographical analysis, visual analysis, question analysis, critical analysis, structural analysis, and semiotic analysis.⁴⁹

The dark mires of epistemological problematics resultant of any attempt to neatly separate between these approaches are less than heuristic. Certainly, there is no form of textual analysis that cannot properly be considered a breed of Hermeneutics, whose sole vocation of *Verstehen* is broad enough to incorporate all lesser variants. There is certainly no definition of “discourse” in the collected works of Foucault or his epigones that is not problematic. Structural and post-structural forms are so rife with unresolved and abstruse internal problems as to have fallen out of favour in universities across the world.

Attempts beyond those of Pingel to devise a general method are also discussed by Nicholls. Yet these are unhelpful as they presume that all textbook research is somehow similar and, quite prudently, perhaps, do not attempt to resolve the millennia-old epistemological problems surrounding interpretation. Even according to Nicholls’ own argument, these models remain “fundamentally underdeveloped.”

2.1.2 Milestones of South African Textbook Research

Modern research on race and power in South African history textbooks began with F.E. Auerbach. Auerbach’s The Power of Prejudice in South African Education, published in 1965, was an ambitious attempt to test whether South Africa “used its educational system to divide its people.”⁵⁰ The study encompasses Transvaal High

⁴⁸Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pg. 3

⁴⁹All these are briefly described in: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. In: S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: forthcoming. Pgs. 3-4.

⁵⁰Auerbach, F.E. The Power of Prejudice in South African Education. Cape Town: 1965. Pg.

School textbooks, “since it is easier and more reliable to study the printed word which, once printed, does not vary, and remains permanent from lesson to lesson.”⁵¹

Auerbach’s largely quantitative study concluded in the affirmative: “there are deep divisions in our public life - often on ethnic lines... these divisions are also sharply reflected in school textbooks.”⁵² Auerbach traces this phenomenon to the lagging influence of Christian National Education, claimed by “one of its chief architects” to have been “developed for the orthodox Afrikaner.” This educational policy subordinated all educational policy to establishing “the national foundation (as) Dutch South African nationalism... no other national foundation will satisfy them... all subjects shall serve this national aim.”⁵³ Textbooks of the early Apartheid era, then, were found guilty of “inducing all white children to adopt an attitude of superiority,” an indicator of “aggressive nationalism in education” on the part of the dominant Afrikaner.⁵⁴

Auerbach concluded that “our educational system was being used to divide the people,” and that “a pronounced trend to greater ethnocentrism, embodied in certain Afrikaans textbooks only, has now also become part of the aims and content of the syllabuses prescribed for all schools irrespective of language medium.”⁵⁵ Auerbach, however, “do[es] not pretend to be able to know the motives of those who wrote the books,” and as such his study does not focus on the deployment of history-educational prejudice in the service of status quo legitimation.

Linda Chisolm’s Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa deals precisely with this issue. However, the article is hampered by a problematic Nineteenth Century definition of ideology and its

⁵¹Auerbach, F.E. The Power of Prejudice in South African Education. Cape Town: 1965. Pg. 1

⁵²Auerbach, F.E. The Power of Prejudice in South African Education. Cape Town: 1965. Pg. 2

⁵³Auerbach, F.E. The Power of Prejudice in South African Education. Cape Town: 1965. Pg. 115

⁵⁴Auerbach, F.E. The Power of Prejudice in South African Education. Cape Town: 1965. Pg. 121

⁵⁵Auerbach, F.E. The Power of Prejudice in South African Education. Cape Town: 1965. Pg. 126

relationship to education that the author later described as “crudely developed.”⁵⁶ Still, its findings on status quo legitimation in history textbooks is no less important. Analysing “one textbook for the Standard 8 used in Coloured schools dealing with South African history,” the author concluded that “the history that is... taught the African, Indian or Coloured denies his existence as it is a heroic tale of the rise of the Afrikaner... by denying blacks a history, it is intended to prevent the growth of a national/class consciousness.”⁵⁷

In such a history the Great Trek is “presented as a struggle for existence against savage tribes and imperialist England on the part of the heroic Boers.” Such a history establishes “the European right to the land... based on two factors: his being the first to settle it and his civilization being superior. Though Chisolm identifies “‘wide, open spaces’ into which the Voortrekkers moved”⁵⁸ she does not deal directly with the myth of empty land identified by Cornevin, as discussed in the following section.

Chisolm does, however, perceive the reduction of Shaka, “leader of the Zulus who had developed the military tactics of his army to an astonishing extent,” operating indirectly through the reduction of “the Difaqane (Mfecane), a complex and central process of nation-building and economic sophistication,” to mere “‘murder and slaughter’ between Bantu tribes.”⁵⁹

Dean, Hartmann, and Katzen, in their 1983 study History in Black and White, deal more expansively with “legitimation, which may be loosely defined as the process by which consent is secured among members of a society to the existing

⁵⁶Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 148

⁵⁷Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 137

⁵⁸Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 142

⁵⁹Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 141

social and political arrangements.”⁶⁰ The purpose of their study, whose sizable textbook sample was “based on the list of English-language history texts approved by the Transvaal Education department”⁶¹ was to reveal a “slant within those texts which were officially used as part of the process known as socialization... intended to maintain the system of Apartheid.”⁶² History textbooks were important, the authors believed, since “history can be, and frequently is, used throughout the world to justify particular forms of social structure and government.”⁶³

These authors concluded that “South African textbooks... are better able to serve narrowly conceived white nationalistic purposes than the more academic purposes that they purport to serve.”⁶⁴ As such, history textbooks constituted “part of the ideological apparatus that serves to legitimate the present South African social order.”⁶⁵ Importantly, these authors identify eight ways in which the textbooks instill “beliefs, attitudes and values that are part of the intellectual underpinning of the Apartheid system.”⁶⁶ These do not all need rehashing here, yet it should be noted that the fifth, “the perpetuation of myths,” reiterates the findings of Cornevin’s study. The authors specifically locate in the Transvaal textbooks “frequent allusion to an erroneous belief that the Boers occupied an empty land when they trekked North during the nineteenth century, suggesting that this land ‘belongs’ to whites.”⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 18

⁶¹ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 43

⁶² Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 5

⁶³ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 13

⁶⁴ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 105

⁶⁵ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 102

⁶⁶ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 103

⁶⁷ Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 103

Marianne Cornevin's Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification, published in 1980, is the only of these studies that focussed exclusively on Apartheid mythology, and marks another important milestone of South African textbook research. Two of its findings are adopted as instruments of analysis for my study.

2.2 Instruments Adopted and their Implementation

2.2.1. Theoretical Framework for Analysis:

Marianne Cornevin's Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification provides an apt theoretical framework for my study. Though Cornevin relies on official government documents and academic history as much as school textbooks for her data, her findings are no less relevant for future history textbook research. The historical mythology identified by Cornevin as derivative of the Apartheid imperative shall constitute the theoretical backbone of my study.

Published in 1980 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Cornevin's book identifies ten myths endemic to Apartheid historiography. Of these ten myths, two function as ample indicators of the influence of 'white history,' and thus provide a substantial unit of analysis for my study. The first of these is the myth "that Chaka, Dingaan, and Mzilikazi were nothing but bloodthirsty despots." The second is the myth "that the Voortrekkers advanced into an uninhabited land that belonged to noone."

I have selected these two myths from the ten identified by Cornevin based on both their practicality and heuristic potential as indicators; the first reinforced notions of superior white civilization and black cultural inferiority - the other served to legitimate the contemporary economic status quo, no small part of which was the distribution of land. These two myths, while not unrelated, may generally be said to correspond to the psychological and the socio-economic needs of white South Africans respectively. Sampling both the psychological and the economic, I hope to cover a good spectrum of white history.

2.2.2. Units of Analysis

Myth 3: That Shaka, Dingane, and Mzilikazi were nothing but bloodthirsty despots.

The third myth identified by Cornevin, and the first I have selected for use as a partial unit of analysis, held that “Chaka, Dingane, and Mzilikazi were nothing but bloodthirsty despots”⁶⁸ lends itself very well to my study, as these are people whose contributions to South African history are afforded substantial coverage in both textbooks. The notion that the South African interior was rife with bloodthirsty despots before white settlement was an integral part of ‘white history,’ as it reinforced white supremacist interpretations of South African history popularized by G.M. Theal. This view envisions a “northward moving [white] civilisation” in contest with “a southward moving [black] barbarism.”⁶⁹ Trekkers were thus seen as civilizing force entering a region of darkness and savagery.

Cornevin’s theoretical framework is further useful in that it not only identifies the myths but it is also prescriptive; for each myth identified Cornevin also provides an approach for recovering history from its Apartheid-mythological shroud. Cornevin recommends the de-mythologising of Shaka, Dingane, and Mzilikazi may commence by further contextualizing their lives, so that the historian may achieve some appreciation of these figures as “great kings” and leaders of their peoples, such as they are remembered by their people.⁷⁰ Cornevin writes: “without wishing to exonerate Chaka, Dingane, and Mzilikazi completely of the charges of cruelty made against them... their characters need to be seen in a broader perspective so as to reveal their stature as statesmen.”⁷¹

While Cornevin is certainly right in noting the tendency within South African historiography to reduce the figure of Shaka, her account of the phenomenon is itself reductive. For the historical personage of Shaka was afforded a peculiar reverence by many white South Africans who gazed retrospectively upon his reported legacy. Indeed, these whites tended to see the Mfecane, presumably started by Shaka, as an

⁶⁸Cornevin, Marianne. *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification*. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 95

⁶⁹Quoted in: Auerbach, F.E. *The Power of Prejudice in South African Education*. Cape Town: 1965. Pg. 78

⁷⁰Cornevin, Marianne. *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification*. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 98

⁷¹Cornevin, Marianne. *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification*. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 100

“express[ion of] the peculiar genius of a people.”⁷² Shaka thus earned the reverence afforded legendary tyrants, and historians often likened him to “Napoleon Bonaparte, Shaka’s European counterpart.”⁷³

This trend is evident in E.A. Ritter’s pioneering 1955 biography, *Shaka Zulu*. Ritter put forth his account in order to “portray Shaka, the founder of the Zulu nation, as the Zulus saw him.”⁷⁴ The characterisation achieved by Ritter may in fact accord with the way Zulus remembered Shaka. Yet even if so, the work more importantly met white, ‘orientalist’ demands for a drum-and trumpet biography of the savage Black Napoleon.⁷⁵ Therein, whites could read of such tales as the epic battle between Shaka and the supernatural Mad Giant, who would “wait... before his kraal smoking hemp in his *gudu* [before] charging out to kill and maim with his colossal axe. Regarded as a supernatural, the bravest feared him. But Shaka met and killed him in single-combat, a match of wit and strength...”⁷⁶

A reverent mythology not unafflicted by Said’s ‘orientalism’⁷⁷ thus enshrouded Shaka in the minds of many white South Africans. This mythology certainly found its way into the historiography, which revered Shaka not only for his legendary prowess or martial ingenuity as an anti-heroic ‘tyrant,’ but also for his alleged capacity for cruelty; “such cruelty as is hardly comprehensible by

⁷²Etherington, Norman. “*Old Wine in New Bottles: The Persistence of Narrative Structures in the Historiography of the Mfecane and the great Trek.*” in: Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 35.

⁷³Saunders, Christopher. “*Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography.*” in: Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 22

⁷⁴Ritter, E.A. *Shaka Zulu: The Rise of the Zulu Empire*. Longman’s Green And Co, London: 1955. Pg. ix.

⁷⁵Ritter actually served as “a trumpeter in the mounted Natal Carbineers,” which accompanied “Captain Lonsdale’s Natal Native Contingent, armed with shield and spear,” in battle against “a part of the Zulus [who] rebelled.” Since his childhood he harboured “an undying interest in all things Zulu,” an interest nursed by his father’s “interest... in all the battles of natives against natives.” See the book’s introduction.

⁷⁶Ritter, E.A. *Shaka Zulu: The Rise of the Zulu Empire*. Longman’s Green And Co, London: 1955. Pg. 36.

⁷⁷Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, New York: 1979.

Europeans.”⁷⁸

The reduction of Shaka to a mere bloodthirsty despot as Cornevin describes did therefore occur, but was part of a larger historiographical trend that enshrined his personage in lore and ‘orientalism.’ From the promulgation of such orientalist lore was borne a popular reverence for Shaka as an icon of savagery, martial prowess and ingenuity, and disciplining leadership such as that known to Ritter.⁷⁹ Therefore, though reductive in its scope and brevity, Cornevin’s theory remains a useful guiding instrument for this study.

Furthermore, since Cornevin wrote in the 1980’s, debates around Shaka have shifted their locus. The scholarship of Julian Cobbing has altered the nature and purpose of these debates so as to cast Shaka’s legacy in an entirely different light, a phenomenon with immediate ramifications for post-Apartheid history textbooks. While Cobbing’s original claim that the Mfecane is nothing more than a historiographical conspiracy put forth to legitimate white land seizure has been dismissed as “implausible conspiracy theor[y],” debates emerging from Cobbing’s work have conceded its “powerful insights.”⁸⁰

Most historians now acknowledge that Cobbing’s “achievement remains: to have challenged old ideas, [and] destroyed the concept of an upheaval that was solely Zulu inspired.”⁸¹ Scholars heedful of the new scholarship variously distribute responsibility for the violence referred to as ‘the Mfecane’ to a number of factors, including slave raiders at Delagoa bay and the Cape Frontier in addition to just Shaka.

Therefore, in addition to tracing the reduction of Shaka to a bloodthirsty despot, and the rehabilitation of his stature as prescribed by Cornevin, this study shall also note the manner and degree to which the textbooks assign responsibility for the

⁷⁸Quoted in: Saunders, Christopher. “*Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography.*” in: Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History.* Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 22

⁷⁹The Timelines series spends much more ink on Shaka than the new textbooks, and also devotes much more ink to mention and consideration of his military innovations.

⁸⁰Hamilton, Carolyn. *The Character and Objects of Chaka: A re-consideration of the making of Shaka as Mfecane “motor.”* University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute. Seminar paper presented 3rd June, 1991. Pg

⁸¹Saunders, Christopher. “*Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography.*” in: Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History.* Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 34.

Mfecane to Shaka. A brief examination of the debates springing from Cobbing's work, the usefulness of the new scholarship as a constituent part of a burgeoning black history, and the possibility of such a black history emerging from the progressivist approach as implemented in the new textbooks shall also be considered in a concluding chapter.

This study entails a comparative analysis of the two textbooks' presentations of Shaka. The Apartheid era textbooks reproduce exactly the third myth identified by Cornevin, while the new textbook does not actively reduce Shaka, but allows and equips the student to effect that reduction by recovering fragments of white history from critical thinking exercises.

Myth 4: That the Voortrekkers advanced into an uninhabited land that belonged to no one.

The fourth myth identified by Cornevin, and the second I shall employ as a unit of analysis, is described as "the Voortrekkers advanced into an uninhabited land that belonged to no one." Such a myth was of crucial use to the Apartheid power structure in that it provided "moral justification for the distribution of land."⁸² Apartheid ideologues had a certain ease in propagating this myth, due to "weakness or absence of 'primary' sources... contemporary written accounts were written largely by missionaries. Before 1833 none of them lived in the interior of the most troubled areas of what is now the Orange Free State and Southern Transvaal." African Oral tradition went untapped as a historical resource until well near the Twentieth Century. Its narratives varied greatly in accordance with the ethnicity of the relater of the history, and had been further corrupted by written accounts.⁸³

According to Cornevin at the time of writing, written South African history on the Mfecane germinated from the work of pioneering historian G.M. Theal, who referred to the phenomenon as "the wars of Tshaka."⁸⁴ Theal is renowned by

⁸²Cornevin, Marianne. *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification*. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 101

⁸³Cornevin, Marianne. *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification*. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 103

⁸⁴Quoted in: Saunders, Christopher. "Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography." in: Hamilton,

contemporary historians for his “profound contempt of the blacks, combined with a flagrant bias in favour of the white settlers.” Historiography built upon his work did little more than “repeat and sometimes amplify the devastation and carnage described by Theal.”⁸⁵ It was thus a matter of great difficulty to put together a credible history of the Mfecane and its immediate aftermath, the arrival of the Voortrekkers. Into this gap an official, Apartheid friendly mythology was disseminated, such that the Department of Information’s South Africa 1977 document read “after the devastation and disruption of the Difaqane, vast sections of the interior were virtually depopulated. It was mainly those parts that the Boer Afrikaner pioneers populated... The Matabele depopulated the whole of the Western Transvaal in the years 1825 to 1832.”⁸⁶

It is in fact a myth, however, as is made clear by population counts conducted in the forty years after the Mfecane. These figures show that “after Mzilikazi’s departure for what is now Zimbabwe in November 1837, the Sotho returned in great numbers to the lands from which they had been driven by the Ndebele.” Furthermore, while the African population of Natal was estimated at 80,000 to 100,000 people in 1843, their numbers were placed at 375,000 in 1882. Cornevin concludes that “the quadrupling or more in forty years that these figures imply seems difficult to accept on the basis of the natural rate of population growth.”⁸⁷

According to revisionist South African historians, these facts demonstrated clearly that “the interior of South Africa had been well populated at the time of Afrikaner expansion and colonisation (in contrast to the claim that the ‘Great Trek’ had been to an empty land.)”⁸⁸

Carolyn. (Ed.) The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 22

⁸⁵Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 103

⁸⁶Quoted in: Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 101

⁸⁷Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 104

⁸⁸Siebörger, Rob. *The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation*. In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 3

The myth of empty land should prove as an especially powerful indicator of the extent of change in the textbooks. This is because the myth served to justify the contemporary dispensation of land, and while the explicitly racist proprietary law that surrounded that dispensation, the actual dispensation itself remains effectively unchanged in the new South Africa. It is thus instructive to trace the myth of empty land in history textbooks through these historical vicissitudes.

With a crude myth of empty land no longer tenable, the new textbooks allow for a justification of the unequal dispensation of land to survive by confining questions surrounding its moral and legal merit to critical thinking activity boxes. Here their justification is juxtaposed with their renunciation and the twain are thereby configured as apparent equals, for neither garner contradiction nor corroboration from the authoritative text.

These myths are taken as instruments of research for the purposes of my study, which makes no overtures toward the development of abstract, universal instruments such as those called for by Nicholls. Rather than delving into the epistemological quagmire presented by questions like: “How does one read what he reads?” this essay takes Pingel’s recommendation to heart, choosing to clearly define a textbook sample then adopt and refine precise, transparent instruments of analysis with which to approach them.

2.3. Empirical Data

2.3.1 Textbook Sample: The Publications of Maskew Miller

This study examines history textbooks published by the Maskew Miller / Maskew Miller Longman (as the company was renamed when it merged with Longman UK in 1983) publishing house. Maskew Miller was founded in 1893 and has been the hegemonic history textbook publisher for the Cape Province from the Union era to present day, and should thus provide a suitable case study of private sector publishers on the whole, and such an example may serve as an indicator of the nature and extent of change in South African history textbooks throughout the nation’s political transition.

Numerous South African private sector textbook publishers served the cause of Apartheid education for many years prior to transition. Indeed, as Siebörger notes,

“the political economy of textbook publishing pre-1994 reflected all the characteristics of an enterprise closely tied to the Apartheid state apparatus.” Though liberal apologists might note the seemingly contrary fact that textbook production “was in the hands of privately owned companies,” the fact remained that “the largest of these companies were Afrikaans owned... [and] depended on orders from state education departments for the overwhelming majority of their profits.”⁸⁹

Yet the willingness of such businesses to make an abrupt ideological about face to meet the stipulations of a new government should further astound those educationists who deny the general subordination of education to state ideology. Maskew Miller Longman, at least, is no stranger to ideological about faces. For the company’s history textbooks had in fact undergone such a reorientation well before the demise of Apartheid.

Once a Cape Colonial English publisher, Maskew Miller began incorporating Afrikaner writers in the Union period and came to be seen as a main South African bilingual history publisher. Nasionale Pres, the main Afrikaans publisher, was unwilling to produce any English language texts. Maskew Miller thus attempted to endear itself upon the United Party throughout the Union period via its policy of bilingualism. Its stock history textbook authors throughout the Union period, C. de K. Fowler and G.J.J. Smit, are British and Afrikaner respectively, reflecting the bilingual, white-alliance approach to education and society advocated by the United Party.

Maskew Miller’s main school history textbook for this period was History for the Cape Senior Certificate and Matriculation. With few departures, the textbook presents the top-down, Eurocentric narrative constitutive of Western liberal history education. What we find in the early textbook can roughly be described as British, and largely unaffected by Afrikaner nationalism.

When the Apartheid government rose to power in 1948, the role of was history education was soon clearly defined by the new government: “The basic principles” of the Apartheid educational system stipulated that “the purpose of history... is to obtain ‘a clear vision of the nation’s origin, its cultural inheritance, and of the content of the

⁸⁹Siebörger, Rob. *The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation*. In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 9

proper trend of inheritance...’ the Western, white religious inheritance.”⁹⁰ Afrikaner heritage with a nationalist emphasis lay at the core of this inheritance for the Apartheid government.

Government regulation of textbooks and textbook content during the Apartheid era “operated at two levels.” One of these was “the selection of textbooks for the ‘approved lists’ maintained by each education department.” The other lay in “the placing of orders for books, which was intended to be done at school level but was often done at department level.”⁹¹

In the interest of continued sales Maskew Miller soon made attempts to endear itself upon the new government, a manoeuvre that entailed the employment of greater numbers of Afrikaner staff. The massification of education in South Africa in the 1970's saw the allotment of many lucrative government contracts in the textbook industry. The bulk of new contracts went to Afrikaner publishers, but Maskew Miller did retain its status as main publisher for history textbooks in the Cape Province.

Sometime in the late 1960's or early 1970's (no date is provided in the text) Fowler and Smit rewrote History for the Cape Senior Certificate and Matriculation in a more Apartheid friendly manner. In the introduction to the revised edition, re-titled Senior History, the authors claim to have “endeavoured to present the facts in accordance with the principles laid down in the basic syllabus for the whole country.”⁹² The rewritten History for the Cape contains many immediate departures from its earlier incarnation. In the earlier version, Section A1 was titled “The Spread of Liberalism During The First Half of the Nineteenth Century.” In the rewritten work, the same section is re-titled “The spread of Nationalism and Liberalism in Europe,” reflecting the incumbent government’s nationalist leanings. These and other revisions of the old colonial textbook testify to the thoroughness of the publisher’s initial ideological about face to meet the needs of a new syllabus, the syllabus that

⁹⁰Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 136

⁹¹Siebörger, Rob. *The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation*. In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 9

⁹²Fowler, C. de K. and Smit, G.J.J. Senior History. Maskew Miller, Cape Town: 1969? Preface page.

rewrote history in the image of Apartheid.

By the time of the official State of Emergency act in 1985, Apartheid had been thrust ever further on the defensive by popular malcontent, criticism, and unrest, both foreign and domestic. By 1979 P.W. Botha feared a “total onslaught” of communist activity and abandonment by Western powers, noting that in this “changing world, we [Afrikaners] must adapt or die.”⁹³ Botha’s adaptation was made manifest abroad in his Total Strategy initiative, and domestically in the State of Emergency Act. These are the defining elements historians identify as ushering in the Late Apartheid period.

Maskew Miller’s Timelines series, first published in 1985 and having risen to hegemony in the calcified Late Apartheid period, effected this legitimization process by invoking the mythology identified by Marianne Cornevin as characteristic of Apartheid historiography, a point to be examined in a later section of this study,

Having long towed the party line of Apartheid officialdom, South African history textbook publishers thus faced a daunting situation with the loss of their sponsor and the rise of a new power structure in the early 1990's. Maskew Miller Longman had in fact anticipated a political transition, of one sort or another, and as such their departure from official Apartheid history can be traced to before the reconciliation process. The publisher in fact made a sudden *volte face* as early as the late 1980's and attempted to ingratiate itself upon the African National Congress. With the mounting internal and external challenges to Apartheid political power the ANC was largely expected to lead a new South African government in the years to come. It was thus necessary of Maskew Miller Longman to endear itself upon the ANC if it was to retain its coveted status as “partners to government in the educational arena.”⁹⁴

To be sure, no great moral calling lay at the heart of Maskew Miller’s about face. As attested by the continued printing and issuance of Timelines, a crass fiscal concern to play both sides of the fence was Maskew Miller’s imperative. While, as Siebörger notes, it may have seemed “commercially risky” for a publisher to “‘jump the gun’ and produce books... reasoning that they could confidently guess future trends in curricula and textbooks,” if performed carefully, such a manoeuvre

⁹³Giliomee, Hermann. The Afrikaners: Biography of a People. University of Virginia, Charlottesville: 2003. Pg. 586

⁹⁴See Maskew Miller Longman’s web page: <http://www.mml.co.za/general/profile.asp>

constituted good fiscal practice. For in the case of many publishers, jumping the gun “wasn’t much of a risk at all as they continued to sell annual ‘top-ups’ of their best-selling older books - a practice which severely inhibited the penetration of new books into schools.”⁹⁵ Maskew Miller continued to print Timelines until at least as recently as 1996, when my copy of the seventeenth impression of Timelines 10 was issued.

While Maskew Miller continued to tow the Apartheid party line by issuing Timelines, their gun-jumping efforts on the other side of the fence entailed publishing the work of John Pampallis. Pampallis was a radical educator who had spent eight years teaching at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, an ANC exile school for South African students located in Tanzania. Pampallis’ Foundations of the New South Africa⁹⁶ (a title given to the revised edition published during the transition to democracy) is intended as “a general textbook to cover the South African section of our syllabus.” In Pampallis’ view, such a work was necessary as all then-existing textbooks (including those published by Maskew Miller Longman,) “served the interests of the Apartheid regime. They portrayed a distorted colonialist and racist view of the past. They all but ignored the history of the black majority and provided historical justification for the national and class oppression which was the essence of the Apartheid system.”⁹⁷ To remedy this historiographical injustice, Pampallis’ work “focuses on the history of the liberation and labour movements... [and] land dispossession.”⁹⁸ It was widely expected by history educators that Pampallis’ work would become the cornerstone of post-Apartheid history education.

Yet the extreme rightwards shift of ruling party ideology that both resulted from and allowed for the reconciliation process did not bode well for an explicitly Marxist approach to history education such as that spelt out by Pampallis. Indeed, by 1993 “people’s history was no longer present as a factor” in colloquia held on

⁹⁵Sieböcker, Rob. “*The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa’s Educational Transformation.*” In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research.* S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pgs. 3 - 4

⁹⁶Pampallis, John. Foundations of the New South Africa. Zed Books Ltd.: London & New Jersey, and Maskew Miller Longman: Cape Town. 1991.

⁹⁷Pampallis, John. Foundations of the New South Africa. Zed Books Ltd.: London & New Jersey, and Maskew Miller Longman: Cape Town. 1991.

⁹⁸Ibid. Rear Jacket

textbook production attended by textbook writers, academics, and publishers, having been supplanted by identity politics.⁹⁹ So it was that, somewhere in the dust kicked up by the sudden about-face of ANC ideology and the forceful implementation of a much-detracted new curriculum, Pampallis' work was abandoned as the literary flagship of post-Apartheid history education. Foundations of the New South Africa was only published overseas, in conjunction with London's Zed Books publishing house, as an academic history book that asks focus questions at the end of every chapter.

What rises in its stead to become the hegemonic Maskew Miller history textbook of post-Apartheid South Africa is a series entitled Looking into the Past. These textbooks were designed in full accordance with the current trend of zealous progressivism that later came to influence C2005. Looking into the Past is now a main textbook series of the Western Cape. The mission statement of this new textbook series is clear:

As the South African education system is reshaped, the country's history must be looked at anew and revised to take account of recent research and to reflect a fairer, educationally sound approach.

Maskew Miller Longman discussed the history syllabus with many teachers and historians. Together, we considered how to develop quality history textbooks which would meet the main demands of the education departments at the time of transition, but which would also make an important contribution to curriculum development in the future. The *Looking into the Past* series is the result.¹⁰⁰

But the shortcomings of progressivism and the particular history of the publisher, as discussed above, leave room for doubt as to the possibility for a clean break from Apartheid historiography in the new series. Has Maskew Miller, in many ways representative of South African private sector school textbook publishing

⁹⁹Siebörger, Rob. *The Dynamics of History Textbook Production During South Africa's Educational Transformation*. In: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: 2005. Pg. 4

¹⁰⁰Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. iv

houses, completely broken with its Apartheid legacy? Does the new series make a commitment to addressing and correcting the old myths, thus redressing a profound disservice to history? Or is the operation more selective? Do the myths go uncorrected in the new text? If so, why?

The fact that one publishing house remained hegemonic in the history textbook field throughout these recent periods of South African history affords great opportunity to the critical analyst interested in the relationship between state ideology and history education. For my purposes, the fact that the Apartheid and post-Apartheid history textbooks under analysis were issued by the same publisher provides a substantial control for my study.

2.3.2 How learner-centred pedagogy in the new textbooks allows for the deliberate reiteration of white history while protecting it from criticism

The “interactive and learner-centred methodology”¹⁰¹ implemented in the new textbook is quite uncompromising. The zealotry with which the pedagogy is implemented undoubtedly finds its roots in the progressivist trend which rose to preeminence in People’s Education. An interactive, outcome based approach is reflected in the series’ preface, which tells us that “students learn... about historical evidence... they develop and practise their observation and interpretation skills by applying them to a wide range of stories, poems, photos, maps and drawings.”¹⁰²

Such devices effectively supplant the narrative heavy, “factual knowledge” approach of the old textbooks. Opening to a random chapter of Timelines, Chapter 2 of Timelines 10, we find 23 pages of relatively dense text followed by two pages of exercises. It seems that in the new textbooks the pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme. Chapter 3 of Looking into the Past for Standard 4 / Grade 6, where Shaka is covered, spans 20 pages. The final 6 of these are dedicated in their entirety to primary sources or critical thinking exercises. Of the remaining 14, 8 offer but 1 or 2 small paragraphs of authoritative text with the remaining portion of these pages containing

¹⁰¹Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Grade 7. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1998. Pg. 5

¹⁰²Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. iv.

pictures, primary sources, “Did You Know?” boxes, or other critical thinking activities. 6 pages then, contain substantial authoritative text, but the historical narrative usually expected of such text is fragmented into discontinuous categories that are far more sociological than historical.

Another artefact of interactive pedagogy is found on virtually every page of the new textbooks. Empathy, a philosophical cornerstone of ‘new history,’ has been implemented with much fervour in Looking into the past. Its “To the teacher” section tells us that “personal accounts, photos and individual stories show vividly how people experienced particular time periods.”¹⁰³ These devices are incorporated into critical thinking activities where they provide stimulus for student contemplation.

A bifurcation is thus at play within the voice of the post-Apartheid textbooks, and it thus becomes necessary to distinguish between two separate strands of text within their pages; The first of these is the authoritative text: the voice of the textbook authors themselves telling us what is true. The second strand is an external voice: the many evidential sources, personal accounts, and conjectural sources incorporated into the textbook for student contemplation.

The primary voice, the authoritative text, is very scanty in the new textbooks and fragmented into discontinuous sociological corridors. Were it to stand on its own, this voice would do no justice to history, understood as “a *continuous*, usu. [usually] chronological, record of important or public events.” The etymological origins of the word ‘history’ lie in the Greek *historia* which partially translates as ‘narrative.’¹⁰⁴

The new textbooks, however, do not disable narrative entirely. They merely defer the construction of narrative to student learners. This is made possible by an interactive pedagogy which takes as its primary onus the provision of “source materials” that “enable the construction of a narrative(s) by students.”¹⁰⁵

The fragmentation of history into discontinuous sociological corridors and

¹⁰³Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. iv

¹⁰⁴ Allen, R.E. The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Eighth Edition. Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1990. Pg. 559. (My italics)

¹⁰⁵Siebörger, Rob. *The In: Nicholls, Jason. Methods in School Textbook Research*. S. Foster and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: *Production During South Africa's Educational Transformation*. 2005. Pg. 6

evidential sources means that historical narrative is not directly provided by the new textbooks but can only be gleaned from these scattered fragments by an active process of collecting, assembling, structuring, and interpreting undertaken by student learners.

The primary, authoritative voice of the textbooks, aside from being fragmented, is also thoroughly innocuous. Any claim that might be considered political or inflammatory is quarantined to the critical thinking activities, where they are delivered in the form of evidential sources. Many of these sources, taking the visual form of severed heads and speech bubbles, reiterate the foundational lineaments of white history.

This has implications for the construction of narrative by student learners. For if the second voice of the new textbooks, the evidential sources, choose to reiterate the tenets of white history, it remains only to be crosschecked whether these tenets go uncontradicted by the first voice, the authoritative text, to see whether or not the grand narrative of white history survives in the new textbooks to be gleaned and reconstructed by student learners.

To illustrate, then, one exemplary artefact of this grand design is the use of multicultural severed heads who advance divergent claims about South African history. An example can be found on page 21 of Looking into the Past for Standard 4 / Grade 7. While these heads are not as neatly severed as those found in subsequent exercises, they nonetheless exemplify the format through which the new textbooks reproduce white history.

The first thing we notice is that a blazing red bar quarantines these heads from the primary, authoritative text. While not all of these exercises are allotted such a bar, the effect is nevertheless the same. These heads are confined to protected, enclosed exercises where their most contentious utterances may be spewed while spared consideration by the authoritative text. For that authoritative text, that primary voice which tells us authoritatively what is true and what is poppycock, may not intrude across the blazing red bar. The veracity of claims advanced by severed heads in activity boxes, then, including those of white supremacist historiography, go unmeasured by the authoritative text, which by way of its silence defers such measurement into the hands of student learners.

Such a pedagogy is certainly interactive, and considerably learner-centred, yet is far from “detective work” as stipulated by English ‘new history’. This is because there is no corresponding information yielded by the authoritative text capable of

assigning truth or falsity to any of the heads' speech bubbles. This absence constitutes the 'innocuousness' of that primary, authoritative voice. Effectively, then, there is no way to crosscheck the claims advanced in the speech bubbles against something in the book which is "true" and in turn reveals the truth value of the speech bubbles themselves.

These severed heads and their speech bubbles, then, are not devices for use in a process of crosschecking and detective work, but an autotelic phenomenon in whose coruscating lustre are reflected all the uncertainties of post-modernity; the severed heads present a melange of disparate yet equally true conjecture, the speech bubbles a Derridian post-structuralist "play of differences."

The particular exercise in question, for instance, tells the reader only that "historians do not always agree with each other. Read what these different historians think."¹⁰⁶ No detective work, then, is even contemplated here, much less assigned. Neither is any quest for historical truth implied in the exercise. In looking for historical truth, then, a student can only choose to empathise with whichever bubble he is inclined to believe according to whatever juvenile criteria suits his fancy. In other words, these exercises are the philosophical equivalent of "What is your favourite colour?"

Crucially for my study, when a budding white supremacist seeks historical truth according to the all too real criteria of white supremacy in South Africa, he is always - at least in the instances surveyed - provided with a speech bubble that serves in this capacity. At least in the instances under study, he will always find a speech bubble that serves to legitimate his beloved white supremacy. If, therefore, blue were the official colour of white supremacy, and the textbook asked in a thousand separate interactive exercises, "What is your favourite colour?" the multiple choice answers provided in each individual exercise may vary, but one of them would always be blue, and blue would always be just as correct as any other answer.

These exercises therefore exemplify the pedagogical axiom that "source materials in books... can be used to enable the construction of a narrative(s) by students."¹⁰⁷ The fact that white sources always occur attests to the fact that this

¹⁰⁶Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. *Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6*. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 21

¹⁰⁷Siebörger, Rob. *The In*: Nicholls, Jason. *Methods in School Textbook Research*. S. Foster

approach has been utilized by Looking into the Past as a passive way of delivering the grand narrative of white history. Its individual tenets lie latent in isolated speech bubbles, waiting only to be recovered, strung together once more, and activated by the volition of student learners.

According to Giliomee, white demands for the continued survival of white history in the South African historical narrative was a major facet of the reconciliation process. The new pedagogy has been implemented in such a way as to allow for this survival. The fact that white history survives but is now propagated only passively by South African history textbooks in an inert celebration of subjectivity may mark a profound transition to historiographical democracy for some. Unfortunately, at least one argument against this approach is far more compelling.

For to simply spell out all the historiographical tenets of white supremacy and juxtapose them with revisionist accounts while the twain are deliberately rendered as equal truths by a scanty, fragmented authoritative text - an authoritative text that refuses to take sides or adjudicate between the disparate contentions in any way - makes for a feeble history textbook series and one loath to “recover from the ravages of Apartheid education.”¹⁰⁸

2.3.3 Selection of Page Sample for Analysis

Shaka and the Great Trek receive substantial coverage in the Apartheid era textbooks. These have chapters dedicated specifically to the Great Trek, and I shall analyse these chapters in total searching for the myth of open land or its refutation. While Shaka himself does not have chapters devoted to him, there are chapters devoted to the Mfecane which afford a great amount of coverage to Shaka. I shall analyse those passages that deal specifically with Shaka to get a sense of the degree to which they reproduce or undermine the myth of the bloodthirsty despot. Dingane and Mzilikazi are afforded much scantly coverage in the textbooks of both periods, and so I shall not consider their presentations in my study.

and K. Crawford (eds.) What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives in School History Textbooks. Information Age, Greenwich Connecticut: *Production During South Africa's Educational Transformation*. 2005. Pg. 6

¹⁰⁸Siebörger, Rob. et al. “The Status Quo in Curriculum Development in South Africa.” in History Education Group (ed). *History Matters* Heinemann-Centaur, Cape Town: 1993. Pg. 11

The Timelines series covers Shaka twice. The first coverage is contained in Chapter 6 of Timelines 6, a chapter entitled “The Mfecane and its Consequences.” This chapter spans from page 103 to page 107 and, as we shall see in a subsequent section of this research proposal, allocates a significant amount of space to characterising Shaka as a warmongering tyrant driven by a lust for revenge.

Timelines 8 revisits Shaka and the Mfecane in chapter 7. Titled “The Mfecane,” this chapter spans from page 101 to page 105. It is prefaced by the passage “The Mfecane and the Great Trek were dealt with in the Standard 6 syllabus. A concise revision included in the Standard 8 syllabus but Chapters 7 and 8 are **not intended for examination purposes.**” Still, the coverage of the Mfecane here is just about as lengthy as that found in Timelines 6.

The Looking into the Past series is organized via a different methodology. Since it is not organized according to a chronological but a thematic format it is more difficult to isolate the presentations of particular individuals or events. Still, there is a fairly continuous passage in Looking into the Past for Standard 4 / Grade 6 that deals with Shaka and the rise of the Zulu. This passage begins on page 25 with the section entitled “The Growth of the Zulu Kingdom.” The text discusses many aspects of the Zulu kingdom, such as the army and government and important women, in a kind of collage format that does not tell a story so much as paint a picture of life in Zulu society. Still, much of this does involve Shaka. By page 30 there is a passage titled “Chaka: ruler of a large kingdom,” and this section culminates in a pair of critical thinking exercises surrounding Shaka’s legacy on page 33. Another critical thinking exercise on page 44 handles the reasons for the Mfecane, and thus deals indirectly with Shaka.

These 7 pages afforded Shaka and the Mfecane by the new textbooks say remarkably little about Shaka in the authoritative text. Rather, all historiographical claims surrounding Shaka and his legacy, including that of the bloodthirsty despot, are relegated to the critical thinking exercises.

The bloodthirsty despot Shaka and the vast open land claimed by Trekkers were not, according to the old official history, entirely unrelated phenomena. To the contrary, the two seem to have a cause and effect relationship: “The recognised linkage is the supposition that the mfecane cleared the highveld of people at the very

moment the Voortrekkers decided to go and live there.”¹⁰⁹ For this reason, much of the myth of open land identified by Cornevin plays itself out in those sections covering the Mfecane. These take the opportunity to assert that “Chaka’s attacks on neighbouring tribes marked the beginning of many years of destructive wars. The survivors of the tribes attacked by Chaka fled northward... These fugitives, in turn, destroyed other tribes... As a result... the greater part of Natal was virtually depopulated.”¹¹⁰ Passages like this abound in the Timelines series: “The Voortrekkers were also influenced by the Mfecane. For instance, the Voortrekkers were able to settle on the vast plains between the Vet River and the Vaal river, since this region was largely uninhabited as a result of Mzilikazi’s wars of annihilation.” Therefore, any search for the myth of open land must examine those passages dedicated to the Great Trek and also those dedicated to the Mfecane.

Like the Mfecane, the Great Trek is covered twice in the Timelines series. The Great Trek is afforded 5 chapters and 30 pages by Timelines 6. Spanning pages 129 to 159, these are chapter 8: “Events Leading Up to the Great Trek,” chapter 9: “The Great Trek,” chapter 10: “The Voortrekkers in Natal,” chapter 11: “The Republic of Natalia,” and chapter 12: “The End of the Great Trek.”

Timelines 8 revisits the Great Trek in a more concise format. Simply entitled “The Great Trek,” chapter 8 spans from page 107 to page 118. This chapter shall be analysed as were those in Timelines 6, in regards to the inhabitancy or non-inhabitancy of land in the interior by indigenous peoples.

The Great Trek is not granted an exclusive chapter or series of chapters in the new textbooks. Rather, white settlement and landholding in the interior are presented thematically in Looking into the Past for Grade 4 / Standard 6 and Looking into the Past for Standard 10. The coverage in the Standard 6 edition is hardly profitable for this study, however, as it deals almost exclusively with Boer culture. The Standard 10 edition, however, covers the issue of Trekker landholding directly. This coverage is concentrated in pages 18 to 44.

The old Apartheid myth of open land finds its decisive refutation in the pages

¹⁰⁹Etherington, Norman. “*Old Wine in New Bottles: The Persistence of Narrative Structures in the Historiography of the Mfecane and the great Trek.*” in: Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 35.

¹¹⁰Lintvelt, et. al. Timelines 6, Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 105

of Looking into the Past. Searching for it, one immediately encounters passages like: “Some historians have suggested that the Trekkers moved into lands that were empty as a result of the wars and migrations that went with the rise of the Zulu kingdom. But this is not what happened. While the population of some areas... had been disturbed and reduced, the Transvaal was far from empty of Africans.”¹¹¹

Scanning those pages of Looking into the Past that deal with the Great Trek we find very quickly that a justification for white landholding takes new form therein. Therein, white history takes the form of a series of contentious claims to white proprietary rights in the interior. These do not appear in the authoritative text, where they might face the judgement of the author/historian, but rather in a set of critical thinking exercises. Primary sources are quoted in these exercises which serve to legitimate white landholding in the interior. To be sure, these claims are disputed by other primary sources in the exercises, but in this melee all becomes a frenzy of subjective speculation, with no authoritative judgement presented by the text.

There is, of course, much to be said for a pedagogy of history wherein learners draw their own conclusions about facts in evidence. The purpose of my research is not to lambaste learner-centred education, but merely to show how the pedagogy is implemented in the new textbooks to protect white history from consideration by the authoritative text. Thereby, rather than directly considering the mass amounts of white landholding derived from the Great Trek as legitimate or illegitimate, the text displaces the act of judgement entirely to the reader, so that “you [the reader] must judge whether the colonists’ claim to the land was convincing.”¹¹²

It is in this act of judgement that white history may find its re-iteration in the post-Apartheid textbooks. Via this second instance, then, I hope to further substantiate my argument, which asserts that the new textbooks have implemented progressivist, learner-centred pedagogy in such a way as to protect white history. Certainly in this particular case the format has been implemented in such a way so as to accommodate a historical justification of white landholding, at least for those who would wish to find one. This justification, of course, differs greatly from the Apartheid era myth of

¹¹¹Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2000. Pg. 34

¹¹²Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2000. Pg. 35

empty land, yet one must remember that the purpose served by the “erroneous belief that the Boers occupied an empty land when they trekked North during the nineteenth century,” was to imply “that this land ‘belongs’ to whites.”¹¹³ Therefore, the myth of empty land was but a single, temporal manifestation of white history and the broader phenomenon, the phenomenon of legitimation of white landholding in the interior, must be considered.

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¹¹³Dean, Elizabeth, et. al. History in Black and White: an Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. UNESCO, Paris: 1983. Pg. 103

Chapter 3

Reduction of Shaka in Timelines and Looking into the Past

3.1. Reduction of Shaka in Timelines

3.1.1. Shaka in Timelines 8

This chapter entails a comparative study of the two Maskew Miller textbooks, using Cornevin's third myth as my unit of analysis. The third myth identified by Cornevin is described by the author as "Chaka, Dingan, and Mzilikazi were nothing but bloodthirsty despots." I shall consider mainly the figure of Shaka, as the figures of Dingan and Mzilikazi are not afforded enough coverage by the textbooks for a meaningful study.

In the instance of Shaka, the Timelines series reproduces Cornevin's myth. Timelines 8 introduces "Chaka," a man of "power and cruelty." The textbook characterises his rise to the chieftaincy as no more than a terror campaign: "He [Chaka] was born in about 1785 and became their chief with the aid of Dingiswayo... establishing himself as chief of the Zulu by killing all who opposed him." It was not long before Disingwayo's death, whence "the leaderless Mtetwa combined with the Zulu... Zwide also claimed the paramountcy but was defeated by Chaka... thus by 1823 Chaka was the undisputed master of what is now Kwazulu and Natal."¹¹⁴

Timelines 8 tells us that, after rising to power by cruelly killing all who opposed him, Shaka immediately started "destructive wars" igniting "a terrible chain-reaction of killing." In these wars, Shaka "proceeded to defeat and destroy all the surrounding tribes. He devastated their crops, burnt their huts and killed all the captured warriors."¹¹⁵

The entire Mfecane, dubbed "wars of destruction" by Timelines, is thus traced only to the Zulu king's destructive urges: "Chaka's destructive wars started a terrible

¹¹⁴Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 101

¹¹⁵Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 101

chain reaction of killing.”¹¹⁶ Such an interpretation ignores all that was positive about the Mfecane,¹¹⁷ and serves to further reduce Shaka by attributing such a “destructive” phenomenon to his personal will, ignoring the numerous historical forces that were at play in South-East Africa at the time.

The reduction of Shaka is yet more thorough and extends so far as to obviate the Zulu leader’s military genius. Cornevin reminds us that “Chaka’s genius lay in setting up a military state in which territorial commands were given not to members of the royal family, but to Indunas, military chiefs from either his own clan or a subject tribe whom he appointed and dismissed. This system made possible the remarkably rapid and stable integration of the subject tribes...” Cornevin believes that Apartheid historiography habitually ignores this important socio-military innovation: “Nothing is said about [this] new organization of the army, which had far reaching sociological effects.”¹¹⁸

In keeping with Cornevin’s theoretical framework, Timelines avoids mentioning this contribution to history. The textbook reads “His [Chaka’s] discipline was severe and he had 50,000 aggressive, brave and well-trained warriors, led by his ablest Indunas.” The word Indunas appears in bold, and refers to a box on the bottom of the page which defines the word: “Indunas: senior commanders and advisors.”¹¹⁹ While it does mention and define the Indunas, the text does not indicate that Induna leadership was a key military innovation. In fact, the textual narrative does not even note the phenomenon as an innovation at all. Timelines 8 thus omits one of Shaka’s key positive qualities as a statesman: “the novelty and originality of the fighting methods adopted by the king of the Zulus.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁶Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 101

¹¹⁷Chisolm notes that the Mfecane was “both a destructive and a constructive process; a process in which traditional tribal links were severed... [and] new powerful kingdoms were forged.” in: Chisolm, Linda. “Ideology, Legitimation of the Status Quo, and History Textbooks in South Africa.” in, *Perspectives in Education: Journal of the Faculty of Education of the University of Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education*. Vol. 5 No. 3 November 1981. Pg. 142

¹¹⁸Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 109

¹¹⁹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 101

¹²⁰Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 96

The “integration of subject tribes,” noted by Cornevin as a positive product of Shaka’s innovation, is also obscured by the text. Indeed, this integration is reduced to mere kidnapping by Timelines 8: “Women and children were taken back to Zululand and incorporated into the Zulu. In this way Chaka made sure that there would be no tribes near Zululand to endanger his people or his own position...” The textual narrative does not allude to the unprecedented social-organizational capacity of the Zulu kingdom under Shaka to incorporate subject peoples. Thus, the text not only fails to identify Induna leadership as a great innovation of Shaka’s, but also fails to note the crucial enabling role of the new organizational system in the subsequent integration of subject tribes. According to Cornevin’s interpretation, then, “Chaka’s genius” is indeed neglected and ignored by the Apartheid-era textbook.

Though Timelines 8 concedes that “under Chaka the Zulu became a great military nation,”¹²¹ it characterises that leadership in purely negative terms. It is purely a matter of killing, kidnapping, devastating, burning, and terrorizing. The only trait Timelines 8 affords Shaka that is not explicitly evil but, perhaps, morally ambiguous, is that of “severe discipline.” Yet in context such severity only reinforces the image of the heartless despot within which the text has enshrouded him.

3.1.2. Shaka in Timelines 6

Timelines 6, the first book in the series, paints a slightly different though no less reductive picture of Shaka. Here we are told that Shaka is the son of Senzangakona, though “because his mother came from the Elangeni tribe, he was not accepted by the Zulu.” When Shaka’s mother brought him to live with the Elangeni “he was kicked, beaten, and derided and the unhappy youngster decided that some day he would have his revenge on the Elangeni.”¹²² We thus have Shaka presented as a bitter, grudge-bearing tyrant, one willing to destroy entire tribes to revenge the kicks, beatings, and derision of an unhappy childhood.

Surprisingly, the presentation of Shaka’s ascension to the Chieftaincy in Timelines 6 is far less bloody: “Senzangakona died in 1816. With the aid of

¹²¹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 101

¹²²Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 103-104

Dingiswayo and the Abatetwa army , Chaka then became chief of the AmaZulu.” Violence here is only partially implied in the phrase “aid... of the Abatetwa army.” However, purely destructive violence immediately emerges when Shaka becomes king, as “the very first thing he did was to destroy the Elangeni tribe.”¹²³

It is to this burning need for destruction imbued to Shaka that Timelines 6 attributes all of “The Mfecane or wars of annihilation.” We are told by Timelines 6 that “when Chaka was ready, he started his series of destructive wars. One of his first victims was Zwide’s powerful Ndwandwe tribe. The Ndwandwe had killed Chaka’s benefactor, Dingiswayo, and Chaka wanted to avenge his death.”¹²⁴ These “destructive wars” (the Mfecane) soon depopulated the region, (a point taken up in a subsequent section) finally leading Shaka to Umgungundhlovu where he “continued his wars of annihilation” until his death.¹²⁵

Timelines 6 spends much time on Shaka’s military tactics, but never identifies any of these as innovations of his own, and never once mentions indunas or their importance. “Chaka’s Genius” as identified by Cornevin is thus completely crippled here. Furthermore, his “stature as states[man]” is totally eradicated; While Timelines 6 does spend some time on the incorporation of smaller tribes, it does not relate this capacity to incorporate conquered tribes to Shaka’s military innovation. Serving in place of this genius is an indefatigable capacity for cruelty, for following the narrative of Timelines 6 one can only conclude that though Shaka built the Zulu into a great and powerful nation, he was only interested in doing so as a means to annihilate people.

Indeed, all of the leader’s nation building and statesmanship has been subordinated by the text to his supposed desire for violent revenge: “His [Chaka’s] ideal was to mould the AmaZulu into a great and powerful nation and to take revenge on the enemies of his youth.” It is thus contended by Timelines 6 that Shaka’s only ambition in life was to destroy. Building the Zulu nation may have been a phenomenon of some historical importance but was intended merely a means to the

¹²³Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 104

¹²⁴Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 104

¹²⁵Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 105

singular end of destruction.¹²⁶

Shaka has thus been reduced to a bloodthirsty despot by the Apartheid-era Timelines series. The only possible deviations from this trajectory are the adjective “brave” and the noun “fearlessness” afforded Shaka by Timelines 6. Yet such bravery does nothing to rehabilitate the beleaguered personage of Shaka when considered in light of the stipulated fact that it was never employed in any capacity beyond annihilating. Indeed, as Cornevin reminds, such traits may at times be mentioned “only to emphasize their role both quantitative and qualitative in the extension of terror.”¹²⁷

It has thus been demonstrated that, in the instance of Shaka, the Timelines series has indeed reproduced Apartheid mythology, reducing the historical figure to nothing more than a bloodthirsty despot with little deviation from contemporary convention. Such smear campaigns embedded in historical narrative legitimated the Apartheid system by casting their intended figures, however revered by their respective peoples, into the realm of the bellicose and atavistic. Such degradation, especially when applied to the historic ‘great leaders’ of the nation’s black peoples, propagated a key ideological principle of Apartheid rule: “the backwardness of the black peoples.” This principle, reminds Cornevin, itself served as “the justification for white trusteeship.”¹²⁸

3.2. Shaka in Looking into the Past.

The next step of this study entails analysing the presentation of Shaka in Maskew Miller’s new post-Apartheid textbook series, Looking into the Past. But before embarking upon the venture it is necessary to ask: “What would a proper historiographical rehabilitation of Shaka entail?” Cornevin concludes her section on the mythologising of Shaka and other historic black statesmen by asserting that

¹²⁶ as indicated by the use of the singular “ideal” as opposed to the plural, i.e.: “His ideals were...”

¹²⁷ Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 96

¹²⁸ Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 31

“without wishing to exonerate Chaka, Dingaan, and Mzilikazi completely of the charges of cruelty made against them... their characters need to be seen in a broader perspective so as to reveal their stature as statesmen.”¹²⁹

Can we expect this broader perspective to manifest in the new MM series? As Giliomee has informed us, the particular nature of the handover of power and in particular the demands made upon the new national history by whites during the reconciliation process would lead us to believe that white history, in this instance the reduction of Shaka to no more than a bloodthirsty despot, would survive in the new textbook.

The reduction of Shaka still takes place in the new textbook, as does some meagre rehabilitation of Shaka's stature as a statesman, but only in the confines of critical thinking activities that stress the subjectivity of the discipline. The authoritative text remains noncommittal and thus, in the resultant whirlpool of subjectivist interpretation, both the reduction and the partial rehabilitation are, as far as the textbook goes, equally true. It remains only for the student reader (probably with considerable guidance from his or her particular instructor) to choose whether to interpret Shaka as a bloodthirsty despot or a statesman.

What is important for this study, it should be said at the outset, is not whatever meagre rehabilitation of Shaka takes place in the scanty confines of a critical thinking exercise. Rather, this study reveals the survival of white history in post-Apartheid textbooks, where it can be found without any authoritative refutation, and notes the persistence of this white history as a legitimization device for white peoples' disproportionate social-economic stake in post-Apartheid South Africa.

The survival of white history in post-Apartheid South African history education through progressivist pedagogy certainly approximates the “integrated” history Giliomee alludes to as white-demanded at the time of reconciliation and also coincides neatly with the rightward shift of the ANC. It is thus further argued that white history survives in contemporary history education as one of many concessions made to the powerful white minority population during reconciliation.

Looking into the Past follows a different method of organization than the Timelines series. The influence of British ‘new history’ methodology can be seen in

¹²⁹Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 100

its pages of illustrated activities and critical thinking questions. In keeping with the tenets of progressivist pedagogy, content is organized so as to facilitate the learning of “historical and analytical skills, basic competencies... technical skills of how to read a graph or table... [and] some skills concerning critical thinking.”¹³⁰

As a result of the new methodology, coverage of Shaka is not concentrated in any one specific passage. Rather, Shaka and the elements of his legacy are dispersed over a wide array of passages on disparate themes. Some of these involve new social organization in the burgeoning Zulu kingdom. Others are primary source accounts illustrated in a comic book format. The Mfecane, once deemed Shaka’s most important contribution and the salient aspect of his legacy, is similarly scattered about in the Looking into the Past series. A bit more sifting is thus required to glean the character of Shaka and the meaning of his legacy from the post-Apartheid text.

Though coverage of Shaka is scattered about a number of thematic passages, Looking into the Past does, at least in the authoritative text, afford Shaka a far better characterization than the Apartheid-era texts. If we recall Timelines’ claim that Shaka “establish[ed] himself as chief of the Zulu by killing all who opposed him...,” we see that Looking into the Past paints a far more becoming picture of Shaka’s ascendance to the chieftaincy: “Shaka was the son of Senzangakona, ruler of the Zulu army. Shaka was trained in the Mthethwa army. When his father died, Shaka became ruler of the Zulu people.”¹³¹ Timelines, if one recalls, neglected to mention the fact that Shaka was the son of Senzangakona and thus had hereditary claim to the Chieftaincy. This omission enabled the narrative to characterize his ascendance to the Chieftaincy as a terror campaign and thus reduce Shaka.

The integration of surrounding tribes also merits a far more becoming passage. As we have seen, Timelines described the process as a campaign: “to defeat and destroy all the surrounding tribes. He devastated their crops, burnt their huts, and killed all the captured warriors. Women and children were taken back to Zululand and incorporated into the Zulu. In this way Chaka made sure that there would be no tribes

¹³⁰Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 11. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2000. From the Foreword.

¹³¹Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 25

near Zululand to endanger his people or his own position.”¹³² Such a description, while not exactly untrue, only emphasizes the terror and destruction of the process.

The new textbook omits such violent detail, reading simply: “Shaka led the Zulu people against the Ndwandwe and defeated them. The Ndwandwe and Mthethwa became part of the Zulu kingdom. Shaka became the strongest ruler between the Mkhuze and the Thukela rivers. All the people in this area were now part of the Zulu kingdom.”¹³³ Keeping in mind Oxford’s definition of the verb defeat: “overcome in a battle or other contest” it is clear that the description offered in Looking into the Past does not emphasize or even necessarily mention the violence of this process. As we shall see, the violence integral to Shaka’s legacy is only implied by the new textbooks, not asserted with the full authority of authoritative text.

The neutral implication of violence is a running theme in the new textbooks’ characterization of Shaka. In another section on the growth of the Zulu kingdom, titled “Government,” the text reads “Some of Shaka’s neighbours decided to join his kingdom. Chiefs who did not support Shaka were *removed* and members of their family who did support Shaka took their places. In this way the king made sure he controlled all the people in the kingdom.”¹³⁴ Without even opening the dictionary, it is clear that the word “remove” again implies but does not assert violence. And violence in the capacity of cruelty? Again, there is only the implication.

The entire growth of the Zulu nation, once decried as a series of “wars of annihilation” by the Apartheid textbooks, now appears as a relatively painless enterprise. Only one battle is mentioned, the battle against the Ndwandwe. Looking into the Past tells us: “In the area around the White Mfolozi River, some small chieftains joined together under a leader called Shaka *to* defend themselves against the Ndwandwe... Shaka led the Zulu people against the Ndwandwe people and defeated them.”¹³⁵ Quite interestingly we have the war (if we assume there was an

¹³²Lintvelt, et. al. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 101

¹³³Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 25

¹³⁴Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 27 (my italics)

¹³⁵Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 25

actual war, as the text does not disclose) against the Ndwandwe presented here as defensive. Indeed, it is presented as a kind of pre-emptive strike. Far from the austere reduction of the old textbooks, the post-Apartheid text is ambiguous as to the merits of such an endeavour, moral or otherwise.

Why does the pattern of neutral ambiguity emerge in the new textbook? The most obvious answer may be that Shaka is covered in the Standard 4/ Grade 6 textbook, and the violence of human history is often deemed an unsuitable topic for such young children's ears. But as we shall see, this is not the case, for the same trend emerges in the high school editions of Looking into the Past.

In the high school editions of Looking into the Past, Shaka is mentioned twice. He is first mentioned in passing and in reference to his death: "in 1823, a group of traders from the Cape Colony had established themselves at Port Natal (later named Durban) with the permission of Shaka, the Zulu King. In 1828, Shaka was assassinated by his brother Dingane."¹³⁶ The second mention of Shaka is equally brief, and occurs in reference to Mzilikazi: "Mzilikazi had been a military commander under Shaka. He fled from the Zulu kingdom with a small band of followers after openly disregarding Shaka's authority."¹³⁷

These scanty sentences covering Shaka in the high school editions do naught to restore the prevalence of violence to his historical legacy. Rather, the pattern of neutral ambiguity holds. It can thus only be concluded that the reason for the pattern lies somewhere other than the youthful age of the textbook's intended readership.

As we shall see, by implying violence, even violence in the capacity of cruelty, in the Zulu leader's characterisation the textbook is able to avoid actively reducing Shaka while allowing the old white history of the bloodthirsty despot to survive. For the debauched and cruel bloodlust once so powerfully imbued onto Shaka's personage remains in the new textbook as a latent force, awaiting only its ignition by an incendiary spark. This spark, of course, cannot be provided by the authoritative text, lest the authoritative text and its authors adopt the brazen garb of white supremacism and thus incriminate themselves. Yet such a spark must come if

¹³⁶Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner's Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2000. Pg. 19

¹³⁷Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner's Book Grade 11. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2000. Pg. 35

white history is to survive in the new textbooks. We shall soon see that it does in fact come, arriving in a roundabout manner via progressivist pedagogy. And because it is delivered by severed multicultural heads, the spark is issued indirectly and thus does not incriminate the authoritative text or the unwaveringly non-committal authors.

But we must first remember that the Apartheid myth identified by Cornevin held not only that Shaka was a bloodthirsty despot, but was *nothing more than* a bloodthirsty despot. If Looking into the Past is sincerely attempting to recover Shaka's "stature as a statesman," it does little to achieve such a recovery in the authoritative text. On the one hand, it does achieve some of the "broader perspective" stipulated by Cornevin. To this end, the new textbook stresses a defensive aspect to the Zulu war against the Ndwandwe: "small chiefdoms joined together under a leader called Shaka to defend themselves against the Ndwandwe."¹³⁸

Yet the new textbook does little more than this to recover Shaka's stature as a statesman. Indeed, it almost seems as if Shaka built the Zulu nation to steal cattle and introduce oppressive class divisions:

Before about 1750, there were no big differences in wealth between people in the small chiefdoms. But in the Zulu Kingdom there were some people who were rich and powerful and others who were poor.

The King, his family and the people who served the king were very powerful and owned most of the cattle. The people who joined Shaka early on were also powerful. They joined the *amabutho* and were rewarded for their successes.

The people who were conquered by Shaka later on and who lived on the edges of his kingdom were much poorer. Shaka took their cattle, and their young men were forced to look after his cattle. These poorer people were given insulting names like *amalala* (low-class servant) and *iziyendane* (*people with a strange hairstyle*.)¹³⁹

Such a statement is not untrue, of course, but the imposition of class hierarchy is taken out of its proper context of nation-building; no mention is made of how the new dispensation may have bolstered production or increased military power. It seems here that Shaka enforced such divisions for no particular reason except to insult

¹³⁸Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 25

¹³⁹Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 26

people.

Furthermore, while Looking into the Past allots two full pages to the Zulu army, it does not mention any of Shaka's military-strategic innovations. Indeed, all of the military structures described in the textbook are dated back to 1750, seventy years before Shaka's rule: "Before about 1750, chiefs needed to call on men to fight for them only when they needed them. The chiefs got men from only one area. Now, in the large Zulu kingdom, the king had a permanent army. Every young man in the Zulu kingdom had to join the *amabutho*..."¹⁴⁰ This section, entitled "the army," goes on to describe the division of labour within the army, relates a partial description of its hierarchy, and provides two primary sources. Curiously, none of this even mentions the leadership of the indunas, identified by Cornevin as the key to Shaka's military success and personal genius.

Thus, the new textbook tells us that if Shaka is more than a bloodthirsty despot, he is not much more. He did lead his people in a successful defensive war against the Ndwandwe, but other than that he only went around stealing cattle and subjecting people to a harsh new class system for no particular reason, except perhaps to insult them.

It thus seems clear that, while the new textbook has not reproduced the official white history of Shaka as nothing more than a bloodthirsty despot in the authoritative text, this authoritative text has also done very little to recover Shaka's stature as a statesman. Once the neutral, rather innocuous authoritative text ends, however, the active agent is introduced. This is the "interactive and learner-centred methodology"¹⁴¹ central to progressivist pedagogy as it later came to influence the much criticized C2005.

Progressivist, learner-centred pedagogy has spawned innumerable critical thinking activities in the pages of Looking into the Past. At least two things can immediately be said about these zones in the post-Apartheid textbooks. Firstly, they allow for the recapitulation of white history's most contentious claims by occupant parties without incriminating the authoritative text. Secondly, they function as a kind

¹⁴⁰Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 28

¹⁴¹Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Grade 7. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1998. Pg. 5

of containment zone wherein these claims may be isolated and spared consideration - any active refutation or abetment - from the authoritative text.

Two critical thinking exercises appear at the end of chapter 3.6.¹⁴² The first of these, titled “What kind of man was Shaka?” begins with the sentence: “Here are some of the things that people have said about Shaka:.” Six disembodied speech bubbles then appear. The first of these reads: “You cannot easily think of a story which is more brave and more successful than the story of Shaka the Great, the founder and emperor of the Greater Zulu Nation.” The speaker is then identified as “Jordan Ngubane, KwaZulu politician, 1976.”

The second speech bubble reads: “Shaka was more like an animal than a human. He had no feelings for other people.” The speaker is then identified: “Alfred Bryant, Natal Missionary, 1929.”

The third speech bubble reads: “Shaka used to kill a man simply because he was ugly. A man would be killed though he had done nothing.” The speaker is then identified: “Baleka, daughter of Mpitikazi of the Qwabe people, about 1920.”

The fourth bubble reads: “I stayed at the court and he showed me kindness.” The speaker: “Charles Rawden Maclean who was shipwrecked off the Natal coast in 1825.”

The fifth bubble: “There has not been in history a more powerful and cruel monster than Shaka.” The speaker: “James King, British trader, 1826.”

The sixth and final bubble: “Shaka came and raised up the power of his people so that (they) became stronger than all the others that had been strong, and they that had been above his father and grandfather he humbled and lowered.” The speaker: “Magema Fuze, Natal writer, 1922.”

The six speech bubbles are followed by three critical thinking questions. These are:

1. Read what these people said about Shaka. Are they all saying the same thing?
2. Look at the date when each person spoke. Which of these people met Shaka. How do you think the others got their ideas about him?
3. Now look at what your class said about Shaka.

These questions ask students to think about who said each statement and

¹⁴²These can both be found on: Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. *Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6*. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 33

when. I am assuming it does this to help the students contemplate the relationships of each of the speakers to Shaka and thus infer some notion of whose views are more or less valid. However, I cannot detect any obvious logic behind this. A black person praises Shaka, another condemns him. A white contemporary is treated kindly by Shaka, another calls him the most powerful, cruel monster in history. A missionary calls him an animal, a writer passes no moral judgement upon his person.

What is clear, however, is that three of these speech bubbles blatantly reproduce the Apartheid mythology surrounding Shaka. It is in fact these three speech bubbles that provide the aforementioned spark to ignite the old Apartheid myth of Shaka as no more than a bloodthirsty despot. Thus the old mythology has been kindled without incriminating the authoritative text, a manoeuvre made possible by the “interactive and learner-centred methodology”¹⁴³ at the core of progressivist education.

What is also clear is that, looking back at the authoritative text, one finds nothing to contradict these contentious white history / Apartheid-mythological speech bubbles. Indeed, their only refutations are found in other speech bubbles. Two of these, those belonging to Jordan Ngubane and Mageba Fuze, do restore some of Shaka’s stature as a nation builder. The other attempts to impart some humanity and kindness onto the Zulu leader.

The relegation of white history to these interactive zones is recapitulated in the second critical thinking exercise, whose multicultural and neatly severed heads issue divergent claims in speech bubbles. The title “How big and how powerful was Shaka’s kingdom?” seems a misnomer when one reads the first (reading clockwise from lower left) speech bubble: “The Zulu army raided far and wide, forcing their neighbours to flee. These neighbours attacked other people in the area, and soon the whole of South Africa was at war.” This statement, as is clear, lacks all but the mildest reference to the size and power of Shaka’s kingdom. It does, however, complete the iteration of white history commenced in the first critical thinking exercise.

For now, having linked the white history bubbles in the two exercises, we have fully reconstructed the old official white history of Shaka as a despot who started

¹⁴³Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Grade 7. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1998. Pg. 5

the Mfecane for no particular reason other than naked bloodlust. To be sure, the contention is plunged into a frenzy of subjectivist interpretation, but it also finds no refutation in the authoritative text; refutation only comes from other speech bubbles.

Chapter 4.4 covers the Mfecane specifically. Titled “Violence and drought,” it tells us that “some people have called the time of violence in the 18th and early 19th centuries the *Mfecane*. People spread out to get away from the violence and to find land with water. Why was there violence in southern Africa in the 18th and early 19th centuries? Historians have different ideas about why...”¹⁴⁴

This leads us to another critical thinking exercise involving speech bubbles, the first of which reads: “The trouble was caused by the Zulu Kingdom. The Zulu rulers wanted to make their kingdom bigger, so they attacked their neighbours. The victims ran away and went further inland. Some of them attacked other chiefdoms.”¹⁴⁵ Again we find Shaka blamed for the Mfecane, and the only motivation attributed to them is lust for power. Again, there is nothing contradictory to this viewpoint in the authoritative text. There is some mention of a drought, but this phenomenon is not anywhere related to the Mfecane except in other dismissable speech bubbles. Thus we find once more white history given expression in the critical thinking exercise without decisive refutation in the authoritative text.

Such a subjectivist format is clearly ambivalent in its prescribed vocation to actively rehabilitate the historical personage of Shaka. As the speech bubbles to which his disparate characterisations are relegated are not authoritative but mere objects of speculation, and since there is no marker of their veracities made obvious to the reader, they all appear as equal truths, or falsities, in a maelstrom of relativism and conjecture. In fact, there is nothing in the text to contradict any of the viewpoints capitulated in the critical thinking activities. The result of such a pedagogy is that students can choose which Shaka to learn from the history lesson.

Such a pedagogy may impress those partial to post-modernism or the idea that democracy should extend to the realm of historical truth, yet despite these possible merits one must concede that white history survives in its throes. It remains only for

¹⁴⁴Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 44

¹⁴⁵Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 44

the student to choose it from the pool of equally true (or equally groundless) conjectures. Once white history is recovered by the student he can flip back through the entire section on Shaka, note the many latent implications of violence, and let rage the oceans of blood beneath them.

Might not the opposite conclusion also be drawn from the maelstrom of subjective speculation and reflection on primary sources? Might not a very different Shaka be gleaned from the authoritative text and activities of Looking into the Past? One who was a great statesman and nation builder? One whose legacy knows obeisance to not even the least charge of cruelty or other moral transgression?

It is clear that it can, and this is exactly why the new textbook realizes the “integrated history” stipulated by Giliomee. And, if we may recall, the very purpose of such a history, according to that author, was to allow for the survival of white history. In this case, the Apartheid myth that Shaka was nothing more than a bloodthirsty despot has hardly been corrected, it has simply been displaced into a critical thinking exercise that emphasizes the subjectivity of the discipline.

It is thus clear that, in the instance of Shaka, the learner-centred activities of the new textbook have in fact realized the “integrated” format stipulated by Giliomee, a format that was ostensibly white-demanded. It has also been demonstrated that, in this instance, the format has served its enunciated purpose, for in its cradle white history has survived.

The question nags one, why even include these speech bubbles that reduce Shaka in these exercises at all? Why have little cartoons in critical thinking activities recapitulating the historiographical tenets of white supremacy? They do serve as a good topic for a critical thinking exercise, but so would anything else involving Shaka that various primary sources in history disagree on. Why not an exercise on his military tactics or the intricacies of the incorporation process? Those reductive bubbles may make for a titillating critical thinking exercise but in the process propagate a mythology designed to entrench and fortify white supremacy.

What is clear is that in the presentation of Shaka in the new textbooks “white history” survives. It still serves to legitimate the notion of black despotism and a chaotic, otiose interior soon to be civilized by Voortrekkers. Such white history is, to be sure, plunged into the realm of subjectivist interpretation. But its recovery from that realm is aided by the text’s provision of “white history” primary sources, which find no contradiction in the authoritative text. Thus, we see in this instance that the

learner-centred approach central to progressivist pedagogy has provided a vehicle for the survival of white history in post-Apartheid textbooks.

It has thus been demonstrated that, at least in the instance of Shaka, white history survives in the new textbooks. If we take Giliomee at his word, then this survival can be traced to the reconciliation process. For as we have seen, whites placed substantial demands on post-Apartheid history during the reconciliation process, a process which entailed the extensive appeasement of white minority demands in exchange for a handover of power. As Giliomee claims, the demand that white history survive in an integrated approach was a priority of the powerful white minority population. The survival of white history in post-Apartheid textbooks through progressivist pedagogy can be said to reflect that demand.

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Chapter 4

Justification for White Landholding in Timelines and Looking into the Past

According to Marianne Cornevin, Apartheid historiography propagated a myth of empty land in the South African interior to legitimate white landholding therein. Yet this justification entailed more than more than the single myth; a broader historiographical justification was propagated which characterised the Trekkers as a benevolent force for order in a dark, chaotic region tyrannized by Dingane's Zulu and Mzilikazi's Matabele. This section first traces manifestations of the myth of empty land in relevant chapters of the Timelines series, then details the manner in which the narrative reduces Dingane and Mzilikazi in order to characterise the white annexation of their land as a force for order and civility.

4.1 Justification for white landownership in the Timelines series

4.1.1 The myth of empty land, ' that the Voortrekkers advanced into an uninhabited land that belonged to no one.'

As Sparks wrote in 2003: "Land had long been part of the mythology of Afrikaner Nationalism." Even when financially unprofitable, white landownership retained "a value in political nostalgia that was priceless... to the Afrikaner Nationalist regime," thus garnering massive subsidies from the Apartheid government.¹⁴⁶ White landownership, a stake vastly disproportionate to population size since well before the oft-noted Land Act of 1913, thus formed an integral node of the South African white supremacist ethos.

Justification of white landholding in South Africa was both religious and secular. The religious component bore strong resemblances to that found among settler colonists in Israel/Palestine and the New World. For white South Africans, especially Afrikaners, white landownership in South Africa, particularly the interior, was no less than "a God-given right extrapolated from their interpretation of Calvinist

¹⁴⁶Sparks, Allister. Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 20

theology and given divine sanction by their Dutch Reformed Church.”¹⁴⁷

The secular component of the legitimation process manifested historiographically as the myth of empty land. The myth of empty land begins where the myth of Shaka as nothing but a cruel despot ends, and in the conjunction of the two one finds the very marrow of white history. For according to the old historiography, the Mfecane cleared vast spaces of land in the interior from African habitation, thus leaving these land available for peaceful white settlement.

The Timelines series reproduces this mythology faithfully but not word for word. At the end of Chapter 6, “The Mfecane and its Consequences,” Timelines 6 reads: “Chaka raises a powerful army and defeats the neighbouring tribes; Wars of annihilation spread across Southern Africa and lead to poverty and depopulation.”¹⁴⁸

Such an account is untenable for at least two reasons. Firstly, as has been shown, the Mfecane was also a constructive process encompassing the birth of the Kingdom of Zulu, a process completely obviated by the misnomer “wars of annihilation.”

Secondly, the claim that the Difaqane “spread across Southern Africa” too conveniently overlooks the localized nature of the Difaqane. As Cornevin reminds, “the Difaqane [Mfecane] affected primarily the Southern Sotho... Mzilikazi’s destructive campaign was borne chiefly by the Eastern group of Tswana.” The wars were therefore localized in that “the north and east of the Transvaal escaped the horrors of the Difaqane. The Northern Sotho (Bapedi) were only marginally affected... and the Venda not at all. In the south-west of the Transvaal and Botswana the western group of Tswana also remained outside.”¹⁴⁹

Though clearly untenable, the notion of wars of annihilation consuming Southern Africa proved incredibly useful to white supremacist historians. It served as the platform upon which could be built a historiography that morally and legally justified white landholding throughout the interior of South Africa, even to the extent of effective monopoly. For according to such a historiography these all-consuming

¹⁴⁷Sparks, Allister. Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 17

¹⁴⁸Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 105

¹⁴⁹Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 107

destructive wars decimated and depopulated the countryside, leaving the land “uninhabited and belong[ing] to no one.”¹⁵⁰

At the close of chapter 6, in a section entitled, “The Mfecane and its Consequences,” Timelines tells us that “the trekkers were also influenced by the Mfecane. For instance, the Voortrekkers were able to settle on vast plains between the Vet River and the Vaal River, since this region was largely uninhabited as a result of Mzilikazi’s wars of annihilation.”¹⁵¹ Here we see how the reduction of the Mfecane to a purely destructive enterprise has segued neatly into the myth of empty land.

The myth is reiterated in a small passage identifying causes of the Great Trek. The sixth cause is identified as “the need for more grazing [which] led the frontier farmers to move farther north.”¹⁵² This passage informs the reader that “ever since 1820, uninhabited cultivatable ground had been scarce and the British government had no desire to expand the Colony still further.” This led to a shortage of grazing land within the Cape Colony as “cattle-farmers required large farms, for they had to make allowance for drought.”

According to Timelines 6, the solution to the farmers’ problem was empty land in the interior. “Consequently,” the textbook reads, “in times of drought, even before the Great Trek, farmers had crossed the borders of the Colony in search of grazing. They were aware of the excellent grazing, and plentiful game in areas which lay uninhabited beyond the Orange River.”¹⁵³ The passage thus informs us that even before the Great Trek whites moved northward beyond the Orange River, where they found excellent and, more importantly, uninhabited land.

The myth of empty land is iterated still further in Timelines 8. In its own passage on the causes of the Great Trek, the textbook informs us that “by the outbreak of the Frontier War of 1834-1835 all the land available for grazing livestock had been taken up.” In time, groups of “frontier farmers... realized that they would obtain no more land beyond the eastern frontier.” Therefore, presumably continuing the pattern

¹⁵⁰Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 101

¹⁵¹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 106

¹⁵²Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 131

¹⁵³Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 6. Maskew Miller: 1985. Pg. 132

of white northward migration detailed in Timelines 6, “they [white frontier farmers] turned northwards into the unoccupied territories beyond the Orange River.”¹⁵⁴

Yet it is in its section on the Mfecane that Timelines 8 most brazenly iterates the myth of empty land. According to this section, “remnants of... [defeated] tribes... attacked and destroyed all the Black tribes in their path so that a buffer-zone was created between themselves and the power and cruelty of Chaka and his Zulu impis.” As a result of this process, “most of densely-populated Natal was depopulated.”¹⁵⁵

In a section summarising the effects of the Mfecane, entitled “The results of the Mfecane,” the myth of open land is reiterated time and time again. Its first sentence tells us that “thousands of tribesmen were killed or left homeless and vast areas were depopulated by the Zulu and Matabele impis.”

The third effect of the Mfecane identified by the textbook is again concerned with empty land. This passage alludes to the “various Black tribes which had fled from the Zulu and Matabele attacks.” These “formed new settlements far from each other, separated by vast depopulated areas.”

The textbook emphasizes and reiterates the depopulation of land in the interior in order to justify white settlement therein. The notion of white settlement on empty land in the interior did much to legitimate white landholding there, both historical and contemporary, as it effectively precludes any possible allegations of wrongful dispossession or land theft that might be levied against the Trekkers. The next sentence of the textbook introduces the theme of Trekker settlement in empty land: “when the Voortrekkers entered the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, they found these largely depopulated territories where they could settle.”¹⁵⁶

It is therefore asserted by the text that in the Orange Free state and in the Transvaal, the interior heartlands of white Afrikanerdom at the time the Timelines series was written, white settlement was achieved peacefully. One can only conclude that if there was any violence in the process, this violence was so negligible as to not merit any mention whatsoever by the text. The contention that white settlement was peaceable process that occurred in empty land clearly served to legitimate white

¹⁵⁴Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 108

¹⁵⁵Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 101

¹⁵⁶Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 104

presence and landownership in these regions in contemporary Apartheid South Africa both morally and in a legal-proprietary vein.

Not only was all of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal empty, but so also was a vast portion of Natal: “Also in Natal, between Zululand and the Umzimvubu River, there was a large apparently unpopulated area.” This led to a massive migration of “White frontier farmers, [who,] unable to penetrate further in their trek eastwards across the Karoo, now turned northwards into the sparsely populated regions created by the Mfecane.” White settlement in Natal is thus also characterized as a peaceable movement of farmers into empty space, for the availability of empty land supposedly left by the Mfecane “led to the migration of the White population of the Cape Eastern frontier into the open territories north of the Orange and Vaal rivers and into Natal.”¹⁵⁷

Timelines 8 is so persistent in propagating the myth of empty land in the interior that it even characterises those lands that were purchased by whites as having been empty. Timelines 8 informs us that “in the Orange Free State, Potgieter was able to acquire a large tract of empty territory between the Vet and Vaal from the Bataung Chief Makwana in exchange for protection against the Matabele.”¹⁵⁸ It would seem white settlement in this instance was so peaceable that even the land they bought was empty. It is in any case made clear by the textbook that in no instance were Africans run off land or dispossessed by the white settlers.

The first passage of chapter 8 in Timelines 8 recaps the mass migration of whites into the interior of South Africa, where they subsequently claimed vast amounts of land and settled permanently, taking the opportunity to once again remind us of the emptiness of the land: “From 1835 onwards some 15,000 Dutch-speaking frontier farmers from the eastern Cape left with all their livestock, belongings and servants to found new homes north of the Orange and Vaal Rivers and in Natal, in the empty regions depopulated by the Mfecane.”¹⁵⁹

According to this passage, then, the process of white settlement in the interior did not involve a single incident of dispossession. If there was any dispossession to

¹⁵⁷Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 104

¹⁵⁸Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 104

¹⁵⁹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 107

speaking about, Timelines would have us believe, then this dispossession owed itself to the Mfecane, the purely destructive wars led by the allegedly bloodthirsty tyrants Shaka and Mzilikazi.

4.1.2 Proprietary legitimation beyond the myth of empty land, the arrival of the Trekkers and their annexation of African land as a benevolent activity.

The myth of empty land has thus been shown to be pervasive in the most relevant chapters of the Timelines series. Yet in a broader sense, a historical justification for white monopoly landownership in the interior is not complete. This is for two reasons. Firstly, references to empty land cannot possibly be stretched to incorporate Zululand and that land controlled by Mzilikazi. A sizeable portion of the interior, this land was obviously taken by force and the violence involved in the endeavour can scarcely be obviated. Secondly, once the threat of the demonically bellicose Zulu and Matabele was quelled, would not the scattered tribes return to the land they had cultivated for centuries with proprietary claims?

Timelines resolves these problems by characterising the Trekker annexation of these territories as a benevolent force. It does this first and foremost by reducing Dingane and Mzilikazi much as it had Shaka. Though these figures do not receive enough coverage in the new textbook series to allow for a comparative study as was undertaken above with the figure of Shaka, it is nonetheless heuristic to briefly explore the ways the reduction of Dingane and Mzilikazi allow for the characterisation of white land annexation as a benevolent force for order in the territories they held.

Timelines affords Dingane similar treatment to that doled out to his brother Shaka. Another bloodthirsty despot, after having “murdered” his brother, Dingane “continued [Shaka’s] reign of terror and also killed all his relations...”¹⁶⁰ Thus established as a murderer and slaughterer of his own family, it was not long before, in an incident that has taken on its own mythological proportions in the South African mind, the wrath of Dingane was turned on Piet Retief and his band of peaceful white settlers in February of 1838.

Timelines 8 tells us that “when Retief asked for land Dingaan promised him a

¹⁶⁰Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 103

grant of territory only if Retief recovered stolen Zulu cattle from Sikonyela...” Soon “Dingaan was given back his stolen cattle... On 6 February, when Retief and his party were taking leave of Dingaan, they were suddenly overwhelmed in Dingaan’s kraal and killed.”¹⁶¹

Here, in the case of Dingane, Cornevin again illuminates the mythological nature of the text. What Apartheid historiography consistently omits is the fact that Dingane had himself been hoodwinked and put on the defensive by the whites. In this way, his “‘treachery and cunning’ were in a way his response to that of the whites.”¹⁶²

According to Cornevin, Apartheid historiography consistently ignores “the way European traders at Port Natal repeatedly broke their word and continually infringed the provisions of a treaty concluded in May 1835.” Apartheid historiography further omits the fact that Piet Retief “who had pledged to give Dingaan sixty-three horses and eleven rifles captured from Chief Sikonyela, delivered only the animals.”¹⁶³

According to Apartheid mythology, then, the despot Dingane broke the treaty between himself and Retief out of sheer depravity and simply murdered the settlers. Timelines repeats this myth, first by attributing bloodthirstiness to Dingane and secondly by omitting the significant events aforementioned - Retief’s failure to deliver the guns as per the agreement, and the habitual breaking of treaties by the white settlers.

Mzilikazi is also reduced by Timelines. Though characterized as “a brilliant leader,” his break from the Zulu nation is reduced to having “dishonestly kept some cattle.” Ordered executed by Shaka, Mzilikazi “fled across the Drakensberg Mountains... [and] followed the usual Zulu pattern of looting, burning, and killing in large areas among the scattered Sotho tribes.”¹⁶⁴ As “Mzilikazi was hostile from the start” to Voortrekkers, it was not long until, during Potgieter’s Trek, “two trekboer hunting parties were attacked and most of the men killed by the Matabele... and on 19

¹⁶¹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 113-114

¹⁶²Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 108

¹⁶³Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 108-109

¹⁶⁴Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 103

October 1836, 40 Voortrekkers fought a large Matabele impi under Kalimpi. Although the attack was beaten off, the Matabele took all their cattle.”¹⁶⁵

Mzilikazi is thus reduced to a looter, burner, killer, and cattle thief by Timelines. Like Shaka, he too has been stripped of his “political and military system.” The sophistication of Mzilikazi’s unmentioned system is attested to by its “remarkable capacity for integration,” so that “10,000 to 20,000 Sotho accompanied him in his flight north at the end of 1837.” Furthermore, according to Cornevin “this large number [of Sotho] suggests that the terror produced by the Ndebele armies was not as total as the official [Apartheid] history indicates.”¹⁶⁶

In a previous chapter, Timelines was shown to reproduce the third myth identified by Cornevin, “That Chaka, Dingaan and Mzilikazi were nothing but bloodthirsty despots,” in the instance of Shaka. The Apartheid era textbooks have now been shown to reproduce the myth in its entirety, for not only do they reduce Shaka to a mere bloodthirsty despot, but also impart the same characteristics to Dingane and Mzilikazi.

The reduction of Dingane and Mzilikazi effects more than just the denigration of historical black statesmen, it also allows for the text to characterise the annexation of their territories by the Voortrekkers as a benevolent force for order. Such a characterisation coincides with the fifth myth identified by Marianne Cornevin: “that only the advent of the whites saved the blacks in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal from total destruction.”¹⁶⁷

A diachronic comparative study of the influence of this fifth myth upon South African history textbooks beckons; unfortunately there is insufficient empirical data in the textbooks selected for such a study to hold water. It is for the moment, however, both possible and immediately relevant to my study to consider the way in which the reduction of Dingane and Mzilikazi makes it possible for the Timelines series to at least approximate this myth by characterizing the annexation of their territories by the Trekkers as benevolent. For this characterisation in turn served to legitimate white

¹⁶⁵Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 109-111

¹⁶⁶Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 99-100

¹⁶⁷Cornevin, Marianne. Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Pg. 106

landholding in the regions annexed from Dingane and Mzilikazi.

Indeed, Timelines informs us that, after the “final defeat of the Matabele” by “a well organized Voortrekker commando... the very large area under Matabele control was now available for *peaceful* Voortrekker settlement.”¹⁶⁸ The alleged fact of peaceful white settlement in the territory liberated from a bloodthirsty Mzilikazi did much to legitimate white landholding and political supremacy in contemporary Apartheid South Africa, for it was thereby that “the northern Orange Free State and most of the Transvaal became Voortrekker territory.”

The legal and moral merit of white settlement in the Orange Free State and Transvaal, of course, held tremendous implications for the day, as “it was in these two areas that the two Boer republics, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, were later to come into being.”¹⁶⁹ These areas survived as the Orange Free State and Gauteng and remained the pronounced epicentre of Afrikaner domination throughout the Apartheid era.

Yet a number of questions remain: What of those tribes that had fled the region? Did their surviving remnants not return after the defeat of the Ndebele? How did they regard the annexation by Voortrekkers of the land they had cultivated ancestrally? According to the Timelines series, so benevolent was the annexation of their territory by the Voortrekkers that upon their settlement “the scattered Black tribes welcomed the Voortrekkers and looked to them for protection.”¹⁷⁰

The annexation of Zululand and those portions of Natal under Dingane’s control by the Voortrekkers is similarly presented as a benevolent force for order. According to Timelines, the battle of Blood River, whose “climax... came when a detachment of Voortrekkers on horseback charged the impi,” left “Natal... open for Voortrekker settlement and for the realization of Retief’s ideal - the establishment of a Trekker state.”¹⁷¹

After this penultimate defeat of Dingane by heroic Voortrekkers “many Zulu...

¹⁶⁸Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 113 (My italics)

¹⁶⁹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 113

¹⁷⁰Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 113

¹⁷¹Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 116-117

deserted Dingaan to join Panda, the half-brother of Dingaan, who in 1839 had become an ally of the Voortrekkers.” It was scarcely a year before “the Voortrekkers and Panda’s impi together decisively defeated Dingaan.” With the final defeat of Dingane, “the Voortrekkers recognized Panda, as paramount chief of the Zulu. [sic] He gave the Trekkers 36 000 cattle as compensation for their losses and Zululand was placed under the protection of the Republic of Natal.”¹⁷²

Indeed, so protective was the annexation of Natal by Trekkers that the venture apparently met with no proprietary claims by the returning scattered tribes. Timelines tells us only that, “in Natal the remnants of the tribes, who returned to their original dwelling places, were protected by Pretorius after the defeat of Dingaan.”¹⁷³ We thus have the annexation of Natal by Voortrekkers presented as an entirely benevolent force, one that swept the region of the bloodthirsty Dingane and his impis, protected the scattered, beleaguered black tribes, and peacefully erected a Trekker state on the liberated land.

The previous section demonstrated that the myth of empty land is enacted and persistently recapitulated by the Apartheid-era Timelines series. This section has demonstrated that, in the cases of specific regions of Natal, the Northern Orange Free State and Transvaal - instances where this myth was clearly untenable - Timelines characterises the annexation of these territories by Voortrekkers as an emancipatory, benevolent force for order in regions plagued by bloodthirsty tyrants.

4.2. Justification for white landownership in the Looking into the Past series.

In the preceding chapter it was demonstrated that post-Apartheid South Africa inherited a legacy of history education that endeavoured to legitimate, both morally and legally, white landholding in the interior. Though a process of legitimation in this vein may in fact survive in the post-Apartheid textbooks, there are a number of changed circumstances necessitating its alteration.

Firstly, white landholding as the divine right of a chosen people, the religious plinth of Afrikaner Nationalism, is now little more than an artefact. As even “the

¹⁷²Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 117

¹⁷³Lintvelt, et. all. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 104

Afrikaners have abandoned their claim to sovereignty over South Africa their historic, God-given homeland,”¹⁷⁴ such a contention is longer tenable in the history textbooks of the new South Africa.

Secondly, the myth of empty land has been debunked by a generation of revisionist historians. It would appear ridiculous in a post-Apartheid textbook if read by students of any ethnicity. With its secular plinth thus also removed, a historiographical legitimation of white landholding in contemporary South African history education would require a new form if it is to perform.

Maskew Miller Longman textbooks of the post-Apartheid era do provide this new form- a new historiographical approach to legitimating white landholding in South Africa. With the myth of empty land no longer tenable, Looking into the Past duly foreswears it, subsequently relegating the legal and moral merit of white proprietary land claims to critical thinking exercises. In these jumbles of subjectivity and speculation, these contentious land claims are spared critical consideration by the authoritative text and are made subject to no criticism other than that afforded them by student learners.

Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10 begins its section entitled “Across the Vaal” with a direct refutation of the Apartheid era myth of empty land. “Some historians,” reads the textbook, “have suggested that the Trekkers moved into lands that were empty as a result of the wars and migrations that went with the rise of the Zulu kingdom. But this is not what happened.” However, this direct refutation of the myth of empty land only applies to the Transvaal, which was “far from empty of Africans,” harboring both the “Venda and Pedi kingdoms” as well as “the Ndebele kingdom under Mzilikazi.”¹⁷⁵ In regards to Transorangia, which I shall consider first here, Looking into the Past is less clear as to the emptiness or occupancy of land.

Looking into the Past covers white settlement and proprietary claims in Transorangia in a section entitled “The Trekkers and the Sotho.”¹⁷⁶ This passage

¹⁷⁴Sparks, Allister. Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 17

¹⁷⁵Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 34

¹⁷⁶Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 28

informs us that “after 1835, groups of Trekkers arrived in Transorangia. Most of them moved through the area on their way to Natal or the far north, but some of them stayed on the fertile land between the Caledon and the Orange Rivers and began to spread outwards towards the north-east.”

The passage then recounts the relations between white settlers and the indigenous inhabitants. “Initially,” the text reads, “these Trekkers and the Sotho lived peacefully alongside one another... But, as the years went by, bitter conflicts developed. At the heart of these conflicts were different attitudes to land.”

The rest of this section, in keeping with the tenets of progressivist pedagogy, comprises nothing more than a melange of divergent source excerpts and two learner-centred activities. It is overtly clear in this instance that this progressivist pedagogic approach has been utilized in such a way as to allow for “white history” - here manifest as a historiographical justification for white landownership - to survive in the post-Apartheid textbook.

The first two excerpts form the backbone of the first activity. The first excerpt, taken from Reader’s Digest Illustrated History of South Africa, tells us that “there was no uniform legal system or concept of ownership to which all parties interested in the land subscribed.” The second excerpt, authored by Davenport, tells us that “the Trekboers thought, apparently, that they were moving into land where they would be able to reach an agreement with those already living there. They found very quickly that their own occupancy was contested, sometimes because they insisted on ownership rather than mere occupation.” The activity then asks the student to consider these two sources and “write a paragraph explaining how the different views on land rights held by the Trekkers and the Sotho contributed to the conflict in Transorangia in the 1840s.”

It is thus imparted by the text that the ensuing conflict did, in fact, geminate from divergent understandings of land rights. The contention that misunderstanding is at the root of the conflict effectively dissuades a student learner from identifying the process of white settlement in Transorangia as a deliberate campaign of dispossession. In other words, the imposed notion that misunderstanding lies at the heart of the conflict precludes the alternative interpretation that white settlers, in full cognizance of the meaning and ramifications of their action, swindled and intimidated the Sotho out of vast amounts of their land.

We then find that both source excerpts serve to exculpate the Trekkers from

any possible allegations in this vein. According to the Reader's Digest history, intercultural mis-communication and the lack of common and clear definitions are to blame. According to Davenport, Trekboers had (apparently) sought to reach an agreement with the Sotho but found them intransigent. At worst, the Trekkers had "insisted on ownership" because they were misinformed by their deep-rooted cultural norms so as to believe that they did in fact own the land.

Clearly, then, there is no substantive way to glean from the text the idea that deliberate dispossession was undertaken by the Trekkers. The best that can be hoped for in this vein is the possibility that a student is somehow springboarded by the single word "apparently" to conceive of the idea by him or herself. Surely, the notion that the mass volumes of white landownership in Transorangia and the wars that established them were begotten of a mutual inability to communicate effectively, rather than deliberate dispossession by aggressive Trekkers, does much to legitimate inordinate white landholding in this region.

The second activity asks students to consider the third source excerpt. This third source comprises the severed upper bodies of Moshweshwe, the Sotho king, and the appropriately named Jan de Winnaar, issuing divergent speech bubbles.¹⁷⁷ Each leader is quoted twice and their quotations are juxtaposed in such a way as to make clear that "the views expressed... are entirely contradictory."¹⁷⁸ In the first juxtaposition, Moshweshwe claims:

"The ground on which they stayed belonged to me, but I had no objections to their flocks grazing there until they were able to proceed further, on condition that they remained in peace with my people and accepted my authority... the selling or renting of land was a practice unknown to us."

Opposite Moshweshwe, de Winnaar voices what Looking into the Past chooses to call "a very different understanding of the situation:"

"I asked Moshoeshoe to grant me a farm... he did so saying that it was mine in perpetuity. At about the same time, and

¹⁷⁷One wonders if the exercise is not weighted from the start, the name 'de Winnaar' translating as 'the winner' or 'the victor.'

¹⁷⁸Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner's Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 29

subsequently, many farms were granted to other people on the same terms.”

In the next juxtaposed pair of quotations, Jan de Winnaar speaks first:

“Although we found the land unoccupied, after having been informed that Moshoeshoe claims the territory we, with a view to acting amicably, requested his leave to occupy it, and he gave us the farms for always.”

Moshweshwe responds:

“I have never ceased to warn them that I viewed them as mere passers-by and, although I did not refuse them temporary hospitality, I could never allow them any right of property. I rented no place to them fearing that this might be considered as a purchase.”

The activity then informs students that “Moshoeshoe’s point of view is completely different to that of Jan de Winnaar and the Trekkers.” The ostensible fact that conflicting points of view are probably at work thus reiterated, the text asks its student readers: “Do you think one of the viewpoints is more correct than the other? Give your reasons, but first consider these points...”

In the points that the textbook asks students to consider when answering the activity question the possibility of dishonesty is finally introduced, but only in such a way that the possibility is levied toward the Sotho. The first point asks: “were one or both sides in this conflict simply telling blatant lies?” However, the second quickly reintroduces the exculpatory claim of mis-communication: “could there have been misunderstandings in discussions between the Trekker leaders and Moshoeshoe, perhaps because of inaccurate translation?”

The concept of dishonesty has appeared in the textbook, as the parties may be “telling blatant lies,” but has been quickly counterbalanced by the concept of honest misunderstanding. Therefore, the texts have managed to imply dishonesty in a neutral kind of way, one that levels the charge at both side without really levelling it at either side. The neutral implication is averred within the confines of a critical thinking exercise where it is undermined by a counterclaim capable of exculpating the Trekkers from any possible charges of deliberately dispossessing the Sotho.

The two follow-up points reintroduce the implication of dishonesty, but exclusively on the part of the Sotho. The first of these claims that “the missionaries were hostile to the Trekkers,” and asks the students if it is “possible that they influenced Moshoeshe to deny grants of land that he had made?” This question implies the dishonesty of the Sotho king, who may have lied about handing out land. Moshweshwe is thus to blame for the conflict that ensued, though mayhaps prompted and influenced by missionaries hostile to the unblemished Trekkers.

The final point tells students that “there is evidence that chiefs who fell under Moshoeshe’s rule entered into agreements with Trekkers over specific pieces of land. Do you think these agreements were valid?” Here again the Sotho king Moshweshwe is to blame for the conflict; his rule is inept, his underlings unruly and willing to dishonestly grant the land under his rule to Voortrekkers.

Following these two questions that implicate the Sotho, there is provided no correlate question to balance the exercise i.e.: “White settlers had engaged in a deliberate campaign of conquest and dispossession since their arrival in Southern Africa. Do you think Jan de Winnaar and his Voortrekkers might have fully understood that the land was never granted to them by Moshoeshe on a permanent basis and simply lied as part of a ploy to dispossess the Sotho?” The textbook does not even ask the most obvious question: “Why on earth would Moshweshwe give away land to Trekkers?”

Bearing in mind that de Winnaar’s claim, quoted in the third bubble, that the Trekkers “found the land unoccupied,” was never contradicted by Moshweshwe or the authoritative text, one can only glean from this entire passage that the Trekkers in Transorangia settled peacefully on vast stretches of empty land. Their proprietary claims were later disputed by the Sotho, (who eventually attacked them over these same land claims in 1858) though whether out of malice or misunderstanding remains an object of speculation. So in this particular progressivist historical nether-region of activity based learning, critical thinking, and subjectivist interpretation, white history survives.

This is not to say, of course, that the text allows for white history interpretations exclusively. Surely, if one brings to the text the notion that Voortrekkers deliberately dispossessed the Sotho and simply lied in every debate surrounding their proprietary claims, then he or she might impart that interpretation onto the passage. However, the student would find nothing definitive in the

authoritative text to support that position and, more importantly, would have to obtain that idea from somewhere outside of the textbook.

The phenomenon of white history through active learning extends itself to Trekker landholding in the Transvaal. Though here the myth of empty land is decisively refuted: “Some historians,” reads the passage entitled “Across the Vaal,” “have suggested that the Trekkers moved into lands that were empty as a result of the wars and migrations that went with the rise of the Zulu kingdom. But this is not what happened.”

The textbook concedes that “the population of some areas -such as the southwestern region where the Trekkers first settled - had been disturbed and reduced, the Transvaal was far from empty of Africans,” and that “the Trekkers who crossed the Vaal... had [a] tougher time imposing their control.”¹⁷⁹

In a paragraph that would surely be applauded by Cornevin, Looking into the Past tells us that “in the east and north, the Venda and Pedi kingdoms were recovering some of their previous strength amidst numerous smaller African chiefdoms.” Furthermore, as had proved problematic enough to garner reduction by propagators of white history, “the most powerful society in the region in the 1830's was the Ndebele kingdom under Mzilikazi.”¹⁸⁰

The subsequent passage, titled “The Ndebele,” briefly details the rise of the Ndebele kingdom under Mzilikazi, arriving at “1836, [when] Mzilikazi and his followers were based in the Marico valley in the western Transvaal.”¹⁸¹

With no segue whatsoever, the text then informs the reader that “the Ndebele were defeated in 1837 by a party of Trekkers led by Andries Hendrik Potgieter and Gert Maritz. Mzilikazi moved across the Limpopo River into present-day Zimbabwe.” We are thus left with no explanation as to the cause of the war or the intentions of its participants. While we have been told that the Trekkers had a tough time “imposing their control,” we are not told whether this control was imposed in an offensive or

¹⁷⁹Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner's Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 34

¹⁸⁰Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner's Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 34

¹⁸¹Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner's Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 35

defensive capacity. We are, of course, also told that the Trekkers wanted arable land, but are furthermore told that they had already found territories with reduced populations in the south-western regions where they first settled.

Why did the Trekkers fight the Ndebele? As an act of naked aggression and land theft? As a pre-emptive strike against a hostile Ndebele kingdom? Surely, readers searching for white history are not thwarted by this ambiguity or the general lack of detail surrounding the defeat of the Ndebele. Those who care to carry the old Apartheid mythology of Mzilikazi as a bloodthirsty despot and the Transvaal Trekkers as a benevolent force for order into the textbooks of the post-Apartheid era are not thwarted either, though they have been stripped of their myth of empty land.

The textbook then deals directly with Trekker landholding in the conquered territory. According to Looking into the Past: “The Trekkers wanted to establish their right to the land in this vast new region. They developed a number of arguments to show that the land belonged to them.” To whom are the arguments directed? The textbook does not say.

What is clearly missing here is the voice of the indigenous tribes who had themselves been dispossessed by the Ndebele as a result of the recent Mfecane. If we remember the coverage afforded them in Timelines, these “scattered Black tribes welcomed the Voortrekkers and looked to them for protection.”¹⁸² The claim is, of course, contentious, and coincides altogether too neatly with the fifth Apartheid myth identified by Cornevin. However in the new textbooks the voices of these indigenous peoples, who everyone would probably agree were in fact dispossessed by the Ndebele, is lost entirely. For while the Trekker proprietary claims are presented in the narrative, the views these indigenous peoples harboured towards the Trekkers’ annexation of their former territory are not.

Still, if the Trekkers formed arguments to substantiate their proprietary claims then it is at least made apparent by the text that white landholding in the Transvaal was a matter of some contention. This contention thus introduced, its immediate displacement and quarantine to a critical thinking exercise is characteristic of the new textbook series. “One argument,” the textbook reads, “was that the defeat of the Ndebele by the Trekkers made the Trekkers owners of the land in the Transvaal. Historians have debated this claim.”

¹⁸²Lintvelt, et. al. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 113

Unsurprisingly, the contentious land claims of the white settlers are all too conveniently utilized by the post-Apartheid textbook to dramatize the subjectivity inherent to the discipline of history: “We shall explore some of these arguments,” the textbook reads, “you must judge whether the colonists’ claim to the land was convincing.”¹⁸³

We are then presented with Source B, an illustration of three historians in a room full of books. The first is a woman of indeterminable ethnicity. Her speech bubble reads:

The Ndebele state was the most powerful in the region. This authority over the land naturally passed to the Trekkers when they defeated the Ndebele.

The second historian is clearly black. His speech bubble reads:

Living on the land and controlling it is not the same as owning it. Private ownership of the land was not part of Ndebele custom. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that the Trekkers took over Ndebele rights to the land after the defeat of 1837.

The third historian is white. His speech bubble reads:

While they sent out raiding parties and received tribute from the people in the surrounding areas, the Ndebele controlled only the land in the heart of their kingdom.

It is clear that white history, serving here as a legitimation device for the vast landholdings of whites in the Transvaal, survives in this maelstrom of subjectivist speculation. Those who seek such legitimation find it in the first speech bubble. (Much can be said of the pictorial presentation here. The fact that the woman to whom the first speech bubble belongs is of no one discernible ethnicity only serves to legitimate her opinion in that she appears an “objective” party. Her belief, one must assume, germinates from genuine philosophical conviction rather than a crass need to defend the landholding of fellow white people.)

There is something inherently dubious about placing the proprietary claims of

¹⁸³Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 35

centuries-dead Voortrekker colonists on equal footing with the views of modern academics and historians. Yet it is precisely this manoeuvre that has been enabled in post-Apartheid history textbooks by the much criticised, zealously learner-centred pedagogy derived from contemporary progressivist trends.

White landholding has thus been legitimated by the post-Apartheid textbooks in the instances of Transorangia and the Transvaal. That leaves only white landholding in Natal to be justified. This subject is covered by Looking into the Past in earlier sections entitled “Natal and the interior,” and “Dividing up the Land.” Here again we find the Apartheid-era myth of empty land authoritatively refuted. The textbook informs us that, even after the defeat of Dingane by the Voortrekkers, “Natal was not the empty land they (the voortrekkers) had imagined. It had a large and growing African population...”¹⁸⁴

After a scant passage on Shaka, Dingane, and the rise of the Zulu kingdom, one learns that “the arrival of the first parties of Trekkers in 1837 made Dingane... nervous. They came in numbers and wanted large tracts of land on the borders of his kingdom.”¹⁸⁵

It should be said here that the character of Dingane is not reduced as it was in Timelines. Rather, he is more contextualized, his nervousness towards the arrival of trekkers informed by “how the Xhosa had lost land to white farmers, and how the Trekkers had defeated Mzilikazi’s Ndebele.” We even learn here that “Boer leaders sent messages to suggest that he would meet the same fate if he did not meet their demands.” It was not long before “he and his councillors decided that the Zulu should strike first.”

We are then presented with the story of Piet Retief and how his “party of trekkers... was killed and Zulu armies went on to attack Boer settlements, killing 600 men, women, and children.” The battle of Blood River follows and it was not long before “Dingane’s brother, Mpande, joined forces with the Trekkers and together they invaded Zululand and overthrew Dingane. Mpande was installed as king.”

At this point in its narrative, Timelines informed us that “he [Mpande] gave

¹⁸⁴Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 20

¹⁸⁵Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 19

the Trekkers 36 000 cattle as compensation for their losses and Zululand was placed under the protection of the Republic of Natal.”¹⁸⁶ The new textbook does not even afford us this scanty bit of detail. The very next sentence reads: “The Trekkers now set about distributing land among themselves.”¹⁸⁷ So all we are told is that somehow, with the ascendance of Mpande to the kingship, the land in Natal was passed to the Trekkers.

Within the confines of this narrative logic nothing casts suspicion onto the Trekker annexation of land in Natal. It seems natural and right as rain. The ensuing activity does not encroach upon the moral or legal merit of the Trekkers’ proprietary claims. As we have seen, the narrative is curiously silent on Trekker land rights to Natal. The text only picks up the subject of land rights in a subsequent passage which covers the period in history after the British had annexed Natal and the Trekkers had sold their land to speculators. Even in this passage, the text does not consider or mention the possibility of dispossession committed by Trekkers upon Africans. The merit of Trekker land claims in Natal that accompanied the ascendance of Mpande can therefore be said to be presented by the text as a given.

It has therefore been shown in the instances of Transorangia, the Transvaal, and Natal that the presentation of white settlement and land annexation has left open all necessary avenues for white history interpretations. Though the myth of empty land has been discarded by the post-Apartheid textbooks, their pedagogical approach to the teaching of history has been conspicuously configured to facilitate “white history” - here taken as an understanding of the past that serves to legitimate contemporary white landholding, even to the current degree of effective monopoly, in the interior of South Africa.

4.3. Why a continued legitimization of white landholding? Its background and likely impetus.

The fact that post-Apartheid South African history textbooks continue to provide a defence for white landholding, in its current and historical inordinate

¹⁸⁶Lintvelt, et. al. Timelines 8. Second Edition. Maskew Miller Longman: 1985. Pg. 117

¹⁸⁷Seleti, Yonah (ed) et. al. Looking into the Past: Learner’s Book Grade 10. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 2001. Pg. 19

manifestations, has many implications. For white landholding is a veritable monopoly enterprise in post-Apartheid South Africa. Why, then, would a publishing house attempting to ingratiate itself upon the ANC issue textbooks that spread justifications for this enduring vestige of white supremacy in South Africa?

There are many possible answers. The first is that the textbook authors, while so willing and informed as to refute a discredited myth of empty land, are steeped in a white history tradition, one which sees the role of history as the provision of justification for the stake white people hold in South Africa. The lingering effects of such steeping may influence their writing in a manner that is hardly conscious.

Another likely explanation lies in the ANC's abandonment of its socialist platform. The issue of these post-Apartheid textbooks coincided neatly with this rightwards shift in the ANC, a shift which saw the party dispense with its redistribution platform. For this rightwards shift meant essentially meant that there was no significant social force left in South Africa pushing the issue of land redistribution. The point requires some elaboration.

By the time of its rise to power the African National Congress had "undergone an astonishing about-turn in the formulation of its economic policy, from a left-wing socialist position that envisaged large-scale nationalization to a position where it has now embraced free-market orthodoxy that involves large-scale privatization."¹⁸⁸

In a stark reversal from Nelson Mandela's 1990 statement: "The nationalization of the mines, the financial institutions and monopoly industry is the fundamental policy of the ANC and it is inconceivable that we will ever change this policy,"¹⁸⁹ the laissez-faire approach to national economics undertaken by the formerly communist-aligned ANC upon its rise to power allowed for the preservation of tangible elements of white supremacy in South Africa.

Issues surrounding the dispensation of land, both during and after the Apartheid era, are integral to this study. The rightwards shift of the ANC held tremendous consequences for the contemporary and future dispensation of land in South Africa. For though the party's foundational Freedom Charter envisioned "all

¹⁸⁸Sparks, Allister. Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 170

¹⁸⁹Sparks, Allister. Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 170

the land... re-divided amongst those who work it,”¹⁹⁰ the party’s rightward shift ensured that standing proprietary rights to South African land were honoured in almost every instance, leaving the institution of veritable white monopoly landholding intact.

The abandonment of land socialization by the ruling party was a multi-staged process. In the early days of its rise to power, the ANC retained some of its rhetoric on land redistribution in the ill-defined Reconstruction and Development Programme. This document held that “in five years it would ‘redistribute a substantial amount of land’ to the landless black population.” However, the RDP had been “hastily crafted in preparation for the election campaign,” and was “really an election manifesto rather than a systematic set of policy programmes.” The document was rife with “such ambiguities it was not clear what it meant,” and proved “an administrative disaster.”¹⁹¹ That land reform could somehow occur when “the ANC had already adopted clauses in a new Bill of Rights entrenching property rights”¹⁹² was inconceivable, but served well as a myth dispensed to win over poor, uneducated and populist minded voters, as well as to placate COSATU and SACP allies who felt betrayed by the ANC’s abandonment of socialism.

By 1995 the RDP was trounced altogether. Jay Naidoo, in charge of its implementation, saw his position disappear, and the RDP “disappeared as a political slogan.” the RDP was replaced by the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution document, “an unvarnished free-free market programme, directly in line with the neo-liberal agenda, or what is known as the ‘Washington consensus.’”¹⁹³

If we are to take Sparks at his word, honest attempts to implement social land reform, even under the vague terminology provided by the RDP, may have fallen victim to internal sabotage by the ANC. This was made clear in the case of Helena Dolny, “an agricultural economist whom Mandela appointed to head the Land Bank

¹⁹⁰Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 172

¹⁹¹Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pgs. 191-192

¹⁹²Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 184

¹⁹³Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 193

and transform it into an institution that would help re-establish a black agricultural class after nearly a century of disinheritance.” Dolny, who was also Joe Slovo’s widow, approached the task “with a passionate commitment” and soon fell victim to “an orchestrated campaign to squeeze her out of her job. Dolny resigned in despair - and with a parting jibe about ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the Land Affairs Department, which had shed seven whites with ‘land struggle activist’ backgrounds from senior positions in five months.”¹⁹⁴

It is of course possible that Dolny and her six comrades were purged from government for simply being white, but I, for one, find it hard to believe that this could be the case when many whites from similarly communist backgrounds who are now willing to tow the neo-liberal party line, such as Alec Erwin, retain such prominent positions in the upper echelons of the ANC. It can also not be a matter of pure coincidence that the Land Affairs Department, having purged these leftist elements, has produced nothing in terms of the redistribution stipulated by the RDP.

Those within the ruling coalition who seek to redress the institution have met with severe reprobation from the uppermost echelons of the ANC; these vestiges of the popular anti-Apartheid movement sympathetic to the erstwhile nationalization / redistribution programme of the ruling party have been deemed “‘ultra-left sectarian elements’” by President Thabo Mbeki, who now insists that “the ANC had always been a national liberation movement with no inherent mission to fight for socialism.”¹⁹⁵

The rightwards ideological shift undertaken by the ANC was a concerted, wide-sweeping effort that entailed severe disciplining within its own ranks. Such a phenomenon held immediate implications for Maskew Miller Longman’s effort to ingratiate itself upon that party. For such an emphatically right-reforming ANC would surely look askance at any overtly socialist school textbook with an enunciated focus on “land dispossession,”¹⁹⁶ such as that envisioned by John Pampallis.

¹⁹⁴Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 9

¹⁹⁵Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago, Chicago: 2003. Pg. 199

¹⁹⁶Pampallis, John. *Foundations of a New South Africa*. Zed Books Ltd.: London & New Jersey, and Maskew Miller Longman: Cape Town. 1991. Rear Jacket.

Surely, any socialist inspired approach to history textbooks would be ill-suited for circulation in the new, neo-liberal South Africa. For, as Kallaway writes:

Instead of the popular or socialist ethos of People's Education... the master narrative of educational reform has, to a large extent, been framed by the guidelines of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Instead of the vision promoted by People's Education for People's Power, the defining concepts of the new education have been rationalisation, downsizing, line management, efficiency, equivalencies, and outcomes based education.¹⁹⁷

An approach to textbook writing that challenged the current economic status quo, including white monopoly landholding, would thus undermine both government policy and the current trend of globalization. The enduring presence of a legitimization for white landholding in South African history textbooks is probably at least in part resultant of the ANC's rightward shift. For if neither the outgoing white political power structure nor the new ruling party was friendly to a redistribution programme then it seems unlikely that a publishing house would issue textbooks that do more to encourage such a programme than to discourage one.

¹⁹⁷Kallaway, Peter, et. al. Education After Apartheid: South African Education in Transition. UCT Press, Cape Town: 1997. Pg 1

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1. “What the Whites Wanted”: General Conclusions

In the Apartheid-era textbooks the influence of Apartheid mythology has been shown to be direct and unmitigated. Such a history served as a powerful legitimization device for the contemporary white supremacist status quo. Apartheid mythology thus constituted the era’s ‘white history,’ a history that served important psychological needs of whites and legitimated their economic stake in society.

The new textbooks have been shown, at least in the cases of Shaka and white land seizure, to leave “white history” - taken here as a legitimization mechanism for white people’s inordinate stake in South Africa - intact. This is made possible by a rigorous implementation of zealously progressivist, learner-centred pedagogy, whose severed heads reiterate white history’s contentious claims from the protected space of critical thinking exercises. The explicit purpose of these exercises is to emphasize the subjectivity inherent to the discipline, not to debunk the ideology reproductive devices of Apartheid historical narrative.

The authoritative text, therefore, does not deign to intrude on the potential truth or falsity of the speech bubbles, all of which consequently appear as equal truths. By this method white history and left-wing or revisionist accounts are integrated into one ostensibly value-free format. The location of white history has thus shifted with the end of Apartheid. White history is no longer delivered directly by the authoritative text of the textbooks, but indirectly via severed heads and other devices.

The form of white history seems not to have changed in the instance of Shaka. The Apartheid mythology in which he was enshrouded is still delivered verbatim by severed heads in the post-Apartheid textbooks. In the instance of white landholding, the form of white history has indeed changed. The myth of empty land has been done away with by the post-Apartheid textbooks, and in its place severed heads advance a series of contentious proprietary claims.

That the narrative-flimsy, non-committal format was adopted by the new textbooks for its capacity to harbour and abet white history in the post-Apartheid era is probable; the fact that it does so has been partially demonstrated. It can therefore be

said that the zealously progressivist pedagogy implemented in the post-Apartheid history textbooks under analysis arrays with the “integrated” approach identified by Stellenbosch historian Hermann Giliomee as “what the whites wanted.”¹⁹⁸

It may, of course, also be averred that the right-reformed ANC wanted something of the same sort, having dropped its redistribution platform. Even if so, and if, therefore, representatives of blacks and of whites agreed upon the new format in harmony, then this phenomenon does not necessarily constitute justice. For concessions made by upper echelons of an upcoming power elite to vestiges of an outgoing one in secretive negotiations certainly marked the end of the popular movement; yet whether ending it in triumph, betrayal, or something in-between is still hotly debated among South Africans of all backgrounds.

5.2. “Justice” and “Fair-Play”: Prospects for Black History via Progressivist Pedagogy as Implemented.

Whether the particular, white desired approach to textbook writing adopted by Maskew Miller Longman’s post-Apartheid textbooks is capable of breaking with the legacy of Apartheid is doubtful, and whether it is just is also subject to contention.

The most obvious critique to level at the new textbooks deserves consideration: the nation’s black majority will never be shown to have so gleefully anticipated the format stipulated by Giliomee and other South African whites during the reconciliation process.

Marianne Cornevin put forth her critical study of Apartheid mythology “to be of help to South African blacks who have a driving need to establish the historical truth of their past.”¹⁹⁹ She considered the exposing and debunking of Apartheid myths a “contribution to the much needed rehabilitation of the history of South African blacks , a rehabilitation passionately called for by Steve Biko... [who wrote] “...If we as blacks want to aid each other in our coming into consciousness, we have to rewrite

¹⁹⁸Giliomee, Hermann. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. University of Virginia, Charlottesville: 2003. Pg. 636

¹⁹⁹Cornevin, Marianne. *Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification*. UNESCO, Paris: 1980. Rear Jacket.

our history...’’²⁰⁰

For Siebörger, both “justice” and “fair play” require that “the dominant paradigm... be allowed to change: that Apartheid history should be replaced by anti-Apartheid history, white history by black history...’’²⁰¹

Siebörger’s 1990 essay “Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History,” focussed on the possibility of implementing such a rewritten history in post-Apartheid schools. The author identifies shortcomings of ‘new history’ pedagogy, the pedagogy at the roots of the progressivist format found in the new textbooks, in its application toward justice, fair play, and the rehabilitation of black history. For Siebörger notes the impulse behind ‘new history’ had been a simplistic attempt at “neutrality or a lack of bias.”²⁰²

The nuts and bolts of ‘new history’ bore “two significant implications which bear on the concept of ‘neutrality.’” Of the two, the second is of utmost importance to this study. The desire for neutrality in textbooks had led to such pedagogical devices as “a two paragraph account of a historical character, one paragraph biased in favour of the character and one against.”²⁰³ In South African textbooks of the anti-Apartheid movement, such devices had taken the form of “exercises such as a comparison of newspaper articles... contrasting the attitudes of different observers at Sharpeville...”²⁰⁴

Such devices generally take the form of severed heads in Looking into the Past. Indeed, judging by the cases studied here, it seems the hotly contested issues of

²⁰⁰ Quoted in: Siebörger, Rob. “*Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History.*” In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 25

²⁰¹ Quoted in: Siebörger, Rob. “*Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History.*” In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 28

²⁰² Siebörger, Rob. “*Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History.*” In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 24

²⁰³ Blyth, J. History in Primary Schools. London, McGraw-Hill: 1982. Quoted in: Siebörger, Rob. “*Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History.*” In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 26

²⁰⁴ Siebörger, Rob. “*Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History.*” In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 27

South African history have been deliberately quarantined to such exercises, where various contentions are issued by severed heads while the authoritative text remains sparse and non-committal.

Siebörger claims that such devices, even in their original 'new history' form, were "inadequate to meet the demands of a new South African history curriculum."²⁰⁵ If one believes that a black history must be told to correct the legacy of Apartheid education, then it is difficult to dispute the claim. As black history was suppressed and beleaguered by Apartheid policy, can its realization in South African schools be achieved by textbooks who relegate all contentious issues to severed heads and critical thinking boxes? Can black history truly be conveyed when broken up into tiny, discontinuous fragments and strewn non-chronologically about the pages, each printed node submerged in the lifeless waters of a subjectivist play of differences?

Some bare rudiments of black history may in fact exist in the new textbooks. For there are severed heads that adumbrate a bit of these rudiments. Their presence may indeed constitute some shallow form of textbook neutrality. The problem is that white supremacist history had centuries to flourish as the hegemonic paradigm. Its story is familiar. Its tenets, even if scattered, harken the old grand narrative. Black history has never been told in South African schools. Its fragments, therefore, are relatively impotent. Therefore, even if the beginnings of a vague black history exist somewhere in the new textbooks, black history as a historical narrative does not. Such a textbook may advance claims to some kind of internal neutrality. Yet when considered in its real world context it becomes clear that the textbook has made little effort to redress the lingering injustices committed by its predecessors.

Siebörger traces the impulse toward neutrality in South African history education to the contemporary prospect of reconciling English and Afrikaner historical perspectives. The concept of neutrality was useful to these whites as a part of this effort. Yet it was clear then as now that "the different perspectives of white, brown and black historians will still need many decades until a reconciliation might become possible."²⁰⁶ It was thus a matter of importance for Siebörger "that those who

²⁰⁵Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History." In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) *History Teaching in a Multicultural Society*. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 27

²⁰⁶Nipperdy, T. "Can History be Objective?" Quoted in: Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning

are on the point of reconciling their perspectives with each other, do not seek to impose their new-found 'neutrality' upon those for whom a new perspective is vitally significant."²⁰⁷

Certainly, a more meaningful objectivity would be hewn by post-Apartheid history education if it allowed for black history to emerge. Why should this story not be heard at last? If the textbooks contained it, it could be ingested and mulled over, critically considered, appreciated for its merits and noted for its shortcomings. But the unwillingness of the new textbooks to tell any narrative handicaps this process at the outset. For it is doubtful whether severed heads alone are up to the task.

Maskew Miller Longman seems to have fallen into the trap warned of by Siebörger in 1990, that of producing a textbook series that is "very bland - and likely to satisfy neither those who believe that their version needs to be read for the first time, nor those who are afraid that theirs will be lost."²⁰⁸

Yet I would venture the critique a step further. Since the various critical thinking exercises of the new textbooks involve little more than the student's ability to "recognise one's own version from a number of competing versions,"²⁰⁹ it would seem the new textbooks are "balanced" in favour of the white minority. For, since white history has reigned hegemonic for centuries in South Africa, its tenet-fragments are easily recognizable. It is thus fairly easy to reassemble them, if one wants to, into something resembling the old grand narrative he learned from his father and his father before him, as was taught in schools and promulgated by state power.

South African blacks, on the other hand, whose version of history has never really been told in schools, only find unrecognizable fragments of something vaguely sympathetic. Where do they go? What do they fit into? Is there a grand narrative passed down from his father and his father before him by which the fragments might

Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History. In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 28

²⁰⁷ Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History." In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 29

²⁰⁸ Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History." In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 27

²⁰⁹ Siebörger, Rob. "Abandoning Neutrality? Taking Sides in Classroom History." In: M.H. Trümpelann. (Ed.) History Teaching in a Multicultural Society. Sasht Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit: 1990. Pg. 27

be recognized and aligned. If so, it is one afflicted and besieged by the dominant, white supremacist narrative. Those who seek black history in the new textbooks, therefore, generally bring no prior inculcated grand narrative.

One telling instance of the inability of the new format to teach a history capable of overcoming the legacy of Apartheid is the coverage of the Mfecane. Since Cornevin put forth her theory, there has been an “efflorescence of new scholarship on the early Zulu kingdom.”²¹⁰ Understandings of the Mfecane were challenged as early as 1983 by Julian Cobbing, who argued for an all-out dismissal of the concept:

Cobbing argued that the idea of a ‘Zulu explosion’ which set in motion the mfecane was a settler myth which conveniently obscured the disruptions of local societies caused by the labour needs of the Cape colonists and the demands of the Delagoa Bay-based slave trade.²¹¹

Cobbing’s theory was itself problematic and subject to much contention. And yet, though “marred by inaccurate references to the historiography... also by overstatements, exaggerated claims and a selective use of evidence,” most conceded that “his achievement remains.”²¹² For, while his notion of the Mfecane as a vast historiographical fabrication was dismissed by many as “implausible conspiracy theor[y],” most were not unswayed by “Cobbing’s powerful insights.”²¹³ For to call attention to the obscured role of white colonist and slavist violence in instigating the Mfecane and to all for its restoration in history discourse was appreciated as a genuine contribution to the field.

Such a restoration also has profound implications for the telling of a black history, one which rehabilitates South African blacks from age-old historiographical allegations of baseness, brutishness, and aggressive, otiose violence. The question that

²¹⁰Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 2.

²¹¹Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 2.

²¹²Saunders, Christopher. “*Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography*.” in: Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 34.

²¹³Hamilton, Carolyn. “*The Character and Objects of Shaka: A Re-consideration of the Making of Shaka as Mfecane “Motor*.” African Studies Seminar Paper. University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute. 1991. Pg.1.

emerges, then, is “how does the new scholarship find voice in the new textbooks?”

As we have seen, Looking into the Past devotes two pages and two critical thinking exercises to the Mfecane, noting that “we are not sure why this happened.”²¹⁴ Before looking for the position afforded recent scholarship in the new textbooks, then, the question lingers: “Why so little on the Mfecane?” The contention may be averred that, given Zulu politics at the time, the new textbooks neglect the Mfecane deliberately in order to for the writers and publisher to dissociate themselves from Inkatha and thereby further ingratiate themselves upon the ANC. The Mfecane was indeed harkened to by Inkatha and Zulu nationalists in the early 1990's as part of their movement's call to arms. Yet, if this were the case, then the manoeuvre would be a flimsy one. Cobbing's revisionist theory was put forth precisely as *a challenge to Inkatha power*: “As Cobbing put it himself... ‘...as we deliberate, Zulu impis are on their murderous march with the myth of Shaka ringing in their ears and a new mfecane is being threatened, a desperate last throw of the dice to forestall the united, ethnicless South Africa that has to be born.”²¹⁵

Revising popular understandings of the Mfecane by restoring the agency of white settlers and slavists, then, was a far better method off undermining Inkatha and ingratiating oneself on the ANC. One wonders if the negligence afforded the Mfecane by the new textbooks is a concession made to contemporary politics at all, or just indicative of the from-to zeal inherent to the progressivist format, which would reduce the Mfecane, formerly assigned paramount importance, to an obscure cellar of the new curriculum.

The new format does not bode well for the new scholarship. Unfortunately for the revisionists, we find absolutely no mention of the slave traders at Delagoa bay or mention of white colonist violence that instigated the Mfecane in the authoritative text. The slavists and colonist are, however, mentioned by two severed heads.

The first of these appears in a critical thinking exercise entitled “How big and powerful was Shaka's Kingdom?”²¹⁶ Therein, a female severed head tells us that “The

²¹⁴Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 25.

²¹⁵Hamilton, Carolyn. (Ed.) The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History. Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: 1995. Pg. 3

²¹⁶Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller

Zulu army was never enormously powerful. The violence at that time was caused by raiding for the slave trade at Delagoa Bay and to supply labour to the Cape Colony.”²¹⁷ It is certainly nice that this is here, and that the new scholarship is represented in the play of differences, but as the authoritative text remains conspicuously silent on the contributive role of whites in the Mfecane, the severed head contributes little to overcoming the legacy of white supremacist history. For one, there is nothing of substance provided by the authoritative text to hark back to and cross-check, and conclude that what she is saying is true. Secondly, she is placed on equal ground with a severed head in the same exercise that repeats white supremacist scholarship verbatim: “The Zulu army raided far and wide, forcing their neighbours to flee. These neighbours attacked other people in the area, and soon the whole of South Africa was at war.”²¹⁸

The second critical thinking exercise involving the Mfecane, entitled “Violence and Drought,” is a repetition of the same phenomenon. Therein, two severed heads point toward unknown or unknowable reasons for the conflict, one citing a lack of evidence. A third tells us that drought caused the Mfecane. Of the remaining two, one reiterates Cobbing’s view, while another invokes the old, Apartheid sponsored view. These read, respectively: “I think violence was caused by raiders like the Griqua people and the European settlers and Portuguese traders who came to look for land and slaves,” and “The trouble was caused by the Zulu kingdom. The Zulu rulers wanted to make their kingdom bigger, so they attacked their neighbours. The victims ran away and went further inland. Some of them attacked other chiefdoms.”²¹⁹

The old, white supremacist history and the revised, more or less pro-black one are assigned equal footing once more here, a testament to the liberal ‘neutrality’ of the new textbooks. Subjugated beneath such neutrality, the scattered, discontinuous adumbrations toward black history issued by severed heads add up to little in the mind

Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 33.

²¹⁷Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 33.

²¹⁸Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 33.

²¹⁹Clacherty, Glynis, et. al. Looking into the Past Standard 4 / Grade 6. Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town: 1996. Pg. 44.

of young South Africans, black or white. These adumbrations certainly do not add up to a magniloquent teleology to rival that of white supremacy. They are better likened to the useless historical scrapheap contemplated by T.S. Elliot after the Great War, the “fragments I have shored against my ruins” in a ravaged “wasteland.”²²⁰

There are severed heads that attempt some rehabilitation of Shaka, and certainly the dismembered bust of Moshweshwe disputes the land claims advanced by bygone Trekboers. Yet when delivered in such a fashion they cannot possibly be understood as part of “a history,” certainly not as part of a grand narrative of injustice, conquest, expansion, land dispossession, etc. The adumbrations offered by severed heads are simply floating, disjointed voices, each apparently no truer or less true than that of its white supremacist adversaries in the historical wasteland. If a narrative of black history must be told to correct the extant narrative of white history, as scholars contend it must, then this need has been ignored in the interest of a shallow neutrality.

To put the whole thing simply, white history has gone from hegemonic narrative to severed heads. Meanwhile, black history has gone from less than nothing to severed heads. Is this justice for South Africa? Few could deny the lingering gravity of the old narrative.

Though black history is hardly presented by the post-Apartheid textbooks, the continued presence of white history and its component artefacts is a noteworthy phenomenon. A partial investigation into the new form and location adopted by white history has been undertaken here, though a detailed investigation lies well outside the scope of a Master’s dissertation.

²²⁰Elliot, T.S. “The Wasteland.” 1922. Line 430.

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