

AFTER THE POEM: THE POETRY OF SYDNEY CLOUTS

BY
SUSAN RUTH JOUBERT

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in English
at the University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Dr I.E. Glenn

July 1989

The University of Cape Town has been given
the right to reproduce this thesis in whole
or in part. Copyright is held by the author.

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was made possible by the financial assistance of the Human Sciences Research Council and by a University of Cape Town Research Scholarship. The views expressed in this thesis are my own and do not reflect the opinions of these institutions.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Ian Glenn, for his kindness and encouragement, my ever-supportive family, and friends especially Anton Fagan, Annette Jacobs, Sue Court, Roslyn Sulcas, Patrick Fish and Jane Starfield. I would also like to thank Marge and Dan Clouts for their help and hospitality. My gratitude also to Professor Guy Butler and to Douglas Reid Skinner for much useful information gleaned in interviews they granted me. My thanks also to Professor Butler for permission to quote from his correspondence with Sydney Clouts, now housed in the National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown.

ABSTRACT

AFTER THE POEM: THE POETRY OF SYDNEY CLOUTS

This thesis is both a critical and a scholarly examination of the work of the South African poet, Sydney Clouts (1926-1982). It seeks to trace the development and thematic direction of those poems contained in the Collected Poems and to examine the oeuvre of Clouts's work in the light of new, previously unpublished, material. It adopts a broad-based critical approach: it makes use of archival material pertaining to the production and publication of Clouts's poetry; it uses the poet's own critical commentary to inform much of the general argument; it establishes a critical dialogue with previous texts by extensive reference to other poets' work and it employs contemporary critical approaches that concern themselves with recognizing the tropes and conceptual limits a text sets up for itself.

The thesis attempts to answer three main problem areas it identifies to be those most often critically levelled at the poetry. It looks in the first instance at Clouts in terms of the South African literary tradition in an effort to establish his importance within its canon. It reveals Clouts's dependence on that European late Romanticism that informs the poetry of landscape depiction of certain South African poets writing in English. Next it attempts to answer the vexed question of why Clouts is such a "difficult" poet and finds its answer firstly in his adoption of abstruse poetic precursors who are, commonly,

Symbolist poets; and secondly in Clouts's sense of the limitations of language in general, and his language in particular, to facilitate the ideal of pure self-presence. The development of the theme of language is traced in the poetry as a whole to suggest that Clouts's sense of language as inadequate becomes, ultimately, a sense of it as useless. This introduces the notion of "silence", and more particularly political voicelessness, which is the third area of persistent criticism the poetry encounters. The prominent absence of political content in the poetry can be ascribed, the thesis argues, to Clouts's own socio-political position which contrives to avoid engagement with, and therefore acknowledgement of responsibility for, the material world of contemporary South Africa.

The thesis concludes with the recognition that the implicit metaphoric thread that binds Clouts's work together is the myth of rootedness in Africa, the lack of fulfilment of which accounts finally for the lack of poetic production in Clouts's later years, and his exile.

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter I The "Piled Harvest": The South African poetic heritage	14
Chapter II The search for new models	53
Chapter III The unresolved shibboleth: Clouts and the problems of language	99
Chapter IV Concealment and caution: the poetics of censorship	151
Conclusion	181
Appendix: 1	186
2	188
3	191
4	208
5	242
Works Cited	249

INTRODUCTION

(I)

Two related events propelled this thesis into being. It was precipitated by the interest generated in South African literary circles towards the poetry of Sydney Clouts, following the untimely death, at the age of fifty-six, of the poet from cancer in 1982. Further, a volume of Clouts's oeuvre that was published by David Philip as Collected Poems and publicized by such as "a landmark in the history of South African poetry" was produced in 1984. It was accompanied by a special edition of English in Africa 11, 2 (1984), devoted exclusively to the work of Sydney Clouts and edited by Guy Butler and Ruth Harnett, in October of that year.

Two implicit agendas are contained within the thesis as a result of this double raison d'être. In the first place it became apparent from what was written at the time of Clouts's death by way of general critical evaluation of his work, and from the reviews that subsequently accompanied the publication of Collected Poems that, although agreed upon by most to be a figure of great repute in South African literature, Clouts's poetry remained little understood. Critical understanding of the poetry was scarce and the poetry appears to remain inaccessible to most, endowed with a vague sense of "purity" and mystique. It appeared imperative to examine why Clouts's poetry evokes such a sense of mystification and why it nevertheless manages to

engender such respect within the established South African critical consciousness. An example of this prestige is evident from the prominent display his work receives in two books of general South African literary criticism by prestigious academics in recent years: Michael Chapman devotes a chapter to Clouts in his South African English Poetry: A Modern Perspective (1984) and Clouts enjoys attention in J.M. Coetzee's White Writing (1988). In the second instance a thorough and scholarly examination of Collected Poems seemed necessary in order to discover if this collection, only the second published volume of Clouts's work after One Life (1966), is indeed the "definitive" edition. Through detailed scholarly examination of issues such as dating, editing and selection, the question of whether Collected Poems adds to a new sense of Clouts's poetry as a whole needed to be considered. In the course of such an evaluation debate about the development and thematic concentration of Clouts's oeuvre comes into play.

The methodology of the thesis is eclectic as a consequence of this two-pronged investigation. In order to examine "problems" raised by the contemplation of Clouts's poetry as a whole, of what it is about and how to read it, certain post-structuralist ideas are embraced. Notions of the definition of what comprises the text and ideas of "silence", "difficulty" and "suppression" all enjoy, arguably, prominent display in Clouts's work and all lend

themselves quite forcefully to a post-structuralist reading. While recognising that the utilization of post-structuralism as any one of several other possible critical tools (which include the use of Clouts's own critical examination, extensive employment of other poets' work as source-material, use of personal interviews and correspondence between Clouts and Guy Butler) runs contrary to the central revolutionary tenet of that movement, I can only respond by arguing that the thesis works with certain assumptions about "meaning" within the text, and does not attempt to look from an external perspective, as does "pure" post-structuralism, in order to uncover how that meaning is made in the first place. The emphasis is textual rather than theoretical. Post-structuralism is utilized for its revisionary possibilities and for the new and energizing vision it affords for the reading of a poem.

The second broad area covered by the thesis is based on a scholarly approach; its main methodological thrust is therefore with the minutiae of the text. It looks at the compilation and editorial construction of Collected Poems and at the very notion of what comprises the corpus of Clouts's work. As such, it concerns itself with issues that informed the editors' decisions with regard to what material to include or omit, the organization of such material into a coherent text and the crucial question about what version of a poem comprises, in effect, that final text. In this enterprise extensive reliance was placed on the letters that

emanated from Marge Clouts, Sydney Clouts's widow and his twin brother, Cyril, the editors of the collection, to Guy Butler between December 1982 and June 1983. The correspondence pertaining to the publication of Collected Poems is to be found in the NELM archives in Grahamstown. Personal interviews with Marge Clouts, undertaken over two days in Longborough in the Cotswolds in December 1987 contributed to an understanding of certain issues with regard to dating and development of the poetry and revealed some new unpublished material.

A problem in reconciling both strands of the thesis arises from the wealth of scholastic information gleaned in the course of such a project. With regard to the dating and development of Clouts's work, for example, it became apparent that the two "contents" pages of collections compiled by Sydney Clouts in 1954 and 1955-58 respectively, which the editors, as they state in their preface (CP xi), use as "guidelines" for an ordering of the poems, needed to be reproduced in toto in the thesis. This was necessary to show that the editors' assemblage of the poems was, in fact, at variance with the poet's own organization of the poems in these two earliest collections. In the interests of accessibility and general reference it became apparent that such information needed to be comprehensively and separately presented. Appendix 1 and 2 are the result. The decision to collect the efforts of scholarly research together into Appendices in no way implies that such research is

subordinate to the focus of the thesis itself. The inclusion of so large and unwieldy an amount of information into the body of the thesis would disrupt the narrative flow of argument, but must be seen as vitally important to the sense of such argument. Appendix 3 became necessary as an attempt to provide an alternative dating scheme for all the poems in Collected Poems, and not simply those mentioned in the first two collections. Based on evidence of its initial publication, in the case of a "Published" poem, or on Marge Clouts's personal recollection of its composition in the case of an "Unpublished" poem, the Appendix attempts to order the poems in a chronological fashion. In so doing, the schema of division of Collected Poems into "Published" and "Unpublished" poems is maintained in Appendix 3, itself divided into sections a-e, although such a schema is problematic, as the Appendix maintains. Certain poems, mainly very early ones, deemed "not up to the standard of the rest" (Guy Butler to Marge Clouts, 15.3.83) were excluded from Collected Poems. Other "unfinished" poems were also omitted and were published instead in New Coin (20, 1 (1984)), with many punctuation errors. It seemed appropriate to include such poems into Appendix 4a) and b), in order to present Clouts's oeuvre in its entirety. In fact, Chapter 4 makes a case for a complete oeuvre arguing that an early poem that is excluded from Collected Poems, "Floodwaters are Political" (Appendix 4a), is interesting in terms of the semiology it sets up for later "more important"

poems. Finally, Appendix 5 was conceived as an example of the problems presented by unilateral editorial decisions about what makes for the final text. The "fragment" that begins "Un- / like / Lightning / which / (we cherish it)" (Appendix 4b), from the New Coin collection, existed prior to publication only as a number of handwritten versions. The presentation of all six pages of the rough working drafts illustrates the complexities of the poem and questions the existence of the published text as the authentic one.

The Appendix should not be regarded as secondary to the body of the thesis and its contribution to the central thrust of the argument must not be underplayed. Neither should its scholarly emphasis be seen as methodologically incompatible with the rest of the thesis. Indeed, its very existence at all argues a post-structuralist case: it reinforces the validity of the claim for the recognition of the inter-play of texts, and it raises the issue of the very definition of the "text" itself, both features of vital concern for Chapters One and Two. It becomes functionally vital, furthermore, in Chapters Three and Four, in terms of the evidence it affords for claims about development.

(II)

The reviews that greeted the arrival of Collected Poems all appear to have in common the fact that Sydney Clouts is viewed as a figure of importance for South African literature. A.G. Ulyyat writes that "for South African poetry, the publication of the Collected Poems of Sydney Clouts is a major event." (Upstream 3,3 (1985) 23). Eve Horwitz in Business Day (22 May 1985) speaks of Clouts's "considerable reputation as a poet" and Marcia Leveson comments in Beeld (25 March 1985) that Clouts is "een van ons werklike groot digters." Speaking of Collected Poems she says:

Dit...plaas Sydney Clouts vierkantig as die grootste mistikus in die Suid-Afrikaanse Engelse digkuns.

Certain critics do not agree with Douglas Reid Skinner's assertion that Collected Poems is "an important book" (Contrast 15, 3 (1985) 77). Stephen Gray for one, commenting on the expectations that Clouts's long poetic silence evoked, concludes that the volume fails to live up to such expectations:

But then always there was the promise of more to come and this reached legendary proportions when the most reliable people swore that Clouts's bottom drawer contained the greatest South African poem yet to come. But when he and his family moved to London...he clammed up. Some--notably his loyal friends in Grahamstown--took this silence for truth. His status as the guru of the private archetype of poetry grew out of all proportion. Inevitably, now that his widow has released the contents of that drawer, there is great elation--and also bitter disappointment. Either way, the new poems are more of the same. (The Star 10 September 1985)

Peter Wilhelm makes mention of this reputation in his review of Collected Poems in The Financial Mail (22 February 1985):

for the first time one is in a position to judge the enormous claims that have been made for Clouts in recent years--that his full work, now available, will radically change our perception of South African post-war poetry; that it's 'landmark' stuff. (75)

The criticisms by J.M. Coetzee of Collected Poems (Vaderland 13 May 1985) similarly emphasize the inadequacies of the book in relation to the expectations of it, but his comments in no way devalue the importance attached to Clouts as a major South African poet:

To those of us who waited so long and so impatiently for a second volume from Clouts, the Collected Poems will come as somewhat of a disappointment. Though the best of the later poems are as good as One Life, they are not better, nor do they mark significant growth in Clouts's talent or development in new directions. It seems, therefore, that Clouts will be remembered for ten or twenty short poems dating mainly from his early middle years. Yet this handful of poems will be enough, I believe, to mark Clouts as the purest poetic talent to have worked in English in South Africa since Roy Campbell.

Clouts's reputation remains intact for all these reviewers in spite of expressed reservations about the Collected Poems from some of them. That Clouts is viewed as a worthwhile, indeed, as a significant, poet is all the more surprising then for the fact that the other point of agreement amongst all the reviewers (with the notable exception of J.M. Coetzee, who offers an original and plausible reading of Clouts) is their sense of general

bewilderment when confronted by the poetry itself. The critical response is an overwhelmingly guarded one.

Peter Wilhelm, pondering the question of whether the Collected Poems is "'landmark' stuff", remarks that

I can't decide. Clouts was humane and warm but his work is austere and often obscure. (75)

Commenting on "Let me not be the firetongs" (CP 135) he is equally vague, and his conclusion is equivocal:

I think I get the idea, though I certainly don't elsewhere. Getting into Clouts requires a sustained immersion in an intellectual spin-dryer. It's worth it, though I couldn't care less whether Clouts is a major poet or a minor poet.

Other critics find him similarly perplexing. Leveson talks of the fact that "[met] sy sobere intellektualiteit en kriptiese sinspeling kan hy soms moeilik klink, selfs ondeursigtig." Horwitz entitles her review, significantly, "Sydney Clouts well worth puzzling out":

Sydney Clouts is not an easy poet to read. He was a perfectionist who chose each word with meticulous care, and, as a poet whose major concern was the difficult process of exploring the relationship between word and reality, creating reality anew in words, his work was committed to a conciseness and precision that demands careful reading.

An anonymous review in The Cape Times (27 July 85) entitled "Across the divide" contains the comment that "[s]ome poems are a treasure hunt with insufficient clues, or references so personal that the average reader is lost." Even those articles of considerable length devoted to a consideration of Clouts's poetry as a consequence of the publication of Collected Poems are hesitant to offer

definitive interpretative cues for a reading of the work. Ian Glenn's article in The English Academy Review 3 (1985) poses tantalizing questions, but offers few answers, and Glenn comments himself that:

Clouts raises unsettling questions, also, about our literary culture. On the basis of the evidence of the special issues of English in Africa he would seem to have been woefully short of constructive critical advice and of comprehending readers. Quite simply, many of Clouts's poems have never been satisfactorily explicated or discussed, or discussed at all. (134).

Douglas Reid Skinner, writing in Contrast 15, 3 (1985) defends Clouts against unworthy readers: .

His work has been called obscure, difficult, awkward and impenetrable.... Yet close reading of the work reveals that the difficulty lies less with the work itself than with the vision required to understand it. (77)

He posits the view that One Life can be read, and understood, as "an essentially modernist long poem", but he himself then passes the critical buck, saying:

The relative success or failure of One Life as a modern poetic sequence is difficult to assess and is the subject for analysis and debate elsewhere. (78)

The other single most notable, and common, feature of critical response to the poetry is the persistent mention of a lack of political emphasis by Clouts. The reviewer in "Across the divide" says:

Clouts is not a political poet. His poetry is more concerned with the aesthetic sensitivity of the individual than with the dialectic or political actualities.

and Horwitz comments that:

He was not a political poet in any conventional sense. He was too aware of complexities to take the easy view, too sensitive in his range of responses to the world not to see too many sides to any question.

Those critics who even implicitly endorse such an a-political view nevertheless, it seems worth mentioning, feel compelled to make commentary on the subject of politics in Clouts's poetry. Ulliyat concludes that:

...most of the issues to which the poet turns his attention are, finally, beyond the confines of politics and nationalistic partiality. (21)

Skinner, ever defensive of Clouts, counters a potential charge by speaking of "For the Thunder" as a poem wherein "Clouts's political sensibility is...vividly displayed" (81). Anthony Delius, writing from London in an article reproduced in The Star entitled "S.A. Poets lose their ethnicity" is similarly defensive, laying claim to Clouts as an "implicitly" political poet:

Clouts always felt any poetry written with political intention hardly deserved to be called poetry at all, whereas poetry written in South Africa under the reign of apartheid could hardly be accepted as poetry that did not take a swing at the official racist beliefs and customs.

The thesis is an attempt to answer the triple riddle thus presented: where and why does Clouts "fit in" to the South African literary tradition, and why is he absorbed so willingly into its canon; why is his poetry considered so "difficult"; and why is his poetry not political?

Each chapter deals with one or more of these issues, and each chapter paves the way for the successive chapter. Chapter One considers Clouts in relation to his South

African poetic tradition, recognizing the importance of Derrida's insistence that "...textual origins are always pushed back beyond recall, in a series of hard-fought rhetorical encounters that make up the line of descent in poetic history." (Norris, Deconstruction 119) It argues Borges's point in Labyrinths that "...every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future." (236) The poetic predecessors that Clouts "reinvents" in his poetry in terms of his South African poetic legacy do little in the way of answering a sense of the "difficulty" of much of his poetry.

The recognition, in Chapter Two, of other, more abstruse and modern poetic influences points the way towards a reading of Clouts's poetry as stylistically inaccessible. The notion of "difficulty" is thematically important to Clouts's poetry as Chapter Three proposes. The evasive quality of Clouts's poetry, its emphasis on the play of signifiers and its very real sense of difference in terms of its temporal aspect where signifiers enforce a continuous postponement of presence and erase the speaking voice as presence and even as identity; and its emphasis on "the duplicities of language and the irreducibly textual nature of whatever they communicate" (Barthes 11) are all illustrative of Clouts's deliberate use of language as a code. Language becomes, for Clouts, the key to deciphering a sense of belonging in Africa: as such Clouts uses it tactically to denote "difficulty", in order to capture that

sense of inaccessibility and otherness that Africa represents for him. The effort to evade language as structure or signifier results in silence as Clouts's most extreme, and logical, manifestation of language-as-difficulty. This marks the point of departure for Chapter Four, which concerns itself with that curious silence with relation to "political" content that is apparent in Clouts's poetry. The chapter considers this deficiency in terms of subject matter as, in itself, evidence of Clout's response to his socio-economic position as a white English-speaking South African and examines issues of censorship and repression as a specifically political response on Clouts's part.

CHAPTER 1

The "piled harvest": The South African poetic heritage

The notion of a poetic tradition is one that occupies an important position in Sydney Clouts's work. It is the theme of a number of his poems and the subject of much of his critical commentary. Aside from the prominent thematic display the idea of tradition enjoys in the poetry itself, an examination of the often unconscious or unacknowledged influences at work in the formation of Clouts's individual poetic identity provides the vital interpretative cue for a reading of many of the poems.

This chapter will attempt to review Clouts's poetry in the light of its continual grapple with the shadow cast by his closest poetic model, namely the English South African poetry that, in turn, owes its existence to nineteenth-century Romanticism. A hypothesis will be advanced that suggests reasons both for Clouts's affiliation to this model and his accompanying resistance to it. Clouts's revisionary strategies, in particular, will receive attention, as the chapter focusses on Clouts's attempts to re-invent his precursors. The limitations and shortfalls of this effort are more than adequately revealed, it will be advanced, in a comparison of Clouts's poetry with poetry being written at the same time by Afrikaans poets.

In spite of the assertion that "tradition is always at the service of a poet and not his master" ("The Violent Arcadia" 10), Clouts's position of wariness as regards the powerful influence of such a tradition is clear:

I'm rather guarded in myself when I think of tradition because it can be an overarching presence which reduces one's fullness as a poet and leaps [sic] into thought. (English in Africa 11, 2 (1984) 12).

and Clouts's rejection of such an influence is explicit in "Residuum" (Collected Poems 78), possibly his apogean poetic statement (as this dissertation will submit), where he declares "My tradition is dew on a shrub."

Most instantly noticeable in the poem "Epic" (CP 67) is the studied contrast afforded by the title of the poem and its length: the grandiose epic form is, candidly, debunked. In the poem, Clouts explicitly privileges a raw immediacy and utility over "infertile" literary and philosophical models. The "piled harvest" is perceived to be weighty and redundant:

Metaphor and metaphysics
two old men:

'In the long barn of life we have turned over
and sleep on the streaked straw:
fire, fire and smoke.

This is the piled harvest.
I...and I...have seen
the knower and the known become the wood
of the roaring skyline of this neighbourhood.'

This perception of tradition as burdensome to poetic initiative is something that is incorporated into the very nature of poetry. Constraint of form (often that which on its own serves to distinguish something as "a poem") and of accessibility always temper an immediacy of experience and expression. The

dialectic set up between tradition and innovation that results is often one of the primary sources of dramatic tension operating within a single poem, and indeed, the process of perpetual displacement of the old text with the new creates that "endlessly shuttling allusion, which makes up the history of writing"

(Norris 122), a point eloquently stressed by T.S. Eliot:

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered, and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art towards the whole are readjusted. ("Tradition and the Individual Talent" 15)

Clearly, the question of poetic identity depends to a large extent on the maintenance of this delicate negotiation between the established, written, tradition and the new, unwritten, poem. Bloom's theory of the "anxiety of influence" that contends that "the strength of any poem is the poems that it has managed to exclude" (Saluzinsky 51) is recognised explicitly by Clouts:

The presence a poet needs either to expel or to transform is that of another poet under whose style he finds it difficult to be himself. ("The Violent Arcadia" 89)

In Clouts's case "tradition" versus "innovation" comes to take on a particular guise. It comes to stand in very specifically for a tension based on a different dialectic--it is made analogous to a "Europe" as opposed to "Africa" dichotomy. That Clouts sees himself as the heir to an encompassing cultural package that is European, and that he feels alienated from such an inheritance, as a South African, is made clear when he says:

We are very aware of the source of certain of our values, and certainly the Anglo-Saxon tradition is a very powerful source of our values. I believe myself to be an African. I'm a white man amongst Europeans, so it's somewhat of a struggle (EiA 14).

To Clouts, then, "tradition" comes to stand in the way of an identity because he identifies himself as an "African". Africa to Clouts signifies selfhood in the existential sense of its representing life lived through and of the self, and responsible only to that subjective perception:

There is no tradition behind poetry. That's the first point. When you've written your poetry, recall that there is a freedom; you are in life and don't look back and say 'Keats'.... Of course you might say Keats, but Keats simply as an object, like a stone, like anything which you pick up, or see, or experience. (EiA 12)

It is significant in the light of this comment that the object chosen to oppose the concept of "Keats" (European and traditional), is a stone. When speaking of the poem "Of Thomas Traherne and the Pebble Outside" (CP 65), in an interview with Guy Butler, Clouts remarked that his choice of the stone as a metaphor was prompted by the fact that "the pebble is unbaptised as is Africa." (Nixon 11)

This artless statement of the value of the "pebble" as motif for Africa appears to offer a clear example of Clouts's fidelity to an "African" identity. The irony implicit in this, for the critic, resides in the fact that it is the existence of this very motif in the first poem of Collected Poems that provides an example of the paradox that comprises Clouts's poetic vision. In "A Pool for the Image" (CP 1) the persona selects a pebble ("A plain round pebble is best") to throw into a pool in his "desire" for "more than reflection". Here, Clouts's commitment to

"certain basic concerns made actual in a simple natural object" (BBC radio talk quoted in CP 141) is asserted in the action of choosing "the thing itself" above "ideas about the thing", in an effort that forces the cerebral confrontation of essential Africa, in the form of the stone. Yet Clouts's "reflection" contains a complexity that is greater than his own intended word-play, for it is "A pool" that offers up "the image", mirroring the self precisely as it does the sun (which it translates as "cool", allowing the syntactical and rhyming possibilities of the poem to offer a literal echo):

A pool for the image,
A cool image of the sun.

J.M.Coetzee's comment that "Tranquil water is the only reflective medium in nature, by its nature a medium to tranquility and reflection" would appear to serve only to confirm Clouts's stated task in the poem. Coetzee, however, goes on to outline the important metaphoric role "still water" plays in European Romantic semiology, and here, for Clouts, lies the rub:

But, as Wordsworth points out, lake water is also transparent, its transparency rendering it penetrable into its depths by the eye, the mind. Bodies of still water lend themselves to metaphors of thinking; in European Romantic landscape art they are associated with reflection, contemplation, and the values attached to the contemplative posture. In lakes and pools, like Narcissus, we see ourselves, come to self-consciousness for the first time. Surface water--lakes, rivers, streams, pools--more than any other natural feature except perhaps trees and mountain peaks becomes a locus of meanings as well as an element of construction in landscape art. What concerns us here is, by contrast, the near absence of surface water on the South African plateau, and the consequent lacuna in the repertoire of the artist (painter but also writer) wishing to give meaningful (meaning-filled) representation to that landscape within the schema he has carried over from European art. (White Writing 44)

For Clouts, the "moment of self-consciousness" and the identification of himself with the pebble (both are "in" the water) conspire together to tie in his identity securely with that of Africa. And yet, the context that occasions such an enterprise is one that is a powerful European trope. Clouts's pebble, representative of quintessential Africa, is, nonetheless, contained (literally and figuratively) within an overarchingly European image, that of the pool.

This combination rock-pool motif occurs in other poems, its appearance serving to set the scene for self-examination (the pool), in an attempt to grasp at a sense of identity that is African (the stone). In the early "Realms" (see Appendix 3b) the persona's attempted identification with the colour of the sky and the call of the bird causes him to view the world as "wet": "like a stone lying dark at the pool's edge" (CP 40). In a later poem, "In this Landscape of Mountains" (see Appendix 3a) Clouts uses the selfsame image-pair to answer the existential probe:

what is life and who am I?

Here on a stone by this water amongst the mountains
I gaze into my spirit, amongst forces
of the rockmaned earth a wiry power. (CP 33)

This chapter will suggest that "influence" occupies a central position in Clouts's efforts to forge a poetic identity, which is, in addition, an identity as a poet who is African. However, as the examination of one complex metaphoric pattern has argued, in the attempt to convey "fresh harmony of forms, the spectrum soul" (CP 34) Clouts must do so fettered to an already-sculptured European model. One can draw a precise metaphor for

this dichotomy from the image in "The Soul in its Sleep" (CP 34) of a European architectural relic being utilized to convey unmediated and untrammelled experience:

O wild and widowed world;
 naked and heathen the buttress leaning alone;
 the eagle soaring upward clear of the mythologies.

It will be argued, in examining influences on Clouts, that what Clouts chooses to include or omit in terms of models, and what qualities in either poets or poems he is attracted to (wittingly or not), is dictated primarily by this effort to create an "African" reality.

Thus, the locating of Clouts's poetry in relation to a South African poetic tradition (that receives and modifies an agenda, in turn, from nineteenth-century Romanticism) will attempt to illustrate that Clouts appropriates models and patterns from predecessors that for him succeed in conveying an "Africanness" in so far as such an affiliation would appear to confirm a sense of "belonging ". In addition, the debt Clouts accumulates to this particular English South African poetic heritage is the result of an attachment to an indigenous tradition which is, to a large extent, ideologically compatible. That Clouts feels the need to partially revise such a tradition reveals his perception of its weaknesses and limitations. Precisely just how limiting this "safe" heritage is, is revealed later in the chapter by a comparison of Clouts's poetry with certain contemporaneous Afrikaans poets he admired, but with whom he did not share a common poetic approach.

this dichotomy from the image in "The Soul in its Sleep" (CP 34) of a European architectural relic being utilized to convey unmediated and untrammelled experience:

O wild and widowed world;
 naked and heaving the buttress leaning alone;
 the eagle soaring upward clear of the mythologies.

It will be argued, in examining influences on Clouts, that what Clouts chooses to include or omit in terms of models, and what qualities in either poets or poems he is attracted to (wittingly or not), is dictated primarily by this effort to create an "African" reality.

Thus, the locating of Clouts's poetry in relation to a South African poetic tradition (that receives and modifies an agenda, in turn, from nineteenth-century Romanticism) will attempt to illustrate that Clouts appropriates models and patterns from predecessors that for him succeed in conveying an "Africanness" in so far as such an affiliation would appear to confirm a sense of "belonging". In addition, the debt Clouts accumulates to this particular English South African poetic heritage is the result of an attachment to an indigenous tradition which is, to a large extent, ideologically compatible. That Clouts feels the need to partially revise such a tradition reveals his perception of its weaknesses and limitations. Precisely just how limiting this "safe" heritage is, is revealed later in the chapter by a comparison of Clouts's poetry with certain contemporaneous Afrikaans poets he admired, but with whom he did not share a common poetic approach.

That Clouts ultimately chooses to revise his chosen predecessors most dramatically in a formal, rather than an ideological, sense illustrates, finally, the paradox of his urgent wish to find "new" expression fitting for the depiction of Africa and his inability to break with a Eurocentric heritage that fails to engage, truly, with Africa.

The next chapter will promote this contention through the examination of the attraction, for Clouts, that certain European and early twentieth-century American poets have. Chapter Two will argue that Clouts's admiration for such poets, in particular those who embrace "Symbolist" ideas, is to a great extent due to their experimentation and innovation with language and formal aspects of poetry. It will be shown that for Clouts the rejection of prevailing technical constraints apparent in his chosen English South African poetic heritage is attractive because of what he feels to be the necessity for new forms, in order to communicate a freshness and immediacy that is "appropriate" to an African reality. Finally, in looking at other distinct poetic models that have a powerful influence on Clouts, it will be asserted that Clouts chooses to emulate so diverse a group of poets as Whitman, Neruda, Yeats, Macdiarmid, Borges, Montale, Frost and Pasternak because of the strong attraction for him their sense of nationalism offers. It will be argued that the common binding factor, for Clouts, between so disparate a group of poets has much to do with their sense of

"belonging" to a place--an achievement Clouts strives for constantly in his wish to be an African poet.

It is illuminating to regard Clouts in relation to his most identifiable poetic predecessors, that is, to white South African poets writing in English. All deal to some extent with the same dilemma of a Europe-Africa dichotomy and with the concomitant problem of imposing an "old" language and the traditions that accompany such a language (what Clouts calls "generations of acculturation", EiA 9) onto a land that is, from the colonial perspective, "new". In examining what Clouts appropriates from such a tradition, and what he rejects or attempts to revise in his own poetry, an argument will be put forward to account for a certain historical stasis in terms of poetic "content" in Clouts's poetry. This argument will be highlighted by contrasting this feature of Clouts's poetry with Afrikaans poetry that Clouts was attracted to.

There is no doubt that Clouts was profoundly influenced by South African English poets. In a letter after his death, his widow, writing to Guy Butler on the subject of "influences", provides "a list of those poets whom Sydney felt particularly strongly about." She says, "I have put them roughly in the order of his having started to enjoy them" and it is significant that Campbell heads a list that includes "St John of the Cross, Uys Krige, Van Wyk Low [sic], Pasternak, Guy Butler, Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Frost, Moore, Yeats, Montale, Dante, Neruda, Lowell and Bishop." (Marge Clouts to Guy Butler, letter 7.9.83). This accords with Clouts's own statement that "[Campbell is] that poet in our literature I was first very dynamically conscious of". (EiA 10)

Undoubtedly, much of the attraction of Campbell for Clouts resides in the tangibility of "place" Campbell can conjure up. Clouts says of Campbell's poetry: "I find that it always sends me back to that world which I know well, my own South African world" (EiA 10). Campbell's is a predilection for a diet of African reality (however painful) chosen in preference to the insipid "salad" that comprises European subject matter and which is rendered up in an obsolete form ("the ballad"). In the satirical "Poets in Africa" published in Adamastor in 1930 (CP 191), Campbell's vision would seem to encapsulate the kind of "poet in Africa" Clouts was later to aspire to be:

For grazing innocence a salad
Of lilies in the bud
For those who dine on words a ballad,
For you and me a name of mud,
A rash of stars upon the sky,
A pox of flowers on the earth--
To such diseases of the eye
Habituated from our birth

We had no time for make-believe ...

Clouts chooses and adheres to models from South African English poetry drawn from Campbell, Butler and Plomer specifically. He pays tribute to Campbell specifically in a poem such as "The Sleeper" (CP 83). Here, the subject matter--the contemplation of a sleeping woman is identical to that of Campbell's poem of the same name, published in Adamastor, which in its turn would seem to have been profoundly influenced by Valéry's "La Dormeuse". Clouts's poem is unflinchingly adherent to Campbell's in terms of treatment. In both poems the containment of the sleeping woman is wondered at by the

observing persona, and is described in terms of natural phenomena:

Sleep has no darkness to enmesh
That lonely rival of the moon (Campbell)

Can a cloud stay so still?
Can a bird be so lonely? (Clouts)

Clouts seems to explicitly offer a reply to Campbell's poem in lines such as "Asleep, you have taken / motion and tenderly laid it within / deeply within you", which answers Campbell's opening lines "She lies so still, her only motion / The waves of hair that round her sweep / Revolving on their hushed explosion." Clouts's "sleeper" appears to "have found / great patience in your breath", just as Campbell's "sleeper's eye...burns away / The sorrows that have made them wise." Clouts's answering and echoing of Campbell's poem can be read as a metaphor in itself for Clouts's acknowledged adherence to the Heraclitean principle of a "hidden harmony", which explicitly admits sleepers into a unified world:

Even sleepers are workers and collaborators in what goes on in the universe (Fragment 124).

Similar examples with regard to Campbell's poetry abound in Clouts's work. Campbell's satirical "Veld Eclogue" (CP 22) which sets up the antithetical and unattractive cultural stereotypes of "Johnny" (English-speaking) and "Piet" (Afrikaans-speaking), is later rewritten as "Roy Kloof" in Clouts's poem of that name (CP 74). The irony here is that Clouts ingeniously bases the English "half" of the boy on Campbell himself: "I was thinking of Roy Campbell, on the one hand, and some other oppositional figure on the other." (EiA 27) Again, in a poem

like "What Remains" (CP 23) Clouts replenishes a Campbellian image in a sentence such as:

That this lack of the prime warmth of winter
is not the cold admission that it sounds

which accords precisely with Campbell's depiction in "Autumn" (CP 52) of the pervasive power of the residue that comprises winter:

I love to see, when leaves depart,
The clear anatomy arrive,
Winter, the paragon of art,
That kills all forms of life and feeling
Save what is pure and will survive.

Clouts is more than emulatory though--his debt to Campbell, Butler and Plomer is also in terms of the reliance he places on them to provide a model that he can revise, if only partially. By performing what Bloom calls an act of "creative correction" Clouts can rewrite aspects of his precursors' poetry whilst still ascribing value to the tradition:

The ancestor of revisionism is heresy, but heresy tended to change received doctrine by an alteration of balances, rather than by what could be called creative correction, the more particular mark of modern revisionism. Heresy resulted, generally, from a change in emphasis, while revisionism follows received doctrine along to a certain point, and then deviates, insisting that a wrong direction was taken at just that point, and no other. (The Anxiety of Influence 29)

The "wrong direction" that Clouts's poetry would appear to identify is the orthodoxy of the Europe-Africa dialectic ascribed to by these poets.

Clouts is dedicated to establishing his credentials through an allegiance to things African that is often in contradiction to the practice of his predecessors. In 1958

Butler, in his introduction to A Book of South African Verse, wrote:

Few African animals have been used to really telling effect in poetry, unless, like the lion or the elephant, they have a poetic history behind them, or, as with the aasvogel or jackal their near relatives (vulture and fox) have. (xxii)

According to the evidence of a typed "contents" page for a proposed volume of poetry, compiled and typed in 1957-1958 (see Appendix 2), at the very time Butler was saying this, "Dawn Hippo" had already been written by Clouts. In Clouts's poem (CP 66), a peculiarly African animal autonomously assumes the vast proportions of a myth, the hippo being depicted as "The size of a cavern for men to crouch in" with the ability to "dom[e] the birth of day." Butler, while content for his part to point to an imbalance in terms of subject matter (an imbalance which Clouts had already been at pains to correct), is guilty of a Eurocentric perspective in a poem such as "Myths" (Selected Poems 49).

Dealing with the imposition of an alien culture onto an indigenous environment, Butler's poem evokes an image of intense desolation in the final stanza. Here, supposedly acclimatized Europeans (they "outspan" their wagons) are shown by Butler to exist in an abyss, separated from the cultural heritage of their forbears and yet also alienated from their natural environment. What is fascinating about Butler's treatment of this scene is his utilization of classical allusions, albeit ironically, to depict this dilemma, which clearly locates his own bias and in this sense reiterates his separation from the agony of the protagonists who are involved in this drama of impasse:

It seemed that in an empty hell

Of darkness, cold and hunger, I had stumbled on
 Eurydice, ragged, deaf forever,
 Orpheus playing to beasts that would or could not hear,
 Both eternally lost to news or rumours of spring.

The Nietzschean Apollo-Dionysus dichotomy of Butler's "Home Thoughts" (CP 72), where Butler can talk of wishing "To civilize my semi-barbarous land" and Plomer's employment of other classical mythological figures in "Europa" (CP 215) are ingeniously melded together and transformed by Clouts in "Zeus Rhinoceros" (CP 94). The legend of the abduction of Europa by Zeus metamorphosed into a white bull is conventionally realised in Plomer's poem. Europa is depicted as a beautiful, desirable woman, attending to her toilette:

...the quivering wiry wavy
 Stiffness of her vigorous hair
 Which crackled as she brushed it and shook it...

and Plomer follows the line of least mythological resistance, when he depicts the beast-god as having a "lustrous pearly hide" and a "rolling black-and-amber eye".

For Clouts, no ambivalence about the necessity for "civilizing a "semi-barbarous land" exists in "Zeus Rhinoceros". Zeus is transformed in Clouts's hands into a rhinoceros, brutal, ugly and vital, and eminently emblematic of "barbarous" Africa. This is a beast of physical grotesqueness but immense sexual and spiritual energy, suggested by the overtly phallic allusion to its "horn" (which is reputed to have properties as an aphrodisiac):

...one
 so strange and grim as wrinkled iron, weak-
 eyed, clumsy, but boding in his horn
 the plains
 the forests
 of a light she had never known.

Europa, in turn, is transformed from being "the ready and summoned bride" of Plomer's poem into a "lissom harlot" with a "lifeless eye" and "witch-white face" in Clouts's version. Satiated by excess and lacking in any kind of vitality or integrity, the harlot figure is stated by Clouts to be "Europe". This is done in a portion of sustained prose that interrupts the action of the narrative, so signifying the condition of stasis in all spheres of life that characterizes Europe:

Europe desperately has tried to restore her spiritual vigour
after the failure of her churches to bring salvation,
of her
philosophers to bring order, of her policies to bring
unity,
of her members, through edicts, indulgences, councils,
dualisms, wars and economic savagery.

Through the use of what Bloom calls the "persuasive misinterpretation of the precursor" (Yeats 11) Clouts seems to answer Butler's vacillation with regard to an unconditional commitment to an African reality, however "semi-barbarous". "Zeus Rhinoceros" advocates no necessity for any "civilizing" process, and the Africa that is depicted is unashamedly itself, and has no pretensions towards moral soundness:

...the immense island of that plunging god who smiled
bleakly without virtue...

In "Zeus Rhinoceros" Clouts still makes use of the oppositional Africa-Europe model. Africa is compelling because of what it offers in opposition to an alternative, and deteriorating, European model. Clouts goes further, however, than a simple remodelling of this Africa-Europe paradigm in his revision of another perniciously Eurocentric literary motif for

Africa, when he alludes to the "Adamastor" myth. The Adamastor figure, invented by Luis de Camoens in the Renaissance epic, The Lusiads, is Table Mountain anthropomorphized into a monstrous encapsulation of Africa as "other". The hero, Da Gama, standing "watchful but carefree" in the prow one night sees a cloud appear overhead "blacking out the sky" which becomes transformed into a terrifying figure:

I had scarcely spoken when a figure took shape in the air before our gaze. It was of fantastic form and size and powerful build, with a heavy jowl, unkempt beard, and sunken eyes. Its expression was evil and terrifying, its complexion of a earthy pallor. Yellow teeth showed in its cavernous mouth, and its crisp hair was matted with clay. (128)

Stephen Gray's comment that "[t]he figure of Adamastor is at the root of all the subsequent white semiology invented to cope with the African experience" (South African Literature: An Introduction 27) might suggest why Campbell made Adamastor the title of his first volume of poetry. Malvern van Wyk Smith, writing in the preface to the anthology produced for the quincentenary of the arrival of Dias at the Cape comments that:

Ever since Camoens conceived of Da Gama's rounding of the Cape as a rite de passage, a symbolic encounter between the son of Lusus (Portugal) and the spirit of Africa, both the main actors and the stage of this encounter have become part of the larger drama of domicile, the continuing arbitration between the memories of Europe and the demands of Africa that has been enacted in the work of almost every white South African poet. (Shades of Adamastor xiii)

In "Rounding the Cape" (CP 27), Campbell's poem about ultimately departing from Africa for Europe, in this Adamastor collection, all that he retreats from (and thus rejects) finds expression and embodiment in the figure of Adamastor:

The low sun whitens on the flying squalls,
 Against the cliffs the long gray surge is rolled
 Where Adamastor from his marble halls
 Threatens the sons of Lusus of old.

...

Farewell, terrific shade! though I go free
 Still of the powers of darkness art thou Lord:
 I watch the phantom sinking in the sea
 Of all that I've hated or adored.

The prow glides smoothly on through seas quiescent:
 But where the last point sinks into the deep,
 The land lies dark beneath the rising crescent,
 And night, the Negro, murmurs in his sleep.

Although Campbell inverts the Camoens myth by recognising the brutality and failure of white colonialism ("Across his back, unheeded, we have broken / Whole forests"), the Adamastor figure remains powerfully that of the sinister "other", envisaged in conventionally pejorative metaphoric terms as "shade", "darkness" and "night, the Negro"; and thus opposed by "light" and "day", suggestive of, literally, light-skin and, figuratively, the qualities of replenishment of the sun. As Cronin eloquently states in his essay on "Rounding the Cape", the vision of this poem is one that embodies the "so-called 'poetry of dread', the continued evocation of dark forces stirring away in the night, of the imminent arrival of the 'barbarians'" and he warns of the "broader assumptions of colonialism" of such a vision:

...these omnipresent themes and images, which so often pass themselves off as progressive, need to be considered very carefully. Too often some dark, elemental Adamastor is wheeled in as an ex machina solution for the white writer's own personal frustration's with suburban, 'philistine', white South Africa, or even as a masochistic purgative for the guilts and ambivalences that the white writer feels in South Africa. (EiA 77)

Clouts, in "Prince Henry the Navigator" (CP 72), in the first section of the poem ("The Navigator"), once more takes as his subject a European figure surveying Africa--or at least approaching the "summit" that suggests Africa--from the prow of a ship. In this poem, however, Prince Henry does not look outwards but looks rather inwards, in the sense that the occasion of approaching Africa affords opportunities for self-discovery. "Africa" as symbol for "other" is here located within the self, and the allusion to Conrad's Heart of Darkness in "the heart of knowledge" of the final stanza is explicit in reinforcing this. Africa as dark and unknown, a "blackness" which "starts to rise" (as does the Adamastor figure from the sea, the whole image being an inversion of the action of the sun), is shown to provide a new opportunity for lucidity "[a]t the summit of perception". The light and dark metaphor used by Campbell is inverted, to suggest that "night's huge and driving breath" can admit a self-revelation and redemption which "Day's daylight" (which is calculated and carefully evolved) cannot:

At the summit of perception
 a blackness starts to rise:
 raw images of darkness
 unkempt alarming skies

that can torment the sturdy mind
 to grief or shibboleth.
 Day's daylight is the reckoned tune,
 night's huge and driving breath

ordains the heart of knowledge
 the spokes that spin the wheel
 the meditating lantern
 the star-revolving keel.

In this poem, Clouts has moved a stage beyond the positing of the Adamastor figure as threatening "other". By assuming

responsibility for the myth, Prince Henry, an apparently completely suitable representative figure for "Europe", is shown to equally accommodate "Africa" within himself through the literal and metaphoric voyage of discovery. Prince Henry "Meditat[ing] on Dry Land" in the second part of the poem is revealed as one who consciously attempts to integrate the Africa-Europe divide. This is shown as a process of the psyche (and thus as a dynamic cerebral exploration) as the narrative switches from past to present tense in the persona's own quoted monologue:

silent I prayed, my task began,
I cross the deliberate gulf of man.

At its furthest point of divarication from his poetic principle-bearers, Clouts's poetry would seem to display a difference in attitude towards Africa as embodied in the landscape. For Clouts, Africa offers possibility and rejuvenation in a poem such as "Poetry is Death Cast Out" (CP 85). Here, "walking / amongst...lizard stones", the quality of "Africanness" Clouts ascribes to the stone offers him, as poet, a primordial reassurance that is transposed into an assurance of the transcendental and permanent qualities of the poem. If one contrasts this with Plomer's "The Scorpion" (CP 18), the emblem that "a scorpion on a stone" offers to Plomer is invested with menace, following in the poem as it does the description of a flooded, unordered and destructive African landscape:

That was the Africa we knew
Where, wandering alone,
We saw, heraldic in the heat,
A scorpion on a stone.

For Plomer, as Peter Wilhelm points out, this image serves as confirmation of the sense of "horror...residing in a universe seemingly intractable to human explanation" which was to eventually drive Plomer

...to make himself over in an English mould. His sensitivity registered terrible vistas into an inner world, that inner Africa, something older than civilization, which he could never abide. (Poetry South Africa 29)

Nonetheless, Clouts's most overtly manifested ties are to the South African English poetry examined thus far, in terms of his use and re-use of its material. The suggestion that Clouts is beholden to such a tradition because he finds himself, in the final analysis, to be in a similar socio-political position to these other poets is one that is crucial to an examination of why he remains attached to this particular South African tradition and why he maintains adherence to such a tradition in the 1950s and 1960s when he wrote most of his poetry. For in spite of the examples given of Clouts's efforts to work with a partially revisionary mode with regard to the poetry of Campbell, Butler and Plomer, it must nevertheless be strongly emphasized that, as revisionist, he works within the parameters set up by these poets. His poetry, while stretching the boundaries established by such poets remains confined by such boundaries--"Prince Henry the Navigator" inverts the Adamastor myth, but maintains it nonetheless precisely because it operates as a term of reference. In this sense Clouts can be called "traditional", according to Chapman's definition of a traditionalist as being "[one who] usually searches and questions from within a received moral and

literary framework" (South African English Poetry: A Modern Perspective 29).

In motivating for the notion of Clouts as fundamentally "traditionalist" with regard to South African English poetry, the most striking argument that can be advanced is that Clouts, writing at least twenty-five years after Plomer and Campbell's South African poetry was produced, and a good while after Butler had produced much of his important poetry, maintains the basic premise underscoring their work and adheres to certain of each poet's most significant models. The reason for this may be located in Clouts's disregard for the contemporaneous, material, life of South Africa which stems from his adherence to the principles of nineteenth-century Romanticism absorbed initially by Campbell, Plomer and Butler. This reliance allows for such a temporal gap, by virtue of Romanticism's emphasis on the "timeless", and so inadvertently admits of a kind of creative stasis. Butler, contemplating Keats's principle of "That beauteous Life, / Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space" says "[t]his kind of spatial consciousness is a rare and blessed thing" (Poetry South Africa 98). Of his own attempts to achieve temporal transcendency he writes that:

Looking down on Florence in 1944 I saw the city in pure space, as it were beyond Time. My own Time orientation did not allow it to rest at that, and I spent some 20 odd years trying to spell out the significance of those few visionary minutes.

If one traces its history in the South African context, this Romantic ethos, which employs devices "to 'defamiliarize' experience in order to remain autonomous of social and economic

events" (Chapman 27) became increasingly exaggerated as it moved further and further away from its late eighteenth-century roots, both in terms of a spatial and temporal distance. As Stephen Watson asserts:

[Romanticism] became divorced from everything except its tenuous literary heritage; it lost its origins which were in the criticism of society, and a burgeoning capitalist society at that. If...Romantic ideology is a 'polarizing structure' in terms of which people pursue 'a subjective intensity and wholeness' in opposition to just those social and economic forces which make the achievement of these so very difficult, then in South Africa one of the poles defining this structure--the social--was all too inclined to disappear, leaving the individual's pursuit of his or her own subjectivity without any apparent, coherent foundation ("Sydney Clouts and the Limits of Romanticism" 4).

In the South African context this particular denial of socio-economic realities can appear insidiously attractive to white English-speaking South African poets, given the unjust socio-economic position they enjoy as a result of their colonial heritage. Alienated in this fashion from the realities of their environment they may well seek, as Clouts does, to make the physical place, "Africa", stand for the entirety and so appear to conquer their own separateness from the social and political and economic and spatial totality that makes for Africa. Through what Coetzee sees as the characteristic goal of South African Romanticism, "the salvation of the European soul alienated in Africa through the means of a Romantic projection of consciousness into the alien: into the African himself, into the African fauna or landscape" (EiA 74), Africa-as-Nature is given prominence.

In this way, the English South African poet can overcome his or her alienation by maintaining Coleridge's tenet that the imaginative depiction of nature is the "primary act of self duplication" (Biographia Literaria 35); a tenet that is particularly apt in the light of Marge Clouts's confirmation of Clouts's early reading of Coleridge and his preference for Coleridge above any other Romantic poet (interview with Susan Joubert, Longborough, 14.12.87). The African landscape serves as a particularly good vehicle for this redemptive act, Africa having traditionally been depicted as "brutish" and "untamed" in Western literature and thought, for, as Northrop Frye asserts of the Romantic adoption of this premise:

...it is rude or uncultivated nature, nature "unspoilt" by man and not transformed into a narcissistic image of himself that comes to be thought of as complementing human nature and completing its being. (19)

It is for these reasons then, that Clouts works within the Romantic paradigm adopted by his South African poetic predecessors, and this serves to explain his attachment to early models. Clouts's debt to the Romantic ethos can be seen in examining the central informing theme of Clouts's poetry, which is, crudely, the representation of experience where a workaday state of mind is transformed into a consciousness where object and subject are unified. Through the imaginative contemplation of Nature unity is achieved, as Coleridge maintains in Biographia Literaria:

In this, and in this alone, object and subject, being and knowing are identical, each involving and supposing the other (34).

An acknowledgement of the importance of this Romantic interconnectedness is apparent in Clouts's appearing to draw the very title of his 1966 volume of poetry, One Life, from Coleridge's "The Aeolian Harp" (1796):

O! the One Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere--
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so filled;
(The Poems 237)

This sense of the interconnectedness of all things is reiterated in a remark made by Clouts to Butler in an interview (London 1975), when he said of One Life:

[The title is] total expression of everything a man can be, including mystical intimations of mortality and immortality. All the poems I can ever write inhabit the title

and this interdependence can presumably extend to the accommodation of other poets or poems, for "Through Cold Constantia Forest" (CP 36) attests that "All poets are one poet / all words one subject".

In order to achieve this organic "oneness" that is his sense of the perfect poetic vision Clouts invokes the paraphernalia of Romantic imagery. Trees, stones, eagles, doves, clouds, mountains, insects and the sea appear again and again in his poetry, and perhaps in this sense too Clouts can be identified as belonging to another, and earlier, era. According to the stages outlined in Stephen Gray's "A Sense of Place in New Literatures", "phase two" writers, who signify a position in South African literature that is pre-1945 (that comes after colonialist "phase one" writers) are marked by their

...using scenery, not for its own merely ornamental or scenic value, but [by their] turning it into the spiritual core of the work, to be praised and brooded over as the main wellspring of inspiration. (32)

Thus, the suggestion of a certain retardation in terms of emphasis in Clouts's poetry may be put forward. Clouts's predilection for the Blakean words "sweet" and "bright" (Watson 13) would imply some reliance on an exhausted Romantic vocabulary. Equally, the poet who is attracted to the sensibility that could compose "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (mentioned by Clouts in rough notes; included in a letter Marge Clouts sent to Guy Butler, 12.3.84) is undoubtedly one who emulates such solitariness and, by implication, withdrawal from the materialist relations that make for social progressiveness. It is telling indeed that in those few poems in which Clouts refers, albeit obliquely and almost incidentally to contemporary socio-political issues he, paradoxically, resorts most overtly to using Romantic allusions or references. An example of this is "Juan" (CP 56), where St Juan de la Cruz, the persona of "The Dark Night"--a poem that was translated from the Spanish by Campbell--is contrasted to a Byronesque "Don Juan" figure, and both are used to create the complex figure of a modern European man, the heir to colonialism. Writing to Butler, Clouts makes mention of this in a letter dated 13.12.65, saying " 'Juan' attempts to join Don and San Juan". Clouts utilizes St John's own convention which is to depict a night of spiritual torment culminating in a state of perfection (which is union with God) by employing the language and form of a human love affair:

O night, you were the guide!
 O night more desirable than dawn!
 O dark of the night you joined
 Beloved with belov'd one,
 Belov'd one with Beloved now transformed!
 (St John 144)

Clouts has a "way in" then, in his own poem, in being able to amalgamate this holy, sacred figure with the archetypically profane and hedonistic Don Juan, immortalised in Byron's poem. "Juan", languishing on board ship and reminiscing about the sexual encounter that has caused him to be banished, is borrowed straight from Byron's "Don Juan", but it is interesting to note that as the poem progresses Byron's virile hero becomes transformed (partly by too much "heat of the [African?] sun") into a "burnt-out" example of twentieth-century Western man's futility and impotence. Reduced to playing chess with the ship's captain, the "dark queen" on the chess board functioning as a substitute for human sexual adventures, Juan has

Africa for tea with a politician:
 he saw these things in his shaving mirror;
 modernity was obvious
 and shone him in the face like chromium
 or an ashtray's crude vermilion
 by the pages of Saint Juan.

Again, in the much later poem, "Wat die Hart van Vol Is" (CP 118), Clouts's attempt to articulate the reality of the colonial ethos that created him an African ("I hear the faint screams of the slaves") and the condition of present-day South Africa that is its legacy ("Tragedy the urban / vitamin") is marked by a specific address to Blake's "And did those feet in ancient time" (CP 514):

I pity England,
 I pity Jerusalem the striven green,

Jerusalem dying
before it can be
Jerusalem ...

In these poems there seems to be a tacit acknowledgement by Clouts of the truth of Watson's assertion that "the tradition of Romantic poetry in South Africa provided the means through which the writer could retreat from...responsibility" (8). In a sense then Clouts's appeal to a Romantic model in moments of contemporary confrontation and stress would appear to suggest that Clouts can locate an area of disjunction in his poetry that prevents actual, material engagement and that he attempts to redress this somehow by calling on the source--the legacy of Romanticism--of such unease.

This tentative suggestion proffers the idea that Clouts, albeit instinctively, can locate an impasse in certain instances in his work, and that in so doing he offers something of a necessary corrective to it (in the sense that he tries to "redress" it by appealing to its Romantic model). Perhaps what is equally useful an exercise in determining the debilitating effect of this burden of "traditionalism", and what is perhaps more convincingly conclusive, is to consider Clouts in relation to earlier and contemporary Afrikaans poets.

There is no doubt that Clouts was deeply influenced by older Afrikaans poets such as N.P. van Wyk Louw. Resonances of a poem such as van Wyk Louw's early, and conventional, "Dennebosse" (Versamelde Gedigte 3), with its simple lyric suggestion of natural reciprocity abound in Clouts's poetry. Van Wyk Louw's poem:

Blou see van denne teen die hang--
 tot, op die blank horison
 die verste toppe yl word in
 opaal van hoë lug en son.

'n Blou nabye heiligheid
 wat tussen see en hemel staan,
 waaroor die groot, mistieke dans,
 van vreemde stille wolke gaan.

is paid tribute to in a Clouts poem such as "Knotted globes of tawny resin" (CP 25):

... Are you still
 Oh separations? Valleyed
 warm, love chimes.
 For studying the pines,
 I chose this summer's day.

Of many similar Clouts poems "Eucalyptus" (CP 30) echoes the sentiment of "Dennebosse", while it owes equal weight for its inception to the Heraclitean perception of natural coalescence ("The transformations of fire are: first, sea; and of sea, half becomes earth, and half the lightning-flash," Fragment 32: 37):

Of the mind in the breadth of its coastal atmosphere,
 of eucalyptus beaten against the sky,
 of the stone linking its wiry maze of cicada,
 and stone suns washed with light within the sea,

 the copious mirrors burn and gladden me.

Ridley Beeton's comment on Clouts's relationship with van Wyk Louw's poetry, which uses an appropriately dominating paternalistic metaphor, would appear to be apt in terms of a limited reading of early van Wyk Louw then:

Clouts, in a letter to me, recalled van Wyk Louw's lines: 'O my land, O my land; jy is ek' and finds in himself a similar mastering love. (EiA 72)

When one considers Clouts's admiration for van Wyk Louw's later poetry, however, together with the poetic relations Clouts established towards contemporaneous Afrikaans poets such as

Opperman and the young Breytenbach, simple analogous associations between the work of Clouts and such poets' work become impossible.

In considering Clouts's work in relation to "Die Beiteljie" (VG 186) of van Wyk Louw, for example, a poem that Clouts mentions by name in rough notes (included in a letter from Marge Clouts to Guy Butler, 12.3.84), a Clouts poem like "With a pointed stone" (CP 60), which ostensibly deals with the same action of striking at a stone in a gesture reminiscent of childhood, could not in fact be more different in how it exploits this event for poetic effect. In Clouts's poem, the persona, in marking his name with stone on stone, in imitation of the "old powerful magical game" achieves through "such sheer strikings" a oneness with nature, wherein all is simultaneously distinct and interdependent:

...nuclear stone and star
 and leaf and bone connect and say
 I am I am in separate tones
 and every act comes clear.

Through this gesture of writing on the stone and then writing about this in a poem, concord between the world and the word is confirmed, and is used to illustrate a cosmic unity that exists between disparate, yet creatively linked, natural phenomena.

Van Wyk Louw's poem, by contrast, makes "die beiteljie," welded by the persona's "tien vingers" "klink" in imitation of the writing and speaking poetic enterprise. The chisel is thus transformed into a symbol for language itself (apart from other symbolic value it might yet retain), and the power of language

(as "beiteljie") is put to the test--" 'n beitel moet kan klip breek / as hy 'n beitel is." The tool that is language succeeds dramatically, and the cracking of the stone which splits the rock on which it rested precipitates a tearing of the very earth upon which the persona stands. This in turn causes cosmic fission, and a disruption of natural chronology:

Dan, met twee goue afgronde
val die planeet aan twee
en oor die kranse, kokend,
verdwyn die vlak groen see

En op die dag sien ek die nag

That this action is realizable within a poem attests to the possibility inherent in language to transform the world. Van Wyk Louw in this way emphasises the power for acting upon the world. The word is not used as it is in Clouts's poem to attempt to accommodate the world through seemingly transparent representation but is rather used as an inventive, shaping instrument to formulate the world.

Van Wyk Louw's and Clouts's divergent treatment of nature in terms of a model for poetic communication illustrated in "Die Beiteljie" and "With a Painted Stone" is echoed by comparing Clouts's "Frog" with D.J. Opperman's "Paddas", a comparison that is invited in the light of Clouts's acknowledged admiration for Opperman. Clouts wrote his poem "before 1961", according to Marge Clouts (interview, Longborough, 14.12.87); Opperman published his poem in Blom en Baaierd in 1956 (81). In "Frog" (CP 115) Clouts treats his subject matter with a reverence that accords it its own autonomy: it is, simply, "frog" and is "no prince" of a Western fairytale. Clouts refuses to manipulate the

medium of language, which has the ability to change the presented world by effortlessly changing consonants in a word, for example ("log" as opposed to "frog"), or which can transform the given by employing language metaphorically:

... no
 magic tightening
 his back into the surface of a stone

 or log
 or frog
 or with a leap, into the heartbeat of man

Opperman, by contrast, uses "paddas," as a species, to symbolise the creative task, the sound of the frogs' "koer" equalling the poetic voice as they "skel of prys / die onvoltooide groot gesprek." In this poem Opperman consciously evokes complex symbolic meaning from the signifier. "Padda", representing "one of the principle beings associated with the idea of creation" (Circlot 114), achieves this connection mainly because of its amphibious nature. Representing, as "padda" does, the transition from the element of earth to water, frogs inhabit this combined earth-water environment that in turn represents "the watery slime of chaos [which is] the base of creative matter" (De Vries 204). This enables the frog to function effectively as symbol for the flux that characterises the creative impulse in much of Opperman's work, as Henning Snyman suggests (124). Moreover, given the ambiguous natural status of frogs (water and land), they are convincingly appropriate in symbolising the chaos-order (demon-god) dialectic that Opperman sees as crucial to this creative task:

Ons wat uit die slym
 berg en ster berym

roep oor die borreling van die moeras
 deur die eeue in ons sange,
 toesang en teensange
 op Hom die groot Hosannas.

Opperman's poem, which effectively employs the natural presented world as a vehicle for commentary upon the creative enterprise, is antithetical to Clouts's "Frog" which seeks to reproduce the natural world for its intrinsic value alone. In stark contrast, too, is Opperman's easy accommodation of, indeed his insistence upon, disharmony within the world of nature.

In a final example, the comparison of Clouts's "Wat die Hart van Vol Is", published in 1968, with Breyten Breytenbach's "wat die hart van vol is loop die mond van oor", published in 1964 in his first volume of poetry, die ysterkoei moet sweet (12), attests once more to a creative interplay that reveals a vast digression in attitude between Clouts and the Afrikaans poets he admired, when they duplicate subject matter. It is interesting to note that Clouts, writing in England and yearning for Africa, felt an Afrikaans idiom to be appropriate for the title of the poem that was motivated by his nostalgia and admiration for an Africa that is

...far from this
 post-imperial
 levity
 and self-disgust,
 this preening.

Breytenbach's poem, written when he too was in exile, in Paris, utilizes the same idiom, initially towards an apparently similar, nostalgic, end:

vir ounooi:

vir u
 kan ek om die dood

nie 'n bitter vers skryf nie

alhoewel dit die mode is
om...

...sandkastele van kinderjare
roekeloos om te skop

but this commitment to the nostalgic idyll is subverted in the course of the poem, to reveal a bleak vision that conceives of human decay and mortality as intrinsic to the natural process begun so optimistically in childhood. Natural imagery is used to show the birthing mother transformed into a participant in the degenerating condition of her son:

maar u kou aan my leë oë
soos my ooglede
soos lig

soos dood

She is implicated by the very fact of having given birth, for in this way she unwittingly facilitated the decaying process of her own offspring. The mother is depicted, thus, as nature stripped of elevated status:

...bespote vyeboom
van vrot vrug

If one compares Clouts's poetry to that of these three poets, all of whose work he greatly admired, it is striking to notice how divergent is the treatment of the central motif of Clouts's poetry, that of untrammelled Nature, in the hands of the Afrikaans poets. Utilizing imagery drawn from nature, the latter nevertheless retain a certain distance from the source of such imagery. Not concerned with transmitting a picture of nature that is unmediated and therefore (ideally) capable of verisimilitude--"something cleansed, fresh, revealed" (Clouts,

interviewed by Butler, London 1975)--these Afrikaans poets can establish the detachment from a natural African reality that comes from employing such subject matter to act as symbol or metaphor. Africa-as-nature does not become an end in itself in their poetry. Perhaps the most plausible explanation for the Afrikaans poets' ability to distance themselves from nature, and to treat it ironically, or as symbol, or as instrumental only in communicating another reality, lies in the fact of their being, precisely, Afrikaans writers. Having at their disposal a language that has evolved in response to a natural African environment (indeed that has words for such natural African phenomena as "kloof", "donga" and "veld" that have no English equivalent), it can be argued with conviction that Afrikaans poets are not party to the same anxieties about rendering a "new" world into an "old" language. Clouts, in his Romantic task (itself inextricably linked to the fact of his being a white English-speaking South African), is preoccupied with the process of melding an ancient language together with the millstone of tradition that accompanies such a language, with a "new" African reality. As such he cannot afford to subvert such a project by questioning the very certainty of natural reality (as van Wyk Louw does), or by conceiving of nature as diabolical, as do both Opperman and Breytenbach in certain of their poems.

To conclude the discussion of Sydney Clouts's South African influences, it is useful finally to consider Clouts's M.A. work which examines Pringle, Slater and Campbell's poetry. As Clouts wrote his dissertation in 1971, after he had published all the

poetry he was to publish in his lifetime (except for three poems published in UNISA English Studies in 1970) it is of little benefit when considering direct "influences" on the poetry itself. Moreover, the thesis topic--"The Violent Arcadia: an examination of the response to nature in the poetry of Thomas Pringle, Francis Carey Slater and Roy Campbell"--although embracing a poetic topic close to Clouts's heart, was motivated more by the expediency of the moment than by any real commitment on Clouts's part to the poetry of either Pringle or, albeit to a lesser extent, Slater. The reason for such a topic seems to have been the necessity for Clouts to research within a suitable South African literary arena. As Clouts mentions in a letter to Guy Butler (29.10.68), and which Butler confirmed (in an interview with Susan Joubert, Grahamstown, 1.7.87), this was in order that Clouts might gain an adequate qualification in order to be able to teach English at Rhodes University. While he wrote his thesis he was temporarily employed as a researcher at the Institute for the Study of English in South Africa, in Grahamstown, from 1969 to 1971.

What is beneficial about the thesis is its revelation of Clouts's disaffection with certain features of this South African English poetic tradition. Clouts does not argue with the predominant choice of subject matter in the poetry of Pringle, Slater and Campbell. Indeed the three poets are selected for, and connected by, their concentration on the representation of nature arguably because of Clouts's own adherence to the Romantic paradigm they all conform to, in varying degrees. Clouts's major

disagreement with Pringle and Slater is a formal one; that is, it is in terms of their technical presentation of the chosen subject matter. Praising Pringle's efforts to connote an African reality, by using a porcupine figure in "Evening Rambles"--"an object symbolic of the more convincing dominance of present reality"--Clouts is nevertheless aware of Pringle's adherence to a formal orthodoxy:

'Evening Rambles' is the effort of a sensibility to alter the scope of its attention if not of its style. (56)

Similarly, he feels Slater's very real efforts to depict "a fresh landscape" in "The Karroo" to be straitjacketed by the stylistic parameters within which the poem resides:

In the first two lines is felt the presence of the landscape, not much mitigated by poeticisms yet already burdened by a form unfit for the subject. (87)

Clouts emphasizes repeatedly the necessity for finding "verbal equivalents for new objects of sense" (95), these "verbal equivalents" being only part of the entire gamut of stylistic possibilities available. Clouts makes clear his disaffection with Slater's slavish adherence to a tried-and-tested stylistic formula:

Slater began writing seriously when the Victorian style had declined into a languid convention and it was this he inherited. He never wholly lost his taste for a dutifully poetic language. (101)

Perhaps what can be seen as the most revealing comment on Clouts's own poetry is a quotation Clouts chooses to highlight in the thesis, where Slater comments on his sense of conservatism. Clouts quotes Slater's own words:

I find it more than difficult to reconcile myself to this age of machinery, rapid motion and rapid living. Thus, oftentimes, when vexed with the hideous noises of motor-car and aeroplane, I long for the gay noise of 'trampling horses feet'. (111)

What is revelatory about Clouts's choice of this quotation is its absolute compatibility with a criticism made by Ian Glenn of Clouts's own poetic predilection, when he says :

God made the country and man made the town, the old saying goes, but the suburban poet lives with man yet makes his proper study of natural objects in the city: trees, the weather, birds.... The view is 'blinkerred': cars, garbage trucks, telephone wires, trains, newspapers, schools, rugby matches and the social and mechanical world are not seen with poetic eyes for what permanent claim to meaning and value do they make? (The English Academy Review 129)

Clouts's criticism of Slater's comment cannot therefore be read as a contradiction of his own, shared, preference in terms of subject matter. Clouts, in fact, attacks Slater only for his "stylistic" conservatism:

A man of such sensibility was not really equipped to produce for himself a sure adaptation or alteration of style. (111)

This criticism is not extended to Campbell's "Arcadian" African poetry, but when writing of the poet to Butler in 1967 (letter, 1.7.67), Clouts accuses Campbell also of a certain stylistic paralysis in his later poetry, although he is careful to ascribe its cause to the pernicious influence of things European:

I have been reading some Campbell again. I remember the blue thunder I saw when first I read him whole almost in a day without stopping. But really he is also delicately French and tenderly Spanish; and he was a troubadour--and that is why he could not save himself from becoming automatic. The troubadour must sing even when the song becomes, as Pasternak says, 'a certain lofty malady'.

Herein lies the identification of Clouts's divergence from South African poetry. Clouts locates the "problem" with his chosen South African poetic tradition to be one of limitation of scope in terms of "style" rather than "content". Clouts attempts to break utterly with that tradition, in terms of what he locates as "style". Whilst attempting to remain true to the Romantic dictates of choice of subject matter, Clouts nevertheless attempts a radical departure from such a heritage in formal terms. He sets up a dualistic model then, and attempts to work with a "form" that is distinct from, and divergent from, its "content" in terms of a traditional paradigm. That Clouts strives for innovation in terms of "form" and that to him such formal "newness" is the key to opening up an African reality is clear when he says:

I was keen to create a form that was completely new, that had sprung clean out of the gammadoelas. (Clouts, 1975, quoted by Butler, EiA 84)

The next section will concern itself with the experimentation undertaken by Clouts with a "form" that is sundered from its "content" which is ultimately derived, as has been argued, from a South African Romantic heritage.

CHAPTER II

The search for new models

It has been shown how Clouts's South African English poetic predecessors can be considered the formative influence upon him, but a case has been established for Clouts's rejection of what he identifies as the formal constraints of such a tradition; constraints which hamper the communication of a vital and immediate African reality. This unease with an orthodoxy of expression is articulated by Clouts even when speaking of Campbell, the precursor he emulates most closely:

I have in later years somewhat regretted...that his radiant gifts somehow were somewhat fixed along certain lines. I feel a certain rigidity in structure. (EiA 10)

For Clouts, the establishment of what might be called a "domiciliary" poetry, fitted to the freedom and freshness that is Africa, involves the attainment of a structure freed from the "rigidity" that Clouts identifies to be Campbell's, and other South African poets' formal circumspection. In a letter written in 1964 to the South African literary figure who came closest to representing a mentor to Clouts during his lifetime, Clouts mentions to Guy Butler the particular allure Butler's later, "freer forms" have for him:

Your freer forms have interested me particularly. My own search for a looser, more open but still strong line, though it has still to arrive at its best inventions, finds this sort of taut rambling a challenge that might--might--bring revelations down. (letter, 24.9.64)

Clouts's admiration for this later poetry can be viewed as an implicit criticism of the existing canon of Butler's work, with its fundamentally conservative approach. Indeed, by the time Clouts wrote this letter to Butler he had already set up a relationship with the older poet's earlier work that was a challenging, rather than emulatory, one. It is Butler's early "Karoo Town 1939" (Selected Poems 1) which contains the phrase "thunder grows intimate with the plain". This phrase seems to have triggered the title of Clouts's poem "Intimate Lightning" (CP 69), which Clouts wrote between 1961 and 1964 in England according to Marge Clouts (interview, Longborough, 14.12.87). It is no coincidence that the "lightning flash" as revelation, and as a common literary metaphor for new vision, is invoked by Clouts in his poem. "Intimate Lightning" is a poem that deliberately seeks to outstrip the poem which begat it in terms of its formal capabilities.

Chapman, critically commenting on Butler's poem, notices that it is "the syntax of grammar that directs our responses" (South African English Poetry: A Modern Perspective 31). Butler's solid phraseology and imagery admit of a method of artistic presentation which is unadventurous and preservative, with its measured pace, its adherence to standardized syntax and its carefully-phrased tonalities:

Here the market price of wool
Comes second only to the acts of God:
Here climate integrates the landman with his soil
And life moves on to the dictates of the season.

Clouts's poem, as distinct from its precursor, is a poem which dispenses with an exterior narrating position and attempts instead an "intimate" perspective as it charts the anguished response of the experiencing persona in neo-colonial guise (promulgating "this fresh quo vadis") to the African environment he wishes to "appropriate". Clouts's comment that this poem is "exploring the Africa within one's self" (interview with Butler, 1975) points to a reworking of the "heart of darkness" metaphor which conceives of Africa as representing the "dark" side of the European psyche. In "Intimate Lightning" the "Africa without", having released the "Africa within", precipitates wanton commercial greed in the original colonisers: "Tusks traded for cash lie somewhere staling under hessian". To a later colonial generation this has been reconstituted as metaphysical acquisitiveness ("I /... ride / upon More, More, the River of Night") as the persona yearns for the "full penetrant / eye" in order to capture the existential essence promised by Africa: "truths of the long lianas tense with dew."

Clouts's poem could not be more divergent from Butler's in terms of the formal treatment of its chosen subject:

Too succulent for quinces comes
 this fresh quo vadis,
 Africa

the bud
 the blossom
 the scent
 of intimate lightning.

Tusks traded for cash lie somewhere staling

poets from the African landscape they choose to depict. Recognizing what he was later to call the "claims of a fresh landscape upon perception and language" ("The Violent Arcadia" 94) and unable to find the technical adventurousness he seeks from the English-speaking South African tradition, Clouts turns to European and American poetic models that he feels can provide the vernal form necessary for true expression of the African environment.

The contention will be that, in the search for novelty and the African sensibility denoted by such novelty, Clouts sets up an early and problematic relationship with poets such as Mallarmé Yeats and Stevens. The European poetic impetus Clouts first consciously echoes, then, is the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century literary movement these poets ally themselves to, broadly known as Symbolism. While it is clear that Clouts did not perceive himself to be a "Symbolist" poet, nor had he any stated affiliation to its principles, it will be argued that Clouts adopts a "Symbolist" approach (in the limited sense of its application to the work of these seminal poets) in much of his poetry.

The initial argument of this chapter will be that, whilst offering to Clouts the possibility of challenging the formal constraints of his South African legacy through its quite dramatic technical innovations, Symbolism as a model appears to allow him, nevertheless, philosophical accommodation with that brand of late Romanticism his

primary poetic source ascribes to. The revelation of a basic and irreconcilable dichotomy for the critical reader of Clouts becomes apparent if one considers Symbolism to be a continuation of late Romanticism. As such, it is characterised by an exaggeration of that trend toward a sense of social distance which is so prominent a feature of late Romanticism. Poets such as Mallarmé and Yeats, Rilke and Stevens proffer poetry which is a response to a historical sense of crisis. Their poetry is, as Yeats would have it, "a revelation of a hidden life" as it sets out to offer its own terms of reference for comprehension of a world in disarray. The fundamental premise for the practice of technical innovation in their poetry is the expression of a self-sufficient reality, expressed poetically through its inaccessible and hierophantic qualities. Edward Lucie-Smith maintains, for example, that for Mallarmé, "the poem became a parallel universe":

He excludes reality because it spoils the mystery he is at pains to create. He puts words in situations, grammatical and associational, which are contrary to their expected context, and which endow them (so he hopes) with both a purity and power. (54)

The obvious contradiction for Clouts is this: whilst Symbolism appears to offer freshness of form it does so precisely at the expense of its connectedness to "the world out there". Clouts's ambivalence with regard to his poetic project is made quite clear by such a model: Clouts's attempted poetic unification with Africa through the depiction of the landscape is simultaneously the poetry of

retreat from the prevailing socio-political climate of such a world. "Intimate Lightning" is a poem that depicts a landscape, but it reads as a landscape of the mind which is separated from the objective and material. In seeking connections with the African world through the representation of the landscape on the page Clouts echoes the example of a poetic mode that denies its exterior affiliations.

The examination of Clouts's very earliest, and crudely imitative, poetry throws these problems into sharpest relief and highlights an additional problem: in utilizing Symbolist poets as models in order to capture the sense of "newness" their poetry offers, such sense of "newness" is irretrievably compromised in Clouts's own poetry.

The repercussions of this problematic adoption of the model of certain strong Symbolist poets, in terms of the contribution this makes to concepts of "silence" and "difficulty" in Clouts's total oeuvre, add to his increasing sense of the futility of his poetic project in his later years; the chapters that follow on from this one take these ideas as their thematic point of departure.

The chapter will conclude with the argument that when Clouts seeks connections in his poetry with European and American poets who write outside of what might loosely be defined as a "Symbolist" paradigm, he does so in an effort to emulate the sense of nationalism that characterises the work of these other poets. That such effort is, ultimately,

unsuccessful is born out by Marge Clouts's comment that Clouts's admiration for poets such as Borges, Pasternak and Frost was ever filled with "the sadness that he was unlike them" (letter to Guy Butler, 6.2.84).

A continuation of the discussion of "influence" with regard to Clouts's poetry is important in that a case has been established for the thematic significance attached to Clouts's choice of poetic models, in the sense that tradition has been shown to play a major role in Clouts's search for an African poetic identity. Chapter One has argued that Clouts chooses as his primary poetic example the group that comprises those poets who most closely resemble, in the material and therefore ideological circumstances surrounding the production of their poetry, his own. He accepts the burden of the heritage of late Romanticism they carry with them as a result. He manifests an estrangement from such poets, though, in terms of their acceptance of a sense of separation they share from the African world they inhabit. Such estrangement he displays most pointedly by criticising, explicitly or through example, their adherence to a stultifying and unsuitable stylistic recipe.

Clouts must look elsewhere for poetic models, therefore, in order to answer fully his sense of commitment to Africa. His early and lifelong reading of Mallarmé and the profound admiration he always retained for the poetry of Yeats and Stevens might offer suggestions as to what Clouts looked for from alternative poetic voices. The common binding factor with regard to these poets can be located in the "Symbolist" tradition they have all come to be identified with: both in a historically-specific sense and

in the crudest sense of their utilization of the symbol in new ways as a poetic option.

It is necessary to examine why Clouts chooses these "Symbolist" poets to emulate as this chapter will contend he does, in a variety of ways, in a significant number of his poems. It can be argued that it is precisely because of the necessity of accommodating his South African legacy that Clouts adopts Symbolism as an additional source of influence. The erasure of social and historical considerations by European late-Romantic poets has been offered as an explanation for its attraction as a model for a generation of white South African English poets who are the heirs to an uncomfortable political legacy. For Clouts, this same guilty inheritance precludes the sweeping rejection of such a position, even as he recognizes its limitations. Symbolism would seem to offer an option of compromise to Clouts: it is a technically and semantically innovative model that maintains, at the same time, the fundamental philosophical convictions of late Romantic poetry. Frank Kermode contends that Symbolism is "the Romantic image writ large" (5), while Edmund Wilson maintains that Symbolism, as a "counterpart to Romanticism" is "a second flood of the same tide" (9). Wilson's metaphor is all too appropriate a one for a description of Symbolism's influence, and its constraints, on Clouts's poetry. A comparative analysis of the opening poem of One Life, "Of Thomas Traherne and the Pebble Outside" (CP 65),

with a poem by Yeats serves to show this. Yeats's expression of the demise of the prevailing Romantic vision in "The Nineteenth Century and After" (CP 271) utilizes an image akin to Wilson's. In Yeats's poem the "great song" of Romanticism is replaced by the subdued, unmelodic noise of "[t]he rattle of pebbles on the shore". The image of rattling pebbles is apparently compatible with a Romantic vocabulary, but, used as a symbol here it nonetheless serves to signify a subtle progression onwards from Romanticism. It replaces the confident Romantic vision of harmony between the individual and the world promised by the large-scale Romantic imaginative enterprise, with a fragile Symbolist vision created through the isolated and arbitrary existence of that chosen as symbol:

Though the great song return no more
 There's been delight in what we have:
 The rattle of pebbles on the shore
 Under the receding wave.

In this poem Yeats illustrates Symbolism's historical position as a poetic response to the crisis of a fin de siècle world. Symbolism operates as a reply to--manifested as a retreat from--the general life of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with its massive political and social upheavals. A primary impulse behind such poetry would appear to be the wish for separation from the "real" external world, the "slow dying of men's hearts that we call the progress of the world" (Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry" 21). In this important characteristic Symbolism can be said to perpetuate the ideas of "late" Romanticism which,

divorced from its initial role as social criticism (through the communication of the alienated individual responding to the processes of industrialization and urbanization) becomes an enterprise increasingly confined simply to the exploration of the singular consciousness of the poet. In this sense, Symbolism is an intensification of the late Romantic impulse to retreat into its own terms of reference. The withdrawal of the Symbolist poet from the disturbing consequences of engagement with a dramatically changing environment is most obviously apparent in two ways: the poetry is a poetry of retreat into the mind of the poet and it is a poetry of withdrawal from time in the sense that chronological time (that which marks off the temporal existence of the actual and material) is replaced by other-than-time represented in the form of the symbol or myth.

Thus Clouts, in "Of Thomas Traherne and the Pebble Outside" (CP 65) utilizes the pebble (as does Yeats in his poem) in order to symbolize a condition that is detached from the everyday workings of human history. In his poem Clouts does not deny a similar process of symbol-making to previous generations but he juxtaposes the pebble, undistinguished ("dim") and seemingly insignificant ("a bit of the world"), as a contemporary symbol to the great religious-mythical system that informed a seventeenth-century world. Thomas Traherne's "firm poems of God" that proclaim

From Dust I rise,
And out of Nothing now awake, .

These Brighter Regions which salute mine Eys,
 A Gift from GOD I take.
 The Earth, the Seas, the Light, the Day, the
 Skies,
 The Sun and Stars are mine; of those I prize.
 ("The Salutation" 6)

are no longer possible. The use of the past tense in Clouts's poem ("I have read...") locates the ability to write "firmly" as something that is not possible to a modern sensibility of uncertainty where no absolute, unifying centre, which can attest to the notion of ongoing human enterprise, is comprehensible.

Like Yeats in his poem, Clouts can choose only an isolated fragment of the natural world to represent a system of belief that finds its roots in the individual creation of symbol. The stone that prompts Traherne to declare in "Fullnesse" (59):

The Root of Hope, the Golden Chain,
 Whose End is, as the Poets feign,
 Fastened to the very Throne
 Of Jove.
 It is a Stone,
 On which I sit.
 An Endless Benefit
 That being made my Regal Throne,
 Doth Prove
 An Oracle of his Eternal Love.

becomes in Clouts's poem the pebble that functions as the symbolic cornerstone of Clouts's private semiology for Africa. Like Traherne before him Clouts is engaged in an act of communion with the natural world but his is an act confined to its own parameters, which seeks to confirm only its own momentary engagement with what it views; it does not

offer the confirmation of any exterior system of existence, as does Traherne's contemplation in "My Spirit" (56):

O Wondrous Self! O Sphere of Light,
 O Sphere of Joy most fair;
 O Act, O Power infinit;
 O Subtile, and unbounded Air!
 O Living Orb of Sight!
 Thou which within me art, yet Me! Thou Ey,
 And Temple of his Whole Infinitie!
 O what a World art Thou! a World within!
 All Things appear,
 All Objects are
 Alive in thee! Supersubstantial, Rare,
 Abov them selvs, and nigh of Kin
 To those pure Things we find
 In his Great Mind
 Who made the World! tho now Ecclypsd by Sin.
 There they are Usefull and Divine,
 Exalted there they ought to Shine.

Clouts feels unable to use the same symbols or myths that Traherne does to denote a sense of constancy and eternity. Traherne's use, for example, of a symbol such as the "angel" is evidence of the accessibility of a consistent and historically-perpetuated mythical/symbolic system to the seventeenth-century poet. Clouts, speaking of the opening lines of Traherne's "Wonder" (6), articulates his own distance from such a poetic act of faith, that can simply accept such symbolic orthodoxy and "perceive bright angels":

°How like an angel came I down / How bright
 are all things here!' Traherne writing lines
 like that was living in a world where it was
 possible for a man to speak confidently in
 those analogical terms, where the totality of
 himself within a reality in which angels were
 part of the imagination was completely
 possible. (EiA 13)

In the Symbolist enterprise symbolic meaning is not given, but is made, in recognition of the individualized task of the poet who is set adrift in the modern world. The

value in using ancient symbols, in order to denote a time-beyond-time, is not denied in this process: they are simply reassessed, and reconstituted. For example, Rilke can utilize the angel in a symbolic capacity other than that established by Judeo-Christian precedent. Thus, in the Duino Elegies, which Clouts read and admired at a young age (interview with Marge Clouts, 14.12.87), Rilke's "angelic orders" are expressive of a human condition divorced from supernatural sanction. Contact with the angels is denied the poet. Although the angelic order is shown to exist, the angel operates in complete contradistinction to its orthodox role as mediator between God and humankind: it stands as a symbol of lack of succour from a divine source:

If I cried out
 who would hear me up there
 among the angelic orders?
 ...
 Oh who can we turn to
 in this need?
 Not angels
 not people
 and the cunning animals
 realize at once
 that we aren't especially
 at home
 in the deciphered world
 What's left?
 Maybe some tree
 on a hillside
 one that you'd see every day
 and the perverse loyalty
 of some habit
 that pleased us
 and then moved in for good.
 ("First Elegy" Duino Elegies 19-20)

In "The Grave's Cherub" (CP 86) Clouts would appear to utilize the angelic figure in a similar way to Rilke, in the sense of its being chosen less for its potential to

illustrate a closeness with God, than for its ability to show contemporary estrangement. In the poem the cherub, rendered immutable in stone, fulfills a symbolic role of ambiguity between God and people, no longer acting as the harbinger of celestial good humour. His "small right hand supplants / the thought of peace" as he is rendered literally and symbolically static and artificial with a "tragic actor's hand", and his is a visage that is, at best, ambivalent in its intentions towards humankind:

...pitiless angelic face,
 eyes fixed hard on the living
 who eat their pain like bread

The impulse to withdraw from chronological time is evident if one looks at the focus of almost all Clouts's poetry. Attempting to utilize symbols other than those set up within in a particular historical paradigm, Clouts's is a particularly "unpeopled" poetry. Almost without exception, he uses timeless natural imagery and landscape, in opposition to the historically-specific and human, as symbol and as subject matter. Those figures that he does employ are most often denuded of their human qualities. In a poem like "Idiot Child" (CP 87), for example, the child is pictured as "my dear dumb colt" who "leapt like a big stone". The other-than-human characteristics of the child, given play in the natural imagery of the poem, are emphasised most strongly in the address "O severed race", which effectively dissociates the child from its common human ancestry. If Clouts does use a specific,

individualized figure in his poetry, as in the eponymous "Roy Kloof" or "Hotknife" or "Professor Gulf" he makes of it an archetype, released from history, through the exaggeration of a particular issue it addresses, or characteristic it assumes. Thus Hotknife, ("Hotknife" CP 107), while granted immediate access to a poetic audience, as it were, through the operation of direct speech, in effect operates as the archetypal Rogue figure because of the ironic distance set up by the bathos of the contrast between the formal register of his address and the indignity of the events he is describing. Both Roy Kloof and Professor Gulf are archetypes. Roy Kloof (CP 74) is the Divided Being, the human configuration of the consequences of the colonial enterprise gone awry, while Professor Gulf (CP 126) is the Ascetic Intellectual, utterly oblivious to the mystique of the natural world around him:

That web of the fine lines
tracing the cornea
gives your locale
its inner compulsions.

In "One That Was Never Seen" (CP 117) the enduring natural symbol, autonomous of human activity, is posited by Clouts in deliberate opposition to the more obvious humanly-created and time-bound symbol. Significantly, the poem was printed on the extreme right-hand margin of an otherwise bare page when it was initially published in 1970 (in Unisa English Studies VIII, 3). This poem is shown, literally, to occupy an "alternative" space to that traditionally apportioned it. The poem itself records a moment ignored by

the chroniclers of human history who determine what is worthy of selection for posterity. In the poem the porcupine, an awkward and ungracious creature, runs next to Cleopatra's tent and is ignored by historians, preoccupied as they are with charting the preparations for a battle that will make the history books. The "logical" focus of the event should be the monumental occasion of the pending battle and the presence of a great queen. The porcupine, which is of course "seen" by the poetic eye, is resuscitated from potential obscurity and positioned as the primary object of importance in the cameo:

One that was never seen
 the golden porcupine
 running in the long dawn
 grass near the tent
 of Cleopatra
 raised his spine
 and bit through the long
 fresh vineleaves
 with a subtle tooth

This poem is strongly resonant of Yeats's "Long-Legged Fly" (CP 381), which sets up a similar pattern of human versus natural symbolism. In Yeats's poem the events in Caesar's tent make for a scenario no more portentous than that of the movement of a solitary fly upon water:

That civilisation may not sink
 Its great battle lost,
 Quiet the dog, tether the pony
 To a distant post.
 Our master Caesar is in the tent
 Where the maps are spread,
 His eyes fixed upon nothing,
 A hand under his head.
Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
His mind moves upon silence.

Symbolism's connection to the late Romantic movement through its retreat from the time-bound real world is evident in another poetic device practised by Clouts, after the example of other poets. Rather than connoting a time that encapsulates all time through the use of non-confinable and often personally-created symbols or myths, a different tactic is to concentrate on capturing a single instant "out of time" in poetry, thereby replacing time with no-time. As Sheppard has commented, because of the disintegration of established social and political edifices, "a principle of unity is felt to have been lost" by fin de siècle poets. As a result of this

...the present seems to lose its organic connection with the past and the future. Time becomes a series of fragmented instants, and a sense of continuity gives way to discontinuity (Sheppard 327).

An illustration of Clouts's adherence to the principle of privileging the moment is "The Eye" (CP 35). In this poem the persona, whilst engaging in that most innocuous of activities, picnicking, allows "the eye" to "let evil in, the whole of it" through the instant comprehension of a spot of time. The activity of undirected gazing at the natural environment precipitates the sudden illumination of a terrible moment of history--one can only hazard a guess that it might be the "new silence" of the twentieth century and the Holocaust--which encapsulates any number of brutal moments, into a flash of visual understanding:

Millions done to death with grass in sight
and wheat and small cucumbers.

Not causally linked to past or future, this moment is played out as quickly as the thought lasts, making the "black and vermilion" stripes of the rug on which the five picnickers sit assume, in that fragmented no-time within the persona's mind, the character of dark trenches of blood from uncountable human conflicts:

Sandwiches and minerals
and lettuces for five
upon the rug, zigzag
of black and of vermilion, raging on the grass
that runs beyond, arriving centuries away
at fields and mounds of the dark ages.

What Glenn calls Wallace Stevens's "aesthetic creed of attention to certain kinds of momentary experience" ("The Poetics of the Moment" 254) is played out in "Dutch Graves in Bucks County" (CP 290), a poem that seems likely to have influenced Clouts's "The Eye". Stevens, viewing the graves, is blind to the actual, time-related scene of a graveyard before him, for his poetic eye admits of the perpetuity that is the flicker out of time, and allows him to behold the battle that caused such loss of life:

Angry men and furious machines
Swarm from the little blue of the horizon
To the great blue of the middle height.
Men scatter throughout clouds.
The wheels are too large for any noise.

Clouts's moment of experience happens in "The Eye" whilst at a picnic. He appears to offer a reply to Stevens's poem that has anticipated "mobs of birth" of future generations who will be able to "picnic in the ruins that we leave"; the suggestion being in Stevens's poem that history is made up

of these instances of momentary unconnected fragments that bear no relationship to temporality:

This is the pit of torment that placid end
Should be illusion, that the mobs of birth
Avoid our stale perfections, seeking out
Their own, waiting until we go
To picnic in the ruins that we leave.

So that the stars, my semblables, chimeres,
Shine on the very living of those alive.

These violent marchers of the present,
Rumbling along the autumnal horizon,
Under the arches, over the arches, in arcs
Of a chaos composed in more than order,
March toward a generation's centre.

This experience of the "spot out of time" is made possible in poetry when the distinction between the mind and the world is elided for an instant. The absolute reliance on the subjective implied by this is what constitutes Symbolism at its most revolutionary. Romanticism strives for the interconnectedness of subject and object through the "organic sensibility". Symbolism might be said to exaggerate the subjective contribution necessary for such an undertaking. Symbolism would appear to have received its cue from the development of the discipline of psychology at the turn of the century. Socio-political turmoil equally challenged any clear sense of social identity or continuity, resulting in the uncertainty of affiliation to anything other than an inner order. To this end, then, reality itself came to be viewed as dependent upon the subjective consciousness to render it into being. For Clouts, this development might seem most attractive, given the thesis that he ever attempts a distance from the material

conditions prevailing in his world as he attempts a private unification with the landscape. The acceptance of modes of symbolism anterior to entrenched cultural structures and accessible only through the individual psyche has been shown to be practised by Clouts and his poetic forbears: the authority of religious or social institutions to impose perception or formulate public myths is undermined and is replaced by the self-creation of such systems. Wilson has identified Gerard de Nerval as one of the primary motivators of this project of inner vision because of his contention (that was profoundly to influence the French Symbolists) that:

...the world which we see about us is involved in some more intimate fashion than is ordinarily supposed with the things that go on in our minds, and that even our dreams and hallucinations are somehow bound up with reality. (in Axel's Castle 17)

Symbolism's intention to do away with prevailing systems of certainty invites the admittance of the individual "unconscious" into poetry, through a fusion and indefiniteness of imagery, intended to offer a variation on "reality" as it is conventionally perceived. In accordance with new ideas of psychology and as a response to a disturbing exterior world, Symbolism's manifesto--to admit the dormant unconscious and intensely private life of the individual into the realm of consciousness through poetry--is articulated by Pater in his Epilogue to The Renaissance:

At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when

reflection begins to play upon these objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like some trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions--colour, odour, texture--in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further:--the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind....Every one of those impressions is the impression of an individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world. (in Bayley 45)

In accordance with a Freudian conception of the human psyche, which sees ideas as being unconscious in a dynamic sense, "strong" unconscious ideas are part of the human makeup but are repressed and kept from consciousness by continuing pressure. They are denied access to ordinary consciousness and can be made accessible only through specific techniques such as hypnosis, dream analysis or free association. Acknowledging the contribution of the unconscious to the creation of any interior meaning, Symbolist poetry attempts to nurture and harness such forces by the setting up of imagery that makes for constant extensions into new meanings, through the nourishment of other-than-logical faculties. Thus the density and confusion that result are intended to give a kind of stereoscopic effect, to enable a third dimension of meaning to come into play. Through suggestiveness and a lack of precision in imagery, as well as the creation of private symbols, no fixed meaning and therefore

numberless meanings are rendered possible. The emphasis is on the playing down of interpretation, the hinting at some direction in the poem, and a gradual, and only partial, revelation.

This agenda invites obvious and dramatic innovation of form. For Clouts the technical innovation of freedom in verse construction is perhaps his most enduring adoption of Symbolist ideas as a result of his ongoing pursuit of the novelty of form he feels necessary for the depiction of Africa in its "pure" form. Wishing to illustrate the personal option "reality" constitutes, Symbolist poets attempt to emphasise, in verse, the process towards, rather than the accomplishment of, reality:

Many of the poets of the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century wanted something which would allow them to say as they went along, they wanted meaning to reside in the process of experience. Hence the pressure towards vers libre and the growing traffic between poetry and prose. Prose was looked to because it moves at a pace of its own making, has an option on itself at every step, is able to capitalise upon coincidence, creates its own impetus and is good at registering life's miscellaneousness (Scott 349).

The purposeful rejection of "the old, tired-out mould" (Mallarmé, "Crisis in Verse" 4) that produced Romantic poetry is practised by Clouts in his poetry as he constantly allows for metrical infractions in his poetry and admits prosaic elements and dialogue into the lyric in poems such as "The clouds look sagely unkempt" (CP 53), "The melon stalk, the melon" (CP 59), "Zeus Rhinoceros" (CP 94),

"Residuum" (CP 78) and the "Hotknife" poems, to name but a few. Importantly too, he makes use of all the unvoiced but equally important rhythms that surround a poem on a page; indeed that constitute another poem in and around the existing one. The recognition in the use of these clear spaces is of the arbitrariness of the creation of meaning; the "alternative" unstated poem "residing" in the blank areas of the page could just as easily have constituted the final, written poem. Thus in "A Fence with Raindrops" (CP 27), "The Soul in its Sleep" (CP 34), "Of Thomas Traherne and the Pebble Outside" (CP 65), "The Situation" (CP 71) and "Residuum" (CP 78) the use of the single line unit surrounded by "gaps" on either side allows for what Rilke calls "the silence which surrounds things" ("August Rodin: Part II" 84) to be established, in the attempt to realise Mallarmé's prescription for the ideal poetic format:

There will be neither the sublime incoherence of the Romantic page-settings nor the artificial unity imposed upon the book by the compositor's calculations; everything will be fluid, the arrangement of parts, their alteration and interruption by blank spaces, and will yield a total rhythmic movement, the silent poem itself, translated in its own way by each unit of the structure ("Crisis in Verse" 8).

Of vital importance to Clouts, this format also allows for a completely individualistic and uncontaminated poetic voice to be aired, as Barthes explains:

Mallarmé's typographical agraphia seeks to create around rarified words an empty zone in which speech, liberated from its guilty social overtones, may, by some happy contrivance, no longer reverberate. The

word, dissociated from the husk of habitual cliché and from the technical reflexes of the writer, is then freed from responsibility in relation to all possible context; it appears in one brief act, which, being devoid of reflections, declares its solitude and therefore its innocence (75).

Furthermore, Mallarmé in Un Coup de Dés sets a new formal precedent by the use of ideographic lettering to distinguish the main from the sub clause, in his employment of the larger area of the double page, and through his distribution of a relatively small number of words across the paper in an irregular pattern. What Steiner calls Mallarmé's "programmatic... resolve to cleanse the vocabulary and syntax of common speech, to carve out and preserve for poetry an arcane realm of uncompromising significance" (On Difficulty 42) is apparent in a poem such as "Une Constellation" (Oeuvres Complètes 477):

UNE CONSTELLATION

froide d'oubli et de désuétude
 pas tant
 qu'elle n'énumère
 sur quelque surface vacante et supérieure
 le heurt successif
 sidéralement
 d'un compte total en formation

viollant
 doutant
 roulant
 brillant et méditant

 avant de s'arrêter
 à quelque point dernier qui le sacre

Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés

Clouts follows the example of such visual patterning in several of his poems. In a poem such as "Hieroglyphs" (CP 103) the theme of language is played out in the lay-out of the poem. The poem contends that human language is ever in danger of losing meaning, for such meaning is social and constructed. Over time, hieroglyphics have ceased to exist as anything other than unconfined signifiers, stripped to their existence only as a system of lexigraphic marks which are used as patterns for commercial design in the contemporary world: "An age of intact enigma has incised / the undecipherable hieroglyphics / lost everywhere". By contrast, the "language" of nature, the grooves cut by water into the rocks, is shown to be enduring and uncompromising. The elliptical quality of the latter part of the poem attempts to depict this by distancing itself, to a degree, from semantic or grammatical context. Clouts places the words unevenly on the page, effectively miming the randomness of nature, and in so doing strives to reproduce the ontological purity of the language of the landscape:

and upon the cliffs
of granite, when the rain wets
the fall of immense stone
 shining, almost
perfect circles claim
the surfaces
high up where
no-one
ever
clung
at unpredictable
intervals, to
cut the stone.

The introduction of a pictorial element into poetry is vitally important for Clouts in his desire to connote Africa. Clouts, writing to Butler about the proposed "One Life" volume (letter, 24.9.64), makes this clear when he says:

I dream of a big book with large print and long pages, a fresh page for each poem's beginning.

By making the poem visual Clouts can make use of a direct appeal to sensory perception rather than simply to understanding through cerebral comprehension. This distinctive visual presentation can serve to physically offer verisimilitude. Just how important this is for Clouts in terms of his poetic goal--the creation of Africa on the page--is stressed by the metaphor he uses, once more that of the stone, when describing such "physicality" in his poetry:

Sometimes I wish I wrote more perfect poems. But then I remind myself, I want some clumsiness, not too much perfection, something like a stone in the way (letter to Butler, 11.2.66).

This sense of comprehension through the immediate stimulation of the senses, rather than through the externally-shaped intellect is what precipitates Clouts's concentration on the musicality of the poem. What Valéry calls the "constant hovering between sound and sense", which is the quality of suggestiveness in music, allows for the suppression of the precision that words necessarily possess. The importance of this for Clouts can be located in his mistrust of the power of the language he speaks to communicate a sense of Africa. Clouts, in the Introduction

to Jean Lipkin's "Among Stones" recognises and praises her use of the musical qualities of poetry, and the paired silence that must accompany any such sound:

Her poems have sometimes the grace of song and
the stillness that vibrates after the last note.

Clouts's comment on the potential for obscurity created by these techniques is an intelligent summation of perhaps the central concern of the Symbolist enterprise, that is, the wish "to understand reality in our time":

Eliot says, Wallace Stevens says, that obscurity is a function of one's own difficulty in understanding reality in our time, with the great complexity of modern civilization, and how, if there is this great complexity, we must also be able to accommodate it; and if obscurity is the result, that's a part of the complexity of our materials. (EiA 17)

The ambiguities in Clouts's position with regard to the Symbolist model are manifold. The paradox for Clouts in following the symbolist procedure of gradual and partial revelation, and so readily opening himself up to "the charge of thick obscurity that has sometimes been brought against the poems" (letter to Guy Butler, 21.12.66) lies, of course, in the fact that such obfuscation is in direct opposition to the clear, "uncontaminated" vision he sees as fitting for the depiction of the untainted African world. Furthermore, denial of the processes of external time and the reliance on the mind as the creator of meaning mitigates against that sense of a tangible, accessible African world-out-there that Clouts seeks so desperately from the African landscape. Ironically, in the light of Clouts's attempted

reconciliation with the landscape, what de Man calls the "oscillation in the status of the image" (Rhetoric of Romanticism 16)--that delicate balance between direct and imagined vision that occurs in Romantic poetry--becomes in the Symbolist sensibility of a poet like Yeats, a poetic figure of tremendous power for Clouts, a contest resolved essentially in favour of the figural over the natural thing. In the later poetry of Yeats, for example, the ostensibly natural, analogical image is used increasingly to mask an esoteric text. De Man comments that:

Yeats's landscapes have a symbolic meaning prior to their natural appearance, and act as predetermined emblems embedded in a more or less fixed symbolic system which is not derived from the observation of nature. One has therefore to go outside the poem to find the "key" to such symbols. (138-9)

These contradictions are most transparent in Clouts's very earliest poetry. Those early poems, wherein Clouts is still attempting to find a "voice", borrow most heavily and obviously from Symbolist models and as a result are obscure, private and opaque. In addition they offer something of a contradiction through this imitative enterprise, in that the resonances of other poets' work confer on the poems an "authority" that is in contra-distinction to any sense of newness and, associatively, Africanness they might otherwise have offered.

The symbol as complex referent is most apparent in Clouts's earliest poetry. The first poems that Clouts wrote which are represented in the Collected Poems contain the

idea that the ostensible subject of the poem is in fact the key to an ulterior reality. The poems are "Children" and "When Her Love's Assonance Glides", (CP 4) which are misleadingly positioned as the fourth and fifth poem, respectively, in the collection. They are, in fact, the first examples of Clouts's work, in spite of the editors' assertion in the preface that "our first concern was to put [the poems] in chronological order". Both poems come from an early notebook and are dated July 1946, predating any other poem in the Collected Poems, according to evidence from Marge Clouts, the co-editor of the book (letter to Susan Joubert, 9.2.88). In fact, this deliberate oversight in itself seems to point to editorial recognition that neither of these poems is a fittingly strong enough poem to introduce Clouts's oeuvre.

It is difficult to disentangle the complex symbolic strands of the two poems, even bearing in mind the inexperience of the poet who wrote them. Appearing to deal with the interrelatedness of the self and the world, described and given emphasis as an organic process, the symbols in the poems contribute coherently to this thesis only if they are not conceived as abstract or autonomous, as is the conventional realization of the symbol. In "Children", for example, the egg as symbol of fresh vision and thus of the child's perspective is only given explanation (and a partial one, at that), if one reads the image of the "dawn's shell" in conjunction with the

following line, which establishes terms for the referent. The image works visually to suggest the rising sun, but symbolic impact (and therefore thematic significance) is only assured if one takes cognisance of the inference that the embryo (new and life-giving) of the egg "bleeds" because of its correspondence in shape and colour to the orb of the sun that is "red" at sunrise. The abstruse image is suggestive of the complex workings of children's minds, as is its "meaning" closely worked to suggest new life in nature paralleled by new human life.

Similarly, in "When Her Love's Assonance Glides" the images of topography--"the mind's slope blow[s] green"; "gazelles from her sleeping sides" and "the vast alluvial heart"--achieve symbolic accord only if read one with the other. Cumulatively they work as symbol to suggest the interchange of the woman and the world and as a continuation of the symbiosis, the liaison between the poet-lover and his subject-loved one through the language (that is, the "assonance") of the poem. In this way, it can be seen how Clouts uses the symbol not as public, authorised and free-standing, but rather as what Yeats terms the "emotional symbol" which is a personal invention: complex because it is subjective and indiscriminating about its origins since it derives only from the inborn tropism of the poet. The real existence of the symbol is in this way transformed into arbitrary existence, the universal is translated into the local and the private and the oblique quality that results

suggests a mood, rather than attaches a particular meaning to the symbol.

"Children" and "When Her Love's Assonance Glides" can both be considered as attempts by Clouts to emulate the Symbolist model which, by ascribing to Mallarmé's dictum of "les mots allusifs, jamais directs", seeks the suggestive quality of the private vision above all. A guarantee of communicating something that has not been previously poetically exploited seems assured through this process. A paradox is apparent in Clouts's position if one re-examines both the poems, though. The residue of established Symbolist allusions is all too apparent in these youthful poems; Clouts subscribes to a set of symbols established by poets who specifically wish to subvert the convention of regarding the symbol as authority.

"When Her Love's Assonance Glides" is an example of this dichotomy. It is a poem that receives assurance from its own self-containment, in the sense that, through the use of ellipsis, complex metaphoric entanglement and "inexplicable" images, it maintains the illusion of being a "private" vision. The first stanza is challenging in terms of its use of audacious imagery. In the last two lines of the first stanza the equally-emphasised objects of "gazelles" and "a glove" suggest a complementary coupling into a single image that is exciting through the very divergence of its composition; gazelles signifying the wild and the African, a glove containment and "civilization":

When her love's assonance glides
 the mind's slope blows green,
 gladly come her ways of love,
 gazelles from her sleeping sides.
 Her breath warms like a glove.

Nonetheless the same stanza is more than incidentally reminiscent of Valéry's "La Dormeuse II" (Oeuvres 1663), a poem that Clouts was clearly familiar with, as a result of Campbell's translation of it into "The Sleeper", which strongly influenced Clouts's own and later poem of that name (CP 83). Valéry's poem reads:

Ma nuit, le tour dormant de ton flanc pur amène
 Un tiède fragment d'épaule pleine, peu
 Sur ma bouche, et buvant cette vivante, dieu
 Je me tais sur ma rive opposée à l'humaine.

[My night, the drowsy contour of your pure side leads to a warm fragment of ripe shoulder, scarcely touching my mouth; and drinking this live womanliness, a god, I am hushed upon my bank opposite the human being (trans. Crasnow in Modernism 375)]

The imagery of Clouts's poem would seem also to draw poetic sustenance from that recurring refrain of Yeats's poem "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz" (CP 263), which is so poignantly evocative of female beauty:

Two girls in silk kimonos, both
 Beautiful, one a gazelle.

In "Children" the employment by Clouts of the symbol of the bright stars in the constellation of Orion to evoke the suggestion of a reciprocity between the world of the children (with its "small heaven") and the elemental world is an effective one:

Eagles are not so rare
 in their small heaven.
 Orion finds comfort,
 and the endless Seven,

to wheel soft for them.

Once more, the resonances of an earlier Symbolist model which serves as "authority" would appear to compromise Clouts's efforts to create a subjective symbol. The connection between the seven stars and sleeping children had been established by Yeats in "A Cradle Song", published in The Rose in 1893 (CP 45):

The angels are stooping
Above your bed;
They weary of trooping
With the whimpering dead.

God's laughing in Heaven
To see you so good;
The Sailing Seven
Are gay with his mood.

The early and powerful impact on Clouts of Yeats's own symbolic cosmos is shown explicitly in a previously unpublished poem "The Transition of W.B. Yeats", written by Clouts in a notebook and dated January 1947 (see Appendix 4a). Making close reference to individual poems, such as "The Secret Rose" (CP 77) and "Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland" (CP 90), both from The Rose edition referred to above, Clouts traces in rather laboured verse the "transition" of the Irish poet by means of a conscious and tributary use of Yeats's own symbols. The poem charts Yeats's progression from the joyfulness of his early magical symbolism where "his first myth-self" dances with the "feet of sprite and elf" to the final symbolic depiction of the aging poet who painfully comprehends his own mortality and so is able to "break" with his past poetic models and "grow"

into "concentrated strength". In the final line of Clouts's poem the exotic and sensual symbols of Yeats's earlier poetry, drawn from Irish or Indian folklore (represented as "spikenard"), have been replaced by relentless and elemental forces chosen to act as symbol ("flame"):

Here lies Yeats, a singer
 Lost in the last wood,
 Whose early legend eye
 Transfixed a magic mood.

Tangled in the embraces of Cathleen and Hanrahan,
 He sang far, wood-locked ladies
 Forever, forever hidden.

Danced in the ring
 Of his first myth-self
 Doomed to vengeful age
 Feet of sprite and elf.

He strayed to the world one morning
 And shook his eyes from Cathleen's
 For he grew suddenly old
 And his mind broke with pains.
 He felt a stranger on the plains.

In the mind ideas are growth:
 The true roses in the true grove.
 The brain must feel the length
 Of year after year; and ideas move
 Towards age, the concentrated strength.
 Ideas like leaves come in time
 For seasons. Time knows the pace
 And knows when to change man and God,
 Make fairies gnarled and long-eared
 Leprechauns spit flame and not spikenard.

One final example serves once more to illustrate Clouts's early reliance on specific symbolist models, in spite of the obvious paradox this practice embodies. "Out of Time" (CP 5), which Marge Clouts suggests was written in the early 1950s (interview, Longborough, 14.12.87) is the poem that comes after "When Her Love's Assonance Glides" in the Collected Poems. Its thematic connection to the later

"What Remains" (CP 23) becomes clear if one recognizes each poem to be a celebration of the human "lack of knowing" which attests to something more in nature than is possible for human comprehension. In "Out of Time" human logic and vision have to accommodate this unknown by conferring on it the nomenclature "nothing":

O questions out of time, I awake
to the dazzle of nothing upon the wall.
It rings, it runs on my arm.
Nothing at all stays calm.

Seasonless and landless light,
inconsequential joy.
The window and the window sill
are summoned very clear with rays

Confirming an ethereal nought
in every value mind has brought.

Through a process of semantic transfiguration "nothing at all stays calm" can be read equally, therefore, to mean "that which has an existence as "nothing" is calm" as much as it could suggest that "no one thing remains calm". In "What Remains" and "Out of Time" the use of the negative is posited as the only way in which this condition named as "nothing" can be communicated. Clouts chooses as symbol the season which embodies lack in "What Remains" to suggest plenty. In "Out of Time" he similarly queries the symbolic certainty of images of seasonal change--"Sunspume, rainbark; leaves coming down?"--and in so doing denotes temporal changelessness. Both poems make use of the "alternative" possibilities inherent in the symbol: Clouts takes the underside of the symbol, so to speak, and appears to use it to say something entirely new, in a unique way. Clouts

takes that which has negative associations and inverts it, so employing it in its antithetical form:

That this lack is the prime warmth of winter
is not the cold admission that it sounds.

Far from being novel, both poems bear witness to the early and famous Wallace Stevens poem "The Snow Man" (CP 9). Stevens colludes the natural and human worlds through the persona's transformation into a "snow man" as he identifies with the winter landscape. In the course of the poem Stevens reconstitutes "winter" as symbol by inverting its conventional and pejoratively negative signification, and powerfully asserting in its place the positive qualities of the "nothing" that comprises the universe in its totality:

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

This sense of "nothing", used positively in the early poetry becomes, finally and less positively, expressive of Clouts's entire poetic enterprise. As the later chapters will argue, as Clouts moves further and further away from his youthful poetry the inadequacies and internal

contradictions of the models he adopts become increasingly apparent to him as part of the more general sense he comes to have that his poetry fails to realize the African world. In his late poetry he seems no longer able or willing to reconcile late-Romantic landscape depiction with his sense of the African world. It would appear that Clouts is not prepared any longer to try to reconcile such a model through a stylistic amendment; a fitting of the old hand into the new (but well-tailored) glove, as it were. In his last poems Clouts seems to write a poetry that appears to be little other than form, stripped of content, as he dispenses with the uneasy alliance he attempted to manage in the earlier poetry with models of Romanticism and of Symbolism. Instead of replacing such an alliance, Clouts opts for only part of Symbolism's model: that which offers to him what appears to be his only possibility for successful rendition of his poetic task; that is, the reconstitution of the purity that Africa represents for him in the poem. As such, he concentrates exclusively on Symbolism's unconventional and original structural and stylistic possibilities. This has the effect of leaving such poems floundering and without substance, reduced to a kind of stylistic acrobatics. The reader is not allowed to follow the trajectory of such a poem; it never manages to ground itself. In spite of a continuing sense of locale in Clouts's poetry the reader and the poet never gain access to it: the effect is of a kind of free floating within the poem, characterized by the eternal

play of signifiers, forever sundered and shifting.

Suspicion of the role of language to connote the meaning that he desires in the poem further compels Clouts to reside in semantic uncertainty and linguistic inaccessibility.

Clouts appears to radicalize his use of the allusive, elliptical qualities of Symbolism. In "Wat die Hart van Vol is" (CP 118) Clouts rejects the tyranny of the human world that marks the failure of his exile, where "Big Ben" has simply replaced "Baas Ben". The world and the poem must be reduced to the uncountable and the immeasurable: the apparatus of the "cyclotron" is invoked as metaphor, suggesting that the size of the atom has become for Clouts's poetic eye and poetic craft the true measure of reality; the poem is fragmented, broken, comprised of minutiae that are deliberately beyond human cognitive reach. The poem resembles "Residuum" (CP 78), in its "jumping" quality but a sense of breakdown, rather the unity of the earlier poem, is suggested in this poem by the invocation of the disparate, the distant and the semantically unfixed--to extend Clouts's metaphor the measurement of nuclear power, a sense of fission rather than of fusion is encouraged:

One country's laws are nothing
as porcupine quills
besiege
the cyclotron.
I hear the faint screams of the slaves.

"Table Mountain" (CP 128) is a poem that has quite specific parallels with both Stevens's "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" (CP 465-489) and William Carlos Williams's "To

Have Done Nothing" (Selected Poems 47) in its play on the metafictional qualities of the poem. It is a poem that declares its own transitory status as a poem, explicitly registering its own inadequacy to transcribe the world. The play between signifier and signified is shown to be ever arbitrary: antonyms are interchangeable as mere words and the descriptive power of the pronoun is negligible for its status is ever-shifting and re-negotiable:

These waters bright waters they
 darken the stones they
 whiten the stones
 they darken. They
 yes they (a drenched pronoun) they (life
 summons, completes, what words never can,
 but a word can look everywhere) they
 they (think of it--now
 I stray from the water--
 Universe, Cosmos, runs through a word
 Return to the pronoun)
 Darken us lighten us
 lighten us darken us.

The contrast that a poem such as this sets up with the work of certain other poets Clouts admired furthers the critical argument that much of Clouts's poetry is unwittingly marked by paradox. Marge Clouts has testified to the interest Clouts showed in other "colonial" poets, namely A.D. Hope, the Australian poet, and Irving Layton of Canada; he admired Hugh Macdiarmid and George Seferis and showed a lifelong devotion to Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda and Boris Pasternak (interview, Longborough 14.12.87). In a letter to Butler (7.9.83), Marge Clouts mentions that "[p]oets such as yourself, Montale, Neruda, Pasternak and Frost were very important to [Clouts] as they

were always rooted in their homeland." The common factor with regard to these poets, for Clouts, would appear to be the sense of nationalism they share and that is reflected in their poetry. Layton, for example, a Jewish Canadian, writes poems that reflect his diverse heritage but that are marked by a sense of assurance with regard to his own position in the Canadian world. In poems from A Red Carpet for the Sun such as "Anglo-Canadian" (150), "Imperial" (64) and "Portrait" (119) he practises scalding criticism of Loyalism and colonialism:

Crazed these many years dwells Right
In the tower above the high pink nose ("Portrait")

A passionate sense of commitment to social justice and to the country of their birth characterizes much of the poetry of Neruda, and of Macdiarmid who can declare the existence of "my people's very life within my own" in "Conception" (160):

I have reached the stage when questioning myself
Concerning the love of Scotland and turning inward
Upon my own spirit, there comes to me
The suggestion of something utterly unlike
All that is commonly meant by loving
One's country, one's brother man, not altruism,
Not kindly feeling, not outward-looking sympathy,
But something different from all these,
Something almost awful in its range,
Its rage and fire, its scope and height and depth,
Something growing up, within my own
Separate and isolated lonely being,
Within the dark deep of my own consciousness,
Flowering in my own heart, my own self
...
--This terrible blinding discovery
Of Scotland in me, and I in Scotland,

Borges writes poems that place him "face to face / with my South American destiny" (SP 95) and that celebrate his

sense of rootedness ("Montevideo" 43; "The Mythical Founding of Buenos Aires" 61). Clouts's use of the motif of the pebble to denote a sense of place receives reinforcement from the certainty of the image connoted in Seferis's "Mycenae" (49), where stones, located in a landscape that is at once familiar and ancient, communicate a sense of belonging to the poet:

I saw in the night
 The sharp peak of the mountain
 I saw the plain flooded
 In the light of an invisible moon
 I saw, on turning my head,
 Black stones huddled
 And my life stretched like a cord
 The beginning and the end
 The last moment;

...
 These stones I have carried as long as I endured
 These stones I have loved as long as I endured
 These stones, my destiny.
 Wounded by my own soil
 Tortured by my own garment
 Condemned by my own gods
 These stones.

Similarly, Montale, writing of a wish for unification with the landscape in "I would have chosen" (Poems 37) says:

I would have chosen to feel myself rough and
 elemental
 like the pebbles that you roll,
 gnawed through and through by the salt;

Those American poets that Clouts admires--Frost, Robert Lowell, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore and Stevens--are all poets who achieve an idiom that is suited to the depiction of their American world. Their English is a language transformed into American that is largely stripped of a sense of the literary and the etymological and that manages clarity, brevity and concretization. Robert

Lowell's "Imitations" (1958) appears to have impressed Clouts with the sense of certainty in terms of the use of English that Lowell's translations of Rilke, Montale and Pasternak offer.

These poets, stylistically diverse as they may be, all ascribe to Stevens's dictum of "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself" (CP 534). Not surprisingly, Clouts feels a sense of antipathy towards those poets who practise "ideas" in their poetry to the exclusion of the sense of the tangible. He scorns such poets in "Contemporary British Poets" (CP 133) for the concentration in their poetry on the cerebral and the detached:

It is irony that marries
locksmiths. True--but
why does every poet fix one
waving to his quill like ostrich feathers?

If he wants to tickle
his bloodstream,
well, let him try the whole ostrich
running so giddily, the whole daft bird
that doesn't take so easily to having its arse
plucked
for a Serious Poem About Life,
with lots of feathers in it.

The ostrich kicks so hard that few can ride him.
Bounce is just a word,
yes, but it hurts where it hurts.

The stones banged by so fast that they flew.

O world

I could not

I could not

think of you!

The poem is strongly reminiscent in tone and subject matter of that poem wherein Campbell rails against "Some South African Novelists" (CP 168):

You praise the firm restraint with which they
write--
I'm with you there, of course:
They use the snaffle and the curb all right
But where's the bloody horse?

Layton, in a poem Clouts most certainly read, the last poem of Here and Now, "The Modern Poet", offers caustic comment on Auden and his successors:

Since Auden set the fashion,
Our poets grow tame;
They are quite without passion,
They live without blame.
Like a respectable dame.

Butler, in "Bellowing Hippopotamus", a commemorative poem to Clouts published in 1982, suggests who the poets might be that Clouts criticizes. Butler addresses a blue faience hippopotamus made in Egypt in 1600 BC in the British Museum in tribute to Clouts's own "Dawn Hippo" and compares this to poems by Eliot, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes:

Unlike Eliot
world-weary that a wheel should turn
you do not
yawn
at dawn
nor grind out flinty blues
like Peat Heaney or Hawk Hughes.

In "Contemporary British Poets" Clouts makes Campbell's horse into an ostrich, an African bird, to denote a sense of the importance of the tangible and the real, just as the hippo is made emblematic of Africa in Clouts's earlier poem. The irony in terms of a critical assessment of Clouts's

poetry resides in the fact that such natural images offer so marked a contrast with the general expression in Clouts's poetry: the rendition of the African animal in a single poem cannot save the majority of the poems from suffering from that very quality of detachment Clouts delivers his invective against. By virtue of his enduring debt to Symbolism the dimension of style that is ever-present in Clouts's poetry is detachment, for Symbolism emphasizes the importance of sense beyond words and works with a syntax that is close to the logic of consciousness itself. The consequences of the concentration on a personal and shifting referent and the "difficulty" that is perceived to be its necessary accompaniment are significant and problematic and become clear when one examines issues of language and silence in Clouts's poetry as a whole.

CHAPTER III

The Unresolved Shibboleth: Clouts and the problems of language

In exploring Clouts's relationships with other poetic models, it has been suggested that he is motivated, above all, by a desire to communicate with the African landscape, which for him embodies the intrinsic ontological primacy of the object.

This chapter will propose that Clouts identifies language to be that which, paradoxically, betrays this project, because its role as mediator causes it to make the separation between human perception and the pure essence of the natural entity explicit. It will be argued that in Clouts's poetry the trope of inadequate discourse, whereby words fail to communicate the novelty and the immediacy of the Africa presented to consciousness, occupies a vital position.

For Clouts, a further dimension to the problem of language resides in the notion that language, as the primary tool of self-consciousness, fulfills an elementary function in the formulation of poetic identity. The word-world dichotomy is further complicated for Clouts by the fact that the language he employs, English, has even slighter claim to identification with the sundered object, Africa. Through its status as an import, the English language is removed by yet another dimension, due to the fact that it cannot lay claim to having originated in response to a specifically African source. Clouts's quest for an African identity through his poetry is continually compromised by this consideration.

This chapter will trace, through an examination of individual poems, the exploration of language-as-problem which Clouts undertakes,

and which stands as the underpinning theme of his work as a whole. The contention will be that Clouts responds to the perpetual erosion of the relationship between words and matter, and the accompanying problem of his own identity as "African" through language in a variety of ways. It will be maintained that his changing response can be charted in accordance with a chronological schema for the poetry.

The chapter will move on to consider in some detail how Clouts in his early poetry (written before 1954) is primarily concerned with evolving a metaphysics of sympathy between the poet and the African landscape. The poetry shows increasing evidence of a dimension of self-doubt in Clouts's worldview that queries his ability to effect any sort of harmonious understanding with the landscape. More and more, Clouts's project is subverted by the very process of the poetry itself. As a result of the continual undercutting of his own argument within that very argument Clouts turns increasingly to considerations of how and why the poet writes.

In the poetry that comes after the early 1950s, Clouts's attempts to forge some sort of reconciliation within the confines of the poem are subsumed by Clouts's overriding concern with the problematics of representation. In this later poetry, language and its role are foregrounded in a number of ways. One response to the schism between language and what it represents is Clouts's use of metafiction, which anticipates this discord. The metafictional poem insists on itself as production, and so revises the conventional idea which maintains that writing is the transparent rendition of reality or lived experience. In this way Clouts can ingeniously make provision for the inadequacy of his language.

A second tactic aimed at working with the problematics of representation is Clouts's adoption of Heraclitean riddles which, as examples of pre-Socratic thought, confound what J. Hillis Miller in Poets of Reality calls the "double bifurcation" of our contemporary world (69). Instead, Heraclitean principles operate outside of our post-Cartesian comprehension, insisting as they do on unity in multiplicity and the reconcilable antinomy of all things. In this way Clouts can allow conceptual "difficulty" to suggest something that lies beyond the linguistic provisions made to accommodate our "world". This of course illustrates the insecurity of language in terms of its ability to contain the world-out-there.

This idea of precariousness leads on to a discussion of a third position Clouts maintains in order to cope with the problems of language and linguistic identification. This is, quite simply, to take up no position, or rather to take, in the poetry, a position of utmost precariousness as poet in relation to the landscape. It can be observed that Clouts practises self-effacement in relation to the natural environment, attempting in a poem such as "Residuum" what Coetzee calls

...a kind of flickering of poetic force from object to object, the poem refusing to settle, since as soon as it is settled it would be absorbed into the object (White Writing 173).

In his desire to draw closer and closer to the ontological status of the object, a further poetic manoeuvre Clouts utilizes in "Residuum" and other poems is the technique of leaving free spaces within and around the poems that work to fill out or fill in what language is incapable of doing.

A fourth reply to the problem of language-as-representation and identity through language in his poetry is Clouts's adoption of poetic personae who, for him, are closer to the primacy of the natural African world by virtue of their status as indigenous people. It will be argued that Clouts attempts, in the "Hotknife" poems, to give voice to a genuinely South African idiom by reproducing the patois of the so-called "coloured" speaker. That this project becomes problematic, in the sense that it operates to set up an unwitting racial hierarchy, will be made clear through the examination of other poems that centre around African protagonists. In a poem such as "Firebowl" (CP 106), the "Bushman" seems to achieve oneness with the environment by being reduced to inarticulateness--the only sounds he is connected with are undecipherable clicks and crude verbal approximations of the noises of the fire, or the hunt. In "Over the Side" (CP 104) the fisherman, "Ou Pellie", is so integrated with the environment that he is figuratively depicted as the prey he hunts. In both these poems the Africans have achieved identification with the primacy of the African world at the cost of their humanness. They become objects together with the object, Africa.

Finally, then, the proposition will be advanced that Clouts, having worked through language-as-problem in a number of ways, ultimately finds the resolutions he proposes to be inadequate. The language, and therefore the identity, of the real Africa eludes him. He allows the silences that are crucial to many of his later poems, notated as spaces between the lines, to expand until they cover the words. Clouts's final solution to Africa and to the language that

cannot capture its essence is to withdraw from it into exile and poetic non-production.

Some day I shall find some magic words to make the knucklebones shiver, perhaps to even charm [sic] all the talk of "models of reality" into pure recognition. (Letter from Sydney Clouts to Guy Butler, 22.12.64)

The Romantic paradigm conceives of human beings as essentially alienated from the natural world they inhabit, this condition arising from the "Romantic myth" identified by Northrop Frye, that

...Man has "fallen" not so much into sin as into the original sin of self-consciousness...where, because his consciousness is what separates him from nature, the primary conscious feeling is one of separation (17).

Clouts, in accordance with this generalization of Romanticism, recognises this separation as part of his human condition and seeks "pure recognition" with nature in his poetry, attempting to discard "models of reality" for reality itself.

1. The supremacy of the object:

In Clouts's poetry the paramountcy of identification with the ontological primacy of the object takes on a particular significance. Immersion into the African environment has been shown to be the most important component of Clouts's poetic project, for the landscape is the key to integration with the African world, for Clouts. The depiction of such landscape and the natural objects that comprise it must illustrate Clouts's suitability to belong in such an environment. The object must be afforded prominent status in the poem as a result.

In a poem such as "Epic" (CP 67), for example, the supremacy of the original object over "secondary" human attempts to describe or contain it is emphatically given voice. In the poem, pointedly not

written in epic form, human knowledge which is the "piled harvest", is shown to be inconsequential and powerless when confronted with primordial, consuming fire:

'I...and I...have seen
the knower and the known become the wood
of the roaring skyline of this neighbourhood.'

In the poem "Lifebelt Post" (CP 109), the title is metaphoric, and ironic as a result. The post stands in stark, minimalistic contrast to the "wave / by wave in the million" that breaks on the shoreline next to it. The man-made construct, intended to "save" people from the sea, is patently unable to resist the corrosive and rotting effects of the actions of the salt and the water. The lifebelt post functions, at this most accessible level, as a metaphor for the transience and paltriness of human edifices intended to cope with immutable natural forces. Irony is confirmed by the very effort of investing the post with metaphoric significance, for this makes it even less substantial and effective as a reality. As Clouts remarked of the poem to Guy Butler in 1975: "You can't save life with metaphor." The power of the object is not conferred on it by some grand poetic gesture (like metaphor) that allows it greater significance. The lifebelt post "falls" and with it, too, is

fallen, that power of things
which none needs give to things ...

The poem would seem to suggest that objects receive sufficient force by simply existing and then disintegrating in time divorced from the extraneous figural "truths" extended to them by the poetic sensibility:

when I walk into a room shall all
its objects be accomplices?
or walking out are stars not stars enough

without this heavier multiple of grief?

This chapter will explore how Clouts attempts to deliver Africa on the page. In so doing, it will concern itself with the vital role that language must play in this process. A developmental paradigm will be offered, that shows how Clouts moves from a position of relative confidence in relation to his appointed task, to one where the natural object appears increasingly resistant to the poet and to the poem. The emphasis on the paramountcy of the object, unconstrained by the human subject, becomes more pronounced in the late poetry. Exaggerated concern with the uncontaminated object freed from poetic appropriation marks the loss of a sense of the reconciling possibilities of the poem for Clouts, and the location of a fair number of poems characterized by this feature in the "Unpublished Poems (1966-82)" section of Collected Poems might point to the dissatisfaction Clouts felt towards such poems.

In "Unpublished Poems (1966-1982)" several poems that assert the power of the object follow one another in close succession and each of the poems, in its own way, betrays Clouts's lack of poetic confidence. "I breathed the first shivers of daylight" (CP 124) is a poem where Clouts implies that he, as poet, discards the task of interpreting the natural world ("who interprets the shadows in the stars") and chooses instead to simply record the "primitive majesty" of a single shell:

I have taken this one shell;
I have laid it moist and round in the midst of life,
there it remains, containing nothing but itself

This apparently uncomplicated gesture is ironized by reference to other literary models and by the use of elaborate metaphoric terms,

even as this reference is a disarming attempt on Clouts's part to forestall and deny such reliance:

Shelley's dome transformed into fertile splinters.
Life breaks life and stores the concise fragments.

The reference to "seahorn messiah of the gathering currents" infers, moreover, that the description carries with it an ideology that works in opposition to the declared task of simply registering the object.

In the short poem, "Let me not be the firetongs" (CP 135), also contained in the "Unpublished Poems 1966-1982" section of Collected Poems, Clouts asserts once more the primacy of the object over the tool employed by people to manipulate it. The "thing itself", the "black coal" and the "dancing" ash it becomes in the fire (the process itself crucial to a sense of the dynamic of the natural world) is contrasted to the "artifice" of the firetongs and the chandeliers:

Let me not be the firetongs
but the black coal
thrust without artifice
into the fire
by the firetongs

Where the chandeliers are turning
and the ash is dancing.

The illegitimacy of Clouts's position with regard to his declared preference is that the poem offers of course the analogical parallel with the firetongs and, by its very definition as literary construct, it can never be "without artifice".

"Genius" (CP 134) asserts that the "genius" is the one who refutes the supremacy of the emotional or cerebral life in favour of the first principles that govern natural life--"the heart...hidden in the lion's belly." "Genius" would appear to be located in the ability to enter into "the feast" that is instinctual living. The lion,

claiming the proverbial "lion's share" with the arrogance of knowing he is "the crucial beast", enjoys the prestige of being the predator who engages at first hand with his prey; the jackal, secondary and scavenging, "howls" for "the central" but is in fact always peripheral to the primacy of the hunt and kill:

What is genius? An instinct for the feast.
 Jackals howling for 'the central' have come too late.
 The heart is already hidden in the lion's belly.
 It thanks the crucial beast for being the first.

The poem operates as a kind of allegory for the importance of the primary: for Clouts it is this crucial ingredient in nature that the poet needs to capture in poetry. "[G]enius" can be identified as the ability to offer first-hand engagement with the primary, natural world in a poem, something that for Clouts seems ever more impossible.

2. Language as representation:

That the poet attempts to use the most essential tool of the conscious mind, language, in order to reconcile the human subject and the natural object is a paradox that Clouts is aware of when he says:

Our knowledge separates us from the world we know. We acknowledge this apartness which is secondary and unavoidable, yet strive for a unity which seems impossible but is the only really desirable end beyond art. (BBC talk in CP 142)

Language as problem, by virtue of the role it plays in drawing attention to the schism that exists between the poet and the world around him (in this way subverting the objective of "pure recognition"), is a theme that is played out continually in Clouts's poetry.

As the examples have shown, for Clouts the "impossible" unity he seeks is complicated for him still further by the fact that the object

adopts a specific guise--that of the African land and seascape and its constituent parts--which for him best represents the unsullied immediacy of nature. If the world is the African landscape then Clouts's identification with such a world is essential for his identity as an African.

To this end, Clouts attempts to discover a language that will facilitate this "Africanhood". That the "magic words" he writes of to Butler in his letter are linked to a secret or encoded African language is obvious. That he is denied access to this "magic" language, by virtue of his European heritage, is made clear in the statement he uttered, again to Butler, in London in 1975:

I get broken up with my own stuff because I am obsessed with this secret language which Africa will produce out of English. But I am not aboriginally African. I am a South African Jewish writer who writes in English. I wanted to create South African poetry and a new language for it--an aboriginal language which fulfills not present but future aspirations. In two hundred years' time people will see it. But now I see that no language can have this sort of crazy promise about it. My language is not some sort of African vulgate, although I would love it to be that. (EiA 88-9)

The idea of a "shibboleth" would appear to describe Clouts's conception of his language vis à vis Africa fittingly. The term "shibboleth" is employed by Clouts in "Prince Henry the Navigator" (CP 72). As Prince Henry's ship approaches the horizon, manifested as a "blackness" which "starts to rise" at the edge of his vision, he is confronted with "the summit of perception" which is the lucidity suggested by the purely natural character of wild Africa. However, there is the suggestion, posited only tentatively by virtue of the unforceful auxiliary verb "can", that this contact with the "raw images" that Africa offers might drive "the sturdy mind" of this cultured European into disarray:

unkempt alarming skies

that can torment the sturdy mind
to grief or shibboleth.

There is the suggestion that, confronted by Africa, Prince Henry may very well be faced with the realization that he speaks an exclusive language, incomprehensible to Africa. His language may be a "shibboleth" that functions to brand him as outsider: the language he speaks may offer the truest test as to his fitness to belong in Africa.

In an earlier version of "A Portrait of Prince Henry" (CP 138) this European Renaissance man is shown to be in possession of all the mechanisms of fluent, cultured language ("a man 'of perfect speech'"). Yet he is equally distinguished by being "conspicuous in nature":

conspicuous in nature,
a man 'of perfect speech'
in perfect isolation,
conservative of each

Although this phrase suggests the superiority of his demeanour (the "each" suggesting he conserves both his privacy and his proficiency in language) it draws attention equally to the fact that he stands out amidst the natural world as his caravel is tossed "On Cape St. Vincent's jagged / promontory's crown." The man-made apparatus, the ship Prince Henry sails, marks him as distinct from the sea he moves on. His "perfect speech", the indication of a sophisticated mind, is what facilitates the ingenious invention that sets him apart from the integrated natural environment.

Clouts, as the heir of these early European explorers and colonizers, inherits a transplanted European language. The peculiarities of this language function for him as a "shibboleth" to

identify him as an intruder in Africa. Clouts takes on the task of discarding this burden in his poetry, and substituting in its stead what he calls a "new language". He hopes, through this novel language, to create a bond with the Africa that continually eludes him.

3. Language as development in the poetry:

It could be argued that this project of discovering a "new language" becomes progressively more difficult for Clouts. Clouts's earlier poetry is concerned with facilitating communication between the poet and the landscape, and this task is premised on the notion that such communication is possible. Concerned with the metaphysics of sympathy between poet and the world, it presumes the feasibility of establishing some sort of relationship by way of a suitable language. This poetry implicitly assumes that the conceptual framework, set up through language to enable perception of the material world, is appropriate and that meaning is sufficiently "fixed" for the sign and referent to operate together.

Only in his later poetry, it will be contended, does Clouts in fact reject this uncomplicated notion of language, as his poetry becomes more and more preoccupied with analyzing the efficacy of his own strategies of representation. The increased concentration in Clouts's later poetry on the problematics of representation (that is, on the very possibility of the existence of a "new language") is indicative of an exaggerated awareness on his part of the futility of this unifying poetic enterprise.

A) The early poetry: the metaphysics of sympathy

In much of Clouts's poetry that forms part of the early "Terrapin" collection and that was therefore written before 1954 (see Appendix 1) there is an attempt to negotiate a way through the state of permanent unease that is perceived to exist between the self-sufficient object and the inevitably intrusive self. That this is achievable only through the ordering and synthesizing of the African vista or its constituent parts into a poem, with the "full penetrant eye" ("Intimate Lightning", CP 69) acting as the conduit, is apparent in Clouts's opening entreaty in "The Eye" (CP 35; date uncertain, Appendix 3a) to "Let it in".

The early poems operate with varying degrees of confidence in affording this penetration into the landscape, but they are all linked together by a sense of the possible. They would all appear to attempt to fulfill what Clouts sees as the most important prerequisite for poetry, namely, the existence within the poet of "a state which is deeply integrated" (EiA 18). This can then facilitate what Butler seeks in Clouts's poetry, namely the "synchronised explorations of outer and inner worlds" (EiA 5).

In a few of these early poems Clouts's yearning for immersion into the landscape, through sight, does seem to come to fruition within the poem. An example of this is "Pathways" (CP 33; "Terrapin" 31). In the poem the sight of blades of grass is visually redolent of straight, linear "pathways" that facilitate interaction between the poet and the world. The image of the "sun preach[ing] inevitable light" allows for literal illumination and the sharp points of the grass that appear to "prick" the air pierce a way into the vacuum that

can then be filled by the contemplative poetic mind. The points of grass come to be equated with sequential points of thought, and the grass is transposed into the mind through the imagination:

My mind is launched into its contemplation.
Point after point is married. Mind with grass.

Through metaphoric integration in the poem (the image of the grass working particularly well in terms of scale to suggest that the "minutiae" of the landscape can accommodate the mind's passage), the reconciliation of the poet and the object is achieved through language. That this integration with the African landscape is essential for Clouts's poetic, and African, identity has been discussed. What makes the imagery in "Pathways" particularly significant in confirming this is the heavy debt the poem owes to Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. In "Song of Myself" the sight that launches Whitman the poet persona into a confirmation of his selfhood and his American communalism is that of a spear of summer grass:

I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
for every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease...observing a spear of summer
grass. (25)

The sight of the grass affords Whitman, as the poem progresses, identity as an American; Clouts, by echoing Whitman's poem, might hope for a similar sense of connection with his, African, environment.

In "To the Winter Rain" (CP 6; "Terrapin" 10) the real African rain that the poet persona is immersed in operates figurally to suggest the baptism ritual, whereby identity is queried and confirmed through the absorption of water:

The question Who am I? consists

in drenching the spirit with drops that delve.
 Their purity is not their peace,
 but sore self-knowledge they bring.

The location of the self within this landscape precipitates the "song" of the poet, that in turn employs water and thunderstorm imagery to portray the qualities that comprise his essential inner life:

I make them into myself and I sing
 for the sake of whatever I save as a man
 from much confusion and much concern:
 great elemental dew distilled
 from electrical vapours, the personal life.

Ultimately though, unlike "Pathways", the link between self-revelation and a part of the natural African landscape (repeated in the later "Intimate Lightning", CP 69) is found to be inadequate in "To the Winter Rain". The lightning does not offer up mimetic irreproachability ("barrages of lightning mirror but mild"), for "the personal life" is "...too fluent for conscience, too chained for love". The introduction of an adjective descriptive of word usage suggests that the life of the poet-persona is paradoxically verbose and constrained. Language, finally, fails to make the natural world comprehensible, or to translate it adequately into human terms.

Language acts as the temporal inhibitor and spatial infiltrator in disrupting the spontaneous correlation whereby the poet's eye responds to the action or existence of the object by absorbing it through sight. To counter this, Clouts in "The Beginning" (CP 2; "Terrapin" 32) would appear to invoke the idea of poetic language and the object achieving (almost) simultaneous origination. Thus, the "sense" in the line "everywhere the sense must be close to follow" suggests both the near-immediate sensory reaction of the poet, as well

as the desire for a convergent rational explanation, operational through language. This proximal situation, where poet and object appear to "begin" together, is played out in the course of the poem:

The mood of an eye,
the flat windy shine
of leaves
of the poplars
ending
as you blink

The subjective vision gives the illusion of reciprocity--the poplar leaves "exist" only in so far as the eye receives them. Indeed, the effect of the observer actively contributing to the world would seem to be carried further, in this instance, to suggest that the world somehow depends on a human agent.

This balancing of dependency within the poem confers equal weight on both observer and world in terms of ontological status. However, this can be seen to be no more than a persuasive attempt on Clouts's part to circumvent the unequivocal assertion that

...words do not originate like flowers. They need to find the mode of their beginning in another entity; they originate out of nothing, in an attempt to be the first words that will arise as if they were natural objects, and, as such, they remain essentially distinct from natural entities (de Man, The Rhetoric of Romanticism 6).

The evolution of a metaphysics of sympathy through sight and language is similarly worked through in "The Inescapable" (CP 7), a poem that is the next-but one to "The Beginning" in the original "Terrapin" collection ("Terrapin" 34). Here sight is transferred from the poet to the object: "The clouds have kept watch on us". Presumably as a result of this watching, the clouds find the object of their viewing, humanity, to be wanting. Their wrath is evident from

their meteorically inexplicable behaviour ("It is not a winter's day,
/ not a sudden summer storm"). They descend over the mountain:

the clouds are falling;
heavy, heavy clouds.

As they fall lower still, they appear as an "intolerable shroud", and the poet awaits the inevitable human forfeiture of sight: "When will the eyes dull?" Already by the end of the poem the person the speaker views, and who views him in return, has "shadowed" eyes and "greying" hands. In desperation the speaker sets up a rune that attempts to ward off "clouded" sight. It tries to instill in its place the power of human language, that, for the speaker is facilitated through visual stimulus and the transposition of this onto paper:

I must keep saying,
saying and saying:
your hands are lovely;
bright, bright are your eyes.

Although the poem ends in the present tense mode, with the poetic action seemingly paralysed, the implicit theme of the poem makes nonsense of a reading of this as a powerful linguistic "charm". The bodily degeneration and the images of inevitable progression towards death underscore the theme of human mortality that is clear from the title. The final analogy for the reader must be that as humans cannot escape death, so can the powers of poetic language not constrain the intractability of the object.

The poems "The Mole" (CP 81) and "Animal Kingdom" (CP 76) placed consecutively in the "Terrapin" collection (pages 23 and 26 respectively), attempt once more to establish an accord between the poet and the natural African world. This is done through the animalizing of the poet-persona within the action of the poem. The

observer in this way ceases to be passive, but instead contributes to the world within the poem. Clouts justifies the choice of the mole because of the importance to him of "the fact of being able to identify with things seen and unseen" (EiA 3). To this end the unseen mole, employing the first-person pronoun, articulates the unspoken. As the mole within the poem can feel, in the final stanza, the light that its blindness prevents it from seeing, so Clouts seems to be suggesting that the subject through an imaginative act of sympathy can conceive of a mole-life it can never experience, as, by extension, can the poet.

In "Animal Kingdom" this inclusive vision again allows cerebral activity to conscript animal life into the poetic vision, and into the poem. The repetitive subject-predicate formation of the first line of the final stanza, followed by the strong verbs of action in the next three lines all "take place" in effect within the overarching adverbial phrase, "in my thought", of the fourth line:

I want I have I give I love
 I answer the senior core of the sun
 I speed the body of the warm gazelle
 I lift the elephant high in my thought

Clouts would seem to infer that, through the absorption of animal life in these poems, the poet can take on the properties of natural phenomena and effect their co-agency in the poem:

Locust locust leap with me
 water flow and mirror me.

The final effect of the incantation which completes "Animal Kingdom" subverts this easy confidence, however. Like "The Inescapable" the poem ends with an invocation (Clouts's so-called "magic words") that indicates a covert perception of the lack of

mastery the poet has over his own descriptive powers to capture the quintessential African world. Clouts is shown to be in the grip of his own shibboleth.

Imaginative integration provides the same theme for three further "Terrapin", and therefore early, poems but here the stress in each poem is on the pivotal role of literature in this procedure. "Reading an Old Book Near Fish Hoek" (CP 19; "Terrapin" 14), "Poetry is Death Cast Out" (CP 85; "Terrapin" 33) and "Grains" (CP 17; "Terrapin" 43) are poems that stress the interchange between literary language and the landscape.

The title "Reading an Old Book Near Fish Hoek" emphatically sets the poetic scene within the world--the context is particularized and named. The book about nature is compared with nature; the "mould" of its "eighteenth century vellum" is as "slow lichen on rocks by the sea" and the "nimble gold" of its writing is like "this hidden sun". More importantly, the book is shown to be in active communion with nature. Within the poem there is the conflation of narrated and lived worlds, that attests to the mutuality of the written and the experienced:

...and a cloud
of autumnal tinges drifts across the heaven of each page
A Book of Flower Poems fills the warm blotched world.

Just as the book attests to the transcendental qualities of the written word, so too does poetry, according to the explicit aphorism: "Poetry is Death Cast Out". This poem is a testament to the permanence of a poetry that draws from an enduring natural source, "a stream with a singing sound". In "Grains", similarly, the literary enterprise is confirmed as vital to human survival. Clouts uses the

metaphor of bread, the staple food, to advance the notion that the written word is a natural necessity.

In the poem the literary text (significantly comprised of the poems of Clouts's most influential poetic precursor, Campbell, although direct reference is also made to the influence of Milton and Coleridge), ostensibly containing the metaphysical, is transmuted into the physical. "'Adamastor' / bound in blue / 'Autumn', 'The Serf'" provide actual sustenance as they are transformed, within Clouts's poem, into bread. The metamorphosis is tangible and vivid. The books "lose / their binding and crumble" as the physical compositions of the components of bread and books are reduced to their lowest common denominator, and union is achieved, establishing a sacramental relationship:

atoms mixed
bread rhyming,

By establishing this elemental bond Clouts can then motivate a harmony between the observer and the landscape. As in "The Beginning" (CP 2) the active contribution of the subject to the world is given emphasis. The world is apparently made over to represent the landscape of the subject. External nature is seemingly absorbed in the compass of the poet's mind:

sharing all
by appetite
and thought, our lens:

gumtrees curving
against the sky;

Clouts's exploration, in his poetry written before 1954, of an affinity between the autonomous object and the ministering subject, within the precincts of the poem, is successful according to its own

terms only in varying degrees. It is nonetheless a reasonably confident exploration. It indicates a reliance on the capabilities of the poetic mind to shape its own communicative instruments. In this way it tries to forge its own sense of self within the abstruse landscape. As often, however, as the sympathetic relationship between the poet and the landscape is temporarily erected (or at least attempted) within these poems, so too is the inexorable breakdown of this structure charted in poems of the same period; and increasingly in poems written after this time. Significantly, the disintegration between the poet and the natural world is evident in those poems that highlight the role of language.

In "Song of Ink" (CP 10; "Terrapin" 36) the poet, depicting himself as the archetypal grey suburban citizen ("that cuffed anonymous / bald man") is distanced from nature to the extent that his is a "folio landscape". He yearns for the intrepidity of the natural object, however, and within the folio-vision of his own "landscape" can recall and re-present the "beauty of the wave", albeit only by way of the rigid and uncompromising simile:

... yet my eye
involved in beauty like the wave,
being an eye, longs to be brave.

The environment he comes from creates "songs" of

... gardens where the sun
behaves like ink that does not run

and bears resemblance to the world of Yeats's "The Scholars" (CP 158) where "all cough in ink". In Yeats's poem

Old, learned, respectable bald heads
Edit and annotate the lines
That young men, tossing on their beds,
Rhymed out in love's despair

and in Clouts's poem the accountable poet is the poet as accountant, who similarly "annotates" the landscape. The poignancy of his failure to penetrate the natural world is revealed by the very fact that his lament occurs in a rhymed couplet, consisting of lines of perfect iambic tetrameter:

The world in columns asks me why
I cannot balance sea and sky.

This is precisely the submission to a regulated, societally-condoned lifestyle that is implicit in the disappointed cry (again carefully phrased in iambic tetrameter) of the middle-aged man to the muse of inspiration:

...Where are you,
my love, who would have saved my life
had I left pen and ink and wife?

The notion of a poem that draws attention to the analytical precision of its own models is evident also in the previously unpublished "Light was a word" (CP 43; written in 1952 according to Marge Clouts, Appendix 3b). Again, this poem stresses the disparity between the word and the world. In this poem a grammatical God conceives of a monad which is instantaneously rendered into being. The genesis of matter and the word is spontaneous, as in Genesis I:i ("Let there be light. And there was Light"). At the moment of declaration Clouts's poem shows that, by definition, "light" is language:

Light was a word
water was a comma
in creation's sentence

Clouts subverts this process, within the poem, however. The poet invokes clichés of the idiom of rock music in stanza one and the suggestion of "Sing a Song of Sixpence" in stanza two to suggest the

debasement of human language, as he suggests stuttering through the repetition of certain syllables. The poet as repository and creator of words hiccups in poetic mid-production, as a God drunk "in his heaven" on "gin and lime", and who has abandoned his project, may well also do. By breaking words up into their separately incomprehensible syllabic components throughout the poem, Clouts suggests the human incapacity to reconcile words and matter to make for meaning:

and gave the world that uni uni
universal death.

In a slightly later poem, "Lines" (CP 15; 1954-55, Appendix 3a) the technique of writing is once more alluded to as the poem, effectively "lines in a scheme of lines", is compared to an etching by Rembrandt. In doing this Clouts recognizes that the "curls" on the head of the figure etched into the landscape approximate the lines of language, articulated or not, that connect the poet to the natural world he attempts to assimilate into the poem:

each curl can so arrange
its separate lines that the whole head
becomes massed with innumerable directions
leading up to the wind and sky.

The artifice of the process is explicitly acknowledged in the next lines, and Clouts admits that the language, while it can make for an imaginary world, does not confer verisimilitude:

The head is then not only head
but dark and bright
in a world of light,
in a world of shade,

The similarities in this poem to stanza three of Stevens's "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle" (CP 13) reside in the "curls" metaphor, which in Stevens's poem is symbolic of the myths that poets ("barbers") create

in an attempt to order reality. This is finally revealed as futile within the world of nature:

Alas! Have all the barbers lived in vain
That not one curl in nature has survived?

Ultimately, as Lentricchia comments, Stevens's poem arrives at the same conclusion as does Clouts's:

[In the poem t]he permanent worlds created by the imagination are necessary because they satisfy a basic need for order, but not for long because they are fictions. (in Saluzinsky 282)

The undated "Driving from the Sea" (CP 41; presumably written in the early 1950s, Appendix 3b) delivers a brilliant parting shot at this same process of fictionalization through language. The poem seems, at its most superficial level, to be about an argument at night that results in a bird being killed by the car the quarrelling couple are driving in. The poem ends with the sentence

...A word
beginning with stars became a sword.

The power of language is made clear; a word that "begins" under the actual stars takes on a greater dimension as, within the text, the poet shaves off the initial letter of the word "stars" to illustrate the destructive ability of language. The letter "s" plus the word "word" can become, by virtue of causality, a "sword" that results in the physical death of the bird. Whatever the ingenuity of this transmutation of words into "things", the fact remains, however, that the poem ultimately shows words to be nothing other than words. "Sword" remains, finally, only a word.

B. The poetry of the late 1950s and early 1960s:

i) The use of metafiction:

By the late 1950s it can be stated that Clouts has moved away from the exploration of harmonious understanding with the landscape that characterises many of the "Terrapin" poems of 1954 or earlier, towards a poetry that increasingly comments on the resistance of the object, and comments in this manner on its own powers. As Clouts works more and more with uncertainties about the power of reconciliation between the poet and the landscape, his poetry becomes devoted to an examination of how its own language works. His poems begin to have a strong metafictional component, and increasingly, Clouts's figural diction states its own precariousness.

Clouts's conviction about the elusiveness of the natural world, for him embodied in the African landscape, and the inability of language to capture it, takes on a particular urgency in two poems, from the mid 1950s (see Appendix 3b) that appear in the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" section of Collected Poems.

In "Cape of Good Hope" (CP 44) and "The Cutting of the Pines" (CP 60) Clouts attempts to confer the authenticity of the object upon his own interpretation by envisaging elements of the landscape as "texts". In "Cape of Good Hope" the formations of the stars are realized by the poet as a physical rendition of writing. An unequivocal "reading" is seemingly guaranteed in this way, for signifier and signified are confirmed as a single entity:

Idle on my back
reading the text of night,
alphabet of the stars

The scattered trunks and branches of fallen trees similarly suggest lexical properties to Clouts in "The Cutting of the Pines".

William Carlos Williams's "Botticellian Trees" (Selected Poems 77) employs this same metaphor of trees as words:

The alphabet of
the trees

is fading in the
song of the leaves

the crossing
bars of the thin

letters that spelled
winter

In Clouts's poem the easy confidence of Williams's "reading" of the signs ("the strict simple / principles of / straight branches") is absent. The "fallen pine" of Clouts's poem is "more personal" than the living tree to the poet-persona, because it has been uprooted from the environment. The subject can identify with this; he is "jagged", in the same way as the trees are broken. The identification cannot be fully completed though, because the "words" of the felled trees are encoded and hidden from the comprehension of the poet persona. Clouts makes out a lexical pattern created by the trees on the ground, but cannot decipher it. Signification without meaning is offered by the trees:

They lie in a forest of jumbled alphabet.
This means that I feel more jagged with regret.

Another strategy Clouts employs in an attempt to make writing connect with the ever-elusive signified that is the African landscape, is to allow the persona within a poem to act out the literal inscription of words into this landscape. Thus, in a poem like "With a pointed stone" (CP 60; possibly written in the late 1950s or early

1960s, Appendix 3b) the persona attempts to carve his name into stone, using a stone instrument. The recurrence of the motif of the stone, which serves as a symbol for the unrelenting "otherness" of Africa, has been discussed in Chapter One. In the light of the significance of the stone as symbol, the subject's action can be interpreted as an effort to realise a niche for himself physically, and therefore an identity, within Africa; the effort invested with yet more power by the fact that the persona attempts to use the African other, the stone, as his tool:

With a pointed stone
I strike my name on stone

Appropriating the stone for his own use the persona attempts to mollify the "mortal hunger / pertinent as stone" that he has felt as a result of being at once "of stone and not of stone"; that is, of Africa and yet not of Africa. By the action of naming himself in and through the stone, he feels freed from the burdens of linguistic constraint, which force the "I" to step outside the intimacy and immediacy of experience, in order to describe that experience. This linguistic constraint demands, in effect, that an action conforms to a grammatically-prescribed system of time:

No self-point scrawling
'Look at you'
I do, I have done
and I shall do.

The poem would appear to suggest that there is a power of being that is divine ("I am I am") but that, the eternal paradox of the poem, once one moves to writing one moves to consciousness, sequence, assessment and the "clannish dust" of generations. The "old powerful magic game" promotes "salvoes" into the terrain of the natural world

but the synthesis (and the possibilities for human redemption promised by such synthesis) suggested by the final stanza is illusory:

Dizziness
and fiery stone!
Here leap larkish flakes of stone,
prompt stars in smallish salvos
love conscience dream and hope.

"Hieroglyphs" (CP 103), a poem written at approximately the same time, that is, after 1958 and before 1966 (Appendix 3c), attests that the process of exorcising the human, and attempting to appropriate the qualities of the object is defeated, finally, by the autonomy of the landscape that alone can lay "claim" to "almost / perfect circles" etched by water on

the surfaces
high up where
no-one
ever
clung
at unpredictable
intervals, to
cut the stone.

In many of the poems of this period the limitations of the powers of the poem become an important focus of the poem. "On the Mountain" (CP 22; written between 1954-56, Appendix 3b) is a poem wherein Clouts attempts to appropriate the stone for his own metaphorical use. The stone, ever functional as resistant Africa, intrudes into the poet's mind, yet resists integration into his thought processes. Indeed, the "hot stone" does not appear to be satisfactorily incorporated into the poem as an image ("The mind is hot like stones / that have stood long in the sun"), suggesting that Clouts acknowledges it to be resilient to metaphoric colonialisation. What Guy Butler calls "the semantic poverty [of] Africa's rock" (in the Introduction to A Book of South African Verse xxxvi)--and intends by this to indicate the limitless

options that are open for the poet to fill it with meaning--is confirmed by Clouts, but instead to suggest "semantic poverty" as presence rather than as absence.

"Within" (CP 80; 1954-1956, Appendix 3c) is an equally clear statement about the recalcitrance of the landscape. Utilizing his visual faculties, as ever to gain "insight" as well as "sight", the Clouts persona concentrates on the natural and material object: "intent on the world / on a midsummer day". Yet, again, the pebble as embodiment of Africa signals the resistance to assimilation of the African environment as the eye falters and "can not go in". Failing thus to gain identity from the source, the eye "must not look within" for the internal world it would find would be one of flimsy human construction

that can easily topple
and bring the heart down
and bring down the mind.

The title "Mile of Grace" (CP 14; written between 1954-1958, Appendix 3a) comes from the ruling of Sextus Solidius in 18 AD that Romans had the right to demand transport services for the distance of one mile from subject peoples. To go the second mile was an act of grace or favour. In the poem the initial perception of the observing subject is that the rows of trees he walks amongst accompany him, step for step:

I have my trees that walk with me,
poplar on the gravel road, pine on the earth road,
lovingly, patiently, spaced apart

As in "Within", the illusory nature of this compatibility is soon evident though. Trees will not be transformed into a subjective landscape, and their indomitable existence is in opposition to the

imperious decree of the poetic eye. The "mile of grace" is clearly a misnomer in this context. The trees refute the very terms by which human progress (and "graciousness") is measured:

But what they are is no man's art
and what they tread is no man's mile.

Like Campbell's "Gum Trees" (from Flowering Reeds 1933) which

...snare the eye with clues of speed,
And with the wandering gaze elope

the trees in Clouts's poem rush on ahead, outpacing and outwitting the human eye that has attempted to constrain and to tame; their apparently headlong rush into the future further reinforces the separation between subject and landscape for it illustrates their disconnectedness from human time and mortality:

Walking between them, the more I go,
they hasten ahead: I go slow.

The comparison now between the fleeing trees and the observant subject causes the latter to be located in a position of powerlessness and apparent and contradictory stasis, a contrast similarly emphasized by Campbell, who asks

Out of the bounds at which we stick
To what dimension are they freed
By such superb arithmetic
To multiply their strength and speed?

The recalcitrance of the natural world receives its best expression in "After the Poem" (CP 75; written between 1958 and 1966, Appendix 3c), a poem that might have as its source poem Stevens's "The Poem that took the place of the Mountain". "After the Poem" is the most convincing example of Clouts's growing deliberation about the nature of representation in his poetry after the early 1950s, precipitated by the increasing disaffiliation he feels between subject

and the landscape. It is in speaking of this poem in 1980 that Clouts explicitly identifies the importance of metafiction in his poetry, remarking that "[A]rt, really, is a construction which constantly deals with itself" (EiA 29).

"After the Poem" sets up an active antagonism between the poem and the world it takes as its materia poetica. In the main body of the poem, comprising three stanzas, the landscape and the poem meet each other head on, with the first and last lines pitting "the coastline" against "every line" of the poem. The confrontation sees the "coastline" as the victor, as it acts aggressively to claim what is its own and what will always be resistant to poetic coercion, remaining intact and untouched as it ever will be "After the poem":

After the poem the coastline took
its place with a forward look
toughly disputing the right of a poem to possess it

The poem may successfully use the coast for its "subject" and so "subject" it to subordination within the poem--a point Clouts manages to convey by his deliberate use of a confiding tone of sinister proselytism, that consciously smacks of social engineering:

It was not a coast that couldn't yet be made
the subject of a poem (don't mistake me)
nothing to do with 'literary history'

The final stanza makes clear the illusory nature of this attitude, though. The action of the waves crashing on the rocks comprises an ever-splintering, ever-shifting coastline. This refutes the linear symmetry of the poem that attempts to define its boundaries, even as the poem itself is "bound" and confined to its own internal action, whatever it may temporarily appropriate to function as its subject matter:

But the coast flashed up--flashed, say, like objections
 up to the rocky summit of the Sentinel
 that sloped into the sea
 such force in it that every line was broken

Clouts's task in the poem is still more complicated, however, in that as the three stanzas stand, the poem can be accused of undermining its own argument by transforming the landscape-in-opposition-to-the-poem itself simply into the "subject" of a poem. To dispel this possible charge, Clouts must show the landscape to exist "after the poem". To this end, the two lines that come "after" the body of the poem are intended to "be" the landscape, in action outside of, and beyond, the poem:

and the sea came by
 the breaking sea came by

Through repetition and crescendo Clouts attempts to make for the pattern of the crashing waves. Through lack of margins, the dangling appearance of the lines and no punctuation he simulates the autonomous existence and everlasting presence of the waves.

It is patently obvious that this is artifice of the highest order, in operation to disclaim the very existence of such. Clouts's comment that "['After the poem'] allows the world to flow beyond it" (EiA 30) ignores the unyielding paradox of the fact that the poem through its working shows that words attempt to manipulate and constrain through their very function as language. They cannot "be" the world, they can only reproduce it, and in so doing they reappropriate the autonomy supposedly won by the landscape within the poem. The poem is self-deconstructing, in that it simultaneously asserts and denies the authority of its own rhetorical processes.

ii) Language as difficulty:

The central paradox of representation, played out in "After the Poem" is that poetic or any other language must always re-present the world and in so doing declare itself as a signifying process that lacks presence. It is in order to work through this paradox of representation that Clouts adopts another strategy in his poetry, namely a turning to Pre-Socratic philosophical models to inject meaning and uncompromising significance into the poems. To motivate why this can be regarded as a direct response to the issue of language and representation, it is informative to consider George Steiner's argument which motivates, in "On Difficulty", that a type of "difficulty" characteristic of modern poetry is that which he calls "ontological difficulty":

Ontological difficulties confront us with blank questions about the nature of human speech, about the status of significance, about the necessity and purpose of the construct we have, with more or less rough and ready consensus, come to perceive as a poem. (41)

He goes on to argue that the heritage of late Romanticism set up the position of the poet's self-imposed inward exile, which was largely a result of the perception that "it was language as a whole which was being cheapened, brutalized, emptied of numinous and exact force, by mass usage." (42) To Steiner one of the most significant impulses to arise out of this, in modern poetry, is that of

...reversion, of an attempted return to an archaic past in which language and thought had, somehow, been open to the truth of being, to the hidden sources of all meaning. (43)

To this end then, Clouts turns, as do other modern poets like Yeats, to "the illuminations of authentic existence reflected in the Pre-Socratics" through which "thought and saying are a perfect unity" |

(43). In the riddling fragments of Heraclitus, for example, Clouts can work with conceptual "incompatibles" that confound the paradigms of language and sense through which we comprehend the world. It is as a result of this that Clemence Ramnoux, conducting an enquiry into the philosophy of Heraclitus in 1959 chose to title her book: Heraclitus or the man between things and words (quoted in Bachelard 35). At the heart of Heraclitean reality, to state the most important principle, is the "unintelligible" fact of unity in multiplicity. Fragment 118 states that "...all things are one", and the Heraclitean world view conceives of the coalescence of subject and object, or knower and known, or thinker and thing thought. Furthermore, to Heraclitus, true antinomy is the source of all things, for "Out of discord comes the fairest harmony" (Fragment 98).

In Clouts's earlier poetry the invocation of Heraclitean riddles may be interpreted simply as part of Clouts's general preoccupation with attempting to evolve a metaphysics of sympathy that will reconcile the subject as poet (and therefore his language) with the self-sufficient world. This is done through the re-enactment of the "hidden harmony" (Fragment 116) of the Heraclitean world.

The symbol for the Discord which precipitates all in Heraclitus's writing is "the simplicity of fire". Fire connotes the idea of pure occurrence: "There is an exchange of all things for fire and of fire for all things" (Fragment 28). Thus in poems such as "Slope Down, Great Sky" (CP 13; "Terrapin" 12, Appendix 3a), "Around this Coast" (CP 78; "Terrapin", 16) and "Eucalyptus" (CP 30; "Terrapin" 51) the merging of fire and earth and sea in the landscape through metaphor is intended to reflect Heraclitus's principle of a continually changing,

yet integrated, universe. In this omnigenous world the "transformations of fire" are "into sea" and earth and "the lightning flash" (Fragment 32). The "hidden harmony" is contained in the fact that

fire lives in the death of earth, air in the death of fire, water in the death of air and earth in the death of water. (Fragment 34)

This earlier poetry attempts to unify disparate elements within the landscape, and so by extension, the poet with such a landscape, through the injunction to consider the world by way of a pre-existent Heraclitean vision.

The later poetry is directed rather more at inviting "ontological difficulties" through a return to Heraclitean principles, in an effort to confront the problematics of representation. Clouts's own late, undated "Fragments" (published posthumously in New Coin, Appendix 4b) confront the reader with "difficulties" by gathering to themselves the quiddity of autonomous existence and meaning. As such they defy exegesis, except insofar as one can recognize that they work with linguistic and semantic possibilities that operate outside of our categories of comprehension. Thus, one is confronted by the riddle in the fragment

Poetry gave me
what phosphorescence gives to the night sea (12)

that remains insoluble, by virtue of the fact that there is no way to accurately make the analogical connection between the two halves of the puzzle. Similarly, one is forced to respond with uncertainty to another cryptical "fragment" that defies "the idiom" by its very existence:

New things, harsh things
 strong...cold...
 seafog...figtree...
 you, stormgranite:

fragrant; float out
 flying massive
 wholehearted
 not for the idiom:
 factual. (13)

The same desire to connote meaning beyond words accounts in part for the impulse behind Clouts's exploitation of small units of signification, interspersed with gaps on the page, in several of his poems. The earliest example of this is "A Fence with Raindrops" (CP 27; "Terrapin" 7) and the last probably the late, untitled, and possibly unfinished poem published in New Coin in 1984 (see Appendices 4b) and 5), which attempts to make itself "instantly declarative" in terms of the pattern and the sight it forms on the page:

Un-
 like
 lightning
 which
 (we cherish it)
 nightlightning
 which
 is instantly declarative
 once
 of the fence-nail
 once
 of the glittering
 withholding nothing
 (embryonic)

instantly is all itself
to crack the gatepost

annotating darkness

iii) The option of erasure:

In "The Violent Arcadia" Clouts criticizes Pringle:

He is the affectionate scientist, closely observing his objects, giving a consistent prominence to them (missing therefore the spaces between them and finding no proximity or distance in his landscape) (49)

and redresses this potential oversight in his own poetry, by acknowledging the silences and spaces within and beyond words, by the lay-out of the poem on the page. In this way Clouts can ward off the confinement Rilke feels in Duino Elegies, when he says:

it's always a world
it's never a nowhere (72).

The most explicit comment about language and representation in Clouts's oeuvre and the most exciting poem in terms of its exploration of the parameters of poetry is "Residuum" (CP 78; begun in 1958, Appendix 3c). This poem utilizes the format, already identified, of fragments on a palpably larger surface and it makes the most radical use of the potentialities of such a format.

"Residuum" functions as the manifesto for Clouts's poetic ambitions and is the most impressive realization of the "new language" he desires as a poet. This poem was originally envisaged by Clouts as the final poem of One Life (see Appendix 3c), no doubt because its subject is explicitly stated to be that which is "left over" and its expressed purpose is to allow for the freshness and vitality that accompanies disregarded, and therefore unexploited, things. The

autonomous line "My tradition is dew on a shrub" declares itself as untainted, yet simultaneously constructed of all things. As

J. Hillis Miller remarks:

The smallest units of space and time--drop of dew, needle's eye, or gleam of water--are more than images of heaven. The indivisible concrete event actually contains eternity, and in that indissoluble unit all contraries are present in tense reconciliation. (Poets of Reality 124)

Accordingly, the words of the line "Open. Open." are "an invitation to the world to enter thing by thing, by thing, by thing, by thing, everything" (Clouts in 1980, EiA 21).

The poem cannot allow this freedom from tradition to be compromised by words, and to this end, the spaces between the words and lines function to ensure a sense of momentariness that guards against what Barthes recognizes to be the loss of freedom that is brought about by language:

...words have a second-order memory which mysteriously persists in the new meanings. Writing is precisely this compromise between freedom and remembrance it is that freedom which remembers and is free only in the gesture of choice, but is no longer so within duration.... [I]t is impossible to develop [freedom] within duration without gradually becoming a prisoner of someone else's words and even of my own. A stubborn after-image, which comes from all the previous modes of writing and even from the past of my own, drowns the sound of my present words (16).

As a result of this, Barthes concludes that "Writing as freedom is therefore a mere moment". Clouts can sustain this "mere moment" and so "free" his words through the temporal and spatial discontinuation from one line to another.

The poem literally realizes that "No word is my dwelling place". This line works powerfully to suggest that "no word" is simultaneously not a word, as a result of the disclaimer, and quite clearly in

existence. These words function ingeniously to explore the operation of both meaning and non-meaning within language. In this way a word can expand into being comprised of the silence that operates beyond epistemological boundaries. Clouts here succeeds in enacting what Geoffrey Hartman sees as the broadening possibilities of literary language:

We assume that, by the miracle of art, the 'presence of the word' is equivalent to the presence of meaning. But the opposite can be urged, that the word carries with it a certain absence or indeterminacy of meaning. Literary language foregrounds language itself as something not reducible to meaning; it opens as well as closes the disparity between symbol and idea, between written sign and assigned meaning (Preface, Deconstruction and Criticism viii).

"No word is my dwelling place" suggests moreover the precariousness of the position of the speaker in the poem. The subject position is under attack, in that the speaker takes up no position in the landscape, moving instead together with each disparate part of the poem, and, as Coetzee remarks "taking over the life of each and then quitting it". The speaker sheds his identity in conjunction with the object, which "begins to mutate and shed its old name almost as soon as it is taken over by language." (White Writing 173) In this way Clouts can be seen to deny a position for the transcendental ego. The subject itself is shown to be made, constituted, and relative--rather than absolute--as is language.

The final line "You leapt clothed into the river in spontaneous love for me", strongly reminiscent of a Heraclitean fragment, attests to the perennial loss of identity of the thing in the flux of time that the poem has played out. It paradoxically asserts, meanwhile, the unity of the natural world, and the necessity for human

participation. Heraditus's Fragment 110 declares that "Into the same rivers we step and we do not step". "Residuum" as a poem confirms this paradox, being at once present and absent, filled and unfilled.

"Residuum" is a poem that is revelatory in terms of Clouts's whole poetic development. Most importantly, it appears to be a poem that allows no fixed position for the poetic speaker. Significantly, the holder of "meaning" in the poem is "A man in Klapmuts" who "breathes the secret". The importance of this line is two-fold: firstly, it gives an identity and a location to the man with "the secret" that is undeniably of Africa (and who is definitely not Clouts) and secondly, it is a secret that is not spoken. The man "breathes" whatever "the secret" is, not rendering it up as language which would make it intelligible to the listener.

To acknowledge "Residuum" as Clouts's most radical realization of his poetic project, as this argument maintains, is thus to recognise that it is a poem that works to negate the poet's role as teller of truths, as it does the very efficacy of his language, just as it denies to Clouts a clear position and identity within the African world.

"Residuum" would appear to leave Clouts nowhere to go. Clouts, however, did not acknowledge "Residuum" to be "the central statement of his poetry" according to Guy Butler (interview with Susan Joubert, 1.7.87), admitting in later years to Butler that "another one [poem] goes further".

One can only speculate, but it is probable that this "other" poem might well be "Dew on A Shrub" (CP 88), for it is a poem that draws from the same vital source as "Residuum", although there is little to

suggest that it was written after "Residuum", except for Clouts's own ordering of it as later in the final version of One Life. "Dew on A Shrub" differs from "Residuum" in one significant aspect, though. It is a poem permeated throughout with the strength of African mythology. One could argue that the criterion by which Clouts may have judged it to go "further" than "Residuum" might be in terms of its efforts to carry the poet into the life of the poem, and thus to confer on him an identity comprised of African elements.

"Dew on A Shrub" is comprised of three short separate poems, each, according to Clouts, in conversation with Butler in 1975, "related to an African myth". Structurally, Clouts in this poem attempts to assert the ideographic nature of poetry as he does in "Residuum", in an effort to draw attention to language as a free-floating signifier, which is always elliptical. Concomitantly, the reliance on the "mythical" properties of each separate poem is intended to "root" the poem (if not the precise language which articulates it) within the mystique of Africa. Clouts makes this clear when he says, again to Butler in 1975:

I wanted a mysterious structure in these poems--
 playing with language which [sic] gives language a
 hold on reality without being rational or explicit.
 It's a poem without an argument, but unfair to
 the reader.

It is clear that for Clouts this poem advances a long way towards becoming what has already been quoted as his longing for "this secret language which Africa will produce". The poem operates as a shibboleth for the reader, precluding total comprehension, but this is a shibboleth of Africa, close to the fulfilment of "those magic words" Clouts seeks (letter to Guy Butler, 21.12.64).

Important in the poem is the fact that the integration of the poet into the landscape only occurs through the destruction of the poet as speaking human agent. The "hippo who is mud of the rainbow" (Clouts in 1975, to Butler) of the second "poem" and who is the African animal incarnate in "Dawn Hippo" (CP 66) becomes the essentially African figure of the crocodile of the third section. The poet is equally transmuted into crocodile form in the course of the final "poem" or section, it being based on "fairy stories about a man who dies and becomes a crocodile" (Clouts to Butler, 1975):

The crocodile flies to me,
 him that I killed
 for meat of him, flaps
 flaps to me, over me.

Ultimately, then, the poem seems to set up an alternative "language", based on a denial of Eurocentric categories of meaning or tradition, but it does so by the simultaneous erosion of the poet as "I". Clouts in this poem, as in "Residuum", appears to be searching for a stage at which his language disappears altogether.

C. The later poetry: the search for the vernacular

This chapter will consider, finally, the argument that the endeavour to erase his own language from the poetry causes Clouts to explore a further, logical, option in the poetry that post-dates "Residuum" and "Dew on A Shrub". This new option represents, in a sense, a straitened response on Clouts's part to the issues of language, representation and the associated problems of African identity.

The response, intended as some sort of solution to Clouts's own effacement within his later poetry, is to substitute indigenous people

By our discussion

already in

"Dew on a Shrub"

a Shrub

as personae. Four of the last six poems of One Life, that presumably constitute the "last word" of the collection (and that are all poems of the late 1950s to mid 1960s), utilize an African protagonist, as do a few of the handful of poems published after One Life.

The "Hotknife" poems (CP 107, 108, 116, 117 and New Coin 7-9) were written in London (Clouts in EiA 33) and the first mention of them by Clouts is in a letter to Guy Butler (28.6.65). The eponymous persona is a so-called "Cape Coloured" ("a culler man") who speaks a patois that is peculiar to his environment, and which is a conglomeration of English and Afrikaans idiomatic language.

In other poems of about the same time Clouts uses Afrikaans to complement his own, inadequate, language. In "Folktales" (CP 110) "Nimbilo / a nameless scholar" spills out the secrets of the earth in two languages: "O earth, O aarde!" The title of "Wat die Hart van Vol is" (CP 118), written in England, is taken from the Afrikaans epigram: "Wat die hart van vol is, loop die mond van oor". Significantly, when speaking of language overflowing the boundaries of constraint that is the result of extreme emotion, Clouts turns to a language other than his own. Afrikaans would seem to offer more intimate connection with the Africa he longs for. This incorporation of "other" tongues, to expand the possibilities of English, continues a tradition long practised by South African English-speaking poets, as Slater reveals in his introduction to A Centenary Book of South African Verse published in 1925:

South African poets have also enriched the language by the adoption of many homely and expressive Afrikaans words and a few liquid and beautiful words from the Bantu languages. (x)

It is for the same reason that Clouts praises Pringle's absorption of other vernaculars:

[In Pringle's] poetry we are occasionally at the edge of discovery but the conventions of his idiom withhold it from us; and it is in this connection that his use of Cape Dutch and Xhosa names and phrases makes the most meaningful 'sense'. 'The Emigrant's Cabin' makes quite liberal use of these for the sake of the tang of immediate reality ("The Violent Arcadia" 66).

The "Hotknife" character is chosen for a purpose more than the illustration of the possibilities dormant in the idiosyncracies of his "native" tongue, although this is part of it. One could argue that he, in fact, replaces Clouts's own voice in the "Hotknife" poems because of his claim to "authenticity". Hotknife's mixed racial origins mean that he is, for Clouts, the genuine thing, being if not wholly at least partially constituted of "African" blood.

Hotknife speaks in his own, unmediated idiom, haltingly articulating the realities of his life. These include murder and imprisonment, but also the poignancy of a "secret life", comprised of a recognition of the natural phenomena that make up his Cape Town world, and the realization of his own oppressed condition:

S is for my secret life, you know.

O is for a oaktree
oaktree for a okey
coming witties girlie.
Bokkie, state your case.

B is for your black heart, shit's bliss.

(CP "Hotknife III" 116)

Hotknife's monologue, as is apparent from the extract, contains an encoded message, amongst the banality of expression. He spells out "S.O.B." in the course of his testament, thereby connoting the sound of misery, even as the acronym indicates lack of repentance and

insurrection, standing as it does for "son of a bitch". At the end of the poem Hotknife adds another letter: "H is forra haap in heawen, too", attesting to the validity of his name and his identity.

To Clouts, then, Hotknife can be located as the speaker of a language that has claim to legitimacy, both in terms of its credibility as an "African" language spoken by an African speaker, and in terms of its suitability of expression in responding to the iniquities of the socio-political situation. The title of Adam Small's edition of poetry published in 1963 calls attention to problems implicit in the Hotknife poems, however. Small's poems are what can loosely be labelled protest poems, written by a so-called "coloured" poet about the condition of being "coloured", and are collected together under the apt title: "Sê Sjibbolet". Employing the same, often bantering, patois as does Clouts, Small makes his poetry utterly distinct from Clouts's. He does this by the fact that he recognizes this language to be something that operates as part of the insidious classificatory system of South African society. Small makes the point that the "sjibbolet" of one's language distinguishes and separates a person as effectively, in the South African context, as does the colour of his or her skin. What Clouts in effect can be seen to be doing in the "Hotknife" poems is demanding, as author and therefore authoritatively, that Hotknife "ssjibbolet". Clouts unwittingly participates in the tragic segregationist impulse of the system by setting Hotknife "apart". And, importantly, Hotknife is most obviously set apart from Clouts.

Thus, although Hotknife "speaks" he speaks a debased language, that in effect, has little real claim to African authenticity, being

composed in the main of one or other transplanted European languages. It is a language, furthermore, that operates effectively to designate him an outcast. Clouts's depiction of Hotknife as a character operating on the perimeter of "decent" society works to reinforce this. The so-called "coloured" as criminal is a dangerous stereotype, similarly utilized by a poet such as Uys Krige in his "Skietgebed van die Skollie", in Ballade van die Groot Begeer en ander gedigte of 1960. Clouts acknowledged to both Guy Butler and Marge Clouts the debt he owed to Krige in much of his poetry. Clouts's "Hotknife" poems bear noticeable similarities of situation and tone to Krige's, earlier, poem:

Jy weet ek hou van sportsmaak en die lekker dop
 en al daai dinge wat mens skaars van praat.
 As Dollie flikflooi, sêekmaklik: 'Top!'
 'n Man's 'n mansmens mos, geen stuk sinkplaat.
 Hy's vol plesierigheid, daai bree straat.
 Ons't weer gejol...Nou sit ek in die kou.
 Dink aan my Magoed en haar smart, haar rou.
 Wat moes sy alles nie vir my ontbeer?
 Die Juds kom straks, ai, ai...o help my nou
 al is dit net om haar ontwil, o Heer.

Hul se ek't Jan se ribbe ingeskop.
 Hoe moet ek weet? Ons het gestook van vroeg tot laat.
 Maar waarom lol hy met my Lollie-pop?

That Clouts is aware of the latent problems of possible crude stereotyping is apparent in the revisionary stereotype he envisaged creating, based on a similar "skollie" character called "Skelm", who was to be invested with the mystical qualities of the African world. Clouts writes of this project to Guy Butler in a letter dated 24.9.64:

Besides shorter pieces I've been working on two longer poems; each to contain about 20 parts, which I shall have to leave for later completion.

Marge Clouts provides details of this elaborately-conceived plan, in a letter to Susan Joubert (9.2.88):

Sydney's idea of 'Skelm' dated from when he was in South Africa but he talked of it and worked on it also in Britain. The idea was a world of strange creatures, full of wonder and mystery--he intended to write a lot about it--many poems--Skelm and other figures would represent aspects of strangeness in the world of strange qualities. He liked the word skelm and wanted to raise it from its meaning into a myth and creation.

The only evidence of the "Skelm" project is the "Extracts from an unfinished sequence" published posthumously in New Coin (10-11), where "Skelm" with "his peacock tail in the ocean" speaks the language of "Hail's icecold gibberish / ...the mightiest language":

To speak like Skelm! Such grandeur grinds
the magnitude of mountains,
oceans, cities, dreams.

What is most striking about the "Skelm" character is that he is envisaged as an other-than-human creature. This has enormous bearing on a discussion of the other so-called "coloured" protagonist Clouts uses in his poetry. Ou Pellie, of the poem "Over the Side" (CP 104) is a fisherman, as is the speaker in Uys Krige's poem "Vishoring" from the same 1960 volume of poetry already quoted. The fisherman in Krige's poem speaks a language that is simple and interspersed with sounds and phonetic repetitions:

Dag Basie! Dag, my Merrem!
Dag, Apoolsie! Dag, Meraai!
Dag, almal, dag! En wat 'n dag,
'n dag der dae, ai!
Ek voel so heppie-heppie soos
'n slakkie in kropslaai.
Dis of my hart hierbinne
tiekie-, tiekie-, tiekiedraai.
Draai heel die aardboltjie vandag
nie met 'n lekker Kaapse swaai
presies soos my ou karringtjie
nou om die hoek kom waai?
Kom koop, toet-toet! Kom koop, toet-toet,
my vissies van Valsbaai.

The point in relation to "Over the Side" is that Krige's character speaks. Ou Pellie is voiceless.

"Over the Side" opens with the creaking sounds of the boat leaving the shore, with the repetition of the "kr" syllable also suggesting stammering attempts to name the crayfish, the desired prey. These are the only sounds uttered within the poem. Clouts's own description completes the action and it is through this description that an interesting transformation occurs. Ou Pellie is initially depicted as bearing a resemblance to the crayfish he hunts, in terms of a simile:

Ou Pellie dives:
his soles are whitish
like the underscales of crayfish

The crayfish he then disturbs is pin-pointed in its lair, and the analogies Clouts makes between the hunter and the hunted become even more explicit. The poem advances the point that Ou Pellie, within the South African context subjected to the iniquities of race classification, the Group Areas Act, and daily injustice is able to be identified with the sentiment that gives expression supposedly only to the crayfish's predicament as it is trapped:

an area; a group; a victim.

By the last stanza, all comparison has been abandoned. Ou Pellie is a crayfish:

Deeply rising
surfacing Ou Pellie
undecipherable
with his claws

Like Hotknife, Ou Pellie, the victim, is allowed no voice in the poem, and he is, moreover, "undecipherable" to Clouts.

"Firebowl" (CP 106) is a poem where Clouts uses, finally, a "truly" aboriginal protagonist. The "Kalahari Bushman" is an autochthon, formed of, and raised in, Africa. In this sense he has better claim to being indigenous than do either Hotknife or Ou Pellie, they being products of miscegenation. In the poem the "Bushman" is portrayed as the utterer of unintelligible sounds that approximate the noises of nature:

stick stuck upright
 click
 click
 of
 bowstring
 toes of the eland
 thk thk the big rain drops
 tk tk tk the sandgrains
 drinking

Ssskla!
 sparks of honey

Together these sounds constitute the "grunt of darkness" as the "bushman" is utterly integrated into the natural-animal environment, losing all distinguishing human characteristics. The obvious racist connotations of this are made clear in the critical commentary of Ruth Harnett who unproblematically equates "Bushman" with "animal" when she speaks of the ending of the poem as "a guttural response in animal-Bushman tongue" (EiA 155). Her later comment in the same article is equally illuminating:

Clouts is not advocating a return to Bushman culture, an obvious impossibility and probably undesirable even if possible.

What can be established by tracing this progression of African personae in Clouts's later poetry is, in fact, a clear regression in animal terms of the status of such personae. The poems, read together, demonstrate the establishment of a disturbing racial hierarchy that

*animal
earlier?*

works in descending order to suggest the following: white person (Clouts) is in possession of tools for articulation on behalf of self and other; "coloured" persona (Hotknife) has access to (inadequate and "other") speech; second, less urbanized, "coloured" persona is voiceless and, by association, not-human; and finally aboriginal persona ("Bushman"), through utterance, is animal.

In summation, then, Clouts in his later poetry, in an effort to combat the sense of his own language's distance from the African source adopts the strategy of resigning from the narration of the poem. Instead, he allows protagonists other than the poetic "I" to act within the poems. African protagonists are chosen precisely because they would appear to be more "qualified" to effect some sort of unity with Africa, the elusive object. As has been shown, the protagonists do achieve oneness with Africa, but this is accomplished through the forfeiture of their humanness. Reconciliation with the object is achieved by the the protagonists being, in varying degrees, themselves objectified. The experiment of working with "other" protagonists is a failure for Clouts not least because it is conducted with a view of the African as "other".

One could argue that, after the achievements of "Residuum" Clouts is increasingly haunted by the notion of a shibboleth. Unable to tap the resources of the vernacular through African protagonists, and convinced, as the analysis of "Residuum" has shown, of the inadequacies of his own language to constrain the African landscape, or to conform to it except through a kind of (successful but unrepeatably) "hit and run" manoeuvre, Clouts appears to be a poet whose explorations of language allow him nowhere else to go. As an

examination of many of the late, unpublished poems collected at the end of Collected Poems illustrated early on in this chapter, Clouts's later work, what little there is of it, is devoted simply to a reiteration of the supremacy of the object over the words that attempt to describe it ("Let me not be the firetongs"; "Genius"; "I breathed the first shivers of daylight").

In conclusion, it can be stated that Clouts's ultimate response to the failure of his language to effect a reconciliation with the embodiment of the elusive other, the African landscape, is to equate this, for reasons outlined in the chapter, with a failure to find an African identity for himself. Perceiving himself to be destined to speak a "shibboleth" in Africa, his final answer to the problems of language and his own identity is to leave the perceived source of such anguish and exile. That this exile effectively halted his writing, by severing him from his (albeit problematic) poetic source is the last irony. Faced with the impossibility of writing in Africa, and of writing outside of Africa, Clouts allows the silence, that occupies so prominent a position in many of his poems, to appropriate the page. Self-censorship and a virtual halt in poetic production were Clouts's solutions to the problems of language for the last fifteen years of his life.

CHAPTER IV

Concealment and caution: the poetics of censorship

The preceding chapter posits the argument that Clouts's poetic project, to name and speak through the landscape and thereby participate in the African world, is ultimately doomed to realise its own futility. For it has been argued that Clouts, aware always of being the sojourner who speaks a different language, sees the landscape as ever resistant to any easy accommodation of the South African colonial poet.

It has been advanced in Chapter Three that an obvious and conscious stifling of Clouts's own poetic presence is apparent in many of those poems which are written from the mid-1960s onwards. Clouts's strategy of foregoing participation in the poem as implied viewer, or persona, has been noted. In the poems where Clouts practises such self-effacement he substitutes "indigenous" and therefore "qualified" speakers (who do not in fact, speak). In addition, Clouts's relinquishment of the control of the written text has been observed, whereby he gradually allows the writing on the page to assume more and more modest proportions, ultimately proffering the suggestion that the silence that surrounds the words is more eloquent than are the words themselves.

The manifestation of the anxiety that precipitates this, and that is most marked in the fact of Clouts's exile

and cessation of poetic production in his later years, is apparent in Clouts's statement in 1982, only two years before his death, that: "Whites feel Africa in very subtle ways which cannot be given voice" (EiA 9). This statement points the way to the argument that will be developed in this chapter: namely, that Clouts, categorizing himself above all as "white" vis à vis Africa, makes himself and his poetry the "political" through precisely such labelling. And this is despite the fact that Clouts's avowed efforts appear to be to remain uncontaminated by the pressures of South African society pressing in upon him. He attempts to establish himself as non-partisan within the political arena, through the contemplation in his poetry of the depopulated earth, sea and sky. Nonetheless, critical examination reveals that Clouts's turning away from historical reality and from his own role as a socio-political being is denied at every turn by the poems themselves. The argument works from the hypothesis that the very motivation for Clouts's poetic project is one that cannot be distanced from his distinctly political rationale: that is, the wish to reconcile his whiteness with his Africanness, by means of poetic immersion into the African landscape.

Two clear, and contradictory, stands are apparent in Clouts's poetic project then. He views his position as a non-political one, freed from considerations of the human

and the historical. His very premise for writing is, however, a political position.

The contradictions and schisms are most eloquently betrayed by what might be called a deliberate process of erasure in Clouts's poetry from his very earliest writing. This chapter will address the issue of censorship and voluntarily-enacted silence in Clouts's poetry.

First, it will examine the role of what Steiner calls "obliquity and closure [through force of] political circumstances" (On Difficulty 33), and will consider Clouts's position as a poet writing in an atmosphere of official repression, and inhibition of free artistic expression. The argument will follow that, more than being inhibited by the threat of state censorship, Clouts practises his own form of internal censorship; a form that is unwittingly revelatory of his position in relation to the political realities of his environment. It will attempt to make clear the concealments of his own political agenda Clouts attempts in the poetry, most notably by means of the use of nature as a metaphor for social action.

It will be shown that from Clouts's earliest poetry, as in the clumsily, yet revealingly, titled "Floodwaters are Political", published in 1951 (see Appendix 4a), Clouts allows the "natural forces" that comprise the subject matter of many of his poems to serve a rather more complex function than would at first appear to be the case. The workings of "nature" (and more particularly of nature in its most

and the historical. His very premise for writing is, however, a political position.

The contradictions and schisms are most eloquently betrayed by what might be called a deliberate process of erasure in Clouts's poetry from his very earliest writing. This chapter will address the issue of censorship and voluntarily-enacted silence in Clouts's poetry.

First, it will examine the role of what Steiner calls "obliquity and cloture [through force of] political circumstances" (On Difficulty 33), and will consider Clouts's position as a poet writing in an atmosphere of official repression, and inhibition of free artistic expression. The argument will follow that, more than being inhibited by the threat of state censorship, Clouts practises his own form of internal censorship; a form that is unwittingly revelatory of his position in relation to the political realities of his environment. It will attempt to make clear the concealments of his own political agenda Clouts attempts in the poetry, most notably by means of the use of nature as a metaphor for social action.

It will be shown that from Clouts's earliest poetry, as in the clumsily, yet revealingly, titled "Floodwaters are Political", published in 1951 (see Appendix 4a), Clouts allows the "natural forces" that comprise the subject matter of many of his poems to serve a rather more complex function than would at first appear to be the case. The workings of "nature" (and more particularly of nature in its most

turbulent forms) serve to function as a metaphoric package for the operation of political forces. In this way Clouts practises a form of self-censorship that ostensibly ensures his own removal from the hurly-burly of contemporary political life in South Africa.

More often than not the repetition of metaphoric codes in Clouts's poetry succeeds in subverting its own proclaimed silence (in terms of his ignoral of the political), to reveal Clouts's position as one that is motivated, fundamentally, by a political sensibility. Clouts's sense of his own impotence in the face of historical specificity, and his inability to envisage a workable society wherein he has a part to play will be stressed in answer to the hypothetical question of why Clouts deliberately stifles his participation in the political arena through these poetic strategies. The inference that Clouts lacks the conviction of his own political legitimacy can be drawn from the fact that those poems that do have, arguably, the more overtly "political" slant are those poems that are contained almost exclusively within the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" section of Collected Poems, and indeed that comprise the largest component of this section.

This chapter will seek to establish causal links between the most fertile period of Clouts's production (1946-66) and the largest number of unpublished poems. It will argue that, when viewed as cause and effect, this dualism points to Clouts's most significantly productive

period being also that period when he most vigorously silences his poetry in terms of publication. This is for the very reason that Clouts is constantly engaged in a battle of revealing whilst suppressing the evidence of his own political preoccupation.

Above all, it will motivate that there is evidence of a process of erasure ever at work in Clouts's poetry. The text, it will be argued, is more often than not the site of a struggle, where the horizons for political expression within the poetry are constantly being set up and, simultaneously, knocked down.

Consideration of the self-censored text, by which is meant the text that contains the evident mechanisms of its own repression, can be translated in Clouts's case, into evidence of the poet's own sense of unfitness to participate in the socio-political arena. Clouts's impulses to consider the manifest problems of political life in contemporary South Africa are curbed, it will be concluded, by his perception that his colonial heritage, his whiteness, and his language conspire to render him an intruder in Africa. Conceiving of himself as ever the outcast, the lone poetic figure in the intractable landscape, he lacks a sense of legitimate political affiliation, and of community. The muzzling of his own voice is ultimately Clouts's (unstated) sense of displacement. In him "the apprehension of silence" that appears to be the African landscape's answer to his greatest quest

...stands in the place of another failure,
by no means inevitable: a failure to
imagine a peopled landscape, an inability to
conceive a society in South Africa in which
there is a place for the self. (Coetzee,
White Writing 9)

The impression that might have been left at the end of the preceding chapter is that the suppression of his poetic voice was an option practised by Clouts only in the final years of his life. This is misleading, for Clouts practised a policy of silence always in his poetry. Even the most cursory of readings of the poetry serves to reveal that the subject matter of the poems is, almost without exception, at variance with the historical conditions that surround its production. It is a poetry that would appear to be distinctively de-politicized: its frame of reference is purged of details of the here-and-now of Clouts's South African world.

Clouts's narrow range of poetic vision is defended by Guy Butler who queries the view that all South African poets should, or could, write poetry of a "political" nature, saying in an interview (with Susan Joubert, Grahamstown, 1.7.87): "Why must we all be herded into the same kraal?" Yet the circumspect nature of Clouts's poetic scope provokes query if only by virtue of the fact that Clouts wrote the bulk of his poetry at a time of such dramatic political upheaval in South Africa that it was to have a significant effect on the material circumstances of his own life.

To contextualize Clouts's poetic output is to document watershed years in modern South African history. Clouts's earliest "authorised" collection of poetry, the "Terrapin" selection, compiled in 1954 (see Appendix 1), is comprised of many poems that must have been written at the peak of the

ANC's Defiance Campaign which had begun two years previously. 1953 had seen civil resistance greeted with the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act which empowered the head of government to declare a state of emergency. A state of emergency was indeed imposed in 1960, following Sharpeville. The events of that year had particular significance for Cape Town. On March 30, nine days after Sharpeville, Patrick Kogasana led a march of 30 000 people into the city centre to attend a PAC rally in support of massive strike action. The route taken by the protestors was one from Mowbray station via De Waal drive (Lodge 221). For Clouts, living in Sir George Grey Street in Oranjezicht, the revolutionary movement must have appeared to come close to home indeed. 1963 saw the establishment of the Publications Control Board and the banning of a number of literary works.

At least one friend of Clouts's, Douglas Reid Skinner, has testified that the Cloutses' decision to leave South Africa in 1961 was a direct result of the political climate of repression prevailing in South Africa. He maintains that in later years, in London, Clouts considered himself to comprise one of that group of South Africans who became "the Sharpeville exiles" (Interview with Susan Joubert, Cape Town, 30.10.86).

One can infer connections between the political situation in South Africa and Clouts's own life. To insist that Clouts's poetry is an adjunct to his lifestyle is more

problematic, for the poetry itself would appear to emphatically discourage any such enterprise. The presented world of the poems is a predominantly de-socialized one, that ostensibly offers few clues towards an interpretation of an informing ideology or a sense of Clouts's immediate socio-political circumstances.

In one notable instance Clouts's poetry was directly subjected to the conditions of repression prevailing in South Africa. In 1966, shortly before the publication of One Life Clouts, living in England, was forced to amend his text to avoid the probable banning of the book which was to be published in South Africa. Having had previous communication with Guy Butler about the potentially "offensive" content of the "Hotknife" poems in their original form, Clouts decided, under pressure from the publisher, to censor the text himself. He explains his decision to Butler in a letter (12.10.66):

You will probably know that Purnell have written to me about the Hotknife poems: 'fokkin' has worried them, would lead to the banning of the book, they said; 'skollie' in 'Hotknife'--'you know wy, you skollie baasted'--and 'Fency' in 'Nellie':--'Ten years is not a fency fawtnight'. It would have been absurd to insist on their printing the poems as they stood, but my first reaction to the thought of finding some alteration was to ask that they put two dashes in each space; but this would have given the poems the sort of sensational atmosphere I was not seeking. It was best I think to find other words and hope that they would preserve the tone, although the same stab would not be there. I remember, you wrote about these poems some time back and perhaps it was foolish of me not to realise then that something would have to be done. I

want Hotknife in the book and though it hurts to see the poems changed (but not I believe out of character), to have taken a sacred stand would have been hotheaded.

Although this incident may have brought the totalitarian threat resoundingly home to Clouts himself, it is significant that the probable banning of the book arose from the issue of a challenge to public morality. There is little in Clouts's poetry that would offend the state censor politically. The poetry, indeed, would appear to be inured from external censorship on political grounds for, as Chapter Three illustrates, it operates predominantly within the "safe" realm of nature or landscape depiction. The poems appear to steer a clear course away from that which is politically contentious, and from events which so starkly changed the lives of South Africans, not least of them Clouts himself. Christopher Hope's acerbic comments on a particular kind of South African English poetry that deals with what he calls "self-immolation" probably relate as much to Clouts as to certain other white English-speaking South African poets. He describes this "intensely private, mystical verse" as "poetry in utero":

When this sort of verse seeks a context it finds it most often in the African landscape. But this Africa is a strange place. It is not the Africa that waits just beyond the glare of electric lights in our trim suburbs; the Africa against which we triple-lock our doors, buy guns, keep dogs.... (in Poetry South Africa 138)

I would contend that the obliteration of historical reality in the poems is, precisely, a political statement.

It can be argued that Clouts subjects himself, as a poet, to rigorous self-censorship as a strategy that is politically determined, above all. The inhibition of his political voice reveals Clouts's sense of his own inadequacy as a political actor. The stifling of a contemporary sensibility betrays Clouts's conception of his political role in South Africa as being an illegitimate one. Many of the poems bear testimony, it will be shown, to the fact that Clouts denies that he has a part to play in the process of South African history. This stems from Clouts's preoccupation with his own identity as white, English-speaking and "non-African". The politically "neutral" stance Clouts assumes in his poetry, is, one might conclude from a close reading of much of that poetry, nothing less than the figural enactment of the perception he entertains of himself as an inert and ineffectual figure within the political arena. As a white English-speaking liberal he feels enmeshed between two radical options: a repressive government he abhors is vigorously opposed by the force of African nationalism which is equally alien and threatening to him. Clouts can identify with neither, and so abjures any and all political positions.

This chapter will trace how a policy of censorship that effects to erase a political consciousness is enacted by Clouts in two ways. Primarily Clouts practises suppression within the poems themselves, through the use of metaphor. Natural phenomena such as thunder, lightning, "floodwaters",

wind and rain become substitutes for forces of political activism. In those poems where natural forces come to approximate societal forces through the operation of figurative language Clouts's political voice or, more accurately, his assumed voicelessness, can best be traced. His poems become, in effect, heavily encoded messages of personal-political conviction. Clouts's second strategy of self-censorship pertains to his literal suppression of the already-completed poem through the refusal to publish it, due to the uneasiness he felt towards it. An examination of the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" section of Collected Poems reveals that most of the poems that operate within the metaphoric framework that denotes a "political" agenda (albeit implicitly) are those that were not submitted for publication during Clouts's lifetime.

Clouts's primary form of suppression with regard to his text is, then, that of concealment through metaphor within the text. Steiner, referring to the whole tradition of Aesopian language describes "allegoric indirection written under pressure of totalitarian censorship" as "tactical difficulty" (On Difficulty 33). Clouts, it can be argued, adopts figural obliquity in his poetry as a "tactic" to avoid, rather than the threat of state censorship, the confrontation within his poetry of his own political role. What Clouts regards as a slight--"the charge of thick obscurity that has sometimes been brought against the poems" (letter to Guy Butler, 21.12.66)--might be nothing less than

the critical identification of such a "tactic" of "difficulty".

Chapter One has shown how Clouts strives, above all, for verisimilitude in terms of the depiction of nature. What Chapman calls Clouts's "distrust of metaphor" (South African English Poetry 156) arises from Clouts's wish to achieve unmediated and immediate communication with a vital African world and so establish himself as "African". Chapter One illustrated this by contrasting Clouts's poetry with that of certain of his Afrikaans poetic contemporaries: Clouts's "Frog" (CP 115) is emphatically "no prince" as opposed to Opperman's "Paddas" which become complex symbolic signifiers, for example. Clouts, unlike Opperman, is uncertain of his right to belong to the African world and so wishes to confirm citizenship by engaging with the landscape as it is. Another corollary can be attached to Clouts's concern with nature or landscape depiction, however. This is that landscape depiction facilitates the implementation of a strategy of avoidance. As the examination of specific poems later on in the chapter would seem to suggest, concomitant with Clouts's desire to depict Africa as accessible and immediate, through recreation of its natural environment, is Clouts's desire to avoid confronting South Africa's manifest political problems, by his device of concentrating on Africa as landscape. For to confront the historically-specific would serve only to reaffirm for Clouts his own alienation and to reveal his own perceived

culpability in the creation of South Africa's unequal society.

Guy Butler, writing in The Cape Argus (22 March 1968) discusses "The Prospects for South African Literature in English" and makes a causal connection between "shocking" political events and a particular kind of poetry written by some South African English poets, that is distilled, "essential" and stripped of reference to the particular or the historical:

There are signs of a literary renaissance in South Africa. Our poets have got beyond the excitements of local colour. Their best verse is concerned with a deep spiritual probing as if the political shocks of the last decade had driven them from too easily held political and social assumptions to search for existential first principles. Our poetry has gained greatly in depth and suggestive power as a result of [sic] a glance at Sydney Clouts, Anne Welsh or Charl Cilliers will show.

Implicit in Butler's argument is a "retreat to the womb" scenario which he fails to explore any further. That the "search for existential first principles" might be retrogressive, rather than progressive, is not acknowledged. Neither is recognition given to the fact that this might result from a very real sense of inadequacy or guilt on the part of these poets for their own "too easily held political and social assumptions" as English-speaking, white and middle class in the face of the reality of South Africa's "political shocks".

Clouts is caught in a double bind. He is forced into a poetic model of landscape depiction that strives for the

literary representation of reality, or mimesis, in order, in part anyway, to avoid political commentary, and together with this, acceptance of the burden of his own political culpability. In those poems where Clouts might wish to hazard a "political" stance, however tentatively, and thus find some means of combatting his political inertia, he is constrained by his own device and compelled to utilize the landscape as trope.

Thus, it is in those poems where the mimetic effect is most threatened that one can best detect a specifically political sensitivity. The most obvious example of Clouts's adoption of nature as a functional metaphor for the political, and indeed an anomaly for this reason, is the early "Floodwaters are Political", excluded from Collected Poems (see Appendix 4a). In this sonnet the forces of nature are harnessed as figural enactors of the process of colonialism. The sun, source of natural power, is transformed into the harbinger of colonialism for, by means of an elaborate conceit, it is the sun that facilitates "the morning" which sees in turn the "founding" of the "main street" and the subsequent mingling of "reason" with the "hail":

INDIAMAN SUN, merchantman and lord,
 From whose exchequer beams at daybreak sail
 To colonise dome, title and lightning rod
 And found a morning on our main street, hail
 And reason have brought havoc to the pine
 With flinty crystal that has pocked our flesh
 and storm in every garden sown the rain
 To generate floodwaters and enmesh
 Our good to risk the water spider's mouth.

The analogy in this instance is insistent, as the title makes all too heavily-handedly apparent: the fact that "floodwaters" are "political" declares the pernicious influence of colonialism which invests everything with associations that are "political". The full force of nature is treated as a fit metaphoric match for the destructive energy of the colonial enterprise, moreover. The "musket bearing pious Dutch / Commander" plants a garden, creates Cape Town and so begins an inequitable society that will "hatch" a "storm in every garden" that "[sows] the rain / To generate floodwaters".

This poem, published in the University of Cape Town student magazine (Groot Schuur 1951), although an early and uncertain poem, is not a peripheral poem; it is particularly important in the context of Clouts's oeuvre for two reasons. For one, it works with what amounts to a political statement in poetic terms, rather than implication, as do Clouts's other poems. Its premise is, statedly, a political one. Moreover, Clouts does little to establish the credibility of a naturalistic description in the poem; something that is inimical to Clouts's other poetry. "Nature" in the poem is adapted to fit a code that is overtly, declaratively, symbolic. An explanation for the uncharacteristic example of the use of nature in Clouts's poetry can best be found if one views this poem in conjunction with others of Clouts's very early and symbolically-loaded poems, like "When Her Love's Assonance Glides" (1946) and "The Transition of W.B.

Yeats" (1947). As Chapter Two has argued, these earliest poems are heavily indebted to the example of European and American symbolist poets, for in such early poems Clouts experiments with the new "freer" forms that such Symbolist models seem to offer in order to adapt a restrictive South African poetic heritage and so answer better the requirements of a "new", linguistically unfettered, landscape.

This leads one to the second reason why "Floodwaters are Political" is important for a reading of much of Clouts's subsequent poetry. The symbolic code that is painstakingly spelt out in "Floodwaters are Political" remains essentially the same in later, ostensibly "non-political", poems. The "tactical difficulty" of Clouts's strategy in later poems can be mapped out and the clues deciphered if one uses the symbolic terms of "Floodwaters are Political" as the key to what becomes an entire poetic of encoding in Clouts's poetry.

The most common denominator of many of the previously unpublished poems is this tactical difficulty. The recognition of its operation affords the reader a sense of parallax: to view "nature" in the poems from the perspective of metaphoric indirection is to recognise the shift in emphasis from nature to society and from the real to the representational.

This code of metaphoric indirection is straightforwardly observed in a poem such as "Cape of Good Hope" (CP 44) which

was probably written in the early 1950s (see Appendix 3b) and unpublished during Clouts's lifetime. The poem revolves around a central irony, encapsulated in the poem's title. "Diaz sailing East" leaves behind him the land that he has named, and thereby claimed, the "Cape of Good Hope". For Clouts, the lie that results in this euphemism is directly attributable to the greed of those in power: Diaz is "... that sailor / whom a prince forced to ruin / the truth of winds". The deceptions of the early and greedy exploratory vision that was later to become the colonial system conspire to "launch / this cape into a dream / through seas of a silver name." The Pacific Ocean, as it was later to be called (a misnomer if ever there was one as the poem is quick to point out), is such only to those who seek to pacify its menace, by charting it and controlling it. The crime of this concealment is made clear by the death of Diaz and his men in a raging storm; "silver" might as well denote the duplicity of those in power as it does the value and beauty of calm seas. Diaz is not party to the deliberate obfuscation practised by the ruler. He "reads" the natural signs and recognises the "Cape of Storms" to be just that, for it was he who gave it this initial name ("Cabo Tormentoso") later changed by King John:

Where is that sailor
and where his shouting tars
Who read the sky's alarm
and came to dragon harm

Clouts, the contemporary observer-poet, also has the ability to "read" the signs of nature for what they really are. To

him the night is a "text" and the stars its "alphabet". And they reveal the "Cape of Good Hope" to be as much a lie as it ever was, for there is "Anger in the earth". Viewing Diaz's ship as a microcosm of the chaotic society that is born of its voyage, Clouts invokes the ghost of Diaz walking the "tilting deck" as a warning of the precariousness of the position of those who perpetuate this unbalanced socio-political system. The rage waiting to be unleashed into society is not defined as of human origin. It takes the form of natural violence, that will successfully eradicate the "fake" of a society that counterfeits justice and humanity as the real storm blasted the ship's rope or "fake":

Wait till the winds blow
and thunder blasts the fake

In this poem Clouts's primary motivation would appear to be the wish to criticize a political and social system that is born of a lie and that lives a lie. He confronts his target opaquely, however. John II, a fifteenth-century prince, would seem to bear the major portion of the blame, for a system perpetuated five centuries on; in the poem, the "forces" that oppose such a system are not even afforded a human visage, albeit a historically remote one. The sense of foreboding that informs the poem is one only implicitly the consequence of human agency, even though the loss of human life is envisaged and anticipated for future generations in the line: "the wind is the earth's shroud." Natural violence stands in for social upheaval in the poem,

then. Clouts identifies a threat but finds himself unable to name it for what it is. He accepts its legitimacy, and even its inevitability by according it the status of a natural phenomenon, but the result of such a depiction is that, as reader, one can recognise he perceives such action to be extrinsic to himself. In the light of this, one can strengthen the poetic equation Clouts makes of himself as persona to the Diaz figure. Like Diaz, Clouts sees things for what they are. Like Diaz, he may not approve of the "lie", but he feels powerless to change it. Indeed, like Diaz he participates in, and even perpetuates, an unjust and unscrupulously self-interested political system. And so, like Diaz, he too "walks" the "tilting deck", his position precarious and fear-filled, waiting for "the storm" to break.

Having identified the Diaz-Clouts relationship as a corollary of the storm-South African politics metaphor, one can accept that each figure occupies an equitable position within that milieu. What this reveals is that Clouts, positioning himself directly as poet persona, conceives of the part he has to play within South African political life as passive and ineffectual--he is about to be sacrificed to the "storm" and is powerless to avert it.

This poem provides a perfect substantiation of Jeremy Cronin's thesis that the adoption by white South African poets of a certain type of poetic manoeuvring as a way of avoiding political reality is politically disabling on a

personal level and harmfully self-fulfilling. Of that "apocalyptic" poetry that treats of resistance to racial oppression as "some kind of natural force, a brewing storm, or something stalking away at the bottom of the garden, or in the night or whatever" he says:

...it's rather paralysing for a white readership and audience. How do you ally yourself with a natural force like a storm or a coming flood? It doesn't really pave the way, or point in the direction of working with, of standing shoulder-to-shoulder usefully and constructively with the majority of South Africans in their resistance to apartheid. (Four South African Poets 17-18)

Other poems, primarily in the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" section of Collected Poems, using such metaphoric indirection as a form of tactical difficulty confirm Clouts's sense of political paralysis. In a poem such as "Want" (CP 45) Clouts seems to recognize such a condition. The affluent speaker, barricaded against "want", is threatened by it in the form of a beggar whose arrival to knock at the fortress erected against such an eventuality is heralded, significantly, by "desolate wind". The ironic denouement of the poem resides in the fact that the second stanza shows it to be the speaker who experiences "want" when confronted by the existential terror of a cossetted, fear-bred life:

Rain is falling.
The night is black.
O when will the precious
stars come back.

In poem after poem a political sense is implied by the invocation of nature in its more turbulent forms. Even the

figure of the "Street Hawker with his Barrow" (CP 48) becomes a motif for the "political" when placed within the "thunderous" context of a city rainstorm. Importantly, though, Clouts does not participate in the "street rain-sour" scene. As poet-persona he is not subjected to the vagaries of the weather. He observes, merely "...someone passing / with a stoop like rain". Thus is Clouts always set up in opposition to the storm, or rain, or lightning. It quite emphatically represents a sense of other. In "When Lion's Head covered brings rain" (CP 52) the "I" of the poem does not experience "each drop [of rain] that explodes." The "mute dark", the "hurled rain" and the "hard wind / blowing all that is possible in their lives / to silent destinations" does not encroach upon the speaker's life but serves only to "remind" him of the privilege of his life that enables him to "shelter / cold people from bad weather". In addition, the references to "Eden" and to "the pyramids [that] kept kings / from violation" give a sharp sense of Clouts's guilt and sense of responsibility for white South Africa.

The oppositional paradigm that Clouts creates between himself and "the other" continually reinforces a sense of "the other" as an alien and menacing construct. In poems such as "Wintertime, great wintertime" (CP 57), "The clouds look sagely unkempt" (CP 53) and "The Beetle" (CP 54) the whole sequence of landscape description is not an independent description allegiant only to the truth of the

Other poems
 say nature
 = movement

outside world, as might at first appear, but is revealed to be the constituent of a trope by virtue of this sense of menace certain natural phenomena assume or provoke in the mind of the poet-observer. In "Wintertime, great wintertime" the bird, appearing in winter, is corporeal and materially assertive, and so set up in opposition to the speaker who, attempting to define himself in relation to the bird ("What I am not I am") is starkly reminded of those characteristics he has, both emotional and cerebral, which make him human and conspire to separate him from nature (represented, as Chapter One argues, in its quintessential form by "the stone"):

The beating of a heart! It binds that stone.
I wept for all betrayals, greed and loss.

The "anguish" of the "beetle" turned onto its back by the flick of a hand in "The Beetle" connotes images, similarly, of human folly and violence and transforms "the green / and paradisaical" into "darkness and storm". The view from the "confident rough marble on [the] porch" enjoyed by the persona of "The clouds look sagely unkempt" is suddenly, in the last line of the poem, no longer a vista that can allow for such complacency. The intrusion of a locust into the happy scene assumes metaphoric proportions that are vast. Suggestive as a single locust is of a swarm of locusts that en masse cause devastation and drought, the persona is reminded of the precariousness of his serene and materially-comfortable life. The "dry political gaze" of the locust is

threateningly prophetic and accusatory, and therefore entirely "political" for Clouts.

A group of poems in the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" section of Collected Poems that has close thematic and compositional links with several of Clouts's critically best-acclaimed poems form together the most accessible examples of "political" poetry in this section. Confirmation of the speculative thematic links between all these poems is provided by Clouts in a letter written to Guy Butler on 1.4.58:

I'm sending you 9 more poems, some of which I hope you will like. At present I am busy on a group similar in treatment to "The Situation" and shall let you have these when they are finished.

Accepting the thesis that the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" component of Collected Poems represents, proportionally, the biggest sample of what has been identified as "political" poetry, and recognising these particular poems to be the most "political" of the lot, one might acknowledge them to hold the position of central importance vis à vis Clouts's political consciousness. The implication of this is that those "Published" poems that form part of the same compositional schema are equally part of such a political statement.

Whilst "After the Riot" (CP 51) and "Such Silence" (CP 48) adhere to the metaphoric patterns established for "political" poetry they are undoubtedly less tactically difficult to navigate in terms of their "political" profile. "After the Riot" utilizes the expected images of tempestuous

nature to denote political activism "...the door / slams in the wind" and "Hands on the bannister seem to feel a trembling / As if the wood held thunder and must split."

The poet-persona's perceptions are exaggerated and his sense of the "real" is distorted as a consequence of "the riot". The significance of this lies not so much in what this super awareness causes the poet-persona to do, as not to do. The poem charts, quite explicitly, the "solution" arrived at by the speaker in the face of such life-changing events. It is a solution informed by ideas of the importance of individualism and the affirmation of value being best located in the sphere of romantic love:

The best is to undress then, very slowly,
and feel your beauty pulsing in the dark.

The personal is offered in place of the public; the sexual instead of the political. Clouts's response to the threat the "riot" represents is to retreat into the sanctity of a liberal-humanist ideal. A similarly clear sense of Clouts's personal-political position is proffered by "Such Silence". The poem presages, in a nightmare vision, a state of political upheaval where the ordered world is overturned by "hard throngs raging". The experiencing persona of the poem is woken by a bird to a scene of natural and man-made harmony ("...a leaf so pleasantly stroked the wall"). Reassured, he sleeps again and wakes to "such silence", interpreting this to be the actualization of the omen of his first sleep. The poem would seem to actively support the contention that Clouts uses nature in his poetry to opt out

of confrontation with the real world. It suggests that nature wakens the persona from political chaos; but the silence--apparently endorsed by nature--becomes like the "dust and rain" the persona foretold from the first dream: the poem suggests the acknowledged perception that turning to nature is a sign of failure elsewhere.

The comparison of these two poems with "The Situation" (CP 71) is inevitable, for they echo one another most explicitly in terms of the scenario each one plays out, that involves the temporal containment of a moment of domestic peace after the horror of contemplating a hostile, external, and avowedly, political, world. In turn, this poem provides a clear connection with "Residuum" (CP 78) for, as Clouts revealed in an interview in 1975, "Residuum" and "The Situation" are "one theme sparked off in different directions" (quoted in Harnett, EiA 148). "Residuum" would have the appearance of being, in its turn, a completed version of "The melon stalk, the melon...", which reads pretty much as a draft for "Residuum" and is included in the "Unpublished Poems 1946-66" section of Collected Poems (CP 59).

As with "Such Silence" and "After the Riot", "The Situation" is a poem that reveals a clearly-identifiable political attitude. Once more, violent climatic manifestations denote political change (and it is worth mentioning here that the invitation to the wind to "blow

wind blow" of the second line does not owe its reference to Macmillan's famous "wind of change" speech, for the poem predates that speech by at least six years). Yet again, sensory distortion is a consequence of psychological shock--the sound of the dung-beetle scratching is amplified so that it "echoes in the house". The most important image for a "reading" of Clouts's political sensibility is the seventh line, that comprises the succinct, pared sentence "I stand still in my garden". In terms of what Riffaterre would call a "structural decoding" which occurs when a poem is read a second time (or "retroactively")--when the reader works comparatively backwards and forwards within the poem--this line takes on "positional" meaning, setting itself up as a sign of semantic equivalence within the general meaning of the poem (Semiotics of Poetry 2-9). Centrally placed, it operates as the literal enactment on the page of Clouts's stated position within the world of the poem. He lives a sequestered and cloistered life, occupying a position that is the "middle ground" between conflicting and extreme political camps, and affecting neutrality in relation to them. John Barrell argues convincingly that the "political authority of consensus" this would seem to offer "bears a close resemblance to a certain ideal construction of the situation of the middle class" (6). Addressing the notion of the "middle ground" with reference to certain values embodied in old-school literary criticism, his discussion is

nonetheless illuminating in its applicability to Clouts's text:

...the balance and resolution which literary texts seek to achieve bear a close resemblance to the political balance which...was both cause and effect of the increasing power of the middle class, and which has made the notion of 'balance' itself a term of value with a crucial function in middle-class ideology, underwriting the political authority of 'consensus' or 'the middle ground' by representing as irrational extremism whatever cannot, or whatever refuses to be, gathered into the middle ground. (6)

Chapter Three argues that "Residuum", together with "Dew on a Shrub" (CP 88) marks that point in Clouts's oeuvre where he achieves the greatest sense of facilitating the African world he strives ever to become part of. In terms of language both poems provide a radical solution to the problem of finding a "fresh tongue", but, Chapter Three contends, ultimately subvert Clouts's poetry as an ongoing project, by leaving him nothing else to say and nowhere else to go. Read as part of a larger "poem" comprising that "group similar in treatment to 'The Situation'" they become, too, part of the political consciousness displayed in these other poems. The suspicion Clouts displays in "Residuum" towards "History" and "society" is confirmed in the companion poems, as is a perspective that conceives of the poet-persona as operating within a vacuum, excluded from the "commotion" of the socio-political world and literally unplaced and unplaceable within the shifting and disjointed locales of the poem.

The poetry reveals Clouts to be a figure unable to reconcile his liberal-humanist values with the radicalism of the "raging throngs" of either oppressor or oppressed, and so occupying the "tilting deck" that is the political middle ground; a poet unwilling to tip the political balance of the see-saw of level-headedness or "neutrality" that marks his middle class affiliations; a writer debarred from finding a "true language" in Africa as an English speaker and a man excluded from the true life of Africa by virtue of his race.

For all these reasons, as this chapter has attempted to show, there is a peculiar and significant correlation between Clouts's most fertile poetic period, and the most vigorous suppression of his poetry. This continual combatting of his own voice can only end, for Clouts, in a condition of stasis and inertia.

So, exiled in England, Clouts wrote little poetry, and what there was of it railed against a tyranny he felt yet more paralysed to act against, thousands of miles away. "Professor Gulf" (CP 126), that quasi-Verwoerdian figure, is appropriately named. In "Wat die Hart van Vol Is" (CP 118) the situation of living in England is shown only to reproduce, in Clouts, the sense of suffocation afforded by living in South Africa--the tyranny of "Big Ben" takes over from "Baas Ben".

Finally, poignantly, the inertia took control of Clouts's poetry. In a letter to Guy Butler he charts its

erosion into his poetic production as early as 1966. In comparing himself to "a piece of local masonry" he becomes, metaphorically "the stone" of Africa made over into a European artifact, and the process stifles him:

I'm also pleased with [One Life] as an act of will because now I feel so frequently so lazy. I'm afraid I've got the sickness that puts off things and will have to cure myself and soon if I'm not to become like a piece of local masonry: misted over and dull. (letter to Guy Butler, 21.12.66)

CONCLUSION

The thread that has bound the thesis together is the sense of Africa that is ever present for Clouts. Clouts's work, the thesis concludes, is governed by a single, unspoken desire--the wish for rootedness in Africa. The thesis has considered Clouts's poetry as representative of a search for the "real" Africa in every sense; Africa has been present as a binding principle over and over again, just as the stone as metaphor resounds continually in the poetry itself.

The first chapter argued that Clouts's commitment in his poetry to the particular brand of nineteenth-century Romanticism that is adopted by his South African poetic predecessors is based on the premise that Clouts and his poetic forebears share, that they are somehow "set apart" from Africa by virtue of their status as outsiders. The choice of Romanticism as a poetic model is the choice then, it was argued, of a model that is imposed onto the African landscape; it does not grow out of it, as does the poetry of speakers of an indigenous tongue such as, arguably, Afrikaans. The landscape offers, to Clouts, the only possibility for concord and integration into Africa, something compatible with the Romantic project of reconciliation between the subject and the natural world. The Romantic task is invested with a particular urgency in Clouts's case, for it becomes integral to Clouts's self

identity as an African. The dissatisfaction the poet manifests with his chosen heritage, the chapter concludes, is an implicit recognition of the anachronism that this late Romanticism is. It fails to offer an African identity or to engage with the landscape that is the quintessential Africa for, as Carr maintains, the nineteenth-century view of the external world works with the sense that:

Man was set sharply against the external world. He grappled with it as something intractable and potentially hostile--intractable because it was difficult to understand, potentially hostile because it was difficult to master. (73)

Chapter Two offered the suggestion that Clouts, in seeking other traditions, chooses one that offers "appropriate" formal possibilities for capturing a sense of newness that is African. In the choice of Symbolist models, it was motivated, Clouts found flexibility and innovation of style, without the apparent need to discard his earliest and formative model. The problem, ultimately, with such a model, it was maintained, is that Clouts only succeeds in alienating himself still further from his source, Africa. This is because "the poetry of the mind" that Clouts ascribes to by virtue of the Symbolist model, in his very earliest and latest poetry, takes on the properties of an intricate and self-contained stylistic game that engages only with its own terms of reference. Clouts's admiration for poets who are strongly nationalistic, the chapter concluded, is a poignant reminder of Clouts's wish for unification with the Africa he feels alienated from.

The notion of a "shibboleth", a word Clouts himself uses in "Prince Henry the Navigator" (CP 72) was offered in the third chapter as suitably descriptive of Clouts's conception of the alienation he feels from Africa in terms of the (necessarily separating) language he is forced to use to connote the continent. The chapter argued that the theme of the limitations of language is fundamental to the Romantic consciousness, but the argument was posited that Clouts feels a particular component of this essential ambivalence to be the fact of himself as an English speaker, the possessor of an imported, and conquering, tongue. Clouts attempts to evade the shibboleth, the test which marks him off as an outsider, by making "difficulty" programmatic in his poetry. Clouts's poetry, as a result, is often an endless list of signifiers that drift free of signification; the elusive nature of the text makes concentration and comprehension near impossible in the later poetry, for Clouts becomes increasingly aware of the inadequacy of his language for true expression. The irony of this, it was pointed out, is all too obvious, in that for Clouts, of all poets, to have his poetry grounded in the material world is all-important. From an early (although qualified) confidence in the joining possibilities of language in the early poetry, the regression of Clouts's poetry into lack of confidence and finally, into silence, was traced.

Such developmental exploration was concluded in Chapter Four, which maintains that the trope of silence, in the form of self-censorship and the wilful repression of certain "political" topics can be located in the predicament that dogs Clouts's poetry from its very inception--the sense of himself as unworthy as a result of his position in the South African context as white and privileged--and is apparent, with increasing intensity and frequency as he gets older. The chapter concluded with the recognition that, ultimately, Clouts's poetry is dramatically political. The silence and exile of his last years speak louder than could any words of the sense of impasse and guilt he feels as a poet and as a person.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Facsimile of original "Poems by 'Terrapin'" contents page for Poetry Competition (1954)
- Appendix 2: Facsimile of "First Poems" contents page for proposed first edition (1957-58)
- Appendix 3: Revised dating for Collected Poems:
- (a) "Published or Authorised poems (1946-66)"
 - (b) "Unpublished poems (1946-66)"
 - (c) One Life (1966): Initial ordering
 - (d) "Published or Authorised poems (1966-82)"
 - (e) "Unpublished poems (1966-82)"
- Appendix 4: Additional poems:
- (a) Poems not included in Collected Poems
 - (b) New Coin "fragments" (N.C, 20, 1, 1984) published posthumously, with Marge Clouts's correction of typographic errors.
- Appendix 5: Working draft of "Un- / like / lightning"

APPENDIX 1:

CONTENTS PAGE FOR POETRY COMPETITION (1954)

"Terrapin" was the pseudonym Clouts adopted when he entered a poetry competition in 1954. Marge Clouts is uncertain about whether it was run by Rhodes University or the CNA. She remarks in a letter to Guy Butler (19.2.82) that one of the judges of the competition was Geoffrey Durrant and comments that "you Guy might have been another." She adds that "[h]e used the pseudonym 'Terrapin' (Shades of Campbell!)" According to Marge Clouts her husband received the second prize for his collection (letter to Susan Joubert 20.5.87).

POEMS BY 'TERRAPIN'
CONTENTS

	Page
A Pool for the Image	1
The Feeding of Doves	2
Future Power	3
Reading an Old Book Near Fish Hoek	4
Written on the Air	5
The Game	6
A Fence with Raindrops	7
Out of Time	8
The Autumn Garden	9
To the Winter Rain	10
The Death	11
Slope Down, Great Sky	12
White Hair	13
The Gathering	14
Around the Coast	16
Prince Henry the Navigator	
1 The Portrait of Prince Henry	17
2 Prince Henry the Navigator	19
3 Meditation on Dry Land	20
The Avocado Tree and the Sparrow	21
Dawn Hippo	22
The Mole	23
Animal Kingdom	26
What Remains	27
Along the Wall	28
The Long Shadow	29
Eliphaz Broom	30
Pathways	31
The Beginning	32
Poetry is Death Cast Out	33
The Inescapable	34
The Mouse	35
A Song of Ink	36
North Wind	37
Different Song	38
Envelopment	39
Idiot Child	41
Grains	43
A Part of Misery	45
The Strong Southeaster	46
The Grave's Cherub	47
Rabbi Akiba	48
Up in the Night Sky	49
Eucalyptus	51

APPENDIX 2:

CONTENTS PAGE FOR PROPOSED "FIRST POEMS" (1957-58)

Sydney Clouts assembled a contents page of existing poems for possible publication under the title "First Poems". In a letter to Guy Butler (10.2.83) Marge Clouts says that

[s]ome time after 1955, Sydney compiled a book of poems which he entitled 'First Poems' which he sent to Cyril who was by then living in London, having left S.A. in 1954, to try and get them published in Britain. I think they were sent to Faber and Faber.

In Collected Poems this collection is emphatically placed as having been compiled "in 1957 or 58" (CP xii).

FIRST POEMS
CONTENTS

	Page
Of Thomas Traherne and the Pebble Outside	1
The Feeding of Doves	2
Mile of Grace	3
Poetry is Death Cast Out	4
The Function of Metre	5
The Game	6
The Mouse	7
Up in the Night Sky	8
A Song of Ink	10
The Grave's Cherub	11
The Mole	12
The Sleeper	15
Earth, Sky	17
A Fence with Raindrops	18
Within	19
Eliphaz Broom	20
Eucalyptus	21
The Sea and the Eagle	24
The Situation	25
Roy Kloof	26
Roy Kloof Went Riding	27
The Death	29
Reading an Old Book Near Fish Hoek	30
The Hawk	31
The Long Shadow	32
The Strong Southeaster	33
Pathways	34
Prince Henry the Navigator	35
1 The Navigator	35
2 Meditation on Dry Land	36
Idiot Child	37
What Remains	39
Around This Coast	40
The Avocado Tree and the Sparrow	41
Out of Time	42
Along the Wall	43
A Part of Misery	44
The Inescapable	45
Dawn Hippo	46
Slope Down, Great Sky	47
North Wind	48
The Autumn Garden	49
Written on the Air	50
Animal Kingdom	51
Sing Out, Bright Beaks	52
Grains	53
The Gathering	55
Under the Gate	57
Rabbi Akiba	58

Future Power	59
In this Landscape of Mountains	60

[Handwritten addition to original contents page:]

Than Light in Motion Lightlier

Knotted Globes of Tawny Resin

APPENDIX 3:

REVISED DATING FOR COLLECTED POEMS

My revision of the order in which the poems should appear in Collected Poems is in accordance with the editors' stated (but unfulfilled) criterion in the Preface that "our first concern was to put [the poems] in chronological order" (xi).

The editors state that they based this ordering largely on Clouts's own lay-out for the "Terrapin" and "First Poems" collections (Appendix 1 and 2 respectively):

We used the order of the poems in both collections as a general guide to our own (CP xii).

This assertion is re-inforced by Marge Clouts herself in a letter to Susan Joubert (2.5.87) wherein she states that:

Cyril, Sydney's brother, and I, did not confine ourselves to a 'thematic scheme' but put the poems in chronological order as far as we could, from our memories of when they were written, and also from when some of them appeared in magazines.

Upon comparison with the original "contents" pages of both the "Terrapin" and "First Poems" collections it is evident, in fact, that Clouts's own, chosen, format for a reading of the poems has been largely abandoned in Collected Poems. An exact chronology based on evidence of a poem's first appearance, in the order that the poet himself chose to organize that material, which is the only datum available for ordering the poems (in view of the fact that Clouts did not date his manuscripts), has not been maintained.

The division of Collected Poems into "Unpublished" and "Published" sections was originally suggested by Guy Butler (letter to Marge Clouts, 2.2.83) as a way of ensuring some sort of qualitative control over the text, in order to separate those poems Clouts felt were worthy of publication from those he felt were not:

It is...with considerable hesitation that I suggest a modified system of presenting the poems. I incline to dividing the book quite boldly into two parts: I. Poems which he chose to publish: II. Posthumous poems (or some other title). With regard to I, we have his own clear imprimatur, and we have the sequence of dates of publication: and, in One Life, his own chosen sequence. With regard to II, we do not have his personal imprimatur but we do have poems which he left. They are, however, of varying quality: to re-cap: some which seem perfectly shaped and finished to me, and which I am at a loss to know why he did not publish; others which look like early drafts; and still others which it seems he had worked over so many times that they became congealed; or, again, were written in conventional forms (e.g. the sonnet) almost as exercises which he judged as stilted, or abandoned as interesting but inadequate.

Marge and Cyril Clouts originally opposed this idea. In a letter to Guy Butler, Marge Clouts maintains that:

Cyril and I both feel that it is misleading to think of Sydney's published poems as "sheep" which he particularly wanted published, and others as "goats". He may have thought them very good, the latter, but not felt they were quite 'ready'. Sometimes he sent batches of poems to a magazine and only a few were taken. (I have no record of all that he sent). He didn't use all the poems in ONE LIFE because he had envisaged a certain sort of book, so it does not follow that he had 'rejected' ones he did not put in, though he may not have felt they were absolutely the best.

She modifies her opposition later in the letter and posits a compatible but more detailed division of the poems:

Cyril and I have discussed your ideas of two sections, those which Sydney chose to publish, and unfinished and unpublished poems. (I suppose that is what you mean by Posthumous--a word we would not want to use).

Certainly we would be relieved not to date the poems in the way that Marie David and I discussed at CT, as there is no definite way of dating say from 46-56, and then from 56-66. It just wouldn't be accurate.

While we all think about the sequencing, and using your idea [sic], here is another suggestion based on it:

I	Unpublished Poems 1946-1966	58
II	Published Poems not in One Life 1946-1966	20 (more or less)
III	One Life published in 1966	45
IV	Published Poems 1966-1982 (in fact no new ones published after 1970)	7
V	Unpublished Poems 1966-1982	15
VI	Incomplete Unpublished Poems and fragments	15 (more or less)

Possible V and VI could be one section.

We think it very important to make the distinction between poems published before and after ONE LIFE. The dating I have given here is very 'extended' but it has the virtue of being TRUE!

APPENDIX 3 a):

REVISED DATING OF PUBLISHED AND AUTHORISED POEMS (1946-66)

In this appendix the poems appearing under the Collected Poems heading of "Published or Authorised Poems (1946-66)" have been re-ordered primarily in accordance with the first mention of their existence. Where a number of poems appear to receive their first mention simultaneously, as in the "Terrapin" Collection, I have attempted to adhere to Clouts's own editorial decisions with regard to the ordering of such poems.

I have distinguished between "authorised" poems (that appear for the first time in published form in Collected Poems) and previously "published" poems; something that the editors of Collected Poems do not.

Problematic editing decisions:

I would query the exclusion of "Along the Wall" from Collected Poems (see Appendix 4) because of its obvious status as an "authorised" poem, forming as it does part of the "Terrapin" collection.

Furthermore, the decision to include "The Eye" (CP 35) under the heading "Published and Authorised Poems (1946-66)" in the Collected Poems seems an unmotivated one. It cannot be included as an "authorised" poem as it does not receive mention in either the "Terrapin" or "First Poem" collections. The only presumable fact about it is that it was written after 1968 (that is, after "First Poems"), but

it certainly does not appear to have received the stamp of "authorisation" from the poet himself. Similarly, it would seem to fit uneasily into the category of "Published Poems (1946-66)" as it was published posthumously, in Sesame 3, 1983-4.

Appendix 3 a):

REVISED DATING OF PUBLISHED AND AUTHORISED POEMS (1946-66):

(* denotes first appearance in published form was in
Collected Poems)

1946 or earlier:

When Her Love's Assonance Glides (Groote Schuur, 1946)
Children (Groote Schuur, 1946)

1954 or earlier:

* A Pool for the Image	("Terrapin", 1)
* The Feeding of Doves	(" 2)
* Reading an Old Book Near Fish Hoek	(" 4)
A Fence with Raindrops	(" 7)
* Out of Time	(" 8)
The Autumn Garden	(" 9)
* To the Winter Rain	(" 10)
* The Death	(" 11)
Slope Down, Great Sky	(" 12)
White Hair	(" 13)
* The Gathering	(" 14)
* The Portrait of Prince Henry (early version)	(" 17)
* The Avocado Tree and the Sparrow	(" 21)
What Remains	(" 27)
The Long Shadow	(" 29)
* Eliphaz Broom	(" 30)
Pathways	(" 31)
* The Beginning	(" 32)
The Inescapable	(" 34)
* Song of Ink	(" 36)
Different Song	(" 38)
* Envelopment	(" 39)
* Grains	(" 43)
A Part of Misery	(" 45)
* The Strong Southeaster	(" 46)
Rabbi Akiba	(" 48)
* Up in the Night Sky	(" 49)
* Eucalyptus	(" 51)

1954 - 55:

The Function of Metre (S.A.B.C., New Soundings, 1955)
 The Sea and the Eagle (")
 Lines (")

1954 - 56:

On the Mountain (Standpunte 13, 1956)
 As it Was (")

1954 - 1958:

Mile of Grace ("First Poems", 3)
 *In This Landscape of Mountains (" 60)
 *Than Light in Motion Lightlier (handwritten addition to
 "First Poems" index)
 Knotted Globes of Tawny Resin (")

Pre 1958:

The Soul in Its Sleep (Poets in South Africa, 1958)

After 1958:

The Eye (posthumous publication in Sesame, 1983-84)

1958 - 63:

Through Cold Constantia Forest: early version (The Lion
 and the Impala, 2,2,1963)

APPENDIX 3 b):

KEY DATES OF UNPUBLISHED POEMS (1946-66)

Marge Clouts provided some key dates from memory to justify the ordering of the undated and often factually undateable "Unpublished Poems (1946-66)" in an interview with Susan Joubert (Longborough 12.12.87). A letter from Sydney Clouts to Guy Butler (10.2.58) provides evidence of the existence of "Such Silence" and "After the Riot" by this date.

Problematic editing decisions:

I would quarrel with the inclusion of "Juan" (CP 56) in the "Unpublished Poems (1946-66)" section of Collected Poems, as it would appear to be an "authorised" poem, judging from a letter Sydney Clouts sent to Guy Butler (13.12.65):

There are two more poems I'd love to include [for publication] if it is possible. One of them, "Juan", attempts to join Don and San Juan: the subject intrigues me.

By contrast, the editorially unjustified exclusion of three unpublished poems from Collected Poems, mentioned by Sydney Clouts to Guy Butler, must be noted. "Two Voices" (see Appendix 4a) and "In the Morning" are mentioned by Sydney Clouts to Guy Butler in a letter dated 10.2.58. "The Storm" (see Appendix 4a) was sent by Clouts to Butler for consideration for A Book of South African Verse (1.2.59).

Appendix 3 b):

KEY DATES OF UNPUBLISHED POEMS (1946-66)

Using the chronology of the "Unpublished Poems (1946-66)" section of Collected Poems as a basic skeleton, some vital dates can be inserted into this framework to provide a rough guide to a likely development of the unpublished poetry.

Unless otherwise stated, the dates are those provided by Marge Clouts to Susan Joubert (interview, 14.12.87, Longborough)

Something precious

Realms (pre 1951)

Song (pre 1951)

Driving from the Sea

The Shadow of a Cloud

Light was a Word (1952)

Cape of Good Hope (early 50s)

The Shark (1953 - 54)

The Cold Wreathes Rising After Rain

The Street Hawker with His Barrow

Such Silence (mentioned by S.C. to G.B, letter 10.2.58)

The Load (1950s)

Orange

The Mime of Reason

After the Riot (originally "Before": S.C. to G.B, 10.2.58)

True-with-cold Springwater

When Lion's Head Covered Brings Rain

The Clouds Look Sagely Unkempt

The Beetle

For the Truth (post 1961; written in England)

Juan

(begun in South Africa; worked
on in England after 1961)

Wintertime, Great Wintertime

The Melon Stalk, the Melon ...

The Cutting of the Pines

(M.C. uncertain of date: "Could
be pre- or post England, as
it's written on a single,
seemingly completed, piece of
paper")

With a Pointed Stone

APPENDIX 3 c):

ORIGINAL ORDER OF ONE LIFE POEMS

The original listing by Sydney Clouts of the One Life poems is provided. It was amended to its final form in a letter from Clouts to Guy Butler dated 16.5.65.

Appendix 3 c):

ORIGINAL LISTING FOR ONE LIFE

I

Is	1
Of Thomas Traherne and the Pebble Outside	2
The Game	3
Dawn Hippo	4
Idiot Child	5
The Mouse	7
Poetry Is Death Cast Out	8
The Grave's Cherub	9
Within	10
The Sleeper	11
Earth, Sky	12
The Situation	13
Roy Kloof	14
Roy Kloof Went Riding	15
The Hawk	16
Prince Henry the Navigator	
The Navigator	17
Meditation on Dry Land	17
Around This Coast	18
North Wind	19
Under the Gate	20
The Mole	21
Animal Kingdom	23
Dew on a Shrub	
1	24
2	25
3	26
Future Power	27

II

Salute	29
Epic	30
Stick Song	31
Zeus Rhinoceros	32
Intimate Lightning	33
The Discovery	34
The Portrait of Prince Henry	35
The Saltiest Soaking Is Given by Knowledge	36
Bright the River's Ocean Shore	37
Karoo Stop	38
For the Thunder	39
After the Poem	40
Being Reborn Imposes Freedom	41

Prescriptions	42
Hieroglyphs	
Interior	43
Over the Side	44
The Republic	45
Firebowl	46
Lifebelt Post	47
Hotknife	
Hotknife	48
Nellie	49
Folktales	
1	50
2	51
Residuum	
1	52
2	53

APPENDIX 3 d):

DATING OF PUBLISHED POEMS (1966-82)

Some approximate dates of composition have been provided from memory by Marge Clouts, and the inclusion of the dates of publication for the remainder of the poems included in "Published or Authorised Poems (1966-82)" in Collected Poems illustrates the paucity of production and publication for the last sixteen years of Clouts's life.

Appendix 3 d):

DATING OF PUBLISHED POEMS (1966-82)

The Radish] (According to Marge Clouts, these two were
 The Frog] written at the same time in the later 1960's,
 in England: interview with S.J. 12.12.87)

Through Cold Constantia Forest
 (BBC: "Living Poets", 1969)

Hotknife (Published in UNISA English Studies,
 8,3,1970, but the "Hotknife" poems begun by
 1964-65, according to a letter, S.C. to G.B,
 28.6.65)

Wat Die Hart van Vol is
 (BBC: "Poetry Now", 1966)

One That Was Never Seen
 (Published in UNISA English Studies, 8,3,1970
 but possibly written at Rhodes between 1969-
 1970).

APPENDIX 3 e):

DATING AND AMENDED ORDERING OF UNPUBLISHED POEMS (1966-82)

Here again approximate dating has been provided, where possible, by Marge Clouts from personal recollection.

Problematic editing decisions:

Marge Clouts suggested, in the interview in Longborough, that "Professor Gulf" was written in England prior to the publication of One Life in 1966. This would qualify the poem for inclusion in the "Unpublished Poems (1946-66)" section of Collected Poems.

I would contend that the inclusion of "Genius" in the "Unpublished Poems (1966-82)" section of Collected Poems is problematic. It is a poem that received simultaneous publication with "The Eye" in Sesame 1983-84, after the poet's death. "The Eye", however, is categorized as an "authorised" poem, and placed under the heading "Published or Authorised Poems (1946-66)" in Collected Poems.

Appendix 3 e):

DATING AND AMENDED ORDERING OF UNPUBLISHED POEMS (1966-82)

Again the only available ordering structure for unpublished poems is that provided in Collected Poems. Specific dates identified by Marge Clouts of when the poems were written are simply slotted into the chronology provided in Collected Poems, therefore.

Professor Gulf (Uncertainty about the date of composition. It possibly pre-dates One Life, and was most probably written in England between 1961 and 1966).

I breathed the first shivers of daylight
When Granite was Our Game
Cape Point
Table Mountain

Contemporary British Poets (1968)

The Heights (Written in Grahamstown, 1969-71)

Up up on the song's beat
The Wheel
Genius

Day that comes to us all]	(All untitled and
Let me not be the firetongs]	undated. Written in
Old scorched stone]	England)
No, it is possible]	
To the subtlety of the plane of mind]	

APPENDIX 4a):

14 POEMS EXCLUDED FROM COLLECTED POEMS:

1. Death of an Athlete
2. Walter de la Mare
3. The Transition of W B Yeats
4. My Springing Feet
5. Windmills
6. Floodwaters are Political
7. I Caught a Figleaf
8. When I Was a Little Boy
9. Along the Wall
10. Two Voices
11. The Storm
12. Revising at Dawn
13. Poem
14. Clouds (untitled)

Death of an Athlete

This night moon, star and madrigal
Cannot teach their music against death.
The earth beneath our lovely hearts
Is buried also under Arthur,
So crushed, so silently away
From us in another, deeper grave.

Arthur is dead and summer feels
His silent moccasins of death;
And sunned air ploughing warmth and movement
Deep in the earth to keep pace with him,
Sends up rich sweat to sweeten his panting,
Wraps hugely about him death and end.

This runner is feminine as the girl
Who weeps her tears into his speed;
He speaks his void in her shelled ear
Pressed to the nothing in his ankles,
His tributaries nothingness
That proves slow growth and slow transition.

His muscles, the plaited universes
Of speed and love and finity,
Are spine, ribs, whiteness, angry bone,
Forcing their dusk and darkness on us.
Before the swan of another evening
Glides to us, O let us be happier.

(Groote Schuur, 1946)

Walter de la Mare

His age has come and he sings still
His son, his ageless Wanderer.
He knows the world, the world his youth
Knew, sliced into equal magics;
Contained and hushed around a toadstool,
Flecked with opening doors and dreams
Of great kings and unicorns,
Gone dancing to the streets madly
Where men look with real eyes on the woods,
And to the mountains go dreamlessly.

Are there strangers on the wold?
Are sleep and song over the lazy
Picknicers? Are all things strange,
Flowers sprung darkly medieval, the air
Tuned to the whisperings of sad colleens?
He, then, walks abroad deeply
And drops stars on the heaths between
His ribs and beneath his striding feet,
And speaks through a wand to all of us.
He steps noiselessly. Through his lips
Winds the quaint music to its omega.

(Groote Schuur, 1946)

The Transition of W B Yeats

Here lies Yeats, a singer
 Lost in the last wood,
 Whose early legend eye
 Transfixed a magic mood.

Tangled in the embraces of Cathleen and Hanrahan,
 He sang far, wood-locked ladies
 Forever, forever hidden.

Danced in the ring
 Of his first myth-self
 Doomed to vengeful age
 Feet of sprite and elf.

He strayed to the world one morning
 And shook his eyes from Cathleen's°
 For he grew suddenly old
 And his mind broke with pains.
 He felt a stranger on the plains.

In the mind ideas are growth:
 The true roses in the true grove.
 The brain must feel the length
 Of year after year; and ideas move
 Towards age, the concentrated strength.
 Ideas like leaves come in time
 For seasons. Time knows the pace
 And knows when to change man and God,
 Makes fairies gnarled and long-eared
 Leprechauns spit flame and not spikenard.

(From an early notebook, dated January 1947: Letter from
 Marge Clouts to Susan Joubert, 9.2.1988)

My Springing Feet

My springing feet my blood will daily
Whirl in its straight and mortal shaft.
Between head and heel, between crown and dust,
All the dynasty of my days,
Until my cradle is the wide, wide Sea,
Last home of thistle and thew
And aloe with a spire's zest
For heaven; last home of flight,
Of bread in the ear ablaze,
Of light in the eyes
In the sun that will last O long O longest.

Until the rooster s anthem
Jerk up for thirsty heaven a round gaze
Of morning to wash me for burial,
My springing feet my blood will daily
Doom for the cypress in the shade.
Though light rides long on the eyes,
Though for many a day
My two bright tailors will measure well
How boulders grind, how eagles are found dead,
What holy and unholy is,
The sun will last O long O longest.

(Trek, April 1949)

Windmills

I stand near the farmhouse and the poplar,
 My fingers pluck the fence's harp,
 A bucket shines looped round the sty s
 Thick post that creaks against the pig.
 High as the wind, confirmed in steel,
 Blades that are bright, blades that are sharp,
 Do dwarf the sun wrestling in the fig
 Tree, and draw waters up by whys
 And wherefores of the religious wheel
 Whose faith in water brings bread
 Black to my table, and sleep to my head.

O Stellenbosch over the hill is steeples,
 Sunday is the mineral stream
 Turning prayer's waterwheel; men wear black,
Women wear light conscience in the lip
And chant their agonies. Christ in stone
 Stares from the wall to heal a dream
 Or keep the blood holy from the grip
 Of love that will not wear His sack.

O wheel, O water, flow and turn,
 O bucket be nickel, sty mud,
 Love the sheer windmill of the blood.

(Groote Schuur, 1951)

Underlined sections are Sydney Clouts's corrections after publication.

Floodwaters are Political

INDIAMAN SUN, merchantman and lord,
From whose exchequer beams at daybreak sail
To colonise dome, title and lightning rod
And found a morning on our main street, hail
And reason have brought havoc to the pine
With flinty crystal that has pocked our flesh
And storm in every garden sown the rain
To generate floodwaters and enmesh
Our good to risk the water spider's mouth.
I think of bold morning when his deck
Landed the musket-bearing pious Dutch
Commander to plant a halfway house and hatch
This lion city prowling through the south
For time's sly kudu at the timeless lake.

(Groote Schuur, 1951)

Underlined section is Sydney Clouts's correction after publication.

I Caught a Figleaf

I caught a figleaf
I caught a memory
Large as my father, deep as the wind.
My life was in the stem's green fire,
All my jangling boyhood
In the orchard of its veins,
In the web of its intricate ladders.

In my deep ear
Its bell of green
Rang the knell of my boy's blood that has run out
Of mine into time's lurching man.
O blind, see how he runs
Ahead of my running years
To cup the streaming marvel of my veins.

I climbed its noise.
I climbed the past.
Through its seasons, through my mystery.
There was a boy I knew nothing
I felt the terror of wind
In its tapping of my heel.
In all the icy summer of its heart.

The crashing leaf
Has told me news.
Blown over the wind, over the sea.
How my elbow creaks its bone away.
How at length the fields
And gates of my dominion
Erupt and buckle. Give me love and light.

(Standpunte, June 1951)

When I Was a Little Boy

When I was a little boy
My mother called me in
To Eden on a rocking horse
And clash of military tin.

Once I ate the rind of cheese
Now I chew the meat,
God was my model shepherd then
O children have strange appetite.

I would not lie for candy but
Shot frogs with a point two two;
Guns are no longer agents of
My lust but why do I lie to you?

I looked in all bazaars for gold;
Tin's anticlimax wore
That brief prospecting time to ruin,
Girls gave me first the feel of ore.

I put away all childish things
Like crayon and genesis
My fear was long as a rabbi's beard
I laughed that life could come to this.

All things lovely were profane
Time's lightning minced the rod,
Beautiful walls came tumbling, dust's
Authority was black as god,

And when I walked my shadow's faithless
Body uprose and fled
Stealing its weight away that held
My heart from walking in my head,

My head from flying to that dark
Where the sheared wind runs wild
And clips the hedge of night, and stars
Fall about madly like a child.

O seasons now your life is not
A foursquare loveliness
Time has no harbour for the ship
Planets will burn like phosphorus.

Cars glide through sliding doors to sleep
Upon the satisfied wheel
But what has made the active dark
So anxious, though traditional,

And made my mind so like that day
The ambiguous virgin ran
And taught corruption to her man
But kissed the dust and dark away.

(Undated early poem: Marge Clouts suggests that it may have
been written in the early 1950s)

Along the Wall

Greater than your laws, O judges,
Wiser than your lifted hands
Expressing weighed rebuke,
Ten years or execution,

The summer moon descends and blends
Through shattered waves of glass
On the factory wall, that pass so gently
Closing their opening eyes,

That cutting edges rise almost asleep.
No human law can rouse them.
The sun's gone down to manufacture thieves,
But the moon has found an ocean wild with peace.

(Included in the "Terrapin" collection. Rejected for
publication in Collected Poems by the editors: Marge Clouts
to Guy Butler, 6.12.1983)

Two Voices

In battlesmoke, cry of the soldier
Haunts the ground that his blood ran over.

Whom do you mourn, ghost?

Earth I have lost.

That is the earth
That you yearn for it, soldier?

Pain of the body,
Fright in the heart;
The sun flowing over,
The cold moon below.

O pity the living.

The dead have their wounds.

Pray for the living.

Their horses shine,
Their dogs bark clear.
They have a sign, a thought,
And build a tower upon the rocks.

O soldier, soldier,
This life is bare and cold
And the bleak roads run aimless;
The rocks and the houses
Whirl into each dark
So effortlessly, like madmen
Who repeat they are well, they are well.
And the wind hurls from the mountain -
I smart and I fear
And would dearly die
And be a voice drifting
Like a cloud in the sky.

2.

I long for the river
Where I washed the first wound.
I long for the tree
Where the second blood sprang
Like a buck through the wood.
I lay down lonely,
I lay down for good.

Life breaks, and that is best,
And I will give you my whole body
For your death, soldier.

No, for I won that well,
And kissed life as I fell.

(Undated poem enclosed in letter: Sydney Clouts to Guy
Butler, 1958, for consideration for A Book of South
African Verse, 1959)

The Storm

Extreme discomfort, my friend--
Through storm we were taken,
But the soft mimosas, it seemed,
Stood quite unshaken.

When we looked at the river
It was smooth and it shone,
But the rain should have dug it
With fierce holes right along.

Things surely were somehow,
Yes, altered severely,
Though you looked through the sobbing glass
And said: "I can see clearly.

"I can see the horses calm
As they steam there in the field.
Men walking are not bowed."
We drove extremely sealed,

Having extolled our habit
Of entire indifferent ease;
Driving through thunder,
Hearing the hum of bees.

(Undated poem enclosed in letter: Sydney Clouts to Guy
Butler, 1958, for consideration for A Book of South
African Verse, 1959)

Revising at Dawn

"...nights and days
from darkness of the waterhole,
to graze upon the green plateaus..."

I opened my eyes.
An hour had passed...
a night...
a lifetime...

Seaside window.
Line by line
my notes and poems
were stirring across the rounded tabletop --
lifting the breeze,
the distances...
like animals out on the plain
sniffing the cool alertness of dawn,
amongst shrubs with the stinging green of brine
bursting as far as the eye could see.
They plunged, prancing
abruptly forward in limited spurts;
they sway, they surge...
oribi, zebra, drumming in thousands over the land,
leaving a silence of pages faintly astir

in the dust of horizons
of this ocean city of my birth,
where it is dawn.

"...hoofbeats...

tabletop...

the plain is swept with light...

O lifetime...."

(From a manuscript dated 1968 containing poems by Sydney Clouts sent by the poet for consideration for The Penguin Book of South African Verse, 1968)

Poem

A night of winter at our door,
My words slammed shut on your belief,
Your eyes looked up from the gentle lore
That doctors try for bones' relief.

More sharply than reflected light
I saw my question on your lip.
The door behind me shut the night
Out from your brightness and the grip

Of love that was your night within.
I walked into the starhushed field
To put on darkness like a skin
Till madness sank and body healed.

There was no trophy I could take
But stole a flake of the simple bark
Of winter off the tree, to stake
My restoration in the dark.

(Undated. Rejected for publication in Collected Poems:
Marge Clouts to Guy Butler, 6.12.1982)

Clouds (untitled)

Clouds

are the wind's hotel
the mountain's covering fever
the sky's humanity.

Wheeze in your bed, cold mountain.
There is a cloud
there is a place
for particular change
and particular grandeur.

Lying in bed
by the half-shut window, sickness
untidies my life that is barely composed.
Tough points of the pinescent,
yesterday's shadowy
radiance, flashed
uncoverings,
heaven's
angles
of wilderness:
the chilled heart.
In the foyers of the city,
of the clouds, winds feast on their walls.
My body's virus bangs in my chest like a stupid orator
hour-after hour,
and I'm cured:

(Undated. Rejected for publication in Collected Poems: Marge
Clouts to Guy Butler, 6.12.1982)

APPENDIX 4 b):

NEW COIN "FRAGMENTS"

"Fragments" of work in progress at the time of Sydney Clouts's death, published in New Coin, 20, 1, 1984. Typographic errors in that edition are corrected here, under Marge Clouts's direction.

Five Untitled Poems

Hermes the obsolete patron of
boundary stones for
whom the very thought
of my existence, and his for me,
is pointless; Hermes who
cannot now be touched
by love and beauty in
Spring's passionate
enclose,
lifting the snake-stick,
his divine symbol
of our precarious
humanity; his
swordhilt gilt flames,
and lightly robed,
has turned away, now
has plainly turned away
I shall never forget him
I shall always remember him
standing aside
lifting his snake-stick to reveal
this terrible change that has come upon me,
and on us all.

She adores apples, she makes no bones
about wanting her peace, her hour
her blackred or red or lovegreen apple

and bites into one
late at night--aloud--sitting
sideways, relaxed,
half in shadow
half turning
full cheeks to the light
like a saint by Giotto

formidable comical beautiful
as (sometimes) women are.

Their saintliness appalls me
apple-eating bitches
too smooth for war
too unregenerate for peacefulness
and quizzically blushing when the stars come down.

Un-

like

lightning

which

(we cherish it)

nightlightning

which

is instantly declarative

once

of the fence-nail

once

of the glittering

withholding nothing

(embryonic)

instantly is all itself

to crack the gatepost

annotating darkness

A new word a new form a new life.

For breakfast, a spilling
extra sparkle of salt,
unquenchable. Act on it. One
grain liquefies law,

whose libraries and powers and police
have come into that apex where they crumble;

so, and universal.

My country is my darkness,
it's my life.

A new word's atom trickles on the tongue.

There will never be a night that can sprinkle enough of the
truth:

Temperish cricketsong stampeding silence,
 all night its populous anger, almost a freak
 of prodigal disharmony,
 protests into my heart with Damn you damn you!
 Do you agree?
 Agree with what, wild cricket,
 With what, aboriginal,
 Black invisible thing?

It is no angry impotence, harsh
 secrecy of inner grieving, that you sing,
 shrubbed in the city's blackened greenery.

Pangs of unmodish joy I never knew
 confound me as I listen,
 confound me as I brood
 established in a truculent repose
 mastered by every light as out
 and out and out it goes.

Through passages of dim account blood feeds and races.
 I pass into the night of a million faces.
 Aimless intimate glooms fumble the living breath.
 Here I listen and I stir and struggle with my death,
 whose humdrum madhouse, with its reddish lawn,
 consumes the light from dawn to dawn.

Night sharpens. I contend, I groan.
 I, implacable cricket, grind like a stone.
 I, implacable cricket, sing, awake, awake!
 Occurring through the city,
 occurring for its sake.
 Acutely as a gardener
 I modulate the air
 of night, and from its calm confusion take
 combustible joy; or shall
 that downward sleep again, which sprains
 control; empty the first
 slow voluntary nucleus of powers.

The Gargoyles: Milan Cathedral

Suddenly I know these creatures
these tearless men:
their hunched and squat worn stone
stays plunging as they turn
fiercely to rise
on scarred wings
humbling the cathedral,

which defeats them.

These blunt-nosed hawkbaboons
with beaks wide open
wide open eyes
gazing upon the world
in pouring rain

all waterspouts
and all these waterspouts
all scorched by time
gush
steeply medieval
dazzling
even tranquil
evil

Hotknife

V

It's destiny, it's heaven somma
busy-busy crowding out my min'
can blin you ewen
or open up your eyes, my maaster.
If you pass
by skellum inne long grass coming
slow-slow tru broken bottles
jus' kiss him going by
jus' kiss him once
dat kiss will laas a long long time

VI

Sir, Polly tol' me
Polly tol' me true
dat witch-woman, dat ol' bitch-woman

"You can go to Windhoek
you can go to Guatemala,
one day a day will come
Hotknife" she say "Hotknife
one day a day will come."

"You can chainze into a pidzen
you can pick up de laas' final crumb
Hotknife," she say "Hotknife
one day a day will come."

An she give me her pink cheek.
You can't get away from deze people.

She say "Hotknife
de win' crack de plumstone
a' de plumstone climb into re plum
one day a day will come
Hotknife" she "Hotknife
One day a day will come."

VII

Ag Nellie now I tell you
when I walk into my place
las' night, I drag no crime
I start so to jiggle by surprise
I dance like no man.

Dead bones can come bite me
I spit, I'm not de'.
I clear whenne moon come out white

I see you, your only face
dat somewhere I know where I am
I embrace you. I'm a man.
I'm responsible.

A mossie a klein mossie
he see dat little mossie onna groun'

Hey sweetness don' be nowhere
I had you by my side.

The Word

It is free, yet anyone thrusting through
this tall excitable grass of endless vistas
baited the rhinoceros

(he) bruteblind he
who scents position

head hard lowered
vast straight comes pounding.

It is he

who was forgotten. The clumsiness is in his target. Broer
beware of not being nimble and unarmed.

This beast can never die.

Skelm (Extracts from an unfinished sequence)

His flickering laughter dews the air,
 his whirring whirring dries.
 He cannot glance, I glimpse him;
 he cannot move, I touch him.
 He turns, his tail in the ocean,
 his peacock tail the ocean:
 feeding at night on the shine crisper
 than good and evil;
 dark in a theatre
 summoning the wise (to Periandros
 whispers, years
 before the killing curtain falls.)

Sundown
 nightmoon
 noon's numb gold
 hoist
 subtleties of loquat.

Coffinless he comes...

To his lightness lace is iron;
 to his boldness, iron oxygen.
 Wind's hop dusts the stones,
 wind's leap rouses miles;

guffawing in the forest,
 as a breeze might say;

and a locust in the long grass,
 legged long with knives, has heard:
 Preposterous!

Blends into the eyes of children.

Madman, saint, have heard.

Hyena, huntsman, ploughman.

Who was the first
 and who shall be the last?

And tends the fuse of the ocean.

Blood's gruffest blinding nudges every vision.

Angering extinct Jehovah, Chronos, ripple-bearded Zeus.

No matter what sings him
 sings, he'll be sung.

A roguish harvest: dew
at sunrise; cities
and farms there, instantly dead
in mountainous hail, go
blank as paper.
Nothing is known,
the world is dead.
Hail's icecold gibberish -- only the voice
was heard and then hidden,
in men and in wheat, the mightiest language.

To speak like Skelm! Such grandeur grinds
the magnitude of mountains,
oceans, cities, dreams.

The last thingbed
was the world, dead.

Fragments

Poetry gave me
what phosphorescence gives to the night sea

The powers of earth
are the beetle
the elephant
the snake:
humility,
gentleness,
cunning.

The lion the devil the table
the whole of life.

A big seastained stone
not far off curves
absorbing the grains of dawn
light like our hemisphere

Roundness at a cost is
what we have: the
almost
imaginary:
the round round world at last

Billowing outriders
 escorted the headland to the sea,
 where it found itself strongly sufficient
 they left it lifting waves up and
 making them its charges
 Seaward, sky and headland met
 in a mutual eclipse, the one of darkness,
 The other of light

Spring rain's thoroughness
 its perfect gift is through and through
 as patience fills
 the scholar's virtue

bringing as pure
 an intense drift
 of desire closer to the facts.

New things, harsh things
 strong...cold...
 seafog...figtree...
 you, stormgranite:

fragrant; float out
 flying massive
 wholehearted
 not for the idiom:
 factual.

The abstract is alone with us
 not less alone than we are

Spring's blossoms
 Ochre vermilion crimson
 A,B,C, etcetera
 This was your convergence
 All these opening spring nasturtiums

De Doorns gave me her valley thorns
peacefully by right of nature, ripping my shirt

And the ocean also stung my skin
as we left Madeira, sailing north in the wind

What you have you are; this one
flat-topped mountain always
possessed as again you approach it
from years of absent nights and days.

APPENDIX 5:

In a letter dated 10.2.83 to Guy Butler, Marge Clouts, considering the issue of the editing of a poem into its final form, states that:

All the time that we lived in S.A. and for the first 8 or so years in the U.K., when a poem was completed, I typed it out for Sydney, under his careful supervision, or he typed it out himself. It is these typed versions, or in some cases poems written out beautifully in a 'fair hand' indicating completion, that we used for the whole of the first and second sections. Although they were final versions, he still used to work on them, writing on the typed versions, in order to improve them further. Part of the job that Cyril and I have been doing is to work out very carefully which was the later version. Nothing was typed out after 1971--those poems are all in working handwritten versions. You wonder 'how many versions' of each poem.... Sydney worked towards a final version, and earlier workings couldnt be counted as 'versions'.

Marge Clouts minimalizes the problems of deciding what makes for the finalized, authoritative text here. The problems become more apparent in the reproduction of one of those "unfinished" poems published in New Coin 20,1 (1984) in its original form. As a poem that Clouts himself had not prepared for publication, and that he was working on at the time of his death, it appears only as a series of rough, handwritten drafts. The six pages that comprise "the poem" were sent to me by Marge Clouts in a letter (20.5.87).

Un-
like
lighting

which

(we cherish it-)

nightlighting

which

is instantly declarative

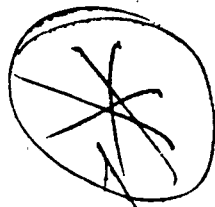
once of the fence-nail

once of the guttering

withholding nothing
(embryonic)

instantly is all talk

to crack the gatepost



Un-
like lightning
which
(we cherish it) night-lighting



Annotating darkness



Un-
like

lightning

which

(we cherish it)

nightlighting

which

S. (98)

instantly declarative

once, of the fence nail

once, of the guttering

withholding nothing
(embryo)

instantly is all itself

To crack the gatepost

annoint the door

annote

append

To rebuke the sun

Un-
like

lightning

(we cherish it)

nightlighting

which is (it)

instantly declarative

once, of the fence-nail

once, of the guttering

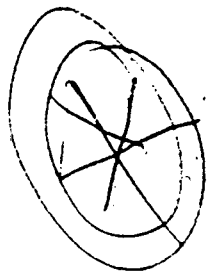
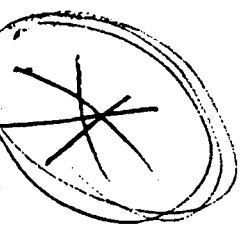
withholding nothing

instantly is all itself (as the)

To excite the help leaves

To crack the gatepost...

To guide the rain



Partly for lower fast

outspeeding Rigs, yet find
more danger
deeper in helms than with knots
where Rigs can cut
yet find

in helms than with knots
where knot is low, low,

know
Partly for find you

outspeeding by the you're the fast
outspeeding by the

more gradual like ^{yet goes} mountain by the

me: you invite Concern yet Startle response
will under create ^{deep} in the helms

I yet have heard
you knots in helms

try
you helms deep knot

you fast thought slow, outspeeding by the (as low does)
you enter at a mountain's night

thought helms than with knots
crowding

thought dear into knots than helms.
more the like with knot

star

* NB

Un - in heavy rain

like lightning which?

lightning
night? & deep lightning in the rain
though

(we check it) night

(we check it) which in steep rain

heavy rain
night? lightning
steep in rain

lightning ~~at~~ drenched

night lightning (which)

which is
is instantly declarative
through heavy ^{steep} rain
once, of the fence rail
once, of the jutting,

which (is)
is instantly declarative

withholding nothing,
instantly is all itself

(we check it) night lightning

which is
is instantly declarative

but ^{steep} ~~create the gatepost~~ & old

in drenched heart

long ^{steep} ~~crowded~~ ^{smoking} heavy rain

Un -
numerous
like lightning

night -
lightning which
is
instantly...

Un - instantly declarative

like lightning which through heavy rain which (we check it)

(we check it) night lightning which

which is
instantly declarative

is instantly declarative
once, of the fence rail
once, of the jutting

night lightning
in steep rain which
instantly...

Being ^{the} yet not quite ^{undicate} a ^{hair} is nevertheless a start. ^{to my eyes} ^{like this}

poising

Poising, if bringing ^{not} ^{extraordinary} ^{all of it} ^{plus} then ^{to the utmost}

but unlike lightning ^{which} ^{we throw in it} ^{isn't lightning} ^{which}
? being ^{isn't lightning} ^{which}
? ^{as} ^{instantly declarative} ^{withholding nothing} ^{we start for it}
(historic) ^{instantly} ^{is all itself} ^{instantly (?)}

— Unlike lightning ^{which} ^(the whole of it)
^{which} ^(we throw in it)
^{isn't lightning} ^{which}

is instantly declarative
withholding nothing
(historic)
instantly is all itself
as love is - ...

blue covers
purple covers
black
stone
blue stones
twigs
one of the ^{purple} ^{twigs}
blue bushes
brownness
whole being

once, ^{one of the}

Let them call you

Then, ^{poetry}, let both your powers

WORKS CITED

- "Across the divide." Anonymous rev. of Sydney Clouts's Collected Poems. Cape Times 27 July 1985.
- Alvarez, A. "The Difficulty of Being South African." New Statesman 4 June 1960: 827-8.
- Bachelard, Gaston. The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos. Trans. Daniel Russell. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.
- Barrell, John. Poetry, Language and Politics. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988.
- Barthes, Roland. Writing Degree Zero. Trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.
- Bayley, John. The Romantic Survival: A Study in Poetic Evolution. London: Constable, 1957.
- Beeton, D.R. "The Achievement of South African English Literature." New Nation October 1968: 4-5.
- . Presentation: 1968 Olive Schreiner Prize for Poetry. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 72-73.
- . "A Reading of 'The Sleeper'." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 51-54.
- Belsey, Catherine. Critical Practice. London: Methuen, 1980.
- Bishop, Elizabeth. The Complete Poems 1927-1979. London: Chatto and Windus, 1983.
- Blake, William. The Complete Poems. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.
- Bloom, Harold. Yeats. New York: Oxford UP, 1970.
- . The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry. New York: Oxford UP, 1973.
- . A Map of Misreading. New York: Oxford UP, 1975.
- , Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman and J. Hillis Miller. Deconstruction and Criticism. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings. Ed. D.A. Yates and J.E. Irby. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.

- . Selected Poems 1923-1967. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- Breytenbach, Breyten. die ysterkoei moet sweet. Cape Town: Taurus, 1964.
- . "A View from Without." Bolt 11 (1974): 42-51.
- Brink, André. "English and the Afrikaans Writer." English in Africa 3, 1 (1976): 41-47.
- Butler, Guy, ed. A Book of South African Verse. London: Oxford UP, 1959.
- . South of the Zambezi: Poems from South Africa. London: Abelard-Schuman, 1966.
- . "The prospects for S.A. literature in English." Cape Argus 22 March 1968.
- . "The Language of the Land." English Studies in Africa 13, 1 (1970): 87-92.
- . Selected Poems. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1975.
- . "On Being Present where you are: some observations on South African Poetry 1930-1960", Poetry South Africa. Ed. Peter Wilhelm and James Polley. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1976. 82-101.
- , and Chris Mann. A New Book of South African Verse in English. Cape Town: Oxford UP, 1979.
- . "Bellowing Hippopotamus." Contrast 14, 2 (1982): 25.
- . "On Sydney Clouts." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 81-107.
- . "'Time Will Preserve': A Review." English in Africa. 11, 2 (1984): 67-69.
- . Interview. Interviewed by Susan Joubert. Grahamstown: 1 July 1987.
- Camoens, Luis de. The Lusiads. Trans. William C. Atkinson. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1952.
- Campbell, Roy. The Collected Poems. London: The Bodley Head: 1955.
- Carr, E.H. What is History? (second ed.). Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.

- Chapman, Michael, ed. A Century of South African Poetry. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1981.
- . South African English Poetry : A Modern Perspective. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1984.
- Circlot, J.E. A Dictionary of Symbols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Clouts, Cyril. Letters to Guy Butler. 11 March 1983 and 21 June 1983 plus 26 pages typed and working draft poems. National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown.
- Clouts, Marge. Interview. Interviewed by Susan Joubert. Longborough: 14 December 1987.
- . Letters to Guy Butler. 6 Dec. 1982 - 21 April 1983. National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown.
- Clouts, Sydney. "Four Poems." Contrast 1, 2 (1961): 8-10.
- . "'The Violent Arcadia': an examination of the response to nature in the poetry of Thomas Pringle, Francis Carey Slater and Roy Campbell." M.A. Diss. Rhodes University, 1971.
- . Letters to Guy Butler. 10 Feb. 1958 - 2 Dec. 1969. National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown.
- . Introduction. Among Stones. By Jean Lipkin. Cape Town: David Philip, 1975.
- . Collected Poems. Cape Town: David Philip, 1984.
- . "Unpublished Poems." New Coin 20, 1 (1984): 2-14.
- . "Sydney Clouts speaking about His Poetry (1)." Rhodes University: Grahamstown 2 May 1980. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 7-15.
- . "Sydney Clouts speaking about His Poetry (2)." Rhodes University: Grahamstown 5 May 1980. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 16-24.
- . "Poetry Reading." High Corner: Grahamstown 3 May 1980. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 25-34.
- Coetzee, J.M. "Sydney Clouts" from English and South Africa 1974. Ed. Alan Lennox-Short. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 74-75.
- . "Purest poetic talent in South Africa." Die Vaderland 13 May 1985.

- . White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa. Yale UP, 1988.
- Cohn, R.G. Toward the Poems of Mallarmé. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Poems. London: Edward Moxon, 1854.
- . "Extracts from Letters and Notes." The Romantic Imagination: A Casebook. Ed. John Spencer Hill. London: Macmillan, 1977. 20-45.
- Cope, Jack, and Krige, Uys, eds. The Penguin Book of South African Verse. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.
- Cope, Jack. The Adversary Within: Dissident writers in Afrikaans. Cape Town: David Philip, 1982.
- Crasnow, Ellman. "Poems and Fictions: Stevens, Rilke, Valry". Modernism. Ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976. 369-382.
- Cronin, Jeremy. Interview. Interviewed by Susan Gardner. Four South African Poets. Grahamstown: NELM, 1986. 13-27.
- . "Turning Around: Roy Campbell's 'Rounding the Cape'." English in Africa 11, 1 (1984): 65-78.
- Culler, Jonathan. Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Davis, Edward. "Our Most Intellectual Poet: Review." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 65-66.
- Delius, Anthony. "The Exile and the Aboriginal." Standpunte 7, 4 (1953): 77-93.
- . "The Secret of the Man in Klapmuts." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 60-62.
- De Man, Paul. Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.
- . The Rhetoric of Romanticism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- Derrida, Jacques. Writing and Difference. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

- De Vries, A. Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1984.
- Donoghue, Denis. Yeats. London: Fontana, 1971.
- Doyle, C., ed. Wallace Stevens: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.
- Durrant, Geoffrey. "New Soundings." Broadcast of the SABC February 1955. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 38-45.
- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.
- Easthope, Anthony. Poetry as Discourse. London: Methuen, 1984.
- Eliot, T.S. Collected Poems 1909-1962, London, Faber, 1963.
- . "Tradition and the Individual Talent". Selected Essays. London: Faber, 1951. 13-23.
- Frost, Robert. Collected Poems. New York: Longmans, 1930.
- Frye, Northrop. A Study of English Romanticism. Brighton: Harvester, 1968.
- Glenn, I.E. "The Poetics of the Moment: T.S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens." PhD. University of Pennsylvania, 1977.
- . "Sydney Clouts: Our Pen-Insular Poet." The English Academy Review 3 (1985): 127-134.
- Gray, Stephen. South African Literature: An Introduction. Cape Town: David Philip, 1979.
- . "A Sense of Place in New Literatures, particularly South African English (1)." The English Academy Review 1 (1983), 29-37.
- . "The Sydney Clouts Legacy." Star 10 September 1985.
- Greshoff, C.J. "Sydney Clouts." Contrast 14, 2 (1982): 21-25.
- Hamburger, Michael. The Truth of Poetry: Tensions in Modern Poetry from Baudelaire to the 1960s. London: Methuen, 1969.
- Haresnape, Geoffrey. Momentum: On recent South African Writing. Ed. M.J. Daymond, J.U. Jacobs and Margaret Lenta. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1984. 54-57.

- Harnett, Ruth. "One Life." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 55-59.
- . "Some Poems by Sydney Clouts." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 108-161.
- Heraclitus. Fragments. Ed. and trans. Philip Wheelwright. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959.
- Hope, A.D. Poems. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1960.
- Hope, Christopher. "A Conversation with Guy Butler." Bolt 7 (1973): 46-57.
- . "Poetry and Society." Poetry South Africa. Ed. Peter Wilhelm and James Polley. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1976. 134-141.
- Horwitz, Eve. "Sydney Clouts well worth puzzling out." Business Day 22 May 1985.
- Hough, Graham. "The Modernist Lyric." Modernism. Ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976. 312-322.
- Houston, John. The Design of Rimbaud's Poetry. London: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Jacobs, J.U. "In a Free State: The Exile in South African Poetry." Momentum: On recent South African Writing. Ed. M.J. Daymond, J.U. Jacobs and Margaret Lenta. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1984. 243-259.
- Kermode, Frank. Romantic Image. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.
- Kirkwood, Mike. "The Colonizer: a critique of the English South African culture theory." Poetry South Africa. Ed. Peter Wilhelm and James Polley. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1976. 102-133.
- Krige, Uys. "Roy Campbell as Lyrical Poet: some quieter aspects." English Studies in Africa 1, 2 (1958): 81-94.
- . Versamelde Gedigte. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1985.
- Layton, Irving. Here and Now. Montreal: First Statement, 1945.
- . A Red Carpet for the Sun. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959.

- Leveson, Marcia. "Imponderende bundels vorm saam een geheel." Beeld 25 March 1985.
- Lipkin, Jean. Among Stones. Cape Town: David Philip, 1975.
- Lodge, Tom. Black Politics in South Africa since 1945. Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983.
- Lowell, Robert. Imitations. London: Faber, 1958.
- . Poems: A Selection. London: Faber, 1974.
- Lucie-Smith, Edward. Symbolist Art. London: Thames and Hudson, 1972.
- Macdiarmid, Hugh. The Hugh Macdiarmid Anthology. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Mallarm, Stphane. Oeuvres Complètes. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1945.
- . "Crisis in Verse". Symbolism: An Anthology. Ed. and trans. T.G. West. London: Methuen, 1980: 1-12.
- Masters, Edgar Lee. Spoon River Anthology. New York: Macmillan, 1955.
- Miller, J. Hillis. Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-century Writers. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1966.
- Montale, Eugenio. Poesie-Poems. Trans. George Kay. Edinburgh: UP, 1964.
- Moore, Marianne. Selected Poems. London: Faber, 1935.
- Moss, Rose. "Some Notes on a Poem by Sydney Clouts." English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 46-50.
- Neruda, Pablo. The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse. Ed. and trans. J.M. Cohen. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965. 424-430.
- Nixon, Robert. "Tense with Dew: The Land, The Poet and the Language of Sydney Clouts's 'One Life'." Research Essay. Rhodes University, 1977.
- Norris, Christopher. Deconstruction: Theory and Practice. London: Methuen, 1982.
- . Derrida. London: Fontana, 1987.
- Opperman, D.J. Blom en Baaierd. South Africa: Nasionale Boekhandel, 1956.

- Pasternak, Boris. Selected Poems. Trans. John Stallworthy and Peter France. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983.
- Pereira, Ernest. "Review of Michael Chapman's 'South African English Poetry: A Modern Perspective'." The English Academy Review 2 (1984): 125-128.
- Plato. Works. Trans. B. Jowett. New York: New York Publishing, undated.
- Plomer, William. Collected Poems. London: Jonathan Cape, 1960.
- Pound, Ezra. The Cantos. London: Faber, 1954.
- Povey, John F. "Memory and its Wound: A Comment on South African Poetry." English Studies in Africa 9, 1 (1966): 61-71.
- Reid Skinner, Douglas. "Nostalgias." Contrast 14, 2 (1982): 25.
- . "Free Verse, or, Where the Heart is full of." Momentum: On recent South African Writing, Ed. M.J. Daymond, J.U. Jacobs and Margaret Lenta. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1984. 307-310.
- . "Revealing riches gradually: the composite Clouts" Contrast 15, 3 (1985): 77-83.
- . The House in Pella District. Johannesburg: David Philip, 1985.
- . Interview. Interviewed by Susan Joubert. Cape Town 30 October 1986.
- Riffaterre, Michael. Semiotics of Poetry. London: Methuen, 1978.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria. Selected Poems. Trans. J.B. Leishman. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964.
- . Duino Elegies. Trans. D. Young. London: Norton, 1978.
- . "Auguste Rodin: Second Part (extract)". Symbolism: An Anthology. Ed. and trans. T.G. West. London: Methuen, 1980. 83-87.
- Rimbaud, Arthur. Oeuvres Complètes. Paris: Gallimard, 1972.
- Saluzinsky, I., ed. Criticism in Society. New York: Methuen, 1987.

- Seféris, George. The King of Asine and other poems. Trans. Bernard Spencer, Nanos Valaoritis and Lawrence Durrell. London: John Lehmann, 1948.
- Sheppard, Richard. "The Crisis of Language." Modernism. Ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James Mcfarlane. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976. 323-336.
- Slater, F.C., ed. The Centenary Book of South African Verse 1820-1925. London: Longmans, 1925.
- Small, Adam. SSjibbolet. Johannesburg: Perskor, 1963.
- Snyman, Henning. Mirakel en Muse. Johannesburg: Perskor, 1983.
- Steiner, George. Language and Silence. London: Faber, 1967.
- . On Difficulty and other essays. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1972.
- Stevens, Wallace. The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954.
- . "Imagination as Value." Symbolism: An Anthology. Ed. T.G. West. London: Methuen, 1980. 100-119.
- St. John. Poems. Trans. G. Brenan, Cambridge UP, 1973.
- Tomlinson, C. William Carlos Williams: A Critical Anthology. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- Traherne, Thomas. Poems and Thanksgivings (Vol. I and II: Centuries, Poems and Thanksgivings). Ed. H.M. Margoliouth. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1958.
- Ulyyat, A.G. "Rev. of Collected Poems of Sydney Clouts." Upstream 3, 3 (1985): 20-23.
- Valry, Paul. Oeuvres. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1957.
- . "Remarks on Poetry." Symbolism: An Anthology. Ed. and trans. T.G. West. London: Methuen, 1980. 43-60.
- Van Wyk Louw, N.P. Versamelde Gedigte. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1981.
- Van Wyk Smith, M., ed. Shades of Adamastor: An Anthology of Poetry. Grahamstown: NELM, 1988.

Watson, Stephen. "Recent White English South African Poetry and the Language of Liberalism." Standpunte 36, 2 (1983): 13-23.

---. Interview. Interviewed by Susan Gardner, Four South African Poets. Grahamstown: NELM, 1986. 49-71.

---. "Sydney Clouts and the Limits of Romanticism." African Studies seminar paper. UCT, 1986.

Wilhelm, Peter. "The real thing." Financial Mail 22 February 1985.

---. "The Single Dreamer: The African Poetry of William Plomer." Poetry South Africa. Ed. Peter Wilhelm and James Polley. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1976. 23-34.

Williams, Raymond. The Country and the City. London: Chatto and Windus, 1973.

Williams, William Carlos. The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams. USA: Macgibbon and Kee, 1948. 320-334.

---. Selected Poems. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.

Wilson, Edmund. Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930. London: Collins-Fontana, 1931.

Woodward, A.G. SABC Broadcast Rev. of One Life 26 May 1967. English in Africa 11, 2 (1984): 70-71.

Wordsworth, William. Poetical Works: Vol.1. Ed. E. de Selincourt. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1940.

Yeats, W.B. The Poems. London: Macmillan, 1983.

---. "The Symbolism of Poetry". Symbolism: An Anthology. Ed. and trans. T.G. West. London: Methuen, 1980. 14-23.