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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION AND EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

THE AMBIGUITIES OF EMPOWERMENT - A DECONSTRUCTIVE  
APPROACH TO THE ADULT EDUCATION WORK OF EDWARD ROUX IN  
THE 1930's AND 1940's AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESENT  
CONCEPTIONS OF LEARNER MATERIALS FOR ADULT BASIC  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ABET)

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ADULT EDUCATION

by

LUCY ALEXANDER

MARCH 1999

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## ABSTRACT

This research is an attempt to understand the ambiguities of empowerment inherent in transactions between educators and adult learners studying at a basic level. Through analysing the case study of Edward Roux's text-based adult education intervention for Africans in South Africa in the 1940's, some conclusions on the resultant power arrangements were drawn. These interpretive conclusions were applied comparatively to a set of adult basic education texts in use in South Africa in the 1990's. The research addressed itself to selected biographical events from Roux's life, as well as to a set of theoretical texts written by Roux about adult education and a set of pamphlets called *The Sixpenny Library*, intended for mass distribution to adult readers. The texts were analysed using a postmodern discourse analysis methodology.

Having identified five recurrent discursive formations in the texts, it was proposed that these discourses could be intertextually read as constituting an individualised construction by Roux of the Enlightenment metanarrative. The genealogy of the metanarrative was analysed, the subjectification of the adult learners was asserted and an interpretation of the arrangements of power within the educational transaction was proposed.

The primary findings were made on the basis of the case study: it was concluded that Roux was committed to the Enlightenment ideal which he constructed in terms of Western educational and cultural norms. By conflating education with social remediation and rationalism, he proposed that education in its own right had socially redemptive power and that it would even result in equality. The potential impact of the intervention in subjectifying adult learners and their resultant disempowerment was analysed and some general trends were noted. Roux's intervention suggested a deep but unrealistic conviction that the acquisition of knowledge had the potential to alleviate the social deprivations that Africans suffered under conditions of post-colonial racial capitalism. Unconsciously Roux conflated the promise of empowerment with the acquisition of a set of basically Western rationalist cultural values and beliefs, without recognising the identity which he constructed for the educator and the attendant disempowerment which the learners may have experienced.

The secondary stage of the research comprised the application of the claims identified in Roux's case study to three comparable genres of Adult Basic Education and Training texts of the 1990's; the presence of similar assumptions in these transactions was assessed and continuities and changes were identified. Some general conclusions were drawn regarding the nature of adult education transactions and the potential for a postmodern consciousness to alter the arrangements of power within educational transactions for adults was discussed. The limitations of the study in terms of learner responses was acknowledged and avenues for further research were identified. An attempt was made to bring into focus some of the uncertainties operative at a global level within adult education, while addressing issues of power between educator and learner in the field of basic adult education in South Africa.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Adult Education. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed by candidate

Lucy Alexander  
15 March 1999

### A Tribute to Edward Roux (1903-1966)

Edward Roux was an extraordinary person. His contribution to the Communist Party of South Africa from the early 1920's until 1936 was intense. His passion for human equality was consistent throughout his life. His educational writing and research was carried out with insight and conviction. Though he made a significant theoretical and practical contribution to the field of adult education for African South Africans in the 1940's, government repression ensured that few benefitted from it during his lifetime. Fortunately for us all, *time* has demonstrated (as he said it would) that it is *longer than rope*.

(Roux called his history of 'The Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa' *Time Longer than Rope*, quoting a West Indian slave proverb from Lord Olivier's *The Anatomy of African Misery*)

University of Cape Town

## THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED TO MY PARENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

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In this introduction, I present the principal issue of the research. I also offer a rationale for using a case study of Edward Roux's educational intervention as the lens through which to illuminate the issue; I survey the contemporary context in which the study is undertaken as well as noting the limitations of the study.

The principal issue of this study is to reconstruct the assumptions underlying a modernist adult education intervention. Through comparison, I hope to provide a clearer understanding of current adult education interventions in the 1990's and a datum for evaluating the arrangements of power which they construct. It is my intention that these findings might contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the situation of adult learners and their experience of texts in present day South Africa. It may also illuminate the ambiguity inherent in the construct that adult educators empower adult learners through their interventions. This examination of Edward Roux's educational project also attempts to make some contribution to the history of adult education in this country in the 1930's and 1940's.

It is suggested herein that Roux's intervention may offer some elucidating lessons for educators working in the field of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)<sup>1</sup> in South Africa. As we move towards a more democratic and mutually respectful society, it is important for educators to challenge some of their deeply embedded assumptions about under-educated adults. The racial-capitalist history of South Africa which led to most ABET learners being African and many educators being white, still prevails. This makes critical examination of the educators' assumptions a priority, if change in the conditions of power within our adult education system is of any importance. The value of such an analysis lies in its potential to alert practitioners to their own tacit constructions of themselves as educators and of the adult learners within the educational transaction. By presenting an analysis of the

impact of Roux's construction of the educator and learner as an exemplar, one may be able to extrapolate implications and even lessons for contemporary practice.

### **The case study**

The basis of this research is the transaction between an adult educator in the 1940's (Edward Roux) and his prospective adult learners; this is used as a lens through which to view a small selection of South African adult education interventions in the 1990's. Both sets of educational transactions are text-based and therefore allow one to focus upon expressed goals, knowledge-selections and curriculum choices, as well as voice and resultant discourse in order to piece together the educator's construction of the world and the learner in relation to that world.

The choice of Edward Roux's intervention as the case study from which to work is not difficult to justify: he was an extraordinary individual not only as an educator but as a political figure, particularly in the wake of re-evaluation of conflicts within the South African Communist Party. His innovation deserves recognition and stands up to critical scrutiny even in the 1990's for its attempt to provide general education, for his choice of content and his development of Easy English<sup>2</sup>. His contribution to the field of adult education has certainly been obscured by the apartheid government's imposition of political restrictions on him from 1950 onwards<sup>3</sup> and his project offers adult educators some useful material to explore and evaluate.

Examining Roux's project may also offer some lessons which stem from the fact that he was an archetypical modernist adult educator. This assertion is unsurprising in that he was active in the first half of the twentieth century. As a Cambridge trained plant physiologist, a committed communist for the seventeen years spanning 1919-1936 and later an educator who is often said to have worked in the liberal-democratic tradition, Roux was steeped in some of the most powerful

manifestations of modernism - science, Marxism and liberalism. In order to assess to what extent current interventions are embedded in the modernist paradigm, I choose to set up a modernist datum for comparison.

Roux, the schooled, urbanised, socialist educator attempted to facilitate passage for working class African adults out of their unacceptable situation by providing literacy classes and accessible reading material which contained, in his view, essential knowledge. His target group consisted primarily of urban migrants or rural peasants; they were therefore mainly from a rural background; they were politically excluded from the franchise, from most educational and training opportunities, from free movement, from economic opportunities and from land ownership outside of delineated areas; their formal schooling was likely to have been minimal (possibly up to Standard 2) and their literacy and language skills in English would have been diverse. The project which Roux envisaged was therefore developed to challenge these unequal power arrangements by providing education which would enable African adults to challenge their untenable situation. Yet this vision carries within it its own modernist metadiscourse, its own assertion of truth and consequently its own imposition of power.

There are a number of other reasons for my choice of Edward Roux's adult education intervention. In 1989, I completed a research project while studying for the Diploma for Educators of Adults at the University of Cape Town, which focused on Edward Roux's adult education initiatives in the 1930's and 1940's<sup>4</sup>. That research comprised a biographical survey of Roux's work and an analysis of three of his publications for adults in terms of their educational intents and methods. The texts were presented in the context of Roux's life and an attempt was made to single out key methodological and iconographic features of his work. In this research I also attempted to identify some of the assumptions expressed by Roux and others who wrote about his educational work. At that point I did not have the methodological tools to identify and analyse the underlying assumptions in Roux's educational intervention.

Roux's work has remained of interest to me for several reasons: his intervention addresses many of the same issues with which curriculum and materials developers and adult educators grapple today. His theoretical writings and educational assertions have barely been explored because of his obscurity over the past three decades. In addition, the case study contains the historical and political reality of apartheid South Africa which has been characterised by racialised power arrangements, a situation which is only now beginning to change, but which carries forward with it the hegemony of a particular conceptualisation of education and development. The legislated inequality of political and educational opportunity for Africans in South Africa during the 1930's and 1940's was at the heart of the transaction and was the motivating force for his project. Although apartheid legislation may be gone, the social and economic conditions of many of the target audience for ABET remain blatantly unequal to those of the providers.

#### **The context of this research - ABET in the 1990's**

Fifty years have elapsed since Roux's educational intervention was made between 1934 and 1946 and one might question its relevance for the current adult education situation. The three contemporary comparative texts I chose were published after the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994. Materially and politically much has changed, yet the presuppositions upon which educational work is based shift slowly. They are reproduced from one generation to another and across and beyond significant political events. Educational offerings and interventions are constructed within a complex interaction of institutional power and individual interpretation thereof. Significantly, they are sometimes also constructed in opposition to reigning institutional power and world views.

The educational transactions selected for this study fit the oppositional or the reconstructive mode. Roux, perceiving the irrelevance of the missionary and mainstream curricula, tried to put something in place to achieve his particular humanistic goals; the current basic adult education policy makers, educators and

commercial publishers who are in the process of constructing the ABET project, have sourced their initiatives from a strongly articulated reconstructive vision, from experience in mainstream school education, policy imperatives such as the National Qualifications Framework and accumulated experience in the field of teaching literacy.

In the context of ABET provision in the 1990's, it has been posited that insufficient research has been conducted or used in the planning and implementation process. Two significant national research programmes have however been completed, both supported by the Joint Education Trust which embarked in 1992 upon a strategy to support the development of Adult Basic Education and Training policy and practice. One of them, the Social Uses of Literacy research (SoUL) undertaken by the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape focused on the potential recipients of literacy interventions and the social contexts in which they need or use literacy practices. The other programme, undertaken by the University of Natal attempted to conduct a comprehensive national survey of current adult basic provision '... in order to assess what is effective and what can be replicated' (Harley et al, 1996, 2). These are both invaluable sources for the field.

The research trajectory which I intend to follow also attempts to understand the context of provision but from a different angle. Working from original learner texts, I shall attempt to map out the conceptual environment which led an educator (Edward Roux) to select, combine and shape his curriculum in this specific way. I hope to develop understanding of the implications of the broader flows of influence and power operative in the 1940's and by extrapolation in the 1990's.

Evaluative studies of ABET provision are important now in that adult basic education in South Africa has never before been accorded such a high profile by the state. The weak impact of state and non-governmental basic adult education offerings over the past five decades has made adult education providers wary of

continuing past practice in an uncritical way. Amongst providers and funders alike, there is a level of political and social urgency inherent in the 1990's ABET project which targets 12,1 million<sup>5</sup> adults who have not completed their basic education and training. The Department of Education has placed the project firmly within a developmental paradigm, stating their vision for ABET as follows:

*A literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation (Department of Education, 1997, 7).*

In this decade of liberation from years of domination by white minority rule, the South African adult education and training field is dominated by logistical and practical issues at the expense of theoretical, epistemological or methodological issues. The state's provincial Adult Education and Training (AET)<sup>6</sup> Sub-directorates are charged with putting in place a host of policies in preparation for a 'national mass mobilisation of learners campaign in the year 2000' (Dept of Education, Directorate: Adult Education and Training, 1997, 171). The policies in question require ABET deliverers in all sectors to increase their impact substantially, train practitioners, combat learner drop-out, develop their assessment systems, give recognition to prior learning, develop curricula and materials, integrate education and training and transform delivery institutions. Non-governmental and commercial publishing initiatives are also engaged in innovative materials development and publishing activities, eager to make a contribution and seize the commercial gap in the market.

Other imperatives within the South African context are contributing to the pressures on the ABET project: the driving force of rationalising South Africa's chaotic education and training system into a coherent whole through the National Qualifications Framework has resulted in ABET being formalised into a replica of the school system for adults. Within the state-subsidised sector, ABET delivery is

dominated by the classroom format, with success measured in terms of passing formal examinations.

### **The global context**

This research is conducted during a period in which adult education in general is affected by uncertainties at a global level; these uncertainties concern its identity, its theoretical trajectories, its purpose and values. In South Africa, adult education of the early 1990's has focused primarily on basic education, in line with its national policy of reconstruction, development and redress for those disadvantaged by apartheid. The ABET sector in South Africa has become increasingly insular with regard to broader movements in the field of adult education. It is possible that by imposing some of the issues which affect adult education globally, one may also enhance the ability of ABET practitioners to see in their practice the imprint of global movements and the consequent social constraints and opportunities which they may herald.

Usher et al have made an analysis of the position of the broader field of adult education at the end of the twentieth century through their publication *Adult Education and the Post-modern Challenge*. As they put it:

*Whilst there is general agreement that we are witnessing profound economic, technological and cultural changes, there is less agreement on whether these constitute a continuation of modernity, a phase of late modernity where already existing trends are intensified, or whether we are now in a condition of postmodernity, a radical break consequent on the failure of modernity (Usher et al, 1997, 1).*

The questions which arise from this uncertainty are not merely theoretical: they are significant in that they call into question the entire conceptualisation of the adult education field - its form, values, epistemologies, curricula and materials; its

methodologies and theories and in particular the relationship between adult educator and adult learner. This study is also an attempt to use this debate (i.e. whether ABET in the 1990's in South Africa is conceptualised within a modernist or postmodernist framework) as one of the glasses through which to view the issue of educators' constructions of themselves and their learners. This research will attempt to bring into focus some of the uncertainties operative at a global level within adult education, while addressing itself to issues of power between educator and learner in the field of basic adult education in South Africa.

### **Limitations of the study**

There are, however, a number of potential limitations in this study. In a paper which surveys research on literacy provision in South Africa, Prinsloo (1995) notes the absence of any record of the experience of African participants in literacy classes. Redressing this situation was one of the primary motivations of the SoUL research.

This case study of Roux's intervention suffers from the same limitation: it also does not contain any record of the views or experience of the learners or readers of the textual offerings of the project because none has been located. Regrettably, most participants' names were not recorded; many are dead, and those important participants who emerged from the Communist Night Schools and about whom biographical information is available, such as Moses Kotane<sup>7</sup>, make little mention of their experience or perceptions of adult classes or Roux's texts. This perennial problem should alert contemporary adult educators to a most pressing need.

Within these limitations, this research attempts to use Roux's work to elucidate the educators' assumptions about learners and educational interventions in the South African context which may otherwise remain submerged and difficult to articulate.

## Definitions of terms used

For the purpose of clarity, I should like to define several terms which I shall use frequently in the course of this study. I choose to refer to Edward Roux's texts for learners and advocacy texts as well as his classes and theories on Easy English as his adult education *intervention or project*. I do so because I regard them in postmodern terms not just as documents but as living communication or discourse, as the remaining manifestation of the work he did. In so-doing I may afford his adult education work a cohesion which he may not have himself envisaged.

I have used a loose definition of basic adult education. The majority of projects before 1970 focused primarily on literacy (usually in English) rather than on a broader range of skills and knowledge. Roux is unusually close to current definitions in his conception of language as merely a communication tool for learning relevant knowledge and skills. Some of the literature I have referred to pertains specifically to literacy teaching, but the learner and educator groups are in fact the same.

For the sake of simplicity, I have primarily referred to *The Sixpenny Library* texts as part of 'Roux's intervention' although I am conscious that the publications were conceptualised by Julian Rollnick and Edward Roux as a team. In so-doing, I do not wish in any way to obscure the significance of Rollnick's publishing innovation, *The African Bookman* and believe it deserves research in its own right.

Finally, Roux's texts are consistently addressed to male readers, and are presented as though the world is peopled by men. Although I do not wish to perpetuate this stereotype, I feel that to remedy his use of *man* and *men* in quoting or referring to the texts would be to distort their inference. His readers were presumably primarily male. I have therefore retained the *male to male* voice of the text throughout the analysis.

In Chapter 1, I shall outline the literature which has provided a foundation and direction to this study.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) ABET or Adult Basic Education and Training is the term used to specify the broad general education offerings conceptualised as required by adults who have less than nine years of formal schooling i.e. below Std 7 or Grade 9. The vision is that ABET should enable adults to operate effectively socially, politically and economically. This proposed curriculum includes literacy in first language, English, numeracy, as well as contextual knowledge and occupational skills.
- (2) Through systematic testing of learners' knowledge of English words, Roux developed a graded vocabulary for writers of English texts to facilitate comprehension. He wrote and published several texts about this method which he called Easy English.
- (3) The Suppression of Communism Act was passed in June 1950. By September 1950 Roux was included on a list of 'named' persons. In December 1962 he was forced to resign from all organisations which opposed government policy. In December 1963 a five-year ban was served on him and by early 1964, he was obliged to leave his post as Professor of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand.
- (4) The title of the research was Edward Roux's Adult Education Initiatives in the 1930's and 1940's. It was completed by the writer in partial fulfilment of the Diploma for Educators of Adults in the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, University of Cape Town in 1989.
- (5) This figure is based on John Aitchison's paper of 20 October 1998 'Literacy and Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa: a Quick Survey' and indicates the number of potential adult learners who have less than nine years of schooling or Standard 7. In the earlier research conducted by Harley et al from the University of Natal, *A Survey of Adult Basic Education*

in South Africa in the 90's (1996), they noted that the actual number of adults with less than Standard 7 education was approximately 12 million, but that some should be excluded because they are 65 years or older or ineducable. When they deducted these two categories, they ended up with approximately 9,9 million potential adult learners. Aitchison also reports that 7,4 million of these adults are functionally illiterate i.e. have less than Standard 5 formal schooling. The researchers refer to Standard 6 and 7 as the first stage of secondary education rather than as basic education. On the other hand, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) includes Standard 6 and 7 or the General Adult Education and Training Certificate years as part of the Adult Basic Education and Training band. I have adopted the NQF nomenclature as I believe the issues which I am addressing are common to adults across this qualification band.

- (6) The Directorate within the Department of Education concerned with ABET is known as the Directorate of Adult Education and Training (AET) and has a brief wider than ABET.
- (7) At the time of developing *The Mayibuye Reader* (1934) and in the ensuing years, Kotane and Roux were in close association; they shared a house for a period in District Six. It is likely that Roux would have solicited his views of the materials.

# CHAPTER 1

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

---

### 1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of selected literature which I have found relevant to the research field - Roux's basic adult education project in relation to ABET in South Africa in the 1990's.

This literature comprises firstly the history of basic education provision for adults including Roux's own writings as well as policy documents and analyses of contemporary ABET provision. Secondly, I have had the benefit of a small number of postmodern analyses of adult education provision in general and in South Africa which have served as methodological exemplars and raised some of the important debates in this area of analysis. A range of literature pertaining to changing paradigms in the selection of educational knowledge has also provided some important conceptual tools for this analysis. Finally, it must also be acknowledged that the body of literature surrounding postmodern textual analysis has been an important aspect of my reading, both in developing my understanding of the research methodology and in exploring the implications of the modernist paradigm.

I shall discuss the literature which has been most important to this study in three sections, the history of adult education provision, postmodern analysis of adult education and changing paradigms in the selection of knowledge.

### 1.2 The history of adult education for Africans in South Africa

The history of adult basic education in this country is contained within a small number of publications, possibly because it is a history of scant provision

undertaken by political parties and non-governmental providers. This material has served both as a source of information and interpretation. Mastin Prinsloo, commenting on a similar body of literature in a paper called 'Provision, Acquisition and Culture: Literacy Research in South Africa', is critical of the relatively slight treatment of the contribution of mission educators to literacy provision in South Africa. He also notes that the emphasis of this research to date has centred mainly on the 'provision of literacy, or lack thereof, rather than an exploration of the social effects of its acquisition, use or lack thereof' and on 'the providers of literacy [rather than] the recipients' (Prinsloo, 1995, 450-451). This point is true of most of the sources to which I have had access; it is also predictable in terms of the social position of the recipients of basic adult education and the socio-political conditions of literacy provision during the apartheid years. Not only was this field marginal to state-subsidised research, but the interventions were often transitory leaving little record of their operations or impact. Because Roux's intervention was provided through educational texts, and because he also wrote theoretical texts on the subject, it is possible to piece together the educator's perspective. Regrettably, the recipients again remain almost completely voiceless.

The most common mode of conducting research on adult basic education in this country has been the historical survey. Adrienne Bird's history of 'The Adult Night School Movement for Blacks on the Witwatersrand 1920 - 1980', published in Kallaway's *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (1991) provides an overview of the period in which she documents the key literacy initiatives, categorising them in terms of radical and liberal traditions; in spite of Prinsloo's legitimate criticism of the gaps in this research, Bird does create a coherent historical overview of the adult night school movement during this period, drawing on a number of original sources.

Apart from the recipients' perspective, another area which is poorly served by the literature is the analysis of the content, knowledge or curriculum provided. Bird refers fleetingly to what was taught in terms of its political or other intent; Daphne

Wilson's extensive thesis on *The African Adult Education Movement in the Western Cape from 1945-1967* (1988) presents a more detailed description of the textbooks used in classes during this period, but because the three R's were the main focus, she gives more attention to approach and little to content (Wilson, 1988, 139-159). She also notes critically that by the senior standards the educational offerings had become increasingly traditional and syllabus-based. Knowledge selection and curriculum choices were, however, of special interest to Roux, and this study is therefore able to make a contribution within this area.

In terms of the literature specific to the case study of Roux's intervention, an invaluable historical record of his intervention is contained within his autobiography, *Rebel Pity* (which was completed by his wife, Winifred and published in 1970). In it, Roux documents his own insights into his project and the context within which it was developed. His 'Foreword' to *Time Longer than Rope* has also been valuable in providing further information about the history of the Communist Party Night Schools.

Although not intended to be comprehensive on the subject, Daphne Wilson's thesis offers several points about the impact of Roux's texts on adult learners and compares his approach to Freire's. Assessments of Roux's contribution to adult education remain, however, scarce and piecemeal.

Roux's own unpublished commentaries on the adult education field, obtained from the Historical and Literary Papers section of the William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, are valuable primary sources in that they constitute his theoretician's voice as text for analysis. *The Sixpenny Library* and other learner texts written by Roux provide the basis for this case study and constitute evidence of his intervention. The full complement is available in several public Africana collections and is listed in Appendix A. I shall not discuss them in detail here.

In relation to the contemporary texts which I have compared to Roux's intervention,

there is an emerging body of policy, ABET implementation plans and two important research initiatives commissioned by the Joint Education Trust which were noted briefly in the Introduction to this research. There is also a growing body of literature for adult neo-literates in South Africa. Much of it has been developed by ABET educators based in non-governmental organisations, while universities and commercial publishers have provided various kinds of support. I have chosen a small selection of texts from this fast growing resource. Whether these sorts of texts will have a market and a readership amongst ABET learners remains to be seen, as ABET provision continues to be constrained by lean resources. It is perhaps to this grouping, the developers of curriculum and learning materials, that this research addresses itself.

### **1.3 A changing paradigm for research and evaluation of adult education**

In Prinsloo's review of research on adult literacy introduced above, he notes the important contribution of Patrick Harries's *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa c. 1860-1910* (1994). This study breaks with the historical review paradigm and although literacy is not the central issue, it contributes to an understanding of the complexity of the social uses of literacy and the adaptations made to Western literacy in the process of acquisition (Prinsloo, 1995, 453).

Harries explores the cultural complexity of literacy acquisition for adult Africans and the indivisibility of Christian missionary education from this context. He points out that the learners' construction of literacy was based on the access which it gave them to leadership positions and personal empowerment in the urban context. The author draws interesting conclusions about the operation of power in acquiring or resisting literacy and explores the consequences thereof. Harries's analysis of the operation of power for black migrant workers (and not solely by colonial industrialists) is Foucauldian. His interpretation provides a sense of potential opportunities for research in this field which could push back or question

the reigning construction of adult learners as powerless and subject to Western education. It has, however, been disappointing not to have located any evidence of the recipients' experience of Roux's project, leaving the exploration of this dimension a challenge for further research.

In addition to these two studies, there are several authors who have recently undertaken postmodern textual analyses within the history of adult education in South Africa. Leon de Kock's *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-century South Africa* (1995), an analysis of educational work at Lovedale College, constitutes an important step for adult education research in this country. De Kock's study served as an exemplar of the postmodern methodology in action in a comparable adult education context. Reviews of this publication by Tony Morphet and Mastin Prinsloo point to a number of problems within de Kock's selection and interpretation of historical material, but as a postmodern reading of the discourses of the missionary educators and the responses of ex-Lovedale students, it is an important step towards another mode of research within this field.

De Kock explores the linkages between the political and philosophical trajectories of colonial history and modernising education by deconstructing texts written by 19th century Scottish Presbyterian mission educators at Lovedale College between 1870 and 1890. He concludes that the missionaries were acting as '... the cultural agents of civilisation ...' using as their major weapon '... literacy and representation of a Utopian realignment of the world' (de Kock, 1996, 34). In his 'Afterword', de Kock states that English language teaching with its attendant cultural baggage was primarily a move to 'rewrite the subjectivity' (de Kock, 1996, 188) of Africans who were regarded by many of the educators (as is shown through their discourse) as 'a barbarous people' (de Kock, 1996, 189).

De Kock restates that the dominant knowledge constructions of the missionaries were essentially born of a modernising, unitary, Enlightenment construction of the

world which privileged reason above all other human capacities, thereby arguing the delimitation of the humanity of people of colour. Comparison with Roux's project also highlights certain continuities, as both projects are embedded within the Enlightenment metanarrative; yet it is the contrast of missionary discourse with that of Roux which has helped to delineate the particularity of Roux's project. A number of the texts quoted by de Kock conflate spiritual salvation and 'rescue from barbarism', constructing their purpose as a civilizing mission. Roux shifts some distance from the civilizing discourse towards a Westernising discourse, which he conflates with education, citizenship, development and progress.

Similarly, Tony Morphet's postmodern analysis of Shula Marks's *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (1987) has provided conceptual pointers for my analysis of Roux's project. Both have as their focus the interface between a white South African academic (Dr Mabel Palmer and Dr Edward Roux) and African learners engaged in Western education. It is Morphet's formulation of the construction of education which has relevance for the study of Roux's intervention. As he describes it, education is accorded the power to transform a state of ignorance to one of civilization. Morphet comments that the:

*... power and authority of the educational discourse lie precisely in this perceived transformative potential ... It is this which draws the two women into relation. It is not however a relation which can be sustained because the promise of transformation cannot be realised. There is no educational route around or beneath the conditions of racially ordered power* (Morphet, 1992, 289).

He too attributes the source of this construction of education to the metanarrative of the European Enlightenment, the enjoining of freedom and rationality, which '... sets the modern educational discourse on its path' (Morphet, 1992, 286) but which does not fit the '... conditions of colonial domination' (Morphet, 1992, 287). The

issues raised in Morphet's analysis are applicable to the context in which Roux was active, although once again, the contrast of these two educators' constructions of their respective learners adds specificity to both.

These postmodern interpretations of South African adult education interventions have prepared the conceptual ground for the study which I have made of Edward Roux's project. What I hope to add to the field is an analysis of the construction of curriculum and knowledge selections as the primary carriers of discourse in Roux's intervention.

Also important to this field, particularly to research in the field of ABET in the 1990's is Brian Street's construction of literacy as 'ideological' in the context of the New Literacy Studies. He infers thereby that literacy is:

*... inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society ... (Street, 1993, 7). [By asserting this, he contests the views of writers such as Goody, Olson and Ong who regard literacy as 'autonomous' and neutral. They treat literacy] ... as an independent social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character. [Street takes particular issue with David Olson who claims] ... writing did not simply extend the structure and uses of oral language and oral memory but altered the content and form in important ways (Street, 1993, 5).*

Street counters the view that literacy in society is symptomatic of the evolution of that society, as he believes that it is never free of the relations and structures of power; its conception as autonomous is, in his analysis, part of the totalising metanarrative of modernity. Street's work and that of the local SoUL research project provided the incentive for formulating the dual focus of this research study - Roux and ABET in the 1990's.

Building on the research of Street, James Gee and Shirley Brice Heath, and a recognition that South African literacy and adult basic education policy is based on a modernist construction of the development and impact of literacy, the SoUL researchers conducted ethnographic research in a variety of local contexts. They postulated that many South Africans operate effectively without reading and writing skills, that literacy and power are deeply intertwined and that a monolithic or homogenized form of literacy provision is inappropriate and counter-productive. This homogenized system invokes a 'catch-up model' of development, where sectors of society who are not acculturated fully into the modern Western cultural model are regarded as deficient and expected to develop through ABET towards this imposed state of enlightenment.

Street's introductory essay to his book *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy* (1993) has been an important source for this research, as has been Prinsloo and Breier's *The Social Uses of Literacy* (1996) and Kell's Masters research *An Analysis of Literacy Practices in an Informal Settlement in the Cape Peninsula* (1994) conducted in this field.

The work of socio-linguist, James Gee, was also relevant, particularly for his concepts - 'primary and secondary discourses', which he coined in the context of the social literacy practices of non-literates. He used the term 'primary discourse' for the discourse practices of the family while 'secondary discourse' indicates institutional discourses, for example schooling. He argues that acquisition and learning are separate processes, the latter requiring conscious reflexion. He introduces the conceptualisation of learning as requiring the simultaneous acquisition of a discourse or set of values, a concept which is helpful in understanding the process of non-literate adults acquiring schooled literacy or an alternative culture.

Adult education in South Africa is a latecomer to postmodern analysis and debate. The history of political activism and Freirean methodology associated with literacy

work, and the lasting disparities left in society by apartheid, have possibly inhibited research and exploration of what may seem too theoretical, relativist and esoteric a paradigm.

Usher et al's publication, *Adult Education and the Postmodern Challenge* (1997) has therefore been of particular importance to my study, in that it provides a set of propositions for how postmodern adult learning might be conceptualised in both practical and theoretical terms. Unlike most writers, this group of writers moves beyond enumerating the deficiencies of modernist practice. They outline some of the demands placed upon adult educators and researchers by the conditions of postmodernity. Their formulation of 'the challenge of postmodern adult learning' provided pointers for my analysis of adult learning texts of the 1990's.

They suggest that postmodernity offers opportunities for:

*... hitherto oppressed and marginalised groups such as women, blacks, gays and ethnic minorities to find a voice, to articulate their own 'subjugated' knowledges and to empower themselves in a variety of ways and according to their own specific agenda ... Linked with this is the impact of a reconfiguration of education away from its institutional and provider-led location (Usher et al, 1997, 22).*

Their analysis also identifies the tendency for adult educators to differentiate the 'wants' and 'needs' of learners. The privileging of needs is in modernist terms justified '... on the grounds that education should have a moral purpose' (Usher et al, 1997, 23). Out of this, the writers propose that the postmodern construct of 'adult learning' signifies the reduction of the:

*... power of the educator to define what constitutes worthwhile knowledge and serious learning ... and a refusal to acknowledge that learning must always be shaped by the values of a particular conception of progress (Usher et al, 1997, 24).*

It is important to note that they include both radical and liberal pedagogies as being framed:

*... within modernist 'regimes of truth' articulated in terms of universal macro-level explanations and centred on conceptions of teleological progress and goal-directed rational selves (Usher et al, 1997, 25).*

In addition, they propose that the very forms of postmodern education engaged should provide '... spaces for a diversity of voices' (Usher et al, 1997, 24) signalling open and distance learning as such forms.

Citing Burbules (1995), they posit three other necessary changes in educational conception. They posit that teachers need to adopt 'critical distance' taking themselves less seriously even when engaged in social transformation; that the purpose of education should not be 'unidirectional' but should embrace the 'unexpected, the tangential'; thirdly that uncertainty and difficulty should not always be seen '... as challenge[s] ... to be overcome ...' but as '... ongoing conditions of the educational process itself, indeed, educationally beneficent correctives to arrogance and complacency' (Usher et al, 1997, 25).

Much of their critique of modernist adult education practice and their discussion of the place of the disciplines within the postmodern paradigm has been of assistance in my study. Of particular importance however is their discussion of the concept of governmentality and the ambiguities of empowerment inherent in some emergent education monitoring practices, like the development of records of achievement or competence. Using the Foucauldian construct of 'governmentality', or governance from within, they give recognition to the process whereby practitioners promote the

metanarrative of progress to coerce learners into collaborating in self-surveillance, submitting themselves to the construction of their own subjectivity in terms of competences for the purpose of certification.

*The key to governmentality is the self-regulating capacities of the subjects, shaped and normalised through expertise (Miller and Rose in Usher et al, 1997, 58).*

They argue that:

*The effect of governmentality is to make our practices more programmatic, which is to say subject to systematic analysis and prescription (Usher et al, 1997, 58).*

This is a significant critique of the ostensibly empowering methodologies of competence-based adult learning advocated in the ABET policies of the 1990's in South Africa.

In the course of this publication, Usher et al provide a set of emergent formations which postmodern adult learning might exhibit. I have used many of their points to analyse contemporary adult learning texts.

#### **1.4 The theoretical framework of knowledge and educational intent**

An important area within my reading has been the theory-based literature relating to the relationship of knowledge and power across the century. One significant critique of the 'received' or established modernist paradigm of knowledge was developed by Young and Bernstein in the process of their evaluation of the impact of the modernist school curriculum on underclass children during the 1970's. There is also an emerging literature central to which is Foucault's analysis of the institutional power contained by the disciplines, which starts to suggest the

possibility of alternate conceptions of knowledge. Usher et al suggest that the scope of knowledge must in an age of postmodernity diversify substantially and become learner-led.

During the five decades in question there have been forays against the dominant conceptualisation or arrangements of knowledge which have brought into question the epistemological foundations of the modern age. I describe them as forays because they have remained largely in the theoretical realm, and have not made substantial institutional impact. They have been postulated in the face of the immensely powerful modernist construction of knowledge which is firmly rooted in classical categories and arrangements.

The apparent immovability of the modernist conception of knowledge correlates with the centrality of knowledge to the shape of modernity itself. The Enlightenment project was constructed upon three epistemological cornerstones relevant to the position of knowledge: freedom was to be attained through conscious, rational action; truth or true knowledge could be derived from empirical research. Thirdly, the natural sciences were seen as providing a model for all other forms of knowledge, and such knowledge was to be derived through systematic research. May's description in which he quotes Bernstein (1983) captures the positivism of this philosophical trajectory.

*Reason is the guarantor of universal knowledge. Add to this the Cartesian claim of a universal standard against which truth could be objectively measured, independent of the objects of scientific enquiry, then the Enlightenment comes to represent an ascending history of colonization over 'valid' knowledge. This requires that 'other' forms of knowledge are supplanted in the quest for objectivity, defined as '... the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness' (May, 1996, 12).*

The core assumptions underlying Enlightenment thinking inform the construction of knowledge which Roux would have assimilated through the institutions of education and higher education in the 1920's and 1930's: as a scientist, rationalist and educator during this period, Roux's construction of knowledge is likely to have been respectful of, if not bounded by a structuralist and positivist modernist conception of knowledge.

The notion of differentiating knowledge into higher and lesser status emerged both through class differentiation and perceived social roles as well as through the special status accorded to the sciences within Enlightenment thinking. The field of education, which is institutionalised and dominated by the state, is prone to reproducing the hierarchies of disciplines and by using them in curriculum, to giving them a naturalised identity. The status of the disciplines and particularly the scientific disciplines acquired through this process lasted until the late 1960's and to a large extent still dominates higher education.

Debates relevant to the conceptualisation of knowledge have been derived from a number of readings in curriculum theory, notably John Eggleston's *The Sociology of the School Curriculum* (1977), Michael Young's *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (1971) and Cleo Cherryholmes's *Power and Criticism* (1988).

Critical to this interpretation of Roux's intervention is an understanding of the possibility of an alternative to the modernist conception of knowledge and the consequent challenge this poses to curriculum. The debates on alternate constructions of knowledge across this century present significant conceptual markers with which to analyse Roux's project.

What makes these debates particularly significant is that the selection of knowledge and its formulation into a series of curricula was a key concern for Roux. It has also been the nexus of many of the battles in the field of education.

This is predictable as within the formulation of the nature of knowledge, 'worthwhile knowledge' and the particular selection termed curriculum, is contained the educator's construction of the learner's identity, needs and conceptualisation of the ideal educated state for humankind. The curriculum reveals much about the educator or institution and the world to which he belongs.

The cohesive curriculum is in itself a modernist construct; it is also one of the most substantial tools used by Western society to reproduce its own ideals and values. It has the potential to carry the grand narratives upon which Western society has for centuries depended; once installed, the grand mythologies tend to be invisibly reproduced as the norm. Though there have been different formulations of the arrangements of power across the century as well as changing hierarchies within the formulation thereof, the simple existence of curriculum is in itself a manifestation of modernity.

The challenge to the arrangements of power embedded in the Enlightenment construction of knowledge and curriculum came through Marxist-orientated educators; adult educator and philosopher Paulo Freire in Brazil in the 1960's on the one hand and social theorist Michael Young and Basil Bernstein, an applied linguist in the 1970's. Freire's move was to challenge the whole edifice of academic knowledge imposed upon under-educated adults and to dismiss this as disempowering and alienating. His chief criticism is based on the dislocation of disciplinary knowledge from the social needs of underclass communities. In place of the traditional offerings of schooling, he counterposed the adult learner's own experiential knowledge as the most productive source of knowledge for under-educated adults, linking educational goals firmly to political and economic empowerment.

Young and Bernstein's formulation of what has come to be known as the New Sociology of Knowledge was also Marxist but revisionist in orientation. They argued that knowledge is differentially organised by the powerful and thus

inevitably advantages the privileged while disadvantaging the underclass. Their re-evaluation of the origination and impact of knowledge choices within curriculum was in contrast to the continuation of the Enlightenment tradition in its twentieth century structuralist form.

*Philosophers like Hirst (1965) and Phenix (1964) [state] that there are particular forms of knowledge (for example, physical sciences, history, literature and the fine arts) which exist independent of societies' actions. [They argue that t]his knowledge is relatively objective, non-problematic and it is verifiable (Marsh, 1992, 206).*

Proponents of the New Sociology of Knowledge contest the disciplines as the fundamental, foundational formations of knowledge in the world, because of their propensity to distribute power differentially. They argue that:

*... knowledge is defined and organized by the dominant groups in society ... It is basically subjective, relative and political (Marsh, 1992, 206).*

In his introduction to *Knowledge and Control* (1971), Young posits that 'what counts as knowledge' is 'socially constituted' within certain 'standardized models' (Young, 1971, 5) and that it is necessary to acknowledge the element of power distribution within the selection and organisation of knowledge (Young, 1971, 19). Bernstein argues that knowledge:

*... which [society] considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and principles of social control. [From this he concludes that] ... educational knowledge is a major regulator of the structure of experience ... [through a process whereby the educator is socialized into accepted public hierarchies of knowledge and passes them on to the learner] (Bernstein in Young, 1971, 47).*

Similarly Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of social reproduction focuses on the access which the individual has to the cultural symbols and practices of those in power, and the relative increase which this grants him or her in terms of what he calls 'cultural capital'. His paper 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction' (1973) provides a case study based within the French class system and its differentiated work strata, and analyses the relative power of those who have more and less access to economic power and their position relative to those who have more cultural capital. I have found this concept of 'cultural capital' and the power arrangements it reveals to be of some value in the context of my research.

Young provides a framework for uncovering '... the assumptions underlying the selection and organization of knowledge' (Young, 1971, 31); he notes:

*.. [T]hose in positions of power will attempt to define what is to be taken as knowledge, how accessible to different groups any knowledge is, and what are the accepted relationships between different knowledge areas and between those who have access to them and make them available (Young, 1971, 32).*

Bernstein's elaboration of Young's framework posits two kinds of curricula which distribute power differently - one which is 'collection-coded' or bound tightly by discipline or subject, while the other subordinates:

*... insulated subjects ... to some 'relational' idea, which blurs the boundaries between subjects (Bernstein in Young, 1971, 53).*

Young, drawing on Bernstein, analyses the impact of these respective framings of knowledge. He suggests that tightly bounded, discipline-specific curricula bring a sense of alienation to the learner resulting from 'the restriction of accessibility of knowledge areas' by those who are unfamiliar with the disciplinary frameworks of knowledge (Young, 1971, 32). Bernstein further elaborates that middle-class

(presumably urban, Western-educated) socialisation gives the middle-classes a 'hidden subsidy' (Bernstein in Young, 1971, 58) while for others, education mediated through the disciplines loses familiarity and therefore accessibility. This critical paradigm of the nature and impact of knowledge has been of some significance for the analysis of curriculum choices in this research, but addresses itself to one specific context (schooling). It assesses how the 'received' (Eggleston, 1977, 52) curriculum, meaning the dominant systematization of knowledge, which is non-negotiable and gains authority from the hierarchy of the disciplines, asserts social control and reproduces the class system.

Young and Bernstein's formulation of power arrangements is too determinist in the sense that it homogenizes learner responses in terms of class, thereby overlooking resistance, cultural creativity and the unexpected; power is constructed as monolithic and a repressive force. It is assumed that institutions possess all their power through class structure, and that those subjected to those institutions possess none.

In their conceptualisation of knowledge, the Sociology of Knowledge philosophers see knowledge choices and the design of curricula as a strategy to secure power relations. In this regard Foucault's postmodern conceptualisation of power is quite different: he regards power as a fluid network of relations. He argues that we would not be brought to obey it if power did nothing but repress.

*What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse (Foucault in Gordon, 1980, 119).*

From my reading, I found the Sociology of Knowledge analysis to be inadequate to explain the way in which knowledge and power interrelate in Roux's project. Although the approach alerts one to some of the potential factors which may serve

to reproduce power, it does not explicate the arrangements of power in substantially differentiated cultural contexts such as post-colonial South Africa, except by extrapolation. Although critical of hierarchies within epistemology, it operates within the same epistemological boundaries as the received perspective.

The postmodern paradigm asserts a dislocation between knowledge and any predetermined arrangements of power. Knowledge in Foucault's terms is arbitrary, far beyond the reach of truth. No fundamental intrinsic formations bind it into disciplines, and the disciplines that were defined in the Enlightenment era become material for genealogical analysis in the search for the formations of power which led to their establishment. In postmodern terms, knowledge is no longer an external, empirically verified body of truth, but rather a construction created by the 'knower'. The postmodernist enterprise contests the usually delineated academic disciplines drawing literary criticism, social psychology, philosophy and even science into closer proximity than ever before.

Knowledge is embedded within discursive practice, and shapes the identity of its user. It is not viewed as having intrinsic character or value; it does not secure predictable power arrangements in society; it simply carries the flows of power within a particular discursive context.

In postmodern terms, Roux's construction of curricula and his selection of knowledge for adult learners can be viewed, along with a range of other elements, as just such a discursive formation. Identification and description of the underlying claims that are made by these constructions of curriculum, provide the means to reconstruct his assumptions regarding his learners, and about what would be 'good for the learners'. Genealogical analysis of the claims could potentially uncover the location of power and explain how this power made these truths possible.

Cherryholmes suggests that the 'poststructural' analysis of curriculum addresses the metanarrative or 'transcendental signifieds' (Cherryholmes, 1988, 134) as he

terms them, by asking questions such as: 'Where do they come from? How were they produced? Why did they originate? What do they assert?' (Cherryholmes, 1988, 134). As he puts it, '... power preceded and produced statements that were received as truth' (Cherryholmes, 1988, 139). I shall use some of these questions to structure my discussion of Roux's selection of knowledge.

These shifting constructions and interconnections in the analysis of knowledge selections have been critical to my study from the viewpoint of recognising the genealogical context of Roux's curriculum and its distinctness. It has provided the key formation for discourse analysis within Roux's intervention.

### **1.5 Genealogical sources**

In the genealogical analysis of the Enlightenment metanarrative, and particularly Edward Roux's version thereof, I have relied on two fields of research: firstly the field of postmodern analysis of colonial and missionary educational intervention has provided a rich source of arguments about the construction of adults as learners in South Africa. De Kock's discussion of the discourses operative in texts produced by missionary educators at Lovedale College has served as evidence of the more theoretical assertions of Gates and Brantlinger contained in Gates's volume *'Race' Writing and Difference* (1986). The other field which has been fruitful is that of social theory: Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of the intellectual formation of socialism, of the role of educators and intellectuals in the modern and postmodern age and of the social impact of the discourse of modernity at other key historical moments such as during the Holocaust, has provided many important assertions around which I have based my genealogical analysis. In particular *Socialism - The Active Utopia* (1976) and *Intimations of Postmodernity* (1992) have provided conceptual formations which I have used in understanding Roux's metanarrative more deeply.

## 1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed some of the literature which forms the foundation for this research and which has been used to develop the conceptual framework for the case study. I have attempted to discuss the main debates raised by these texts, and to clarify conceptual constructs which I intend to apply in the course of the case study. In the next chapter I shall describe the research process and briefly present the methodological underpinnings of this process.

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# CHAPTER 2

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PLAN

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### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall present a rationale for the choice of methodology and describe the research plan. I have chosen to use a qualitative research method - specifically a postmodern approach, drawing on some of the analytical tools developed by Michel Foucault. In so-doing, I understand that the choice of methodology circumscribes the possible research results.

### 2.2 A rationale for the choice of a postmodern approach

As was stated in the first chapter, I previously conducted research on Roux's project in 1989. This was an attempt to describe three of Edward Roux's texts (*The Mayibuye Reader*, *The Cattle of Kumalo* and *Colour and Cleverness or What the Black Man Can Do*) in terms of the author's political and personal history. The texts were expected to yield congruence with his individual social and political experience and it was assumed that historical events could be held as the cause of human actions. This presupposed that the author as individual is able to explain accurately and control the intended impact of the educational intervention. I interpreted the texts in terms of their educational intents and methods, gaining some insight into the impact they might have had. Although this was qualitative research, I believe that such anticipated symmetry between the educator's life experience and the resultant educational intervention remained firm within the positivist paradigm. I choose here to undertake qualitative research within the context of the postmodern paradigm recognising that the choice of research methodology proscribes its possible results.

The postmodern paradigm is distinguished from the modernist framework by a fundamental shift in the assumptions made about reality and how it comes to be understood. The modernist researcher is characterised as positivist, believing phenomena to be explicable, measurable and provable; on this basis, it is assumed that reliable generalisation and prediction is possible. Postmodern research taken to its logical conclusion espouses no epistemology of its own but occupies a relativist stance seeking to uncover evidence of the research subject's epistemology.

The positivist system of thought has over centuries become self-referential, defining everything else in relation to itself, in relation to 'claims of legitimacy by reference to external, universally truthful propositions' (Rosenau, 1992, xii). It is these universalised propositions which the postmodernist researcher seeks to reveal.

*Post-modernism challenges all global, all-encompassing world views, be they political, religious or social. It ... dismisses them all as logocentric, transcendental totalizing metanarratives that anticipate all questions and provide predetermined answers ... The post-modern goal is not to formulate an alternative set of assumptions, but to register the impossibility of establishing any such underpinning for knowledge (Ashley and Walker, Culler and Norris in Rosenau, 1992, 6).*

I have chosen to use this approach because it provides the tools to make visible the assumptions which underpin Roux's world view. Examination reveals Roux's world as recognisably modernist: as a Marxist, a humanist, a scientist and an educator, he was embedded in the socio-cultural matrix of modernism<sup>1</sup>. A postmodern methodology offers the possibility of uncovering the metanarrative, the formation encompassing all the underlying truths upon which the project was founded and to expose the conscious and unconscious power arrangements formed by this educational interaction.

Usher notes that through a postmodern methodology:

*... we become sceptical of Utopian projects that promise universal betterment. In promising an end to oppressive power, they often merely enshrine power subtly yet more firmly through surveillance and regulation, through manipulation of body and soul. The web of interactions and contingencies through which life is played out involves unequal power relations regardless of emancipatory and benevolent intentions (Usher et al, 1997, 7).*

This research does not aim to analyse Roux's project and assumptions for the sake of critique in its own right, but to understand more clearly the relationship constructed for the educator and learner in this transaction. Thereby, it is hoped that one may become more conscious of the arrangements of power, and the possibilities and problems inherent in such transactions. It is particularly interesting because Roux's project seems so bold, innovative and humane during a period of bleak social and educational opportunity. The positive intent of an educational project has particular capacity in masking the power arrangements within that project.

A final aspect of the rationale for using a postmodernist approach is that it embraces text as a legitimate and important source of data. Edward Roux's texts for African adults and about adult education form the basis of this research and are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

### **2.3 Data for the research**

The data for this research consists of a case study of Edward Roux's trajectory as an adult educator, the texts he wrote for adult learners and educators in the 1940's which are contrasted with three genres of ABET text from the 1990's in South Africa. Analysis of the primary case study (Roux's project) constitutes the major

part of the research, while my application of these findings to contemporary texts forms the minor part.

In my analysis of Roux's educational intervention, I shall use two genres from amongst the texts he wrote: firstly a series of booklets for adult learners called *The Sixpenny Library* (1943 - 1945), as well as an unpublished text written for African readers called 'Mass Education in Africa '(c.1946). *The Sixpenny Library* project is further described in Chapter 3; the texts he wrote for other adult educators about his project are summarised in Appendix E.

In terms of the application of my findings to texts in the 1990's, I have selected the *Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training*, October 1997, several readers from the New Readers Project published by the Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal and USWE's *Changing Lives*, a four-part series of workbooks published by Sached Books/Maskew Miller Longman. The selection of material is necessarily subjective and as incomplete as any selection of material. I have scanned fairly widely to select these texts however, and admit that my choice was informed by an element of comparable purpose which exists between these texts and Edward Roux's. The intent of the policy document can be compared with Roux's theoretical assertions, while the *Changing Lives* series shares with Roux's series the didactic purpose of assisting adults who have recently come to the city with information relevant to this transition. The New Readers Project fulfils a slightly different function - one text contains socially relevant information, a similar purpose to many of Roux's texts, the other constitutes a counterpoint in its role as extra reading or reading for pleasure. The value of using texts as the starting point for this research is posited in the light of what Paul Ricoeur terms 'text as living communication' rather than as 'authorless object' (Ricoeur, 1991, 110). Ricoeur elaborates that text offers the opportunity:

... to interpret in the manner of the historian ... [as opposed to] ... explaining in the manner of the natural scientist ... [but at the same time the text] ... enters into relation with all other texts that come to take the place of the circumstantial reality referred to by living speech (Ricoeur, 1991, 110).

In the absence of the educator and his learners, texts provide the 'living communication' of this particular project.

## **2.4 Research process**

Having located all the relevant data, the research process has entailed reading and analysis using Foucault's methods of archeological investigation of texts and genealogical analysis of these findings.

The research process begins with Chapter 3 in which I construct the case study of Roux's educational intervention, focusing selectively on biographical events which have bearing on his construction of knowledge and education. As part of the case study, I describe *The Sixpenny Library* and the related theoretical documents which he wrote.

In Chapter 4, I focus on Roux's suggested constructions of curricula for adult African learners and his selection of knowledge for *The Sixpenny Library* curriculum. In this context, I analyse the discourse in which the selections are embedded using 'archeological analysis' of the texts. This involves delving into texts and trying to identify recurrent assertions within them. Significant findings would include the identification of common discourses which arise within the educators' intervention. In intertextual relation, it is likely that these discourses will in turn embody a broader metanarrative or world view. Additional data upon which this analysis rests are the theoretical texts in which he discussed his views on what constituted 'worthwhile knowledge' for this target group. In the analysis I try to apply some of the theoretical arguments on the construction of knowledge

discussed in Chapter 1 to Roux's conceptualisation, in order to describe it more accurately, and to reconstruct the metanarrative within which his construction is embedded. I also make some preliminary assertions about the metanarrative which emerges from the analysis of the curriculum.

In Chapter 5, I analyse *The Sixpenny Library* texts themselves giving more attention to three written by Roux. I also link these discursive formations with his theoretical assertions, and draw out four interconnected discourse repertoires which in intertextual relation constitute the dominant metanarrative or silent assumptions 'governing' the intervention. This process also falls within Foucault's notion of 'archeology'.

In Chapter 6 I discuss some possible conditions of formation of the conceptual structures inherent in Roux's intervention, using Foucault's process of 'genealogical analysis' drawing heavily on conceptual formations identified by Zygmunt Bauman. This process also serves to identify the circulation of power within the transactions and the construction of self and the learner by the educator. Through genealogical analysis, I try to develop understanding of some of the educational, cultural and social consequences which arise for the adult African learners who were subjected to the intervention. In this way, I attempt to gain some insight into the educator's view of the learners and to understand the interactions of power between them. Chapter 6 therefore constitutes the primary set of conclusions arising from analysis of the case study.

Having elicited a conceptualisation of the arrangements of power within Roux's intervention, I compare them in Chapter 7 with a selection of ABET texts written in South Africa in the 1990's. I interpret their continuity with or diversion from the assumptions underlying Roux's project. Through this comparison, I evaluate whether a similar metanarrative underpins ABET texts today. This analysis may provide lessons for contemporary adult educators in the sense of sensitising them to the hidden dimensions within the taken-for-granted transactions engaged in by

adult educators when developing educational interventions.

Chapter 8 constitutes a set of secondary conclusions which build on the primary conclusions from the case study; I assess their validity in relation to the secondary case study - the set of contemporary ABET texts. My conclusions are thus presented in two stages: stage one is a description of Roux's metanarrative and the likely arrangements of power within his proposed educational intervention; stage two comprises the identification of continuity or divergence between Roux's texts written in the 1940's and ABET texts of the 1990's.

I shall briefly describe the Foucauldian methodology which I intend to engage before moving on to presenting the case study of Roux's intervention in Chapter 3.

## **2.5 Discourse analysis**

The discourse analysis process is based upon the premise that:

*[L]anguage contains the most basic categories that we use to understand ourselves. [In language, we] ... draw on shared patterns of meaning and contrasting ways of speaking [which are referred to as] ... discourse repertoires. [These discourses] ... have immense power to shape the way that people ... experience and behave in the world (Burman & Parker, 1993, 1).*

Reading and deconstructing language enables one to enter the speaker or writer's consciousness at that particular point and to scan, scour and code that text or stretch of language for symptoms and signs of a particular construction of the world. In the process:

*... a text is [torn] apart, reveal[ing] its contradictions and assumptions; its intent, however, is not to improve, revise or offer a better version of the text (Rosenau, 1992, xi).*

Texts are not regarded as isolated utterances but operate intertextually, bearing in mind that people and their actions, oral testimony, dominant ways of thinking and political ideologies are also regarded as forms of text. Postmodernists like Zygmunt Bauman regard the resultant interpretations as '... an endless conversation between the texts with no prospect of ever arriving at or being halted at an agreed point' (Bauman in Rosenau, 1992, xii).

A postmodernist reading of texts must however be ordered or strategised in some way. The search for psychologically constructed and linguistically encoded modernist metanarratives is one of the driving forces. By locating metanarratives, one reveals subtle power arrangements which otherwise appear as naturalised order. Laying them bare, forces back assumed truths, and demands reconsideration of what actually constitutes 'order' or 'truth', and what does not. At the level of language, postmodernist enquiry also has the capacity to reveal the structures of language which articulate thought. Usher writes:

*Postmodernism's deconstructive thrust foregrounds and challenges the place of the binary oppositions which structure thought (Usher et al, 1997, 8).*

These binary oppositions are particularly visible in colonial discourse, and are indicative of the imposition of a unitary and usually false construction of truth.

### **2.5.1 Archeology**

The first stage in the postmodernist research process is the analytical deconstruction of texts, conceptualised by Foucault as 'archeology'. Barry Smart's

analysis of Foucault's methodology is discussed below.

Foucault's archeology is the process of delving into texts and analysing specific evidence as symptomatic of the tacit rules of formation which underpin a world view; what is revealed through this process is not history, but a reconstruction of the system of thought which constructed that history. The metaphor of the archeologist piecing together fragments to understand the past is too positivist an image to capture the object of the search, but it does suggest the methodological approach. What is fundamental to the search is suspension of the 'continuities and unities' (Smart, 1985, 38) or categories which are often taken as self-evident in the human sciences such as '... tradition, influence, development, evolution and spirit ...' (Smart, 1985, 38).

Smart describes Foucault's guidance for discourse analysis thus:

*In seeking the basis of the unity imputed to those statements associated with medicine, economics, or grammar, Foucault argued that it is not a common object, a style, concepts or thematic choices which account for unity but rather the presence of a systematic dispersion of elements. Where between objects, types of statements, concepts and thematic choices there exists an order, correlations, 'positions in commonspace, a reciprocal functioning' (Foucault in Smart, 1985, 39), and linked transformations then a regularity, a system of dispersion, has been located and a discursive formation identified ... The systems of formation conceptualized by Foucault are literally located at the 'prediscursive level', they constitute the conditions in and under which it is possible for a discourse to exist, of 'what must be related', in a particular discursive practice, for such and such an enunciation to be made ... (Smart, 1985, 39).*

Yet Smart makes it clear that prediscursive practices remain embedded within discourse and cannot be seen as external to that discourse.

Archeology is however only part of Foucault's methodology and after publishing *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1977), he began to experience archeological analysis as limiting. He argued that the discourses located are inevitably beyond the reach of the 'archives' in which we are embedded; we may recognise their disjunctive impact but we are confined by the rules of our own discourse. This shift becomes apparent in *Discipline and Punish of 1977* (Smart, 1985, 54).

### 2.5.2 Genealogy

Foucault, therefore developed a process which he called 'genealogy'; in fact he gave archeology a complementary but secondary status in the discourse analysis process. He distinguished this process from historical inquiry because it does not pretend to look for cause or consequence, rather confining the enquiry to coincidences or resonances in philosophical thought. He acknowledged Nietzsche in his creation of this conceptual tool which, in spite of its purpose to describe the emergence and descent of a set of values, has nothing in common with traditional history.

*Genealogy as the analysis of historical descent rejects the uninterrupted continuities and stable forms which have been a feature of traditional history in order to reveal the complexity, fragility, and contingency surrounding historical events* (Smart, 1985, 56).

Its founding concepts are instability, the 'play of historical forces' (Smart, 1985, 57), in which the transitory nature of:

*... historical emergence [is not regarded] as the culmination of events, or as the end of a process of development but rather as a particular momentary manifestation of the 'hazardous play of dominations' or a stage in the struggle of forces* (Smart, 1985, 57).

What genealogy seeks to do is to investigate the conditions of possibility which brought the metanarrative into being. It implies situating the metanarrative located through archeology, within narratives and common readings of the ruling socio-cultural assumptions or projections of the time.

Foucault is, as Cherryholmes puts it:

*... interested in the political production of truth. How are these discourses constituted? How do discourses constitute institutions? How do institutions constitute and regulate discourses? (Cherryholmes, 1988, 33).*

These theoretical elements of postmodernity will guide the research process, providing the conceptual framework for analysing discourse in the texts in order to reconstruct the metanarrative in which they are embedded and its genealogical origins.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented a rationale for the choice of the postmodern approach, described the research plan, its data and research process and discussed two aspects of the analytical methodology. In the next chapter, I shall present the primary research object - the case study of the adult education project of Edward Roux in its historical context.

## **ENDNOTES**

- (1) Lyotard refers to this world as the '... modernist program ...' (Lyotard in Polkinghorne in Kvale, 1992, 147), thus distinguishing it from synonymy with reality.

## CHAPTER 3

### EDWARD ROUX'S ADULT EDUCATION PROJECT: THE CASE STUDY

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#### 3.1 Introduction

A case study of Edward Roux's educational intervention forms the basis of this research. In this chapter, I shall describe the intervention and comment on its place in the history of adult education in South Africa in order to contextualise it and to suggest its significance. This will provide the departure point for a postmodern analysis of a selection of Roux's texts.

#### 3.2 Background to Edward Roux's educational project

I have chosen to construct Roux's intervention integrated with selected events in his personal biography. In doing so, I acknowledge that this choice foregrounds his political affiliations as a source for his educational intervention. This is not intended to pre-empt the textual analysis which follows; instead it offers an additional 'text', that of an individual's political actions to be read in intertextual relation with his written texts.

##### 3.2.1 The state of education for adult Africans in the 1930's and 1940's

In an unpublished paper of the late 1930's called 'Adult Education for Africans', Roux summarised the literacy levels of adult Africans in South Africa as follows:

*... 75 per cent of our total adult native population today is completely illiterate ... Experience gained in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town leads me to the conclusion that the majority of urban location Natives (over*

*50 per cent), have some knowledge of reading and writing in their own language. The proportion who are literate in English is of course very much lower. The degree of literacy among Bantu mine workers on the Witwatersrand is very low, possibly less than 5 per cent (Roux, c.1936, 2).*

In 1946, the report of the Adult Education Committee stated that '... 80 per cent of the African and 70 to 75 per cent of the Coloured population are illiterate' (Roux, 1964, 344).

It is within this social context that Roux conceptualised his adult education intervention in the 1930's and 1940's.

### **3.2.2 Formative experience in the Communist Party of South Africa**

The foundations of Roux's education intervention were laid when as an activist in the Communist Party of South Africa, he taught in the Communist Party Night School.

As early as 1917, Sidney Bunting and David Ivon Jones, a trade unionist from Wales, had established a night school for African adults in the International Socialist League. When Roux moved from the Young Communist League to the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in the early 1920's, he came under the influence of Bunting '... who at that time was trying to persuade an almost exclusively white party that its main task was to organise the non-whites for revolution' (Roux, 1964, IX).

With this broad political goal in mind, the Communist Party Night School was established in 1925 as one of the few means of contact with African workers (Roux, 1964, 202). It was initially led by T.W. Thibedi, who had for some time been '... the only black man in the movement ... and had a natural genius for getting people together for special meetings' (Roux, 1970, 66). Roux describes the night school

classes as held by '... enthusiastic white comrades [who] tried to teach semi-literate Africans to read passages from Bukharin's ABC of Communism' (Roux, 1970, 67). Through Thibedi's work, the Communist Party gradually built an African following (Roux, 1964, 203).

In his autobiography, Roux notes that the Night School later flourished under Charles Baker, a retired teacher from England, whose:

*... chief business in life was to denounce religion as 'the opium of the people' and to castigate all missionaries as 'agents of imperialism' ... We taught reading, writing and simple arithmetic and held occasional lectures and debates on general topics of working class interest. The teachers as before, were enthusiastic white comrades. We were not expert in teaching, but we improved as we went along. And our pupils were hungry for knowledge ...* (Roux, 1970, 67-8).

Even these early moments of the adult education movement resonate with the inevitability of a power differential between the African adult learners and their more educated white comrades, resulting in the educational agenda belonging to the educated.

The aims of the Communist Party Night School as identified by Bird were primarily to enable equal engagement in Party matters, to develop African leadership '... and to allow as many [learners] as possible to understand the structure that oppressed them' (Bird in Kallaway, 1991, 198). This would have been a project held more strongly by Jones, Bunting, Roux (the labour nigrophilists<sup>1</sup> as Roux terms them) and their African comrades than by the Party as a whole at this time<sup>2</sup>. Though the scale of provision was never significant, this intervention seems to have had an ongoing inspirational significance to educators and African workers alike. The story of the Communist Party Night Schools is repeated in almost any text on the history of basic adult education in South Africa. Several important African labour leaders

gained educational advantage through this intervention, for example Moses Kotane, Stanley Silwane, Thomas Mbeki, Tantsi, Johannes Nkosi and Gana Makabeni (Bird in Kallaway, 1991, 195) as well as Edwin Mofutsanyane.

By late 1928, the Communist Party was under pressure from the Comintern in Moscow to work towards '... an independent Native republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government' (Roux, 1970, 60). Bunting, Roux and many other members of the Communist Party in South Africa feared the disunity this would cause with the white unions and opposed it. This led to charges being brought against Bunting in 1931 for 'right wing deviations' (Roux, 1970, 102); he was expelled along with four other leading trade unionists in September of that year. To Roux's shame, he made no protest; he engrossed himself in Party activities including the production of *Umsebenzi* (*The South African Worker*), making it once more a 'readable paper' (Roux, 1970, 130).

The Night School is recorded as having expanded substantially in 1929, but by the mid-1930's, the school was defunct. During this period, when Roux came under pressure to conform to the Comintern's Native Republic policy, he proposed that they revive the Night School '... to try to make the Party headquarters once more a living centre of daily activities' (Roux, 1970, 144); this suggestion was vehemently opposed by Lazar Bach because it had been put forward in a way which suggested that '... there [was] something wrong in the bolshevik system of organisation of the Party' (Roux, 1970, 144).

Four years after Bunting's expulsion, another purge was undertaken in the Party; this time, Roux condemned it at a public meeting. This led to his isolation and removal from the editorship of *Umsebenzi*. Roux was never formally expelled, but he and his wife were sufficiently isolated to elect to distance themselves. He describes the end of his relationship with the Communist Party as rejection rather than expulsion.

*My days, once so tight-packed with strenuous work for the Party, were now a desert of an emptiness more exhausting than any toil ... Hammer and sickle had rejected me ... I knew that the efforts of some seventeen years of my life now counted for almost nothing (Roux, 1970, 147).*

During the last years of his association with the Party, Roux authored his first accessible reader for newly literate Africans. Published by The Communist Party in 1934, it was called *The Mayibuye Reader*. Of its aims he wrote:

*I take it for granted that what Africans need in the struggle for liberation is not merely knowledge in general but political knowledge in particular. I have tried to supply both in this reader (Roux, 1934, 3).*

The inclusion of overtly political material was a vision which he was to forego in the publications which followed. In spite of his immense commitment to the work of The Communist Party, he had been initially in opposition to the dominance of white labour, and later in opposition to the racialising and disuniting effect of the Native Republic slogan. This relationship with the Party prefigures Roux, the adult educator, when he emerged from 'the desert of emptiness' referred to above. Pondering on their differences with the Party in 1929, Bunting and Roux had concluded ironically that:

*Our trouble was an innate empiricism which made us prefer to reason from fact to theory rather than from theory to what ought to be fact (Roux, 1970, 93).*

Donald Livingstone, speaking at Roux's funeral in March 1966 gives some insight into another quality which is evident in his relationship with Party work and in his educational project.

*... [H]owever we may have met him we could not fail to come under the spell of this shy man's wholly unconscious charm and to realize that a deep human compassion was the mainspring of his being (Roux, 1970, 272).*

An insight into Roux's ambiguous relationship with the Communist Party after he parted from it is contained in his preface to *S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography* (1944). In it, he states to:

*... the opponents of the left ... [that] ... the Communist Party in South Africa is still the only political organization of any consequence in this country which fights in season and out for the political, social and economic emancipation of all the people of South Africa (Roux, 1970, 168).*

These strands, empiricism, compassion and a belief in equal rights for all human beings capture some of the complexity of his educational motivation in the decade which followed.

### **3.2.3 From communist to 'radical liberal' and rationalist**

The period during which Roux developed his adult education project was influenced by his need to support his family, the conditions of the war years and an imperative to come to terms with his feelings of having betrayed Sidney Bunting. Prior to focusing on the educational project of the 1940's, I shall complete a brief biographical survey.

Immediately after leaving the Communist Party, Roux attempted to stand independently for the Native Representative Council in the Cape, but failed to meet the two-year residence qualification. This he termed '... his final attempt to remain in the political field' (Roux, 1970, 148).

Thereafter he worked for a period as superintendant at the Claremont swimming baths, until he was introduced by Peter (C.P.) Molteno, with whom he had studied at Cambridge, to Izak Donen, a fruit researcher at the University of Cape Town. Donen needed the assistance of a plant physiologist. During this time, he and Molteno investigated the vitamin A content of certain South African fish oils, which in turn led to Roux's wartime job with Vitamin Oils where Molteno was Managing Director.

According to Roux's wife, he spent time writing every day of his life: during 1936, he embarked on his biography of S.P. Bunting, in part to make amends for his silence and to pay tribute to the '... memory of a great man whose contribution to the cause of racial freedom in South Africa was unique' (Roux, 1970, 169). He also wrote political and historical articles for *Trek* which were to be the basis for *Time Longer than Rope. The Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (1948) which he completed in 1939, although some chapters were added in 1946.

In the same year, the Professor of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand, John Frederick Phillips appointed Edward Roux to the position of Senior Lecturer, responsible for the Frankenwald Research Station where returning servicemen were able to study for a Bachelor of Science in Soil Conservation and Grassland Ecology.

In the 1950's, Roux described himself as having '... degenerated into a sort of radical liberal of no commitments ...' (Roux, 1970, 197). He was however forced back into political life by the Nationalist Government when they began to clamp down on all organized opposition in the 1950's. Under the Minister of Justice, C.R. Swart, the Suppression of Communism Bill was passed and lists of former members of the Communist Party were compiled. In September 1950, Roux's political harassment by the Nationalist Government began. He was 'named' and his home library was raided.

In 1957 Roux was approached to join The Liberal Party, which had been founded in 1953; he did so, setting aside his decision of fifteen years earlier, to stay out of politics. He argued that it was '... the first time [since the Communist Party] ... that a political party has granted absolute equality of membership to all races. Not a qualified franchise but one man one vote. I believe in democracy', he stated (Roux, 1970, 208). Roux stood for the Liberal Party in the municipal elections in 1957, but along with five other candidates lost to the United Party. In 1962, he was forced to resign from any organization in opposition to the government.

In the same year, Roux, who had been Acting Head in the Botany Department for two years was appointed Professor and asked to stay on for a further five years. In characteristic fashion, he delivered his inaugural lecture on 'The Veld and the Future' in non-technical language aimed at the layperson.

Another important involvement in Roux's later life was his membership of The Rationalist Association<sup>3</sup> which he joined in 1953. His wife writes of him that:

*He believed in the power of rational thought and held that by this means only could human welfare be advanced. This is not to say that he imagined that ultimate meaning could be established by thought but that the journey towards sure knowledge must always be by way of rational analysis of tested experience followed by a synthesis of suggested explanation ... He strove towards increase of probability and was content to live in the knowledge that he would never know how the universe originated ... Indeed he did not believe in asking 'why', that question with its load of teleology, but only 'how'. There can be no 'why'. And in this he was consistent to the end (Roux, 1970, 219).*

As Chairperson in 1955, Roux organised debates, study groups and lectures; he participated in 1960 in changing the Association's newsletter into a small printed journal, *The Rationalist*. Their policy was non-political as was stated by Roux in

their first issue:

*We are interested in the spread of rational and critical thinking and are mainly concerned with philosophical, religious and moral problems ...*

*We have taken action and made pronouncements from time to time on matters that might be deemed political. But this was only because the Government of the day has done things which in our opinion interfered with freedom of conscience or liberty of thought and expression (Roux, 1970, 220).*

Their non-political stance made no difference to the restrictions imposed on 'named' persons which from December 1962 prevented Roux from editing or contributing to the journal. In September 1964, B.J. Vorster, Minister of Justice issued a statement that all ex-Communists who had not applied for their names to be removed from the 'named' list would be banned from educational institutions. In December 1964, a ban was served on six university lecturers. This prohibited Roux from leaving the magisterial district of Johannesburg, from meeting other banned persons, from visiting townships, publishing, giving educational instruction or attending meetings. Amidst academic protest, Roux left the University in 1965 to live his final year in relative isolation, writing up his research on colour inheritance in *Cosmos* plants, secondary grassland succession and finally *Grass - A Story of Frankenwald* (1969).

#### **3.2.4 The influence of newspaper publishing on his development of accessible English**

Roux's identity as an educator was, I believe, formed in the political arena. For the period of the Second World War, he transferred his passionate activism to the field of basic adult education for Africans. His conviction that part-time adult education could produce an impact must have been partly formed out of the Communist Party

Night School experience: he notes that many of the African leaders came through the school. Yet he is always humorously apologetic about the teaching experience and methods of the educators and critical of the conditions under which classes took place. A more important influence on his project was probably his substantial experience in producing a number of Communist Party newspapers, his observation of what increased readership and his attempts to build political awareness through the mass media.

In 1929, while unemployed in Cape Town, he had taken on the role of editor, journalist, printer and at times distributor of the weekly mouthpiece of the Communist Party, *Umsebenzi*. He learnt typesetting from an 'old socialist' in Wynberg and ran the whole operation from the Party offices in Hanover Street, District Six. Roux ensured that half the paper was written in accessible English while the other half was in the most used vernaculars. Working on *Umsebenzi* with Moses Kotane seems to have strengthened Roux's views on the importance of accessible language for African readers. He wrote of the value of newspapers in adult education to educate the African public on political and social issues.

*... [T]he Bantu newspaper press [is] ... probably the most important factor in Bantu adult education at present, and is likely to remain so for a long time to come. We cannot expect the Government to support any large scale system of adult education at present. That would depend on a miraculous change of heart or a political revolution, both of which are not in the realm of immediate possibility. Those of us who wish to help Bantu progress in literacy will find in the newspaper one of our strongest weapons (Roux, c.1936<sup>4</sup>, 4).*

During all his periods of office on the Communist newspaper, he had worked hard on language accessibility in order to make the newspaper an effective communication channel. He saw the inability of Africans to read newspapers and other publications in English as a major barrier in their struggle for political

empowerment. He had also noted that readership had risen and fallen in relation to the use of vernaculars and accessible English languages during his period of editorship of *Umsebenzi*. Circulation figures had dropped at times when the paper had been dominated by abstruse theoretical language.

Roux's experience of newspaper production was wider than the Party organ: in 1930, Roux and his future wife Winifred started a small monthly magazine called *Indlela Yenkululeko (The Road to Freedom)* which they sent to students at the University of Fort Hare and other centres. In addition, at the height of the war in Ethiopia (1935), Roux embarked on producing a monthly paper, *Umvikele Thebe, (The African Defender)*, which enjoyed a circulation of 10 000 during the period when it appeared that Haile Selassie's army was winning; readership declined, however, as it became clear that the Ethiopians were losing the war.

On the other hand, his introduction to the history of newspaper readership amongst Africans in *Time Longer than Rope ...* carries an additional inference about his construction of the role of the press which is relevant to this analysis; here he notes that newspapers can be seen as '... the chief index of the increasing Westernisation of the black man in South Africa' (Roux, 1964, 348).

Roux's experience with newspaper production furthered his recognition of the potential of mass distributed texts as the means of disseminating 'necessary' information for political liberation and of the importance of using simplified English to achieve this goal. This led to his conceptualisation of accessible texts as an important medium for mass education in the decade of the 1940's.

In 1934-5, Roux had experimented briefly with C.K. Ogden's Basic English, an internationally used limited vocabulary of 850 words, deemed by linguists to have potential as a universal language. The use of verbs was limited to eighteen so-called 'operatives' which resulted in clumsy circumlocutions in its constructions. *The Mayibuye Reader* was in fact written in Basic English. While Roux

acknowledged the defining capacity of 'Basic', he and Kotane believed it to be unsuitable for urban Africans, many of whom had already acquired a broader language base through contact with English-speakers; Roux therefore proceeded to tackle the challenge of developing his own system of accessible English.

From 1937, Roux taught African, coloured and a few white adults at St. Philip's Church in District Six, Cape Town under the auspices of the People's Club. It was here that he developed a set of graded vocabularies in English for new readers by studying the known vocabulary of African learners who attended his classes. This became Easy English which he developed with the intention of facilitating communication and making information or knowledge more readily available to them.

In 1944 Roux's Easy English word list was published as a booklet for writers and public speakers who wished to be understood by 'the greatest number of African readers' (*The Easy English Handbook: A Guide to the Simplification of English for Lecturers, Writers and Teachers*, 1944). Unfortunately for him, Winston Churchill endorsed Basic English in 1944, as a tool for international anti-fascist education in developing countries, and Roux's book *Why Not Easy English?* has remained in manuscript form although parts of it appeared in journals<sup>5</sup>.

### **3.3 Roux's educational project: publications for adult Africans**

Taking forward the ideas of mass dissemination of useful information through accessible texts in English, Roux conceptualised, edited and wrote accessible educational texts for African adults. He was able to do so through a collaborative association with Julian Rollnick, who had worked in adult education for the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg. Julian Rollnick established a publishing house, The African Bookman in 1943 and played a key role in Roux's educational intervention, although The African Bookman was only in operation until 1945 owing to 'sales and distribution difficulties' (Rollnick, 1945, 6). In 1948, the

entire stock was sold to Isaac Pitman and Sons in Johannesburg. A full list of The African Bookman's publications is listed as Appendix A.

The African Bookman aimed to publish literature which was '... suitable in language, content and price for African readers' (Rollnick, 1945, 1). Three main categories of text were identified: those for just-literate adults, texts for the 'African intellectual' (Rollnick, 1945, 4) and Educational Wallsheets developed by Ernest Middlemiss, aimed at African schools, carrying semi-scientific information on such topics as pests and diseases. In addition, various miscellaneous texts such as Roux's *The Cattle of Kumalo* (1943) were published.

This case study focuses on the literature for just-literates for whom Roux and Rollnick produced a series of sixteen accessible readers<sup>6</sup> called *The Sixpenny Library*. Although theirs was a collaborative project, I shall refer to the publications as 'Roux's project and curriculum' for the sake of simplicity; Rollnick's contribution is however acknowledged<sup>7</sup>. According to Rollnick, Roux was responsible for the conception, editorship and approach of *The Sixpenny Library* series.

The series is listed in Appendix B. Within the series, Roux wrote *Colour and Cleverness or What the Black Man Can Do* under the nom de plume Arthur Lee, *The History of Civilisations* as Michael Barnard and *The How and Why of Science* under his own name. These three booklets form a key part of the data for this research and their content is comprehensively described as Appendix C.

The *Sixpenny Library* booklets are between fourteen and twenty pages in length and are written in Easy English. They are 5 000 - 6 000 words long, and are described as '... cheaply produced, but of good materials and characterised by: simple and standardised vocabulary; normal linguistic structure' (Rollnick, 1945, 3). They have a similar series cover made up of a collage of photographs of urban images, dominated by a clock. Line drawings are sparsely included and mostly serve an informational purpose.

It was intended that the publications could both be purchased directly and indirectly by mail order; this is indicated by the reader information on the covers of the booklets. The series of readers was developed for possible combination with a set of four graded language books, the *AB Adult Readers*. The language books were written with Lawrence Lerner and published in 1945; Roux also produced several additional readers on topics of general interest - *James Mabeta Goes to Sea* (1949) and *The Cattle of Kumalo* (1943), which was published in four languages and produced for radio.

It is of interest to note the scope of The African Bookman texts intended for the African intellectual, called the *Pro and Con Pamphlets*. They address:

*... issues which concern the African specifically, issues with a broad socio-political and cultural background; there are African writers wanting to express their thoughts and opinion; there are, we hope, readers anxious to absorb all this. Reflecting this atmosphere Dr J.M. Nhlapo and Mr W.W.T. Mbete are editing a series ... conceived as a frankly controversial treatment of significant contemporary subjects. The editors have worked out an impressively militant and realistic program, from which three titles have resulted ...* (Rollnick, 1945, 4).

The titles listed are: *Nguni and Sotho* by Dr J.M. Nhlapo, *Shall Lobolo Live or Die?* by H.H.T. Manwede and G. Mamabolo and *Africans and their Chiefs* by J.M. Mohapeloa. This series is significant for its inclusion of political topics which are never overtly addressed in *The Sixpenny Library* series.

Although the texts from *The Sixpenny Library* form the core of this research, a number of other simultaneous adult education activities inform Roux's project. First of all, the classes which he was teaching in District Six from 1937 were formative in that they provided an empirical testing ground for his intervention. In addition, between c.1936 and 1946, Roux was involved in writing papers and presenting

talks to peers on basic adult education; of the texts which remain, some are theoretical and others are advocacy texts. The papers were written for conferences, meetings and for distribution amongst fellow-educators and writers of materials. One of them, *Education through Reading*, was published by the Institute for Race Relations in 1942, but most of them remained in manuscript form.

These texts provide an interesting insight into Roux's thinking, not only in relation to the role and purpose of adult education in the 1940's, but also in relation to his attempts to simplify reading materials in English for adult Africans and thereby to make the knowledge, which he considered crucial to improving the quality of their lives, accessible to them.

Roux's thinking about the kind of knowledge needed by the learners shifted across the decade. He remained optimistic and presented ambitious plans for combatting illiteracy, becoming increasingly insistent on the issue of simplified English as the route to achieve development.

Across the decade, his tone in the texts for Africans also suggests an increasing sense of talking to peers and a growing emphasis on routes towards development. The theoretical texts which I have used in this research are briefly summarised in Appendix E. I have no reason to believe that this is a comprehensive list of his writings on adult basic education during this period.

### **3.4 The historical impact of Roux's educational project**

Little has been published concerning Roux's contribution to adult education, and for a number of reasons, the continuity of his vision for adult education was broken.

As part of the adult education movement in South Africa, his achievement and insights in the period of his materials development project (1934-1946) remain

remarkable. The projects he suggested and initiated could have provided a valuable foundation and a source of strategies for basic adult education practice in South Africa in later decades.

One of the reasons for the obscurity of Roux's intervention is the fact that, in the opinion of Julian Rollnick, *The African Bookman* failed as a publishing venture in terms of distribution. For this reason it did not reach its intended mass audience, and therefore did not achieve its intended impact. In his paper of 1945, called 'An Informal Review of the Work of *The African Bookman*', Julian Rollnick discusses the failure of the publishing aspect of the intervention. I believe it is useful to quote it in full. Rollnick writes:

*What has been the reaction of African readers to all this literature? We have to admit, with reluctance and regret, that the demand and sales have not been sufficient to justify the editorial and production policy ... [He speculates on the reasons and states], ... perhaps the drastic and well-acknowledged lack of educational services has limited the reading public to a non-economic figure; perhaps we have not hit upon really interesting subject matter and just the right approach and presentation; perhaps those Africans who can read have not yet acquired the habit of reading, have not yet grasped the functional role of literature in civilised life, and might not absorb this attitude for many years. But probably the one dominating difficulty is that involved in the physical channels of distribution and advertisement; no bookshops cater for this trade; mail-order dispatch implies too great an effort on the part of the reader; newspaper space for advertising is crippling in cost; trading stores are not keen on stocking the literature; agents sell too little to merit the high organisational expenses involved; we ourselves lack the experience and are temperamentally ill able to face the host of promotion and distribution problems with realism and courage (Rollnick, 1945, 6).*

In the period between 1950 and 1990, adult educators in South Africa have had little access to Roux's publications or proposals for adult education for a number of reasons: in 1946 after the War ended, Roux resumed the career for which he had been trained, a plant physiologist. He did so for financial and career reasons and this entailed leaving Cape Town for the Frankenwald Field Research Station, which was part of the Botany Department of the University of the Witwatersrand.

His wife, Winifred, mentions a second factor in *Rebel Pity*, Roux's autobiography which she completed after his death in 1966. In it she writes:

... [H]is [Roux's] tendency to turn from one interest and move on to other matters asserted itself. [His simplified version of English for adult readers], *Easy English* was laid aside, the typescript and all records stored in our large filing cabinet, possibly to be used in the future, more probably to be forgotten (Roux, 1970, 179).

In addition, Roux was politically harassed by the Nationalist Government from 1950 onwards as a 'named' person and this isolation coupled with his premature death in 1966 is as much a factor.

However, the discontinuity of his project was not entire: Daphne Wilson (1988) who worked for the Cape Non-European Night Schools Association (CNENSA) reports that a number of Roux's texts, among them the *AB Adult Readers*, *James Mabeta Goes to Sea*, and *The Cattle of Kumalo*, were in use by the Association until the books went out of print in 1954. She also cites Hay, who notes that Roux's publications were used in 1945 in the Mindola Experiment in adult literacy methods in Northern Rhodesia; in addition they were used by the South African Institute of Race Relations Night Schools in Johannesburg in combination with the Laubach system during the late 1940's.

The CNENSA did not however use *The Sixpenny Library*. Wilson speculates that this was because of the Association's non-political stance (Wilson, 1988, 145), a curious decision in view of the lack of overt political content.

Roux's advocacy of writing in accessible English was also taken up in the decades which followed by political activists such as Baruch Hirson who 'translated' Che Guevara's writings into Easy English. Hirson also recalls<sup>8</sup> that members of the National Committee of Liberation discussed Roux's *Why Not Easy English* in their study circle in the 1960's. Although we may conclude that there are continuities with Roux's project and that more may be identified, they seem to be haphazard and threaded through individual lives and initiatives rather than part of a broad or continuous movement.

Roux's individual contribution as an educator at a number of levels is without question. The impact of his project is however difficult to quantify without a different kind of research. This examination of his educational project does not have this as its goal but rather seeks to provide a case study of an educator and his assumptions about adult learners in the South African adult education context of the 1940's.

In the chapters which follow, the educational project will be analysed in terms of its knowledge selections or curriculum, Roux's utterances about knowledge selection and educational purpose, and the texts themselves.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Apart from being of interest in its own right, Roux's adult education intervention may have relevance for adult education practitioners working in curriculum and materials development in South Africa in the 1990's. His intervention has a cohesion because it was primarily mediated through texts and because of the historical distance we have from it. His intervention was made at a time of change

from state apathy towards adult learners to increased restriction of educational opportunities for African adults.

Roux's was a private intervention, comparable with non-governmental curriculum and materials development, and was imbued with comparable intent - to provide a relevant educational alternative.

That a case study of Edward Roux's intervention has something to offer in terms of understanding contemporary adult basic education is posited in the light of postmodern social theory which offers the opportunity to read Roux's texts as symptomatic of a particular construction of reality or discursive formation.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) Roux uses the term 'labour nigrophilists' to distinguish the small group of trade unionists (including David Ivon Jones, Sidney Bunting and himself) who championed the inclusion of Africans in the unions, a position strongly resisted by the majority of white members of the labour movement until the late 1920's.
- (2) In his biography of Sidney Bunting, Roux explains that the ranks of early socialism in South Africa, which developed through the early Labour Party and the International Socialist League (1914 - 1921), were essentially made up of:

*an aristocracy of [white] labour trying to maintain a remarkably high standard of living in the face of competition from the low-paid masses of Native Africans (Roux, 1993, 73).*

- (3) The association was at that time The Humanist Association, but it changed its name in 1955 to The Rationalist Association in the belief that a humanist association could not legitimately exist in a political climate of repression.

- (4) The text is undated. I assume that it was written in about 1936, for the following reason. In the text, Roux mentions that he had started to publish *Umvikele Thebe (The African Defender)* in the previous year. This newspaper commenced publication in 1935.
- (5) ROUX, E.R. 'Easy English for Africans', *African Studies*, 1942, 261-269.
- (6) In Roux's personal papers held by the Historical and Literary Papers Collection of the William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand is to be found a booklet in the same genre called *The Races of Mankind*. It was published by the Public Affairs Committee Inc., New York. The full listing of Public Affairs pamphlets is included as Appendix F. The listing is taken from the back cover of this pamphlet. The correlation of this pamphlet with the genre of *The Sixpenny Library* is of interest.
- (7) Julian Rollnick declined to give any further personal information for this research (1998), although he was generous in offering his survey of *The African Bookman*, of 1945, and was willing to comment on the accuracy of any related information.
- (8) Personal communication: Baruch Hirson to Lucy Alexander, September 1997, London.

# CHAPTER 4

## ROUX'S CONSTRUCTION OF 'WORTHWHILE' KNOWLEDGE

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### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall map out the selections of knowledge which Roux made for African adults, and present some of his statements about his educational aims and knowledge selections. Through locating discourses within the curriculum formations and exploring their intertextual relation with his statements, I shall analyse some of his assertions, suggest possible sources for these claims and explore the arrangements of power which start to emerge.

### 4.2 What every African should know

In c.1936, eight years before publication of *The Sixpenny Library* began, Roux presented ideas for a syllabus for African adults in a paper titled 'Adult Education for Africans':

*... [If] we are to work out a syllabus for Bantu adult education with the aim of providing Africans with essential knowledge, we should produce something very different from what passes for education in the ordinary Mission school today (Roux, c.1936, 12).*

In contrast to the shortcomings of the mission and mainstream syllabuses, he argues for his own construction of a worthwhile curriculum:

*Education should aim at giving people as much knowledge as possible about the world in which they live. By the utilisation of knowledge men are able to live ... more abundantly (Roux, c.1936, 15).*

Roux sees Africans' access to such knowledge as the means whereby:

*... [T]he existing state of affairs in South Africa [could be immediately altered. He notes that] ... the rulers ... [no doubt realise this and aim to] ... keep Africans as unsophisticated as possible (Roux, c.1936, 15).*

The target group consisted of 'just-literate African adults' (Rollnick, 1945, 1), newly arrived in the city, as is suggested by this description:

*... [A]t the beginning it was realised that the vocabulary used had to be related to the knowledge of the labourer, usually a newcomer to the town, whose inefficient and scanty schooling in English had been to some extent, amplified by verbal contact with his employers and friends (Rollnick, 1945, 1).*

Roux concludes with a description of 'what every African should know'. This section of the text is quoted in full as Appendix D; loosely summarised, he states that every African should know:

- how to read, speak and write English;
- arithmetic for 'everyday matters';
- elementary facts about his body including nutrition, sanitation, cause and prevention of diseases, particularly tuberculosis and syphilis;
- if he is a peasant, prevention of soil erosion, modern ideas about fertilisers, cattle breeding;
- business and trade especially through co-operatives;
- a little elementary science;
- the principles of industrial trade unionism;
- that the 'emancipation of the Bantu is in the last analysis a political question' (Roux, c.1936, 16).

It is notable that there is a fairly strong political intent in the curriculum which Roux constructs in c.1936. Six years later, this element is no longer overtly present in *The Sixpenny Library* series.

### 4.3 The selection of knowledge for *The Sixpenny Library*

In their assertions about the series, Roux and Rollnick set up a quite specific construction of the 'educated man' they have in mind. The person concerned has a good general knowledge: they appear to mean the opposite of narrow specialisation but simultaneously they mean awareness of the broad range of knowledges needed to operate with confidence, and consciousness in a 'sophisticated' Western context. Everyday knowledge, which is relevant to daily living, is also contained within this construct of general knowledge, as is the notion of that knowledge being 'up-to-date'. In short, they want swift transition for their learners to a state of being such as they possibly enjoy. It is interesting to be able to scrutinise the offerings which they chose to put in place to achieve this 'educated man'.

In a pamphlet written prior to *The Sixpenny Library* in 1942, called *Education Through Reading*, Roux had presented the disciplines to the learner, referring to them as the Branches of Knowledge. He countered this however by stating:

*... A man may have a good education in a special way but if he does not have a general knowledge of the world, he is not really educated. A good education gives us a good general knowledge (Roux, 1942, 5)*

In Rollnick's description of the intention and process of knowledge selection for *The Sixpenny Library* series, he reiterates this point, referring to providing 'general knowledge' for the newly literate adult (Rollnick, 1945, 3).

On the inner cover of *The How and Why of Science*, the series is presented thus to the learner:

*These books will enable you to carry on with your general education after leaving school. They are full of up-to-date knowledge, and are written so that anyone who has a few years of schooling will be able to read and understand (Roux, 1945, inner cover).*

Before they embarked upon selecting the specific knowledge to be included in the curriculum, they attempted to conduct research on the preferences of the readers; Rollnick describes the process as follows:

*One rough check on reader tastes was made at the outset: a list of twelve subjects was sent out to about three hundred just-literates, who were asked to 'vote' for the three subjects they liked best. The results showed a definite preference for the somewhat academic 'background' subjects like history, psychology and politics; and against the simple exposition of physical and biological sciences.*

*... Accordingly THE SIXPENNY LIBRARY was tentatively established, ... characterised by ... serious subject matter aimed at opening up the big wide world of culture and ideas, and providing some sort of background knowledge for the unsophisticated just-literate, still gaping at the civilised world (Rollnick, 1945, 2-3).*

Bearing in mind that the choice of twelve subjects offered in the survey may already have limited the learners' options and that their answers would also have been subject to interpretation by the educators, the slippage between these transactions leads one to recognise that the discourses of the more powerful educators are likely to have dominated, regardless of what consultation took place<sup>1</sup>.

If one surveys the range of topics and themes covered by *The Sixpenny Library* there seem to be two broad categories of knowledge which are provided, both based within the humanities, but guided by an underlying social project of providing the 'essential' knowledge needed for life in modern Western society. I have termed them the 'social curriculum' and the 'liberal education' curriculum. This description will focus primarily on the themes selected and the broad categories of knowledge to which they seem to belong; detailed discussion of the contents of the booklets will be retained for the next chapter.

Nine of the booklets are thematically addressed to the social, cultural and political experience of Africans - issues of 'race', religion, education, evolution, political organisation and language are included as well as the achievements of individual Africans and American negroes. Six of these pamphlets present the reader with information about their historical origins, but their primary aim seems to be to contest racism and the colour-bar. America serves as a foil for the restricted lifestyle of black people in South Africa, and a source of positive black role-models. Although they make no reference to the specific political situation in South Africa, in addressing racism and African identity, they have a political intent aimed at strengthening individual identity. I shall term this whole group of pamphlets the social curriculum; it addresses itself primarily to issues of human equality, and attempts to give the readers a broad overview of their place in society, while attempting to debunk racial myths and to build individual confidence. I have noted that the curriculum is not overtly political in that it does not address political history or processes or the unjust nature of the South African political arrangements at the time. Only in *How Men are Governed* which I have placed in the other category, is there one mild mention of the unjust political system in South Africa. In contrast to *The Mayibuye Reader* propaganda has been dropped completely, and a new form of rational debate about human equality emerges.

Yet in combination, the texts within the social curriculum are a significantly political intervention: they constitute a psychological approach to undermining the

politically unjust system. It is to some extent an invitation to the African reader to take control themselves. In current terms it could be said to have something in common with a Black Consciousness intent, although the presentation is that of the rationalist educator.

The pamphlets which fall into this category are as follows:

- *Colour and Cleverness or What the Black Man Can Do* by Arthur Lee (Edward Roux)
- *Intelligence and Education* by J.G. Taylor
- *The Black Man in Africa* by A.J.H. Goodwin
- *Who Are the Coloured People?* by C. Ziervogel
- *Life in America* by Eric Rosenthal
- *Famous American Negroes* by Pauline Podbrey
- *Town and Country*<sup>2</sup> by A.J.H. Goodwin
- *Let's Do It Together* by G.A. Mbeki
- *Bantu Babel: Will the Bantu Languages Live?* by J.M. Nhlapo

The last three booklets listed do not address issues of 'race', but do focus on social and economic issues which may have been deemed to concern adult Africans - urbanisation processes, starting co-operatives and 'rationalisation' of the bantu languages.

The remaining seven booklets from the series draw on mainstream liberal education subjects - history, political history, religious history, science and literature. Here the general knowledge required by the 'educated man' seems to be conceptualised as primarily historical knowledge which would provide contextual understanding of Western culture while acknowledging the diversity of civilizations, cultures and religions of the world. The informing motive would appear to be to offer a selection of important encyclopaedic information providing entry to religions, civilizations, evolution, literature, democratic governance and

science. There is however no sense that entry to the other cultures cited is an option. They are simply presented as part of the world's diversity. In the acknowledgement of multiple civilizations and many religions, there is also a sense of Roux's residual Internationalism and his promotion of tolerance of diversity; this could equally have been influenced by the experience of being a civilian of socialist leanings during the Second World War.

In comparison with the social category, most of the texts provide information about the world rather than local information. There is little which is Africa-specific except for the examples used in *The How and Why of Science*, which are primarily examples of African superstitions and harmful diseases.

The choice of topics seems to be informed by acceptance of the 'received curriculum' insofar as it draws on the disciplines; they are also presented in the lexical genre rather than in the form of argument as are some of the texts in the social category. Here the educators' choices seem to be governed by their own education, guided significantly by the powerful status of the disciplines within that conception of knowledge. The linkage to the disciplines is tempered, however, by Roux's stated commitment to the integration of knowledge in the sense of its not being strictly bounded by one discipline, and its linkage to everyday issues. An example of the latter is to be found in the science text, where scientific principles are presented through the topics of lightning and malaria.

Although this level of knowledge integration would have been unusual in the 1940's, it is akin to the initiative of British socialist academics and writers such as H.G. Wells who sought to make specialist knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, accessible to the layperson.

Through this 'liberal education' category of texts, it is implied that there is a range of information which everyone should know about in order to locate him or herself in the world. The following texts are seen as belonging to this category:

- *The First Men on Earth* by Dr Louis Herrman
- *The History of Civilizations* by Michael Barnard (Edward Roux)
- *How Men are Governed* by Zoe Marsh
- *Religion in Many Lands* by J. D. Mackin
- *The Story of Christianity* by Jane Casson
- *The How and Why of Science* by Edward Roux
- *Great English Books and Writers* by Phillip Segal

In summary, the developers of *The Sixpenny Library* series have as their starting point a universalising assumption about the value of knowledge. They imply that they see knowledge as accumulated information about the world, applied to the learner's everyday needs. Their selection of knowledge for this project appears to have been based on the perceived needs of the learners, although this was inevitably the educators' perceptions of the learners' needs. Although they tacitly acknowledge the disciplines, knowledge is primarily integrated across the disciplines and contextualised in relevant everyday experience.

At the end of the Second World War, a number of shifts are evident in Roux's selection of knowledge. I provide this comparison in the hope that it will help to describe the features of *The Sixpenny Library* more clearly. Roux wrote (but did not publish) a text for African readers, called *Mass Education in Africa* in c.1946<sup>3</sup>. At this point, his construction of 'worthwhile' knowledge seems to have shifted: the vision he presents through his knowledge selection is focused on a broader vision of rural development of society in Africa where modern technology facilitates the forward movement of social progress.

In this publication, Roux again affirms his view of the value of knowledge, acknowledging the importance of the disciplines, here referred to as 'the branches of knowledge', but stating firmly that they are always integrated. 'No branch of knowledge stands by itself' (Roux, c.1946, 17), he writes. He describes two sorts

of knowledge which:

*... mass education must give the people of Africa ... (a) the knowledge of how to do things; and (b) the knowledge of what to think about things (Roux, c.1946, 17).*

In his first category, he includes farming, health, trades (meaning 'How to make things that were not made before in Africa, like bricks, leather, boots ... '), money and business, machines, co-operation and government (Roux, c.1946, 18). He has difficulty in explaining the second category - 'the books which try to teach us what to think' (Roux, c.1946, 18).

His reference point is the Second World War from which the world had just emerged; in this context, he advocates knowledge which '... will help people to face the questions of today ...' (Roux, 1944-6, 18) such as history<sup>4</sup>, science - for its relevance to health, farming, trade and government in Africa. Finally he speaks of literature for reading as a pastime.

The knowledge selected here seems to be focused less on the formation of 'the educated man' , and more towards collective reconstructive action.

Three features emerge from a description of Roux's selection of knowledge: firstly knowledge itself is given high status in its own right although the definition of knowledge itself is organic; the knowledge he selects feeds into a view that remediation is achieved through the acquisition of particular kinds of knowledge; and thirdly, the educator has chosen (in Bernstein's terms) to loosen the boundaries between the 'disciplines' and to connect or integrate knowledge with the learners' everyday experience and concerns.

Further analysis of these features offers the possibility of gaining some insight into institutions which shaped Roux's construction of his curriculum.

#### 4.4 Analysis of Roux's selection of knowledge

In this section, I shall confine my discussion to the broad curriculum which Roux selected for *The Sixpenny Library*. I shall attempt to interpret what truths or metanarratives these selections assert in intertextual relation, and to suggest what sources of power may have legitimated these assertions.

The *Sixpenny Library* curriculum, which I have characterised as being divisible into two categories, the social and liberal education curricula, could be interpreted as an assertion of the formal equality of African learners; paradoxically it could also be seen as remedial, offering the necessary knowledge for African adults to be accorded equality. In this sense it is an assertion of formal equality amongst all human beings, but simultaneously it 'diagnoses' the present state of being of his target group as wanting.

This assertion is based on the fact that Roux, the educator selects categories of knowledge which will inform African adults of the workings of Western urban living e.g. its government, history, religions and pastimes. His choices of liberal knowledge appear to be guided by the structuralist conception of the disciplines, as a neutral and indisputably valued framework for knowledge. Within this paradigm, the educator pieces together a selection of topics from an almost full range of the disciplines as, for example, defined by Hirst in the 1960's:

*These forms of knowledge are scientific, mathematical, religious, moral, historical, sociological and aesthetic* (Eggleston, 1977, 57).

I base this assertion on my categorisation of the 'liberal education curriculum' category of texts:

- Historical and scientific: *The First Men on Earth*
- Historical: *The History of Civilizations*

- Sociological and historical: *How Men are Governed*
- Religious and historical: *Religion in Many Lands*
- Religious and historical: *The Story of Christianity*
- Scientific: *The How and Why of Science*
- Aesthetic: *Great English Books and Writers*

Of Hirst's seven cognitive systems of knowing, mathematical, moral and sociological knowledge is minimal in this section of *The Sixpenny Library* curriculum, and *How Men are Governed* may be regarded as more political history than sociological knowledge. The social curriculum contains mainly sociological, psychological, historical and 'moral' knowledge.

I recognise that Hirst's 1965 systematisation comes long after Roux's c.1940 selection, but their sources have much in common. Eggleston terms this sort of selection the 'received perspective' and speaks of recurring phrases in the literature describing this form of curriculum, notably 'the essential nature of subjects' and the 'fundamental understandings' of these areas of the curriculum (Eggleston, 1977, 53). This suggests that there is an historically developed metanarrative operative within the construction of Roux's liberal education curriculum.

What then does this selection assert? Firstly, the choice of these subjects establishes the existence of a body of knowledge which has intrinsic and important value for all human beings. Also contained within this assertion is that this body of knowledge is selected on the basis of its verifiable truth. Its litany is so well-known that it has seemingly indisputable status. It asserts that this selection of knowledge has value and it affords this knowledge initiatory status in terms of belonging to Western society. What is significant is that this curriculum is so embedded within the Enlightenment discourse of the centrality of the 'Western civilised world', that it edges out alternatives to the point where they are not even visible. An exception is contained in the use of the plural form in two titles in the series - 'civilizations'

and 'religions'; this is in fact the only allusion to cultural alternatives, but as the concepts are safely contained within the historical survey mode, they do not invite contestation.

What else does this combination of liberal education topics assert? In the way in which this part of the curriculum seems to construct the world's knowledge out of diverse segments, it gives the impression of making up a complete whole, and, by extrapolation, of incompleteness should any segment be left out. In this sense it is structuralist in conception, and within its detail it contains further evidence thereof; e.g. a diagram of the branches of the sciences in *The How and Why of Science* suggests further structural layers which constitute the discipline.

Embedded in Roux's reference to the disciplines is the assertion that in formal, liberal egalitarian terms, everyone should have access to equal education. This is one of the issues which African critics were taking up in the 1940's:

*Mr Selope Thema recently criticised very strongly the proposal of the Native Affairs Commission that Natives should receive a special education. Native leaders very rightly resent the suggestion that what is good enough for Europeans is not good enough for them (Roux, c.1936, 12).*

What Roux does not recognise is that the disciplinary offerings which he provides may have within them the seeds of inequality. This was made apparent in terms of the challenge offered by the social theorists of the 1970's who were critical of the structuralist approach to knowledge. Bourdieu, Young and Bernstein's revisionist Marxist perspective regards the disciplinary paradigm as reproductive of the power of those who designed it. This is an interesting assertion in relation to Roux's curriculum, but too deterministic. If one questions whether Roux consciously or unconsciously reproduces Western cultural power through the 'received curriculum', one's answer must be affirmative, but it does not particularly clarify the transaction. When one adds his social curriculum, his move seems to

be to subvert social reproduction. I shall therefore discuss this category, before trying to analyse what institutions might have legitimated his knowledge selections.

His selection of topics for the social category outlined above, which addresses itself to challenging racist assumptions and the colour-bar, is eccentric in terms of curriculum tradition. Topics such as *Colour and Cleverness* or *What the Black Man Can Do* and *Intelligence and Education* are in direct opposition to the political status quo; the other four topic areas could be termed historical or social historical, and seem to have a similar intent. They focus on African identity e.g. *The Black Man in Africa* and *Who Are the Coloured People?*; they attempt to build the reader's confidence e.g. *Life in America* and *Famous American Negroes* and they provide the information needed to challenge racism. This selection of topics and knowledge appears to assert that the new citizens need to recognise their own equality with white Western city dwellers as the first stage towards liberation. The voice is that of Roux, the 'labour nigrophilist' turned educator who is concerned to mitigate the discomfort of adaptation for African migrants to an urban white-dominated racial-capitalist society. Providing a route to this form of personal psychological liberation was perhaps the only means left to Roux to 'rescue' his African reading audience from politically imposed 'outsider' status.

That knowledge brings progress is a discourse which gained its authority from the Enlightenment institution of formal education over two and a half centuries, but the socially transformative aspect of Roux's discourse seems to originate in opposition to the curriculum which was being provided by South African mainstream and missionary educators.

What Roux was challenging in the mainstream curriculum for Africans was that it took little cognisance of their individual humanity or social needs but rather focused on socialising them into a subject position as units of labour or indoctrinating them into the 'sanctions of European civilization' (*Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education* in Kallaway, 1991, 61). In those

intents, one can see that the benefits are conceptualised as accruing to those who employ Africans, and not to the Africans themselves. Roux's social curriculum, though conceptualised on behalf of the learners, aims to benefit learners individually. The institution which initiates this curriculum move is his opposition to the political institution of racial capitalism in South Africa; the curriculum, which Roux conceptualises in opposition, is legitimated by his deeply held belief in human equality.

In intertextual relation with the social category of knowledge, Roux's liberal curriculum may be read as asserting that the second step towards the learners' social 'redemption' is encapsulated by their induction, as prospective citizens, into the culture of Western society. This presumably would, in the educator's mind, ease cultural transition, acculturation or adaptation to the inevitable.

It is interesting to apply the Sociology of Knowledge theorists' critique to the social category of Roux's curriculum. As a member of the dominant class, he is not simply reproducing the power of his class through his choices, but instead trying to give 'outsiders' access to that power, to which he believes they are entitled. In his past role as a Communist Party activist, he might have been seen as an organic intellectual committing class suicide; in the field of education, he does not wish to do so. Instead he *attempts to dig an underground passage giving unseen access to the holy of holies*, to objective knowledge, the source of power. This move has something in common with Shirley Brice Heath's attempt to provide access to the discourses of schooling to underclass children in America in the 1980's using meta-discourse. In Part II of her book *Ways with Words* (1983), she describes her attempts to encourage children to become participant observers of their own discourses; likewise Roux encourages adult Africans to become reflexive of the conditions of their own oppression, and in this way he offers them a level of personal empowerment.

Even Roux's social curriculum could therefore be interpreted as a covert induction to the values of the Enlightenment for the sake of ensuring access to Western culture. This leads one to conclude that even the eccentric social curriculum is modernist in intention, if not in method. This section of the curriculum constitutes psychological preparation of the learner so that they can enjoy the fruits of the Enlightenment as equals. What is significant, however is that the values of the Enlightenment are transmitted here through the retrieval of ethics which had been sacrificed under the political conditions of racial capitalism.

This is, in addition to his confident belief in the power of knowledge, possibly shaped by the same Enlightenment discourses which 'constrained' his own educational history as a scientific pragmatist. His belief in the socially redemptive potential of knowledge stems theoretically from the same source, but it is coloured by a particular political and moral stance. This encompasses a sociological conviction that progress can be attained through correcting social wrongs e.g. health problems, and through systematically ridding society of practices such as racism which are unconscionable in objective terms.

Another aspect of the analysis provided by the Sociology of Knowledge theorists which is fruitful in relation to Roux's curriculum is the issue of integration of knowledge into everyday living. In this sense, Roux is in tune with Bernstein's challenge to the 'collection-coding' of the disciplines: Bernstein argued in the 1970's that strongly bounded disciplinary knowledge alienated underclass learners, produced poor performance and thereby reinforced class stratification. Roux has instinctively understood this as a teacher or a Communist, and is concerned that if knowledge is to benefit the African adult reader, it must be relevant to everyday living.

Roux's attempt to change the fact that his readers are 'a subject people' (Roux, c.1936, 15) constitutes a move against the dominant hegemonic discursive practice of political and educational power of the day. Something, possibly political

or moral conviction, enables Roux to look past South African political and educational institutions of power and to dismiss their curriculum assertions as aberrant.

At the same time, this is the point where Roux is blinded by the metanarrative of the Enlightenment and appears to regard education itself as morally ennobling. The Enlightenment vision starts from a premise of the cultural centrality of the West; its self-perpetuating power has little tolerance for knowledge forms which are not rational, which cannot be empirically tested, which do not fit into its structuralist lexicon.

The postmodern paradigm uproots this totalizing notion, raising concern that such universalising propositions become hegemonic, concealed as they are '... in the cloak of universality, value-neutrality and benevolent progress' (Usher et al, 1997, 6). Roux trusted that the alternate curriculum which he had designed in opposition to local institutions would result in individual liberation and social progress. This was, however, the self-deceiving myth within his construction, as it was fully dependent on the edifice of Western education, culture and the 'received curriculum' of knowledge.

Two examples will suffice to make this point: the first is drawn from Roux and Rollnick's preliminary survey of learner preferences which is quoted above. Rollnick's summary of the educators' conclusions suggests that the nature of the knowledge or subject matter which is needed for African readers will be firmly set within the Western paradigm.

*[The series should include] ... serious subject matter aimed at opening up the big wide world of culture and ideas, and providing some sort of background knowledge for the unsophisticated just-literate, still gaping at the civilised world (Rollnick, 1945, 2-3).*

The term 'civilised world' is here used in the sense of modern, urban Western world. The phrases 'opening up the big wide world of culture', 'unsophisticated' and 'gaping' construct a deficit view of the readers when set against a modern, urban, schooled world. By extrapolation the objective application of knowledge will lead to sophisticating the unsophisticated.

In Roux's c.1936 curriculum description, his reason for the inclusion of science for African learners is similarly chauvinistic:

*[Science] ... will help him to break with superstition and tabu, whether inherited from tribalism or introduced by the white man (Roux, c.1936, 16).*

Here too, the inference is that the curriculum will have a remedial role in relation to 'irrational' cultural beliefs. The conclusion which one might reach is that the Enlightenment construction of knowledge was not inherently humane or tolerant nor did it contain an inherent morality. The point is well made by Zygmunt Bauman (1989), in his analysis of the modernity of the Holocaust, in which he posits that it was the very conditions created by the discourse of Western modernity which facilitated the suspension of moral judgement amongst the perpetrators of genocide. In fact Foucault asserts that 'discourse is a violence that we do to things, or in any case a practice that we impose on them' (Foucault, 1970 in Young, 1981, 67).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have outlined three successive curriculum proposals conceptualised by Roux and I have attempted to identify the metanarrative which gives form to the selections he makes. In his assertions about the educational process, he and his colleague, Julian Rollnick seem to have as their goal the development of 'the educated man', one who is at ease in the modern Western world, be it rural or urban. To this end they advocate the value of a general

knowledge of the world which includes a selection of the disciplinary curriculum, integrated with everyday applications, and not arbitrarily bounded for the sake of disciplinary purity. There is a sense that they are equipping travellers with all the necessary information for a trip, including a positive sense of themselves, and a recognition of their own potential.

The social curriculum is in tune with the values of Roux the socialist or humanist egalitarian, and his belief in all peoples' potential. It stands with the best ideals of the Enlightenment which conceptualised progressive improvement of all of humanity, rather than privileging some. To address the disadvantaging of some parts of society, the Enlightenment thinkers had actually developed Sociology and in this sense the social category of Roux's curriculum stands firmly within a Modernist conceptualisation of progressive enlightenment. In this sense Roux is in tune with the spirit of the Enlightenment and out of step with South African colonial and racial capitalist versions of it.

What *The Sixpenny Library* curriculum confirms is Roux's reverence for the essential value of knowledge, and although his particular selection is honed for the needs of his audience, the liberal category has much in common with the Enlightenment arrangement of knowledge within the disciplines. Although Roux has loosened the boundaries between them and between them and everyday life, in intertextual association, the authority of the disciplines remains intact.

It was suggested that the inclusion of a substantial liberal education offering may have been in the service of formal equality. This suggests that the integration of Africans into Western society was seen as inevitable. To effect this integration comfortably, everyone would need and should have access to its valued aspects. Yet what the educator does not perceive is the inherent destructive force or 'violence', as Foucault calls it, that the unitary position and totalising power of Western culture inflicts upon the receivers.

The 'violence' which this metanarrative commits to those who subject others to it (the educator for example through his curriculum), is that the metanarrative blinds the educator to its coercive power and allows the educator to feel that he is constructing a route to liberation: the curriculum and the sanctions it embodies are held out as a means towards progress, as the norm towards which humanity is moving. Its power is apparent and it stimulates desire for access to that power.

The violence which it commits towards those who are subject to the metanarrative, is that it presents a totalizing vision which is laden with opportunities for desire - such as equality, identity, dignity, humanity, access and the powerful lure of knowledge. But it masks the 'risk' entailed in its adoption - one aspect of which may be the risk to the outsider's cultural discourse; another may be the persistence of the racial formations of power in South Africa. As Bauman notes there is no ethical element to the grand narrative of modernity.

*The civilizing process is, among other things, a process of divesting the use and deployment of violence from moral calculus, and of emancipating the desiderata of rationality from interference of ethical norms or moral inhibitions (Bauman, 1989, 28).*

This chapter provides some preliminary findings within the analysis of Roux's intervention. Thus far, I have only considered *The Sixpenny Library* curriculum which I categorised into a liberal and a social component for the sake of building the argument. The metanarrative within which both aspects of this curriculum is embedded is that of the Enlightenment, which erects 'the civilizing mission' of Western culture and its lexicon of rational disciplinary knowledge as central to human progress and social improvement.

In the next chapter, I shall analyse selected texts from *The Sixpenny Library* series and Roux's theoretical writings in intertextual relation with each other in order to identify the range of discourse repertoires which underpin the Enlightenment metanarrative.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) This transaction represents one of the interestingly contradictory processes which educators often embark upon: they solicit learners' views about what they want when the overall goal has already been determined. The contradictions lie not only in the fact that there is most likely a predetermined curriculum, but also that the learner is put into a position of second-guessing what the educator intends when he cannot know what is intended for his or her 'transformation'. This is not to say that it is not a worthwhile process, but to signal that the learner's lack of power in the transaction must be recognised, that the educator needs to be cautious about the success of such consultation and the resultant data should be viewed with reservations. Rollnick is characteristically humble about their findings, and notes that '... perhaps we have not as yet hit upon really interesting subject matter ...' (Rollnick, 1945, 5).
- (2) Within the series, *Town and Country* is the one pamphlet which patronises the readers and seems to assume their complete unfamiliarity with living under urban conditions.
- (3) In this undated manuscript, reference is made to the Second World War being in its sixth year. This is crossed out and replaced by '... has at last come to an end'. I therefore assume that the pamphlet was started in 1944/5 and completed in 1946.
- (4) By 1935 Roux was already working on a history of the black people of South Africa; parts were published first in the Communist Party newspaper he edited, then in *Trek* magazine in the early 1940's, and later (in 1948) these articles became the basis for *Time Longer than Rope*. In the Preface to the latter he wrote: 'Essential background [for political education for Africans in the Communist movement] would be some knowledge of their own history' (Roux, 1978, VII). Political history also however plays a minor role in *The Sixpenny Library* series.

# CHAPTER 5

## ANALYSIS OF THE SIXPENNY LIBRARY TEXTS

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### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall introduce the metanarrative within which Roux's intervention appears to me to be embedded. Following this, I shall discuss four discourse repertoires which led me to this conclusion. I have structured the chapter using five sub-sections; the first addresses the metanarrative which is followed by four sub-sections each focusing on one of these discourses:

- I. All 'men' are equal;
- II. The primacy of reason;
- III. Knowledge is the key to freedom and better living;
- IV. *English is the doorway to the house of education and knowledge* (Roux, c.1946, 8).

### 5.2 The metanarrative

The discourses which I have located within Roux's intervention are symptomatic of a set of rules of formation, which could be termed a worldview, except that this term does not portray the legislative force which is contained in the postmodern concept 'metanarrative'.

Through analysis of Roux's curriculum in Chapter 4 and of his texts, I have concluded that the organising metanarrative in Roux's educational intervention is the centrality of modern Western culture which is attainable through Western-style education. Roux implies that it is through gaining access to rational, scientific knowledge that the individual African adult can free himself. In his project he

conflates the benefits of education with Western cultural norms. The potential uprooting of the African learners' beliefs is justified by the discourse of 'emancipation' attributed to education within the Western cultural model.

Within the metanarrative, the logical route to achieve this change quickly is presented as the acquisition of the skills of reading in English and thereby gaining access to the world of knowledge. Only thus may Africans also have access to 'the big wide world' (Rollnick, 1945, 3) of expanding horizons and participate in rational discourse: thus their lives will be transformed by the resultant truth, justice and emancipation.

Essentially Roux's world view is a version of the modernist metanarrative of orderly evolutionary and progressive improvement leading towards the ideal state of enlightenment in society, cast in Western cultural terms. In Roux's construction, enlightenment seems to encompass social benefits such as health, freedom from poverty, individual self-confidence, lawfulness and justice for all. Concomitantly this suggests freedom from all that is irrational, unlawful and unscientific.

The postmodern analytical framework recognises that when we take these grand narratives at face value, they become:

*... monolithic, and hegemonic, totalising power-plays concealed in the cloak of universality, value-neutrality and benevolent progress (Usher et al, 1997, 6).*

This is the focal issue in the context of adult education and is the route towards an analysis of the distribution of power within the educational transaction. I shall now outline and discuss the four discourse repertoires which lead me to propose that Roux's world view is fundamentally modernist.

### 5.3 Discourse I - All 'men' are equal

The foundational discourse from which the metanarrative starts - *All 'men' are equal* - is not unexpected in terms of Roux's roots in the labour movement and commitment to non-racist principles. This belief in equality is evident in Roux's first adult education text, *The Mayibuye Reader* of 1934. In it the issue of racism is used to engender loyalty to the Communist movement and to the workerist cause. Internationalism is mentioned more than once in the reader, consolidating his position on equality. In a lesson called 'The Nations of the Earth' Roux writes:

*We who are Communists do not worry about the colour of a man's skin, nor do we care to what race he belongs. All that we want to know is whether a man is a worker or whether he is a boss (Roux, 1934, 13).*

Ten years later, writing as Arthur Lee, Roux introduced this egalitarian discourse in the first text of *The Sixpenny Library* series, *Colour and Cleverness or What the Black Man Can Do* (1944) thus.

*There is a belief in South Africa, and in some other parts of the world, that people whose skins are black or brown in colour are not as clever as people with white skins ... But it has now become clear, to those who have gone into this question, that this old belief has not been shown to be true; it has not been shown that one race is really better than another, or that the colour of a man's skin has anything to do with his cleverness (Lee, 1944, 3).*

As the first of the booklets, it seems to introduce the defining discourse of the series. In it, Roux problematises a number of racist arguments as if answering some invisible detractor, and provides the reader, a potential victim of racism, with a series of logical counter-arguments. The content of the three booklets written by Roux is described in Appendix C.

The discourse of equality resurfaces throughout the series: it is also present in the descriptions of role models - Africans and African Americans who have succeeded in the terms of 'Western civilized' society. For example, in Pauline Podbrey's *Famous American Negroes of 1944*, she presents short accounts of the achievements of Booker T. Washington, educationist, George Washington Carver, agricultural scientist and many others. The message is that everyone can succeed, given the opportunity. Roux presents a similar line-up of South African achievers in *Colour and Cleverness ...* including Tiyo Soga, Walter Rubusana, Sol Plaatje and Clements Kadalie.

Unqualified human equality as a principle has been rare in South African politics. Roux's conviction in the principle implies a positive expectation of the capacity of African people gained through experience.

The principle as expressed in *Colour and Cleverness...*, however, takes no account of the political and economic situation of African migrant workers and the comparably disempowered position in which they will experience this equality. The discourse masks these realities and suggests that formal equality, plus self-esteem might be sufficient to move Africans to an equal footing with white South Africans.

Having moved away from revolutionary politics to the position of rationalist, humanist educator, Roux's discourse is misleadingly simple. In this sense the discourse conceals the realities of the South African racial capitalist hegemony; it promises too much.

Equality is again the topic of J.G. Taylor's *Intelligence and Education*, but this time, some reference is made to the chances that people get to exercise their equality. The fact that equal education involves cultural coercion is not however recognised.

*They [the psychologists] believe that the differences in the marks which the different peoples get in intelligence tests are not caused by intelligence but by the sort of education they get, their way of living, and the chances which they are given of getting on in the world (Taylor, 1944, 13).*

Here Taylor does acknowledge that 'the chances [people] are given of getting on in the world' affects the way in which equality works for them.

Part of Roux's construct of equality is the entitlement of all citizens to equal access to the benefits of society such as scientific knowledge. The movement for broad access to knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, which is usually held by the more powerful sectors of society, had been significant amongst socialist sympathisers in Britain and Russia for decades. *The Sixpenny Library* belongs to a genre of education publication which appears to have its roots in this tradition. H.G. Wells and Lancelot Hogben offer precedents. From Roux's autobiography and from a discussion with Julian Rollnick<sup>1</sup>, it is apparent that Roux identified with their educational vision - a moral obligation to give the broad populace access to simplified specialist knowledge. Science, mathematics, botany, history and a broad range of sociological topics were made accessible through numerous publications in the 1920's and 1930's.

Underpinning Hogben's introductory 'Author's Confessions' in *Science for the Citizen* is the construct of the 'intelligent adult' who should in his opinion have knowledge of science because it affects daily living; the same adult, he asserts, should be aware of the 'new, destructive powers of science misapplied' (Hogben, 1938, 9). Hogben concludes that:

*This nonsense that the scientific worker has no time to be a socially responsible adult, exercising his social responsibilities as a citizen, is due to be debunked (Hogben, 1938, 11).*

Hogben's position on accessible knowledge seems significant in analysing Roux's construction of education. He was personally known to and admired by Roux. Rollnick noted that they had been closely associated in the mid-1920's, and that Hogben would have provided '... a living approach for Roux to emulate' (Rollnick, 1989).

The conceptualisation of the learners as fellow citizens is also a significant concept within Roux's project implying a shared position, where one party may have more knowledge than the other, but where this would not be seen as a deficiency in human or moral terms. This relationship will be explored in Chapter 6 in terms of the assumptions which Roux made about power within the educational transaction.

In terms of equality and the concept of 'civilization', the egalitarian conception of the learners as fellow citizens causes Roux certain difficulties in *The History of Civilizations* which he wrote under the *nom de plume* Michael Barnard. Having defined civilization in Western modernist terms, as a point in the development of a people when they settle, 'discover' writing and live in cities, Roux is faced with a number of conundrums. They arise from some 'races' not having achieved equally in terms of this culturally singular definition of civilization.

'Why was no civilization started by the black people of Africa?' (Barnard, 1944, 7) he asks and why have some farming communities not become civilized? He again attempts to answer these questions in semi-scientific terms: those who become civilized do so in reaction to crisis (Barnard, 1944, 7). However, the Africans of Central Africa contradict this theory by adapting to the 'dangers of the forest' (Barnard, 1944, 8) rather than building towns or 'discovering writing'. Although Roux inserts the positive example of Zimbabwean civilization, he describes it as 'still-born' through factors unknown. This is one argument which Roux does not resolve; in closure he asserts his 'redemptive' equality thesis by asserting that such groups which did not develop civilizations were not uniquely African communities; he cites the Laplanders in Europe who also '... did not manage to

make a civilization' and concludes that:

*As far as is known civilization has nothing to do with the colour of a man's skin (Barnard, 1944, 7).*

Perhaps he believed that equilibrium had been restored, but having framed the argument within a unitary, positivist definition of civilization (in terms of Western urban norms), the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved. The very concept 'civilization' in the singular, implies the 'otherness' and inferiority of all who do not fit the category. His use of the plural form is his attempt to defuse this problem. However, in that he implies that the attributes of Western, modern society provide a universally positive norm, he cannot avoid the inference that all that falls outside of it is inferior. He closes with a weakly affirming statement:

*Perhaps one day a new civilization may be started by the black people of Africa. Who can say? (Roux, 1944, 15).*

The second set of discourse repertoires which I shall discuss pivot on rationality and build intertextually on the typology of equality.

#### **5.4 Discourse II - The primacy of reason**

In Roux's educational intervention, rational deduction and the primacy of reason is the subject, voice and the literary genre of the text i.e. argument. Although he speaks as a rational, scientific educator, in the role of one providing advice and information, he uses the collective voice 'we' throughout. In so-doing, he slips ambiguously between figurative community with the learner and association with the community of scholars. An example of the first stance is:

*If we look round at all the peoples of the earth we find that they are of different colours ... [my emphasis in all quotes] (Lee, 1944, 3) or*

*This is a lesson we must learn in Africa. Most African children do not get [enough] meat, milk ... (Lee, 1944, 8).*

An example of the second stance is:

*We have explained that there is no truth in the idea that some races are 'better' or 'higher' than others (Lee, 1944, 9).*

Occasionally, there are references to higher authorities, e.g. '... so **learned people** do not talk very much nowadays about the black man having a smaller brain ...' (Lee, 1944, 6). The use of the collective voice is an interestingly ambiguous practice. Roux, the educator, remains an insider of the dominant discourse but periodically draws the learners into this community, suggesting once again that it is incontrovertible that all rational adults would agree.

A rational orientation is inherent in the world view of the Enlightenment period or Age of Reason. Philosophical thought had deemed reason and rationality to be the highest values, capable of releasing humanity from barbarism and all the emotive metaphorical baggage of 'darkness'. The weight of philosophical argument had accumulated since the early 18th century and had significant impact in the hands of educators who were then schooled into believing that scientific process, based on empirical methods and experimentation, was the route to all valuable human knowledge.

Significantly, Roux's reverence for the scientific way of doing things targets traditional 'superstitious' cultural practices of peoples who were not fully acculturated into Western urban social norms. In all three of the texts Roux wrote, he uses the *modus operandi* of the science teacher - demonstrating proof through exemplification, empirical data or failing that, quotation of a respected authority.

In *Colour and Cleverness...*, Roux sets out the racist assertions of the dominant group as follows:

- ... *people whose skins are black or brown in colour are not as clever as the people with white skins ...;*
- ... *black people belong to a nation ... which cannot become as clever as the white nation (or race) because there is something IN the white man which makes him cleverer than the black man;*
- ... *that certain races are truly better than other races ...;*
- ... *that certain races can be civilised and other races cannot ...* (Roux, 1944, 1).

Using empirical logic, he argues that these assertions are irrational and illogical: his first focus is on a common racist construct - that black people are lower on the evolutionary scale, 'closer to the apes' (Lee, 1944, 2); with careful factual arguments he refutes this notion, asserting that white people more closely resemble apes in their lip thickness and hairiness than Africans and Asians. In furnishing these detailed rational arguments to refute insulting racist claims, one feels that Roux, the educator is taking up a protective position as a parent might do when his child has been bullied at school. He provides a rational way of reacting to insult should it happen again. Simultaneously, there is an assumption that even the detractors are capable of hearing rational argument. This confirms his depth of belief in the possibility of liberation from racism through rational transaction.

In this text, Roux does not resort to propaganda or appeal to emotions. He avoids judgement in the course of his argument except in his conclusion, where he is not beyond dismissing the irrationality of others as follows:

*[T]he idea that people of colour are 'lower', and so must be treated worse than other people, is one which can only be held by those who are foolish or who close their eyes to the truth* (Lee, 1944, 14).

The African adult reader (who in this instance is outside the discourse), would probably have found this argument very persuasive. He would hardly have felt inclined to question the argument through which such liberatory assertions are made. The power of discourse is encapsulated by this transaction. From inside the discourse, the outsider is absolved from inferiority. The outsider would therefore surely conclude that the claims made within the discourse are true. However, in the course of this transaction, he might well be convinced that the discourse of rational argument as a method is liberatory and leads to truth.

Postmodern theorists argue that human beings are so embedded within discourse that they do not perceive the assumptions and power positions which they are thereby afforded or to which they are subjected. James Gee's theory of 'primary and secondary discourses' has relevance here. If one takes liberties with Gee's theory, transferring it from its subtle differentiation of family and schooled discourse to a cultural context of much deeper differentiation, the resultant tension involved in such transitions is revealed.

The learners in Roux's transaction are required to operate in their secondary cultural discourse which is substantially divorced from their primary cultural discourse. It is a discourse which is differentiated in language and epistemology. When Roux offers the readers explanations of their racialised oppression through and in terms of their secondary discourse (English-language educational offerings presented through rational argument), they are placed in a state of tension between their 'primary' and a highly differentiated alternative discourse. This may require rejection of the primary cultural discourse and the simultaneous disempowerment of the learner.

In the analysis above, Roux, the educator, exemplifies Gee's analysis of the conditions for enabling transition between discourses in literacy acquisition: the learner is placed in a state of critical reflexivity in order to prise himself loose from his or her primary cultural discourse. Roux has provided a critical discourse of the racist construction of Africans. Through intertextual connection, scientific ways of

doing things are contrasted with Africans' superstitious understandings of the world. The African learner is offered the opportunity to assert his equality, but simultaneously, he is required to abandon or dislocate from his own cultural context. One cannot however ignore the learners' potential for 'agonistic response'<sup>2</sup>. As Foucault suggests, imposition or subjectification of a learner does not necessarily mean unquestioning adoption of the discourse or automatic subjectivity; it may bring forth a dual response of adoption and resistance, or some creative adaptation of the discourse.

The call to resist racism in Roux's texts appears to be primarily aimed at challenging the self-image into which African adults may have been acculturated or which may have been imposed on them; but the rationality of his argument carries another kind of message. The discourse suggests that a rational understanding of unjust and irrational prejudice and rightful equality is a critical factor in the empowerment and liberation of adult African men in South Africa. There is however an anomaly contained in the way Roux deals with the issue of racial discrimination in South Africa in the 1940's. In view of his past experience the choice to suppress the arguments of political economy in *The Sixpenny Library* is as significant as would be its inclusion<sup>3</sup>.

By excluding political or economic analysis from his explanation of racism, Roux attributes substantial power to rational argument and self-knowledge in the process of achieving emancipation. This leads one to ask - what was the nature of the oppression from which Roux sought to free his readers? Was it solely the internalised sense of inferiority assumed to be experienced by Africans? Could we infer that he regarded freedom from internalised racism as the necessary precondition for political liberation? Or did he regard freedom from internalised racism through rational argument as liberation itself?

In all the texts, Roux speaks from the perspective of the educated insider. He holds more cultural capital because he operates from inside the power-base of the alternative discourse, the master-narrative of rationalism. Simply by providing an

educational intervention, the power arrangements are differentiated in his favour.

This is most obvious in *The How and Why of Science*, where the subject matter is most remote from the readers. As was discussed in Chapter 4, this is one of the few booklets bounded by the traditional construct of the disciplines, and the content is therefore, in Bernstein's terms potentially alienating because it is more remote from the culture of the learners. The primacy of the rational solution coupled with the distinction between insider and outsider becomes even more pronounced. In other words, the identification of weaknesses within the learners' primary discourse becomes a lever with which to shift them towards the alternative discourse. Repeatedly the writer enunciates the polarity between the scientific versus the 'not-scientific way of doing things' (Roux, 1945, 3); the 'not-scientific' is relegated to outsider status. For example Roux disabuses his readers of the 'not-scientific' way of doing things by using the example of the lightning conductor. The people of Pondoland are described as 'making a big mistake' or 'wasting [their] money' (Roux, 1945, 3) by resorting to medicines such as their 'witchdoctors' provide (Roux, 1945, 3).

After outlining the process of scientific testing of the lightning conductor and emphasising the importance of empirical testing (thereby in his own terms proving its truth) Roux writes:

*How different it is with the witchdoctors. Everyone has his own special medicines for this or that.*

*He will not tell others how he made his medicines. Everything is kept secret. So it is very hard to say if his medicines are any good or not. Very often they are quite useless (Roux, 1945, 5).*

The primacy of science would be difficult to contest in relation to Roux's presentation of the irrational explanations given by 'witchdoctors' when their medicines fail. Although lightning and malaria are the topics of the pamphlet, the

discursive framework is the contraposition of two belief systems. In the same text Roux offers his readers an idealised view of an ordered scientific universe. So rational it is that:

*[a] ... true scientist is always willing to give up a theory if he finds that it is wrong. [At the same time, such knowledge is presented as evolutionary.] Old theories die and new theories come, but knowledge keeps on growing (Roux, 1945, 11).*

This representation of the evolutionary development of knowledge is recognisably part of the grand Enlightenment narrative of progress through knowledge. Reason is not only the foundation stone of equality in this construction of enlightened Western civilization; it is fundamental to education, because it is the guiding criterion for valuing knowledge in this discourse. These discourse repertoires of scientificity, rationality and 'worthwhile' knowledge are interwoven and difficult to discuss in isolation. In the next section I shall try to separate some of the threads within Roux's educational discourse.

### **5.5 Discourse III - Knowledge is the key to freedom and better living**

Roux wrote extensively in the 1930's and 1940's about education, specifically adult education for Africans. His claims for education and his assertions about what counts as 'worthwhile' knowledge are numerous and are made across the span of a decade or more. I shall therefore identify only some of the discourses relevant to education and knowledge.

With the phrase 'On grounds of humanity and justice ...' (Roux, c.1945, 2) Roux erects two powerful standards for the entitlement of every human being to education. Fundamental entitlement to education is inherent in his position on equality. In this assertion is the implication that everyone is capable of learning.

An early indicator of his position on educational potential is the motto of the short-lived monthly newspaper *Umvikele Thebe - The African Defender* which he started publishing at the height of Italy's invasion of Abyssinia (1935 - May 1936). The motto is 'Paper for Bantu Education and Development - There is not knowledge which white men have which black men cannot have as well' (Bird, 1980 in Kallaway, 1984, 197).

His argument for equal access to education reveals the assumption that African people are not formally unequal, but that their lives are devalued by lack of education in areas essential to all. In a paper called *Adult Education for Africans* (c.1936) Roux makes an assertion to this effect.

*The Bantu are a subject people and a poor people. Their subjugation and poverty are made possible by the fact that they do not have certain necessary knowledge. Let us European friends of the Bantu, who usually have had greater opportunities of learning try to give to the Bantu as much knowledge as we can. If the Bantu were as sophisticated<sup>d</sup> as we are, they would be in a position immediately to alter the existing state of affairs in South Africa* (Roux, c.1936, 15).

Spurred on by the British Government's 1943 report on mass education in Africa, Roux wrote his text for African readers which was never published, called *Mass Education in Africa*. In it he constructs the need for education as the fundamental element for the transformation of African poverty.

*The chief reason [Africa] is poor is that the ordinary people, the masses, are not educated* (Roux, c.1946, 23).

In order to gain such knowledge, Roux advocates reading in English, with a clearly defined instrumental purpose - as a means to gain knowledge.

*We must remember that language is not an end in itself. It is only a way to*

*an end. The idea of mass education is to give people knowledge which will help them to grow more food, make more money, build better houses, keep healthy, understand machinery, know what is happening in the world ...*  
(Roux, c.1946, 11).

Roux's purpose for education is one of the more volatile aspects of the discourse. It is however driven by the fundamental ingredient of the Enlightenment vision - access to knowledge. This is in contrast to his purpose as a Communist Party Night School educator where he had sought to develop leadership and to give access to the political and economic arguments of Marxism. According to Adrienne Bird, the Communist Night School educators:

*... distanced themselves absolutely from the formal channels of education. Their aim was to train leaders and to allow as many as possible to understand the structure that oppressed them* (Bird, 1980 in Kallaway, 1984, 198).

In her overview of the history of adult education in South Africa, Bird interprets the shift made by the liberal adult education initiatives started in the 1930's as follows:

*Learners were no longer viewed as potential leaders but as individuals needing skills with which to operate within the given social structure. A more formal school-type education was taught to more adequately equip learners for employment* (Bird, 1980 in Kallaway, 1984, 198).

Bird regards Roux as '... virtually the founding figure of the liberal tradition' (Bird, in Kallaway, 1984, 198) which is of interest but questionable, depending on one's construction of the liberal tradition. After Roux left the Communist Party, it is likely that his conceptualisation of the role of education would have shifted - from serving Party needs to serving individual needs. Yet to see his project, as Bird does, in terms of formal school-type education, or liberal education in the sense of education for its own sake or preparation for employment, under-estimates the

distinctness of Roux's project. Though his construction of education after 1936 was directed at individual learners, it was intended to '... help [them] in [their] daily lives' (Roux, 1942, 3). He frames his project in terms of preparing African migrant workers to fit into or to bring change to 'modern' urban or productive rural society.

This is not a construction of liberal education as asserted by Bird, but of a social reconstruction model of education. Roux's concept of the educator is of one who provides the knowledge necessary for social balance and liberation to be achieved. His construction pays little attention, however, to methodological choices, or to the acquisition and reception of such knowledge.

*If mass education will enable Africans to read books and if they are able to get all the books they want, then the whole world of knowledge will open up to them. They will then be able to judge for themselves what is real education and what is not (Roux, c.1946, 5).*

Roux's construction of the purpose of education shifts across the decade and in relation to its audience. It is initially focused on building African revolutionary leadership, then moves from individual empowerment to productive national development. The claims he makes also vary according to the intended reader of the texts. For fellow educators or the state, he seems to choose the discourse of economic empowerment. To learners, he speaks a vaguer, more visionary language.

*Last, but not least, we may say that education will help a nation to go forward to freedom and happiness (Roux, 1942, 4).*

Within his learner-discourse, there is also a strong ethos of mutual assistance and urgency. In *Mass Education in Africa* he guides the learners themselves towards an 'each one teach one' learning strategy in order to spread the necessary knowledge for Africa's development.

*People who can read and who can get the right sorts of books are able to educate themselves. So the grown up, even though he has never had a chance of going to school, will be able to play his part in making the big changes which are needed in Africa (Roux, c.1946, 3).*

After 1945, Roux's position seems to reflect the context of post-war reconstruction expressing social and economic development arguments more consistently. For example, he quotes the government Social and Economic Planning Council in a paper called *Our Illiterate Millions*. The resonances with reconstruction and development discourses in the late 1990's in South Africa are notable.

*The Union is doomed to ... losing competitive struggle against the mentally-developed labour of the Western countries, against the awakening Eastern races and even against other parts of Africa unless the educational facilities for non-Europeans are improved (Roux, c.1945, 2)<sup>5</sup>.*

In the postwar period, Roux still saw the purpose of education as development and reconstruction, but in the terms of the Western, modern, industrial, economics-driven model. Without recourse to political action, he revised his strategy for social emancipation, and adopted the vision that national economic development would facilitate individual liberation.

Within the discourse of education and knowledge, Roux constructs the desires of his learners as different from his own. In examining this construct, the differentiation of power between educator and learner is partly revealed. In *Adult Education for Africans* (c.1936), Roux advocates the development of publications for Africans, and presents his construction of what would interest African readers.

*A few good stories in simple English and vernacular written from the Bantu point of view, dealing with the things which are nearest to the hearts of the people - cows, land, the colour bar, police persecution, beer, etc. will do much to make Africans interested in reading ... Once Africans acquire the*

*reading habit the whole field of English literature will be open to them (Roux, c.1936, 10).*

This suggests that Roux believed that adults would first wish to deal with the negative and oppressive aspects of their lives, and only thereafter to enjoy what he seems also to construct as a social benefit - English literature.

In the same paper, Roux makes a bid for introducing Junior Certificate classes in the night schools, and provides reasons for this proposal amongst which are the desires of the learners. He argues the need to extend education beyond the basics of literacy because learners themselves desire it; but his own view is that Junior Certificate classes should actually offer them 'a real education' unlike that which in his opinion, mainstream education offered white school-goers at the time. In his representation of African learners' desires, Roux exhibits frustration. He writes:

*There is a great craving for education among all sections of Africans in town and country. But this craving for Education is not necessarily a craving for knowledge. To the illiterate and semi-literate to be educated means to have a knowledge of English, to be able to read, write and calculate. This indicates a very healthy attitude towards education. But among the more educated Africans those who have reached or passed standard VI, we find a much less healthy attitude. These people in large measure suffer from the examination fetish. They want to pass examinations: they are not so keen on knowledge for its own sake. In general they are not interested in general knowledge classes, they are not interested in books as such, and they will not be bothered with any form of study which does not offer the prospect of an examination. This is a generalisation based on very considerable experience. I have conducted night classes for Africans on and off since 1925 and have been interviewed by hundreds of aspiring young Africans who wanted education. The interviews have usually resulted in our mutual disappointment. I have been unable to provide what they wanted, viz. a full course based on the matriculation or Junior Certificate syllabus ... Instead*

*I have offered them general knowledge classes in English reading. But they were not interested. For them education does not mean the acquisition of knowledge but of status ... These pathological symptoms will only disappear when education becomes general and rational ... (Roux, c.1936, 12-15).*

This statement which is quoted in full in the endnotes<sup>5</sup> contains some strange anomalies. Firstly Roux advocates topics for reading which are entirely mainstream in their description - history, geography etc; secondly he represents the desire for accredited study (which in terms of the dominant discourse is the route to power), as unsophisticated, misguided and selfish. Although the Junior Certificate operates from within the edifice of the Western model of education, Roux does not regard these educational norms as worth reproducing. His own curriculum operates at the peripheries of these norms, overlapping with some, and diverging from others. He seeks to provide entry to Western society via social, environmental and cultural development, but this entry is framed according to what he perceives as the most urgent needs of the learners. Roux's assertion of the suitability of his own curriculum over that of the Junior Certificate parallels Bernstein's assertion of integrated versus collection-coded knowledge for working class learners; but in this context it is counter to the learners' choice.

The argument also represents the inevitable tension of the educator constructing the subjectivity of adult learners without cognisance of their potential for agency. Roux's assumptions about his learners are laid bare: he is disappointed in what he perceives as the self-serving and misdirected aspirations of Junior Certificate level African adult learners. It is at this point that the visionary curriculum, the call to education ruptures to reveal the educator unwilling to acknowledge the greater power of the mainstream discourse, possibly because of his lasting attachment to the socialist modernist dream of unselfishness by all (Tester, 1992). He is frustrated by the desires of the learners, because he believes he knows what the learners need better than they do.

Through these discourse repertoires, a picture starts to form of what Roux regarded as authentic and worthwhile for adults to learn. What signifies an educated person is captured in this extract from *Education through Reading*:

... [If] you have knowledge you are educated. [A] really educated man is one who has a good general knowledge of the world in which we live. If you are a farmer and do not use manure on your land you are not educated. If your child is sick and you pay a witch-doctor to chase away a bad 'spirit' and do not make use of hospitals and doctors, then you are not educated. If you never read a newspaper or a book, if you have no knowledge of what is happening in the world, then you are not educated (Roux, 1942, 4).

This extract reveals two elements of Roux's thinking - education is internalised knowledge which the individual can act upon and secondly, Western knowledge is true knowledge and affords one the status of being 'educated'. Roux's claim for his construction of adult education is therefore that it gives access to the power of knowledge, for urban and rural living. He speaks of education dualistically, providing knowledge for everyday contexts as well as book knowledge.

Yet his position on education is undeveloped in terms of the culture and desires of the learners whom he addresses; and because his motives are bound by the philosophical parameters of his time, he appears to see no tension in the fact that the education he advocates requires the abandonment of cultural practices and the ways of knowing held by the learners, and the acceptance of the institutions of power of Westernised South African society.

#### **5.6 Discourse IV - *English is the doorway to the house of education and knowledge* (Roux, c.1946, 8)**

Roux wrote all but his botanical texts for under-educated adults, believing, like Hogben, in the 'educability' of the common man. He reckoned that if the language could be comprehended, informational knowledge would immediately be

transferred. In other words, he regarded language to some extent as a neutral medium of information transfer. At the heart of many of Roux's publications such as *The Veld and the Future*, *Time Longer Than Rope*, *The Cattle of Kumalo*, and many of *The Sixpenny Library* series is a body of information deemed useful, if not essential to the citizens of South Africa.

For Roux, there was an urgency about the benefits which knowledge could bring to people who were in his eyes unacceptably poor and exploited. It is partly this urgency which led Roux to assert that the ability to read in English is essential to every adult African, but equally that written English must be made more accessible by writers for Africans. From the late 1930's, the issue of language dominated his theoretical writings; he set about developing his project of accessible English with the rigour of a scientist and the fervour of a political activist, arguing that the newspapers offered a key medium for this process (Roux, c.1936, 4)<sup>7</sup>. A decade later, Roux added radio and travelling cinema to his plan for mass education (Roux, c.1945, 21).

It was while writing and editing newspapers for the Communist Party that Roux became convinced of the importance of using simplified English for adults, although he endorsed the benefits of mother-tongue education for children. He argued that newspapers offer the means for:

*... readers with a smattering of English to acquire a better knowledge of that language through the medium of his newspaper. This could be done by having a special section for beginners in English in which only simple language should be used and where actual lessons should be included* (Roux, c.1936, 6).

Roux's rationale for English is presented as a logical and rational choice although he acknowledged that African adults would be at a disadvantage; he seems to have reached a position where he accepted that adaptation to the discomfort of modern Western conditions was inevitable. In an unpublished paper called *Why*

*Not Easy English?* (1945) he even discussed Lancelot Hogben's concern that if English were to be used:

*... those who use it as their mother tongue [would occupy] a position of cultural privilege. They would become a kind of 'linguistic Herrenvolk' and natural resentment of this would defeat the end in view (Roux, 1945, 1.2).*

Roux however did not support Hogben's invented *lingua franca* 'Interglossa' though he admitted '... the logic of Hogben's argument' (Roux, 1945, 1.2). He argued for English thus:

*It is hardly necessary to emphasise the importance of English as against all other languages. It is the language of the conqueror and all which that implies. It is the language of trade and commerce, of the cinema, of the motor car and other machinery, of sport. Above all, it is the language of books ... [He argues that the use of African languages in textbooks] ... in arithmetic, hygiene, history and geography and general knowledge will take generations. English is the short cut and it is to English that we must turn for a way out. The handicap in using a language other than the mother tongue must remain. But the advantages of English outweigh all the disadvantages a hundredfold (Roux, c.1936, 8-9).*

In another paper called *Our Illiterate Millions* c.1945, Roux alluded to the fact that English would be economically useful to the learners (Roux, c.1945, 2). In *Mass Education in Africa*, his unpublished text for African readers, Roux reiterated and extended this argument.

*Now it is not very much use teaching a man to read a certain language, if we say to him, 'We are sorry there are no books or newspapers printed in your language' (Roux, c.1946, 7).*

He enumerated the number of Bantu languages in Africa, discussed their multiple dialects and the problem of dialects being recorded in written form in different ways.

*This has caused a lot of trouble to teachers. Language and educational workers have for some years been trying to clear up these troubles by joining different dialects together and by getting people to agree on what is called a common orthography (way of writing) for every language (Roux, c.1946, 7).*

This argument is extended by Jacob Nhlapo in *The Sixpenny Library* booklet *Bantu Babel*, subtitled *Will the Bantu Languages Live?* In it he argues for joining the Bantu languages in the interests of cost, power in unity, speed and reduction of conflict, regarding language merely and 'in truth [as] ... just a tool for letting people know what we think (Nhlapo, 1944, 5).

Roux adds to this mounting body of arguments the cost of publishing, the time taken, and concludes:

*So it is clear that we need a common language for education in Africa - one language which all people can learn to speak and to read ... Well is there any common language which could be used in this way? [Triumphantly he concludes:] That language is English.*

*English is the common language we are looking for ... English is the doorway to the house of education and knowledge (Roux, c.1946, 8).*

Nhlapo (edited by Roux) also presented English in these terms, but used persuasive examples and emotive adjectives:

*English has come to have such a big place in African education, that it is quite true that to most African scholars English is education, and education*

*is English, and they find it very hard to believe that a person may know a lot and be very well educated, and yet know no English ...*

*Africans have got to like English so much that those who say that school subjects must be taught in the Bantu languages are looked upon as those who do not want the black people to go forward quickly ... We can see that English unites the pupils in the schools while the Bantu languages keep them apart (Nhlapo, 1944, 11).*

In a number of his papers, Roux set out in detail how he proposed to facilitate this transition to English. Initially (c.1936) he proposed C.K.Ogden's *Basic English* but later and more vociferously, he explained in great detail his own carefully researched system of simplified English or Easy English. I will not discuss the systems themselves, but rather reassert that he saw these systems as supporting the principle of equality, of making the world's accumulated knowledge accessible to all<sup>8</sup>.

It is also significant in relation to the previous discussion of Roux's scientific inclination that he arrived at his own version of simplified English through empirical research in adult classes. His method was centred around the learners and consisted of singling out the learners' best known words and attempting to work from the language reservoir which adult Africans brought to the classes. Roux also made reference to well-known structures and constituents in the Bantu languages in his system.

Out of this position on the adoption of English for African adults' education grew his publications in Easy English, *The Sixpenny Library series*, *the AB Adult Readers* (a step by step series introducing a graded vocabulary), *The Easy English Handbook - A Guide to the Simplification of English for Lecturers, Writers and Teachers* (1944) and a number of other advocacy texts on this language strategy. The value of English as the medium for his educational texts is a carefully argued and deeply held belief. Rather than interpreting this as a form of linguistic

imperialism<sup>9</sup>, I regard his reasons as primarily pragmatic but grounded in his position as a modernist. For him, English has a centrality and logic which he does not perceive as an imposition. He envisions rapid language and knowledge acquisition as the means for African adults to escape their unacceptably oppressive situation. This is borne out by his track-record of publishing multilingual newspapers for the Communist Party, and the fact that in 1943-4 his text, *The Cattle of Kumalo*, which focuses on improving farming methods, was translated into the Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho languages.

What Roux again fails to address, however, is the cultural power of the language of the dominant group and its concomitant disempowerment of the readers. He does not seem to recognise that acquisition is unlikely to be a simple matter facilitated by accessible English texts. In the course of his argument, Roux constructs literacy acquisition as a simple, neutral process akin to acquiring the skill of using a particular tool. The cultural embeddedness of language is not recognised.

## 5.7 Conclusion

Edward Roux's educational texts for just-literate African adults and fellow-educators are shaped by an unarticulated set of rules which 'govern what is said and what remains unsaid. They identify who can speak with authority and who must listen' (Cherryholmes, 1988, 34).

The educator's role has historically been constructed as controlling and directive. Postmodern theory argues that this is an illusion, and that educators are also players embedded within discourse. Postmodern analysis has enabled one to deconstruct Roux's claims and to distinguish the shape of the narrative to which they belong.

In theoretical terms, the discourses which I have described can be read intertextually to reveal the overarching narrative of Roux's vision for African adults

and society in general, and a set of assumptions about how this vision might be achieved. The vision is of a society which is rational, humane, egalitarian, just and committed to the Western model of science and knowledge. Roux's means to achieve this vision is to facilitate educational access to the knowledge he regards as essential to reach this state. Presented thus, the concept 'education' carries immense promise and a level of redemptive truth which masks its hegemonic capacity. Within these conditions the learners are constituted as equals. Adoption of the required means of communication, English followed by general knowledge, appears simple and rapidly achievable. The construct of education subsumes the concept of culture, masking the fact that what is specifically meant by educated is the condition of Western (mainly white), modern society.

The metanarrative negates cultural plurality or its possibility. It promotes rational intercourse, promising enlightenment and improved living conditions. In this sense it is part of the modernist Enlightenment metanarrative which is characterised by rationalism and scientificity, industrial progress, evolutionary processes of development and a unitary value system for human achievement. I am also however conscious that Roux's educational intervention contains elements which are at odds with the grand narrative of the Enlightenment, and that his version of the metanarrative is distinct. The particularity of his intervention will be explored through genealogical analysis and comparison in Chapter 6.

The modernist metanarrative which is revealed through deconstruction of Roux's educational intervention masks to some extent the conditions of power between educator and learner. Some of the resultant arrangements of power have been unlocked through discourse analysis and will form the focus of the first set of conclusions on the case study which follow in the next chapter.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) Personal communication: Julian Rollnick to Lucy Alexander, 4 October 1989, Cape Town.

- (2) The concept 'agonism' was coined by Foucault to describe the '... paradoxical position of apparently free agents who are constrained by larger power structures, but who nevertheless interpret the regulatory practices of such structures creatively or antagonistically' (de Kock, 1996, 198).
- (3) In a telephone conversation with Julian Rollnick recently (July 1998) he confirmed that this was a conscious choice. It must however be noted that one pamphlet in the series, Zoe Marsh's *How Men Are Governed* is an exception; it is primarily an historical account of the evolution of democracy in Britain, the United States and South Africa, with a short concluding section of eleven lines which critically asserts that the disenfranchised situation of Africans in South Africa is undemocratic.
- (4) The concept of 'sophistication' is another significant one in the delineation of the relationship of learner and educator. The concept of sophistication is I believe used in the sense of Western worldly wisdom and possibly also technological advancement.
- (5) In a scientific paper titled *The Native Reserves and Post-war Reconstruction*, Roux writes:

*There is no reason why a progressive government should not finance Native education and other social services out of general revenue. Free education of all citizens must necessarily accompany any attempt to develop South Africa's agricultural and industrial resources on modern lines (Roux, 1944, 9).*

- (6) Roux continues:

*The passing of an examination means a step upward in a hierarchy of learning. At the top we have the doctors and graduates. Beneath them are the matriculated ... Possession of a certificate often opens the door to a better job or better pay ... But this is by no means the only reason why certificates are desired. A great number of educated*

*Africans are unwilling to pass on their learning to others. They feel their education gives them status which they will lose if education becomes general. [He cites some examples] ... They suffer from disabilities common to all subject peoples and classes. We find a similar superstitious reverence among many Afrikaners for the 'geleerde man', and the English South African, though to a less[er] degree, is often a victim of the examination fetish. [He concludes that] I mention these facts here because they must be taken into account in any plan for adult Bantu education. It is all very well offering the Bantu education, but unless they find the kind of education they want they will not come and take it ... Let us provide for the 'post Standard Sixers' by providing them with classes which in general will follow the Junior Certificate syllabus, and make it possible for those who are sufficiently capable actually to sit for the examination with some chance of success. But let our teachers, like all intelligent teachers nowadays, try to give their pupils a real education in spite of the shortcomings of the syllabus ... All pupils should be given large doses of general knowledge ... Books chosen for English reading should be informative - history, geography, natural science etc (Roux, c.1936, 12-15).*

- (7) He describes the circulation of the Bantu weeklies in the same article, noting that:

*There are two big Bantu weeklies - The Bantu World and Umteteli waBantu. Their circulation is probably something under 10 000 each. About 50 per cent of their space is taken up by English and the balance by the three chief Bantu languages, Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho (Roux, c.1936, 2).*

Later in the paper, he estimates the total circulation of 'Bantu newspapers' as 30 000 and concludes that about 100 000 or 2 per cent of the adult African population is 'newspaper literate' (Roux, c.1936, 3).

*Even a comparatively large 'dorp' such as Bloemfontein has more newspaper readers per head of population than Johannesburg ... For many rural and semi-rural adult Africans a single weekly newspaper provides the sole means of cultural and political enlightenment and the influence of such newspapers is considerable (Roux, c.1936, 4).*

One of the significant indicators of the power of the press amongst this audience which is mentioned by Roux was the upsurge of circulation during the 'war in Abyssinia', particularly amongst rurally-based teachers.

- (8) Roux invites the educators and editors to modify their practice. He argues his strategy on many occasions, and writes a handbook for lecturers, writers and teachers in 1944 (*The Easy English Handbook*).

*By 'simplified' English I do not mean a new language ... I mean an English with a limited vocabulary, easily learnt, with a minimum of grammar, capable of meeting the needs of the average African in contact with European civilization, and serving as an introduction to normal English (Roux, c.1936, 8).*

- (9) Robert Phillipson explains English linguistic imperialism as follows: '... the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (Phillipson, 1992, 47).

## CHAPTER 6

### THE GENEALOGY OF THE METANARRATIVE AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF POWER

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#### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapters 4 and 5, I attempted to show that Roux's intervention is embedded in the grand narrative of the Enlightenment. I also asserted that his version of the metanarrative is particular in its acknowledgement of human equality and its conviction that social and political justice can be restored by rational means, provided that the victims have access to the resource of modernising Western knowledge.

In this chapter I shall explore the genealogy of the metanarrative. Using these findings and my previous analysis, I shall describe the subjectivity which Roux constructed for himself and his learners. From this construction, I shall draw primary conclusions regarding the arrangements of power within Roux's educational transaction.

In the first section I shall try to identify some relevant developments in social theory; by this I mean those assumptions and historical emergences of thought which feed into the construction of the metanarrative in general and into the particular shape which it takes in Roux's project.

#### 6.2 The genealogy of the metanarrative

That Roux's project is modernist is historically unsurprising, in the light of the predominance of an Enlightenment world view from the middle of the eighteenth century until late in the twentieth century. Once set in motion, the modernist

momentum pervaded every aspect of Western culture, particularly education, the induction of the young or uneducated into a set of already legitimated rules. The institutions of education themselves became one of the key routes whereby the grand narrative was reproduced.

The modernist world view, crystallised by the French philosophers in the eighteenth century, evolved during a period of substantially increased scientific understanding of the world. The positivist world view suggested that it was possible to reach full understanding of life and its phenomena, and that absolute truth was attainable through gradually peeling back layers of ignorance. Within this context, rational and empirical pursuit seemed to offer new possibilities for understanding reality and organising society. Voltaire's assertion that moral virtue could be achieved through the application of reason, rather than through Christian belief, is one of the cornerstones of this project and much of the impetus of the Enlightenment is drawn from this 'moral' imperative.

In the search for the means of enlightenment, society itself became an object of study, a trend which can be traced to Giambattista Vico in the eighteenth century in Italy, through Auguste Comte and others to the nineteenth century. Their focus was on discovering '... rational-empirical causes for social phenomena in place of metaphysical or theological ones' (May, 1996, 13). The shift they made was normative and they began to view human beings as social creatures '... whose actions could be understood only in relation to the whole of society' (May, 1996, 13). Out of this the field of Sociology was born with the possibility of institutionalised intervention leading to social remediation. Central to the Enlightenment metanarrative is the utopian notion of the perfectability of the social order.

Bauman associates the birth of modernity with the increased speed of social change which he argues was for the first time perceptible within the scope of a lifespan: consciousness of this change '... was reflected in the new and novel sense of history as an endless chain of irreversible changes ...'. He suggests that

the concept of progress '... a development which brings change for the better ...' emerged from this conviction (Bauman, 1976, 18-19). Another formative factor to which Bauman attributes the will to transform society, was the advancement of the natural sciences in the nineteenth century. This had:

*... reduced terrifyingly sovereign Nature to the status of a pliable, malleable stuff with which one could and should knead all kinds of useful and practicable things; they inspired the public mind to undertake a search for similar accomplishment in the social sphere (Bauman, 1976, 20).*

Coupled with rationalism and social progress, there was a strong egalitarian thread within the intellectual formations associated with the Enlightenment, expressed by Condorcet, one of the philosophers of the Enlightenment in *The Idea of Progress* (1795):

*Our hopes regarding the future state of humanity can be reduced to these three important points: the destruction of inequality between nations; the progress of equality within one and the same nation; and, finally, the real perfecting of mankind (Condorcet quoted in Bauman, 1976, 20).*

The task of achieving Condorcet's 'real perfecting of mankind' fell in part to education. Jean Jacques Rousseau's dictum, 'we shape plants by cultivation, and human beings by education' (translation of quotation in Bauman, 1976, 23) suggests the crucial resocialisation process envisaged by the modernist project.

This will to 'perfect society' can also be discerned in one of the other manifestations of modernism - socialism. In his work *Socialism. The Active Utopia*, Zygmunt Bauman represents socialism as a modernist utopian vision. Utopias, he claims, relativise reality, posit positive options, critically expose '... divisions of interest within society ...' (Bauman, 1976, 15) and have an 'activating presence' (Bauman, 1976, 18).

*... [F]ar from being just predictions waiting on bookshelves to be compared with the actual events they avowedly tried to foresee, our statements about the future become, from the start, active factors in shaping this future ...* (Bauman, 1976, 10).

Bauman's exploration of the social and intellectual factors which were present in the advent of the modernist utopia in general and socialism in particular, adds body to the genealogical analysis of Roux's metanarrative. In exploring the history of ideas surrounding the formation of socialist modernity, Bauman cites Reinhard Bendix's proposal of two major formative constructs:

*... The first was ... 'impersonalism' as the paramount principle regulating the way individuals were pinioned into the network of socially defined roles and behavioural patterns* (Bauman, 1976, 38).

This concept reduces the significance of the individual and creates the conditions for quantifying and managing the masses in rational terms. The other construct is *plebiscitarianism*, '... the vision that the masses will be included in the political process' (Bauman, 1976, 41). Through this shift, the masses are made equal citizens at a political level and their numbers give authority to decision-making. Within the socialist paradigm this leads to an all-pervading notion of equality in the civic, social and political sphere. It differs from the liberal capitalist model which shares the principle of equality, but limits its agency to the political sphere.

*... [T]he emphatic refusal [of socialism] to accept the notion of equality as limited to the political sphere alone, the insistence on the importance of the numerous links with other spheres which renders political equality void if other inequalities are left intact, and the determined desire to extend the ideal of equality beyond the domain of 'homo politicus' [was] to remain the only cultural postulate shared by all shades of the socialist counter-culture* (Bauman, 1976, 42).

This broad-reaching socialist egalitarianism is fundamental to Roux's version of the metanarrative. After his departure from the political arena, it was primarily in the name of his vision of equality in the broadest range of areas of social interaction that he embarked upon his educational project.

Within the Enlightenment's construct of egalitarianism, it is education which raises one of the critical ruptures. Marx had posed the question of an egalitarian society: who will 'educate the educators?' This question problematises the potential for perpetuating inequality even in the ideal egalitarian society (Bauman, 1976, 23). The theorists of the European Enlightenment, in spite of their utopian aspirations, regarded some members of society as 'more equal' and better able to provide educational leadership than others. In this construction, the educator takes on the role of '... benevolent despot: the Legislator; the Philosopher; the Scientist ... who by dint of miraculous power, omnipotent technology or ability ...' (Bauman, 1976, 24) brings the less-endowed masses to enlightenment. Ironically, however, the philosophers and their inheritors had, according to commentators of the period, little faith in the capacity of '... the culturally-retarded masses who refuse to be enlightened' (Bauman, 1976, 25). Bauman reflects upon the fact that many Enlightenment thinkers regarded the masses as the stumbling block in reaching the utopian vision.

The elite role of educators is common to capitalism and socialism alike; in the latter, 'minority revolution' was advocated even though the working class had been conceptualised as fearless and heroic; once the sites of power had been seized by the leaders, the working class majority would be educated to fit into and sustain the transformed society. In educational transactions which are in fact the institutional transfer of legitimated ideologies, many of the contradictions of the Enlightenment are contained.

In an essay called 'Legislators and Interpreters - Culture as the Ideology of Intellectuals' (Bauman, 1992, 1-25), the author delineates the passage of the Enlightenment world view into the consciousness of twentieth century society. He

explores the camouflaged role played by intellectuals or organic intellectuals in determining the master narratives of the day. With the increased political pressure for control in early modern European society, what he calls the 'legislative' role of the educator was born (Bauman, 1992, 7). During the Enlightenment the organic intellectual assumed this role based on three premises. Loosely paraphrased, these premises are: human beings are incomplete and only humanised through socialisation processes; humanisation is a learning process achieved through the acquisition of knowledge in the course of which the animal side of our nature is tamed; and the humanisation process requires teachers and a teaching system to ensure its progress (Bauman, 1992, 3).

This intellectual control can be compared with the action of 'civilizing' or resocializing which Bauman formulates by exploring the historical and political spheres in which this concept was formed.

*The aspects of human life now picked up for conscious regulation came to be known as 'culture' (Bauman, 1992, 8).*

He tracks the movement from a pre-modern construction of society, where localised 'surveillance and disciplinary power' (Bauman, 1992, 5) was possible because of the small-scale community structures of the period. In his view, the shift from feudal agricultural life to urban society presented the context for the birth of new systems of surveillance and power appropriate to the absolutist state. His argument goes that:

*If the community-based social control resulted in perpetuating and reinforcing local differentiations of the forms of life, the state-based control could only promote supracommunal uniformity. Universality as an ideal and a measure of social improvement was born of this need [to control] of the modern state; and of its practical ability to act on such a need (Bauman, 1992, 7).*

He identifies 'culture' as the site for shifting consciousness and educators or intellectuals as those entrusted with the process of this resocialisation. This process is especially visible under conditions of colonial conquest and industrialisation, wherein the egalitarian aspect of the Enlightenment metanarrative was sacrificed for the 'civilizing' or resocializing mission.

*Culture, civilising, refining were so many names given to the crusade against the 'vulgar', 'beastly', 'superstitious', habits and customs and the forces presiding over their perpetuation (Bauman, 1992, 9).*

He notes that this construction of culture:

*... is rooted in a particular vision of the world that articulates the potential, elaborates the values and legitimizes the role of the intellectuals (Bauman, 1992, 2-3).*

It is also, according to his argument the educators who '... hold the key to the continuous reproduction of cohabitation as a human society' (Bauman, 1992, 2). Under conditions of modernity, instead of tacitly accepting the diversity of forms of life in different societies, '... other forms of life were now seen as the products of a wrong kind of teaching, of malice or error, of ignorance at best' (Bauman, 1992, 9). The predominance of reason was one of the fundamental bases of this new construction.

In that adult education in South Africa grows directly out of the colonizing mission of England and Europe, it is useful to explore this genealogical stream with its emphasis on surveillance and control. This legislative role is recognisable in the Christian missionary educators of the nineteenth century, with their emphasis on culture and their positivism regarding the universality of their social and religious values. As educators, they imposed on and subjectified their learners, rendering them as 'other', deficient and in need of both spiritual and general knowledge. Filtered through the colonising mindset, the educational trajectory of the

Enlightenment takes on a particularly coercive complexion. Progress and development which led towards a shared utopian vision for social perfection took a very different form in the face of imperialist conquest, which used as its justification the superiority of the culture of the conqueror. Once again, the minority educators legislated and dictated the terms for the majority; in this instance, progress was termed 'civilizing' which carried its own set of dictates.

'Reclaiming from barbarism' and 'instruction in the arts and refinements' (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, 1974, 239) are points along a continuum in the definition of 'civilising'. Civilization is a concept which is central, not so much to the industrialising process undertaken by colonisers, but to their self-justificatory discourse which has too often been used to excuse acts of barbarism committed in the process of 'reclaiming [others] from barbarism'.

De Kock comments on:

*... the deeply paradoxical process [of bringing enlightenment to the colonized as] involving the construction of the Self as well as the Other in a manner that rendered ironic the cherished ideals and certainties of an Enlightenment left behind on the shores of Europe (de Kock, 1996, 23).*

The subjectivity constructed for adult learners by missionary educators was often as barbarous, childlike and helpless. Christian religion and morality was represented as the route to redemption for African adults, but this required the subjectivity of the learners to be rewritten in terms of Western religious and cultural norms. This construction echoes Voltaire and Rousseau's position that '... black people were naturally inferior to Europeans in mental ability'(de Kock, 1996, 39). Malleability is at the heart of this representation, and Brantlinger notes that '... a completely subordinate proletariat ... is one of the central fantasies of imperialism' (Brantlinger in Gates, 1986, 200). It is also one of the 'central fantasies' of educators within the Western education model.

Another Enlightenment current which was given prominence in the colonial construction was the privileging of reason. Coupled with this, the ability to write, more particularly in the arts and sciences, was taken as a symptom of reason and an indicator of humanity.

*We know reason by its writing, by its representations ... And while superb scholars give priority to the spoken as the privileged of the pair, most Europeans privileged writing - in their writings about Africans, at least - as the principal measure of the Africans' humanity, their capacity for progress, their very place in the great chain of being (Gates, 1986, 9).*

This resulted in the use of the absence and presence of reason, evidenced by writing, to delimit and circumscribe the humanity of people of colour which Europeans had been 'discovering' since the Renaissance. In addition the urge towards systematizing human knowledge (by which we characterize the Enlightenment) led directly to the relegation of black people to a lower place in *the great chain of being*; this construct was an arrangement of all of creation on a vertical scale from plants, insects and animals through man to the angels and God himself.

In contrast to Condorcet's assertion of the utopian ideal of equality, the great chain of being had by 1750 become minutely calibrated; the human scale rose from the 'lowliest Hottentot' (black South Africans) to 'glorious Milton and Newton' (Gates, 1986, 8). This same position is evident in the words of David Hume in an essay of 1748, 'Of National Characters' wherein he notes that:

*... there never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences... (Hume quoted in Gates, 1986, 10).*

Gates notes that this construction became prescriptive as it was absorbed by major European philosophers, Immanuel Kant and Hegel. They compounded this litany of ethnocentric prejudice: Hegel, for example, focussed on the absence of written history and presumed the absence of collective cultural memory (Gates, 1985, 11). These crude articulations fed the discourse of difference into the Enlightenment metanarrative. Their flows in the shifting shape of modernist thought pervaded the education of adult Africans initially through the mission colleges in various ways: de Kock concludes that the teaching of English was the primary tool used to 'rewrite the subjectivity' (de Kock, 1996, 188) of those who were regarded as a barbarous people.

The colonial version of the Enlightenment sacrifices any sort of egalitarianism in the interests of its own self-justification; it shifts its mission to a point on the Great Chain of Being where change in the political elements of the narrative are suppressed in favour of the cultural.

This genealogical exploration of some sources and formations of the Enlightenment metanarrative suggests that different versions of the metanarrative are differentiated according to political persuasion. It also posits the educator or intellectual as a key member of the disseminators of the metanarrative, and identifies their arena of action as primarily that of culture. In the next section, I shall explore the relevance of these genealogical currents to the metanarrative as it becomes visible in Roux's project.

### **6.3 Roux's construction of the adult educator and learner**

Within the genealogical currents which I have identified above, there are some which add particularity to Roux's construction of the Enlightenment mythology. A key element in Roux's conceptualisation of his educational project is his assumption that through progress and development the conditions of society can be improved. Utopianism is at the heart of this thinking and the egalitarianism of socialism is fundamental to his vision of human improvement.

In paradoxical tension with his egalitarianism, Roux fits comfortably into the role of 'elitist' educator (as suggested by Bauman), one who feels he is skilled to select and teach the curriculum through an accident of birth. On the other hand, Roux does not underestimate the capacity of his learners, but at the same time expects them to exhibit a particular approach to knowledge and learning. He requires 'rational' choices to be made, guided by an unselfish desire for useful knowledge rather than the lure of certification.

Unlike the missionaries, Roux constructs an adult learner who is fundamentally an equal human being, but who has been denied opportunities for progress. His 'evolved adult' has self-esteem, recognises that he has the potential to progress, holds rational beliefs, increases his knowledge in a wide range of spheres and is in touch with modern developments in the fields of health and agriculture (for example).

At the same time, all that is positively implied by the construction of 'the educated man' may be read as deficit in terms of the subjectivity or constructed identity of the learner. Roux's adult learner, by inference, lacks self-esteem and a sense of his own potential, holds pre-rational beliefs, lacks general knowledge and is ignorant of modern developments in various fields essential to daily life.

Through Rollnick's and Roux's texts written about education, it becomes apparent that the subjectivity of the learners is conceptualised as homogenous. Seen simply as 'the newcomer to town' (Rollnick, 1945, 1), there is little sense of differentiation in cultural experience, age, experience, language ability, political affiliation, confidence or sense of self within the learner grouping which was likely to have been highly diverse. The learner survey is the educators' only gesture towards this diversity. This is predictable in terms of the fact that the Enlightenment metanarrative actually seeks to homogenise disparate cultures in its own image.

In order to characterise Roux's version of the metanarrative more clearly, I shall briefly contrast his construction of learner and educator subjectivity with that of his

colonial and missionary educational predecessors in the 19th century. The missionary educators had interpreted the rules of the Enlightenment in an especially harsh way, focusing their attention on the process of 'civilizing'. Roux's project subscribes to the same rules, but his interpretation thereof is different. He is firstly conscious of the power of the discourse of civilization (as defined by Western society) in representing black identity; in *The History of Civilizations*, he is at pains to argue that the development of a 'civilization' has no bearing upon peoples' fundamental equality or potential for equal achievement. He acknowledges the plurality of civilizations or cultures although he does not recognise that the yardstick against which he is measuring achievement, cities and writing, is constructed from a mono-cultural standpoint.

Roux's egalitarian and anti-racist stance is paradoxical in relation to the unitary vision of the Enlightenment which sets up European social mores and practices as the norm for all civilized societies. This is a tension which he does not resolve. He tries to counter a deficit view of other cultures, yet does not recognise that the Enlightenment vision which he advocates implies deficits within the culture it reshapes. He becomes trapped in the contradictions of his discourse. In *The History of Civilizations* he even attempts to resolve this dilemma by redefining the concept 'civilization' through the use of the plural form; he develops an argument for the conditions of success and failure of civilizations; but his lack of acknowledgement of the legislative and sometimes destructive forces of the Enlightenment's civilizing mission prevents him from resolving this issue satisfactorily. When rational argument no longer works, he substitutes visionary statements.

Although he differs from his predecessors in this regard, he shares with them a reverence for the tradition of rationalism; again however, his construct of rationalism differs from the colonial discourse where rationalism appears to have been chiefly constructed in terms of conventionalised colonial manners and behaviours. Missionary educators frequently represented Africans as irrational; they focussed on rationalism as the antidote to primitive, emotional interaction.

Rationalism is set up as the binary opposite of irrationalism and is used to describe, classify and devalue people from outside Europe and England, not to present arguments and knowledge.

Roux's construct of rationalism is comparatively far more academic. It encompasses intellectual deduction, for example in recognising the aberrant arguments of racism or in presenting a scientific explanation for lightning strikes in *The How and Why of Science*. Roux asserts the need for a rational approach from society in general and not solely from Africans. Roux's approach is to present empirical evidence and attempt to persuade by intellectual argument rather than by persuasive force.

It has been noted in the previous section that social remediation was a key idea of the Enlightenment. This is significant in intertextual relationship with Roux's reverence for rationalism. What emerges in his project is an assertion that social remediation is an important and likely outcome of a rational, scientific approach to the problems of society. This approach is necessarily coupled with knowledge, the pursuit of which is in itself rational.

To what extent educators have constructed their offerings as the vehicle of progress is one of the indicators of their level of subscription to the Enlightenment metanarrative. The construct of evolutionary, modernising progress is clearly articulated by Roux's text for African readers, *Mass Education in Africa*:

*The knowledge which Africans need so that they can become 'up-to-date', so that they can catch up with the nations of Europe, and so that they can manage things for themselves is of two sorts: (a) the knowledge of how to do things; and (b) the knowledge of what to think about things (Roux, c. 1946, 18).*

Roux's version of the Enlightenment metanarrative no longer constructs the learner pejoratively as 'uncivilized', but as uneducated. Yet his concept of 'educated man'

is based exclusively within the Western construct of knowledge and it therefore subsumes the construct of culture (though not civilization) within it. Although 'culture' implies many of the same aspects of human activity and interaction contained within the concept of 'civilization', it differs in that it acknowledges plurality and that those who practise it start from a position of difference not inequality. In Roux's terms, 'educated' seems to infer someone who performs rational practices with regard to health, safety and cleanliness, who has humane ways of interacting with other people, who shows mature, caring attitudes to the less fortunate, who has a love of knowledge for its own sake as well an enjoyment of the pastimes of Western intellectual society. Rationalism is in his opinion learnt, and therefore absence thereof does not condemn 'man'. In his construction, any person can be redeemed through education; in the colonial consciousness, lack of rationalism was genetic and a lasting flaw.

Both missionary educators and Roux viewed their own offerings, whether Christian or educational, as leading to progress. It is however in the subjectivity constructed for themselves and the learners, that differences emerge. What is particular to Roux's construction of the educational process is that he regards it as possible that adult Africans can reach equality at every level, even if they have been held back in their progress. The missionary educators constructed themselves as those who lead and guide, but they hold a deficit view of their African learners and do not anticipate equality as the endpoint.

Within the socialist project, Enlightenment ideals construct the identity of participants in a significantly different way to the Christian Enlightenment project, although they have strategic similarities. Socialism presupposes a collective identity for its subjects as workers, regardless of nationality, race or culture. This commonality is a powerful buffer against the intrusion of cultural chauvinism within its creed.

The formation of educator and learner identities within Roux's project draws its particularity chiefly from socialism and its vision of class equality. In this context,

cultural difference is a lesser concern in the face of a unifying ideology. The contents and purpose of education is constructed around inducting learners into this particular economic system and to furthering the gains of the collective. Within its philosophical formation, socialism is critical of colonial imperialism and works against the tendency of the Enlightenment stance to use cultural formations as its yardstick. Power within this formation is exercised by the discourse of collective agreement, by willing self-subjugation to the rules thereof.

The socialist version of the Enlightenment was to a large extent blind to cultural differentiation and supremely confident that what it did was done for the good of working class humanity. The educational project is subsumed within its broader goals: those who were not educated were seen as needing education in order to understand the conditions of their own oppression, grasp sufficient political theory to unite in the socialist project and to exert their agency within the socialist community.

This appears to be the most significantly particular identity of Roux's construction of his own role; this is in contrast to the liberal view of society which has often been applied to Roux's project after he distanced himself from the Communist Party. Roux is not, in my assessment, a liberal educator in word or deed in that he accords his learners the potential for equality in all spheres of life and not just the political sphere<sup>1</sup>. He remained convinced of the instrumental importance of education, even when he shifted the curriculum from political-economy to the social sphere.

Although Roux does not use the term 'civil society' at all, he seems to envision learners as 'citizens-in-waiting', anticipating a society where all educated South Africans could enjoy the benefits of Western modernity; in the terms of modernism, this implies a stage beyond 'civilizing', a stage where equal beings enhance their patterns of behaviour and living for the good of society.

In some ways, Roux provides a living example of the postmodern thesis that individuals do not control their surroundings, but that they are part of discourses which move in and out of tension with each other. Within the circumstances of his own biography, he is consistent in his anti-racist, egalitarian and social reconstructionist position regardless of how he may have been categorised by left or right.

The particularity of Roux's intervention which emerges is his consistent espousal of rationalist education for social development or improvement. Running throughout his construction of himself is reason, operating through educational strategies to remediate social injustice.

#### 6.4 The ambiguities of power

The construct of power which I shall employ to draw conclusions about Edward Roux's adult education project is based on that of Foucault. It is helpful in its extrapolation of the concept of power from simply meaning the domination of one body by another, to a complex network of interrelated forces, which '... depends for its existence on the presence of a *multiplicity of points of resistance* (Smart, 1985, 77).

In Foucault's construction, power is not regarded as a commodity; nor is it the result of the intentionality of the agent of power. The assumed agent, the educator is in fact only one point within the interplay of power. In trying to understand the distribution of power, Foucault urges the researcher to look to local not centralised institutions, to focus on the practices which embody power rather than on:

*... questions of possession or conscious intention* (Smart, 1985, 78). [He notes that power]... *circulates through the social body, and 'functions in the form of a chain' ... The individual is both an effect of power and the element of its articulation* (Smart, 1985, 79).

Foucault suggests several questions which may be asked in relation to power:

*'How is it exercised? by what means?' and 'what are the effects of the exercise of power?' rather than 'what is power and where does it come from?' (Smart, 1985, 77).*

Foucault also distinguishes between the total subjectivity of slaves which he does not regard as a relationship of power, and the action and reaction of 'free' people in power relations. He argues that the exercise of power brings into action the possibilities of simultaneous consent and resistance, the phenomenon of 'agonism'.

Few examples of agonistic and creative response by Roux's learners have been located. Roux's description of resistance to general knowledge classes by those African students who wanted to continue with qualifying examinations such as the Junior Certificate is one instance (Roux, c. 1936, 12-15). The learners asserted their agency as consumers of education by expressing their desire for Junior Certificate tuition; Roux expressed frustration but acceded to their wishes, interpreting their adoption of the hegemonic discourse of education for certification as selfishness on their part and decrying the fact that they placed more value on certificates than on general knowledge. The learners' response demonstrates their awareness of the hierarchies and arrangements of power within the metanarrative but at the same time their incorporation into the hegemonic metanarrative.

In this context, they had cynically identified that the locus of power in Western society did not lie in the possession of knowledge but of certificates. Comparable examples such as de Kock's postmodern analysis of the agonistic responses of Lovedale graduates like John Tengo Jabavu or Harries's analysis of migrant workers' responses to literacy, demonstrate that learner responses were not likely to be uniform, nor would they have been consistently responses of disempowerment. In spite of their lesser power, the recipients of education may have retained a level of agency, subverting the intent of the project.

Another example of agonistic response is tentatively suggested; Rollnick described the lack of demand and sales of *The Sixpenny Library* publications. He noted the need to have sold at least 10 000 copies in three years to justify the editorial and production policy of The African Bookman's publishing projects. One is left to speculate whether the commercial failure of *The Sixpenny Library* does not contain the record of an agonistic response of the readers rather than lack of interest.

Rollnick writes:

*It is very difficult to say why the demand has been low; perhaps the drastic and well-acknowledged lack of educational services has limited the reading public to a non-economic figure; perhaps we have not as yet hit upon really interesting subject matter and just the right approach and presentation; perhaps those Africans who can read have not yet acquired the habit of reading, have not yet grasped the functional role of literature in civilised life, and might not absorb this attitude for many years. But probably the one dominating difficulty is that involved in the physical channels of distribution and advertisement; no bookshops cater for this trade; mail-order dispatch implies too great an effort on the part of the reader; newspaper space for advertising is crippling in cost; trading stores are not keen on stocking the literature; agents sell too little to merit the high organisational expenses involved; we ourselves lack the experience and are temperamentally ill able to face the host of promotion and distribution problems with realism and courage.*

*The venture as a whole has failed to pay its way (Rollnick, 1945, 5-6)<sup>2</sup>.*

It is possible that one response to this modernist adult education intervention may have been passive resistance on the part of the potential readers; on the other hand, the eagerness with which night school learners seem to have requested higher levels of education contradicts this conclusion, except if they did not grasp the relevance of The African Bookman's publications to their educational progress.

The night school learners were however a very small group of people.

In postmodern terms, the African learners for whom Roux writes, are entrapped by the allure of the Enlightenment mythology, subjectified by the realisation of how much in need of modernist redemption they are and simultaneously resistant to the epistemology of powerful, racist, exclusionary white capitalism. Yet in Roux's intervention, they are faced with an offering which invites them to embrace the educational strategies of the oppressors, to learn English, a scientific rationalist epistemology, in order to gain access to the social benefits which have been denied by that same oppressor.

Roux does not, however, appear to recognise the culture he advocates as Western or 'white'. His vision is infused with the belief that everyone has the ability to make this transition and that it is their right to do so. His strongly held belief in human equality and the right to equal education masks the inherent conditions of power within these transactions. Embedded as he is within the modernist metanarrative and inside his own educated class position, he does not recognise the coercive power of the ruling discourse. For him the transition offers the ingredients for swift social transition.

One of the ironies which Roux fails to recognise is that although he aims to empower adults through his project, he simultaneously undermines the foundations of their epistemology or does not admit the possibility of its validity. This happens in a masked fashion; both learners and educators enter voluntarily into the overwhelmingly positive Enlightenment discourse of adult education for social empowerment. Within the unitary delineation of education which Roux offers and the adult learner's assessment of the elements of power within the offering, they appear to engage in a common project. The discourses are, however, subtly undermining of the learner's epistemology, dislodging the learner from the comfort of his primary discourse by holding out arguments in an alternative discourse. The mythology of the Enlightenment is so powerful that it masks the problems inherent in this acquisition.

The educational transactions intended by Roux to empower the African learners, negate their identity by excluding any alternative epistemology. The educator sets out, with a vision to reduce the damage inflicted by racial segregation and its contingent disadvantages, but heaps further negation on the target group - by simply ignoring their language, beliefs and cultural identity. The term negation is too strong for this transaction which cannot acknowledge its own hegemony.

Roux's visionary education discourse masks the power of the educator. Simultaneously it excludes the possibility of any other discourse than that which is rational and scientific. Within Roux's texts, many of the 'irrational' beliefs and superstitions which are cited are African; in Roux's hands, this does not however confirm a racial bias but rather a rationalist bias. His discourse posits that these practices can be unlearned; they pose no major challenge to his construction of the world. However the subjectivity which Roux proposes for his learners is presented as the only option possible.

A parallel transaction which helps to clarify this situation occurs in oral societies: literacy, English or any cultural tool from outside of one's own cultural world is likely to be the imposition of outsiders. This imposition more often than not is constructed by the outsider as 'needed' by the recipient and likely to assist her or him in new roles in the imposed cultural context. What this construction fails however to recognise is that this 'need' arises entirely out of the initial imposition. In the analysis of the consequences of educational interventions with impressively stated idealistic aims, these power arrangements often go unrecognised or undocumented.

If one turns to Foucault's questions, 'How is power exercised? by what means?' and 'What are the effects of the exercise of power?' some insights are gained.

Power is exercised in this educational context through the imposition of the discourses of the dominant class and culture. Assuming that the learners reached the point of reading the texts, and many did, it would have been primarily through

the metanarrative that power would have been exercised. Within the transaction, the learners are subjectified as needy or lacking in the face of the promises of the legitimating idea of education or being educated. To reiterate the promise - it offers equality, status and better living, as well as development and health. The learners are drawn into the violence of the discourse which is alluring in its promise but which leaves little space for alternative discourses. The totalising message of the metanarrative is all-encompassing: it schools the learner in how he is to think about himself, how he should respond in situations of racism, the mode of thought he should apply, the knowledge he will need. The learner would simultaneously recognise what power is offered by entry into the discourse and be attracted to it. This could constitute simultaneous experience of personal devaluation and the possibility of redemption.

On the other hand, by providing a rational argument on the irrationality of linking 'colour and cleverness', it is suggested that 'the problem' can be solved through rational intercourse. The promise that knowledge, English, modern farming methods or science will '... make Africa a healthier, a richer and a happier place' (Roux, c.1946, 2) is an overambitious promise in the face of legislated inequality in South Africa. The hope that Easy English in the newspapers, or any other text forms will lead to an informed reading public puts too much faith in the rapidity of language acquisition in a second language by just-literate adults.

Another consequence of the metanarrative's promise of rapid transition to a state of 'abundant living' through education and knowledge is that members of the small circle of educators and learners involved are likely to have been mutually disappointed. Progress is likely to have been slower than the discourse promised, and the benefits must have been slight. Whether such failures are attributable to agonistic response, or to a combination of practical factors or both is a matter of speculation. Although these truths have been with us for decades, adult education policy makers seem unable to recognise their impact, or to act upon this recognition.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the origins of the metanarrative constructed by Roux's intervention by analysing the genealogy of that metanarrative. From this I concluded that the particularity of Roux's construction is the belief or assertion that through education and rational intercourse, social injustice could be contested.

Through the genealogical threads which were selected, I was able to identify how power operates within the transaction - noting that both elitist educator and learner are subjectified within the discourse. The flows of power are not constant: there are instances which could be read as agonistic response on the part of the learners. On the other hand, Roux's intervention proclaims its universal goodness so emphatically, that the alternative discourses of the learners are shut out of the transaction. The intentions of the educator to empower the learner through induction into the power of the Western cultural discourse is thrown into ambiguous relation, in that the transaction is complex and fluid. The intervention seemingly obliterates as well as offers power, but at the same time, the learners take hold of power in unexpected ways.

The metanarrative in Roux's project inevitably places the learners outside of the modernist circle of power of Western cultural membership through constructing them as in need of its benefits. When Roux advocates and offers the universal benefits of education, he inevitably enters into a relation of power with his learners, not only because he is the educator, but because his offerings are presented as the predefined truth. The learners are subjectified by the transaction - they are drawn into the discourse which is unitary, totalizing and allows no alternatives within its ambit. The learners' agency in the transaction is made invisible by the positivistic claims made for the project, its pre-determined value which becomes tacit and assumed by all those involved in the transaction.

Postmodern analysis offers the opportunity to unmask the assumptions of the educator and to give recognition to human and cultural diversity, and to the related

diversification of social and educational need. Usher et al note that:

*[A]s we become aware of and in closer contact with diversity we recognise that it is difference rather than sameness which is most significant and that indeed sameness can only be maintained through the repression of difference ... [W]e become sceptical of Utopian projects that promise universal betterment. In promising an end to oppressive power, they often merely enshrine power subtly yet more firmly through surveillance and regulation, through manipulation of body and soul. The web of interactions and contingencies through which life is played out involves unequal power relations regardless of emancipatory and benevolent intentions (Usher et al, 1997, 7).*

In terms of postmodern analysis, Roux's project's aim is subverted both through its totalizing impact, and through the learners' resistance. It is through this analytical process that the ambiguities of power embedded in the educational transaction become visible.

In Chapter 7, I shall apply some of the cautionary lessons revealed by this analysis of Roux's project as well as those in Usher et al's delineation of postmodernist adult learning practice to three genres of text from the ABET field in the 1990's.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) His involvement with The Liberal Party was in fact on the grounds that it was the first time since the Communist Party that:

*... a political party ha[d] granted absolute equality of membership to all races. Not a qualified franchise, but one man one vote. I believe in democracy (Roux, 1970, 208).*

- (2) The fact that similar difficulties in distribution and library usage are

indicated by the University of Natal's survey of ABET provision of 1996 suggests that Rollnick's project was singularly ambitious for the 1940's. In the absence of further data, one is left to speculate on the receivers' experience of the transaction.

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# CHAPTER 7

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN SELECTED ABET TEXTS OF THE 1990's

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### 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall trace continuities and changes between Roux's project and three comparable genres of ABET text in use in South Africa in the late 1990's. In this comparison, I shall assess whether the same modernising metanarrative is detectable and whether it results in similar arrangements of power. In other words I shall address whether the conceptual ambiguities inherent in creating learning opportunities for under-educated adults are still operative in adult education initiatives.

To address this question, I have selected texts which seem comparable in genre to Roux's project: they are the Directorate of Adult Education and Training's *Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training*, October 1997 which has equivalence with Roux's texts about adult education; USWE's *Changing Lives*, a four part series published by Sached Books/Maskew Miller Longman which constitutes a curriculum in a similar way to *The Sixpenny Library*, and selected texts from the New Readers Project published by the Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal which correspond with Roux's informational and leisure-reading texts e.g. *James Mabeta Goes to Sea*. The first text is a national policy document; the second is a set of guided instructional texts for just-literates in English communication and social studies for learners at Grade 7 or ABET Level 3 (previously Std 5). The third is conceptualised as further reading for new literates in English - adults similar to those whom Rollnick and Roux's project targeted.

## 7.2 Issues which arise from an analysis of the *Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training*

The adult basic education policy of the 1990's contains similarities but also differs from Roux's project. First of all the political context has changed substantially: in the 1940's, the state was minimally supportive, if not directly hostile to adult education for Africans. The state position on ABET in the 1990's is very different: *the Bill of Rights* in the Constitution enshrines the right of all citizens to a basic education and *The White Paper on Education* of 1995 endorses educational provision:

*... which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (The Bill of Rights, 1996, Chapter 2 section 29(1)).*

It is important to note that the construction of adult learners has not however changed substantially in the eyes of the 'policy makers', as is detectable in the discourse of the *Policy Document on ABET* when compared to Roux's advocacy texts. In the former, it is stated:

*ABET introduces citizens to a culture of learning and provides them with the foundations for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for social and economic development, justice and equality. It also provides access to further and higher education, training and employment. The term itself subsumes both literacy and post-literacy as it seeks to connect literacy with basic (general) adult education on the one hand, and with training for income-generation on the other hand (Bhola, quoted in Department of Education, 1997a, 1).*

This description suggests that citizens are substantially disempowered by being illiterate and implies that ABET will enable them to function more effectively in society. Although one recognises that the thinking behind the statement is more nuanced than this, it suggests a level of helplessness or deficiency on the part of

illiterate adults. It is not, however, surprising that the modernist metanarrative should resurface through the state's intervention, for as Usher et al point out '... dedicated educational institutions ...' (Usher et al, 1997, 10) have played a powerful role as the legitimisers of modernity.

Except for the emphasis on income-generation, the role conceptualised for ABET is similar to that described by Roux in c.1946. The same pre-determined vision of progressive social improvement pertains and the means to achieve the vision is firmly placed within mass education. Where Roux employed accessible texts as the educational medium, the *Policy Document...* proposes standardised materials and formal classes. Because of the political context in the 1940's, Roux put forward an 'each one teach one' model of dissemination for Africa, but it is conceivable that he would have advocated a mass formal system had this been possible at that time. The ABET policy document can be said to be in tune with the modernising vision for a developed society. One must however acknowledge elements of change in the Department of Education's policy for ABET. It is for example stated that:

*ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences ...* (Department of Education, 1997a, 5).

This gesture towards flexibility is one of the redeeming elements which leaves the door open to pluralistic educational interventions taking place. Flexibility and addressing specific needs is not, however, coherent with the Department's delivery practice, which is a closely controlled replica of the formal school system. Success is, for example, monitored in terms of sustained classroom numbers and examination results. The Department of Education's modernist surveillance in Public Adult Learning Centres has presumably been instituted in the wake of past unaccountability and inefficiency. The Department's Multi-year Implementation Plan (1997) specifies ambitious numbers of 'learner successes' as the sole indicator of progress between now and 2001. Herein lies a problem.

Brian Street (1993) has distinguished what he calls an 'ideological model' of literacy from one which is 'autonomous'. His position acknowledges that literacy is not a uniform technology (autonomous), but is rather a multiplicity of practices carried out within a diverse set of social contexts. Progress therein is not likely to be measurable using a uniform tool - the examination. Street takes issue with the adopted guise of neutrality of the autonomous model and this is relevant to the implementation model of the ABET Policy. Street notes that learners should not:

*... merely be given the kind of formal, schooled literacy with which policy-makers are familiar ... Delivering such formalised literacy will not lead to empowerment, will not facilitate jobs and will not create social mobility. [He also notes the high drop out rates of school-type literacy classes as a symptom that] ... people themselves see this more quickly and acutely than do planners (Street in Prinsloo, 1996, 5-6).*

Street's 'ideological' model of literacy also reveals problems in the assumption that all adults want redress and lifelong learning in the generalised terms offered by state qualifications.

The logistical dictates of redress, reconstruction and development demand however that progress is shown to be made and that it be made swiftly. It must also be justifiable in rational empirical and costing terms through numbers. This is not an unjustifiable position to take if one focuses for a moment on the issue of redress. For most of this century the political, social and educational institutions of South Africa have restrained the employability and economic progress of the African and coloured majority. In the light of this situation, and coupled with the qualifications criteria of Western industrialised societies, a system for awarding, articulating and equivilating qualifications has been developed (the National Qualifications Framework) for which inexpensive mass assessment in terms of pre-ordinate criteria is an essential part. Financially and logistically, the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework is regarded as the most viable system for streamlining education and training, employment and human resources

development in South Africa. There is neither the budget nor the personnel capacity to engage in non-formal, developmental ABET which is sensitive to local needs. The postmodern discourse of lifelong learning and flexible career-pathing presupposes that all educational offerings will lead to qualifications. Thus the gesture towards a flexible postmodern vision in the *Policy Document on ABET* requires an essentially modernist monitoring structure, which is likely to jeopardise flexibility.

The modernising pre-requisites of the metanarrative continue to exercise their power, in this instance through the demands for qualification, progression and accreditation in the workplace. The practical result is mass delivery of an autonomous model of literacy or ABET. There are parallels with Roux's project. Both visions are firmly embedded within the Western modernising metanarrative; the metanarrative constructs society as in need of remediation, and those who have been disempowered as capable of 'catching up'; this it requires them to do in the terms of the hegemonic ruling narrative. There is however a broad shift in emphasis. Where Roux focused on personal psychological empowerment and covert transition to the cultural norms of the West through education, the shift suggested in the ABET policy is overt but primarily envisaged as taking place through economic empowerment. This is further emphasised in the knowledge areas chosen for the curriculum.

The visionary language of the ABET Policy is reminiscent of Roux's learner discourse in that it masks its legislative impact and its subjectification of 'under-educated' adults. Opposition to the vision or its implementation is subject to another risk - that of being accused of opposing redress. What the vision for ABET in the 1990's fails to acknowledge, however, is the potential for its own failure in its own terms of learner success and social impact, if the multiplicity of literacy needs amongst illiterate adults, identified in the SoUL research conducted locally within the New Literacy Studies paradigm, is not taken into account.

Although the ABET curriculum contains some similarities to Roux's, it shows some significant differences. Usher et al note that postmodern adult education is constructed as self-consciously more sensitive to plurality of context.

*As education in the postmodern becomes detached from legitimising grand narratives, it becomes increasingly implicated with specific cultural contexts, on localised and particularised knowledges, on the needs of consumption and the cultivation of desire and on the valuing of a multiplicity of experience as an integral part of defining a lifestyle (Usher et al, 1997, 15).*

To what extent is this applicable to the ABET curriculum? Street argues that a dynamically interactive combination of local and centralised literacies and knowledges may be a successful conceptualisation for adult basic education policy. A combination of local and centralised knowledges is made possible by the conceptualisation of the curriculum framework adopted in South Africa. Sets of Unit Standards or outcomes comprising general skills are being developed; the responsibility for locating them in local or work-specific contexts is devolved to the educator who is encouraged to draw on knowledge relevant to the learners.

Presently eight broad learning areas have been selected for ABET; more are envisaged but at present, the selected learning areas are:

- *language, literacy and communication;*
- *mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences;*
- *human and social sciences;*
- *natural sciences;*
- *technology;*
- *economic and management sciences;*
- *life orientation; and*
- *arts and culture*<sup>1</sup> (Department of Education, 1997a, 21).

When compared to Roux's curriculum of c.1936, there is much that is continuous with these learning areas although Roux envisaged that every adult should have a broad general knowledge rather than an occupation-specific selection of knowledge and skills. In the ABET curriculum, learners are not expected to cover this entire framework, but a qualification is expected to include a range of learning areas selected according to a set of 'rules of combination'. This policy proposes that the traditional learning areas can be categorised according to three orders of role in an adult's life. They are either tools for learning e.g. language, they provide contextual knowledge or they develop occupational skills. Although the quantitative relationship of the rules of combination is still contested and to be determined by the South African Qualifications Authority, it is suggested that ABET qualifications be made up of offerings from all three categories of knowledge and competence: fundamental (language and numeracy), contextual (e.g. social studies) and elective (occupational skills and knowledge e.g. small and medium size business enterprise).

Philosophically, the model signals a substantial theoretical shift in the direction of postmodernity; it attempts to allow a level of plurality at the point of application of Unit Standards to relevant contexts. Thus far however, this plurality is conceptualised as the responsibility of each of the nine provinces. This assumes that differentiation only occurs between these arbitrary geographical boundaries and not within them, which thwarts the potential for plurality. The issue of assessment of outcomes across contexts particularly with regard to the contextual and elective categories remains problematic too. Educators continue to grapple with the question of whether contextual learning areas e.g. social studies or natural sciences, can be studied and assessed without the expectation that the learner should bring a 'store' of knowledge or scientific principles to the assessment.

In Roux's curriculum vision, it was the image of the 'modern, rational educated man' which drove him towards his broad selection of general knowledge; in his conception of progress it was health, nutrition, modern farming methods and self-esteem which were foregrounded because the issues of political equality and

better employment conditions were beyond his reach. What is significant however, is that unemployment was not an issue in the 1940's. In the 1990's equality at least at a formal level has been achieved, and the greatest source of inequality remains economic. Progress and development today seems to be conceptualised in terms of national economic development and its concomitant trickle-down effect. Unsurprisingly the unarticulated rules which appear to legitimate the more specialised offerings of ABET qualifications today seem to be largely economy-driven. Adults do not have time and the state does not have the resources in the immediate future to provide a wide-ranging education and training foundation; unemployment is a major priority and economic competitiveness requires human resources in particular areas of the economy which are to be identified and which will be the primary areas for state support; the information age is upon us and knowledge resources will always be there when needed: adults must be taught to access information; lifelong learning is the watchword, and ABET is really just a lever to manoeuvre adults onto the lifelong learning track: after that it is their own responsibility; economic improvement of under-educated adults is at the heart of development of ABET at this level, and social remediation, it is believed, will follow. It is a changed vision from Roux's, driven by economic realities and a sense of political urgency. It does however have all the characteristics of a late-capitalist vision of society, where the state provides resources which build the economy in global terms and the citizens are largely responsible for their own social development.

In comparison, Roux afforded little space for local knowledge, advocating general knowledge as the key to transformation. This is an interesting contrast: while Roux was trying to bring African adults, outsiders to Western cultural discourse, into that discourse in order to empower them in society, the current ABET policy prescribes nothing in terms of context, leaving these decisions to the provincial authorities and educators. This could in theory give scope to the educator to draw on local knowledges but there are some difficulties contained within this strategy: first of all, educators and authorities have been schooled according to 'the Western cultural model' and a particular selection of schooled knowledge; they are therefore likely

to reproduce it; and secondly, local knowledges can, at some levels, restrict access to information. It falls therefore to the educator to interpret the 'needs' of the learners. Roux on the other hand used narrow, context-specific descriptions of the fields of knowledge to be covered e.g.'elementary facts about his body including nutrition, sanitation, cause and prevention of diseases, particularly tuberculosis and syphilis '(Roux, c.1936, 16) signalling a pre-ordinate and very particular construction of the learners.

Roux did not advocate an occupational dimension as does the ABET curriculum - possibly because unemployment was not the issue; the ABET system formulates its curriculum in terms of occupational roles, a move which is coherent with Usher's analysis of postmodern adult education strategy. Roux's focus was in fact more upon social and psychological remediation than on economic empowerment, which seems to be at the heart of the ABET policy's concept of development. I shall return to substantiate this claim further into the discussion.

Although the ABET curriculum, a set of broad outcome statements or unit standards which are envisaged as applicable to local knowledge contexts may appear to be less imposing on the adult learner, they must be read within the broader aims of 'reconstruction, development and social transformation' (Department of Education, 1997a, 9); in these terms they are as firmly embedded within a developmental 'catch-up' discourse as Roux's proposal. The emphasis has however shifted from the social to the economic, not because of any cultural critique of the imposition of Western values, but because of a strategic shift in the means of achieving modernist resocialisation.

Comparatively, however the ABET curriculum is open-ended and makes Roux's look more discipline-based and prescriptive than when viewed in isolation. It is also notable that the potential for integration of education with local life contexts in the ABET curriculum has much in common with Roux's vision. It is likely however that the integrated conceptualisation of the ABET curriculum is in deference to the diversification of the job-market and not for the pragmatic reasons articulated by

Roux or for the purpose of redress proposed by Bernstein.

The ABET curriculum framework gives few clues to the construction of the adult learners who are envisaged, and the deficits which are to be addressed because of the generality of its categories. The extent to which the skills and knowledge selected for the ABET project will be culturally sensitive and affirming of the prospective learners, who are primarily African and coloured adults from rural contexts, will be determined by local educators' insight and training; practice will indicate the extent to which ABET policy has moved from a position of universalising Western modernist norms. This sensitivity to the learners' desires may, however operate at different levels; the valuing of local knowledge may take place at a micro-level (in the lessons themselves for example) as it did to some extent within Roux's texts, but the thrust may remain to acculturate learners into the same Western modernising norms, without cognisance of their desires.

This is a critical issue in relation to publishing learner materials for mass audiences. If one takes the intent of *The Sixpenny Library*, which was to reach mass audiences, it could not but homogenize its readers and speak to them as if they had uniform cultural and educational experience, much as the newspapers do. This remains an unavoidable tension for contemporary educational publishing, although some solutions have been achieved at lesson level. This will be discussed in terms of USWE's *Changing Lives*.

Usher et al note that knowledge acquisition in postmodern projects is primarily valued for its 'performativity'.

*This is usually taken to mean that the purpose of knowledge is the optimising of efficient performance ... The activities of professionals become, and this is obviously significant for the situation adult education practitioners find themselves in, increasingly governed by managerialism and the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. Skilled performance embodied in 'competences' becomes an increasingly significant part of the agenda and*

*an increasingly important and valued outcome of learning (Usher et al, 1997, 13-14).*

This postmodern trajectory is recognisable in the Department of Education's implementation plan for ABET, and in the endorsement of an outcomes-led competence-driven education and training model for the country as a whole. Usher however makes some observations about the competence-led model of education and training, noting its tendency to institute '... continuously expanding surveillance ...' (Usher et al, 1997, 84) in the form of self-monitoring.

*Learner-centredness is part of the rationale, evoking the need for individuals to be active, to take responsibility for their own learning ... But, in operating within this hybrid yet knowledgeable discourse, learners also become subjects of their own surveillance, sitting in judgement upon themselves, defined through behaviourally framed competences, disciplined through self-discipline (Usher et al, 1997, 84).*

I noted this phenomenon in Roux's night classes, where adult learners started to take hold of the discourse of Western society and demand Junior Certificate classes. In that instance, it was they who assessed the discourse and acted within its terms. In the ABET policy context, this self-surveillance is built into the transaction, and is presented as learner empowerment. This again points to the ambiguous nature of empowering the learner within any educational system and suggests that we are still, in practice, harnessed to modernist modes of social control. The vision expressed within the ABET Policy does, however, offer some opportunities for taking adults' own needs into account within the educational transaction; it is the modernist practice of bureaucratising educational systems which is fundamentally inflexible, and the vision which it seeks to realise which works against the development of pluralistic culturally sensitive opportunities for ABET.

The outcome is that the metanarrative of redress and development in the current policy masks the arrangements of power within the transaction. It may, in fact, impose to an unprecedented degree on the educators and learners. The semblance of choice and autonomy offered by the competence-based system will in all likelihood harness the individual into the service of the state and require them to participate in the state's legislative and surveillance activities.

Having pointed to some discrepancies between policy and systemic practice, I shall turn to analysing two genres of ABET texts and contrast them with Roux's modernising model which I have set up as datum.

### **7.3 Issues which arise from an analysis of an 'easy reader'**

The second genre of contemporary text which I wish to discuss is an easy reader aimed at providing entertainment and practice reading opportunities for new literates. The University of Natal's Centre for Adult Education publication *No Space to Plant* (1992) represents an innovative mode in contemporary publications where the learners themselves are the originators of the issues and stories in the texts.

This book gives voice to local knowledge, a strategy which constitutes a significant divergence from Roux's textual offerings; the knowledge offered is not generalised or world knowledge, nor selected by the holder of power (the educator); it focuses on experience which may be comparable to that of some of the learners. There is, however, at one level continuity with Roux's project in the sense of honouring the lives of positive African role models.

The text of *No Space to Plant* is made up of biographical stories told by four women from a shack settlement community called Canaan. The approach demonstrates coherence with the theories of Paulo Freire in that ordinary peoples' experience, their problems and solutions are explored. The text resonates with authenticity and the particularities of these women's lives; there is also much to

learn from them in terms of humanity, courage in the face of difficulty and African cultural practices. The stories provide affirmation of the lives and experience of ordinary women through their being 'honoured' by a publication (in the discourse of the Western 'other'), and they provide culturally familiar content for the acquisition of reading skills practice in a second language. The latter appears to be sound educational practice in terms of teaching language skills within a familiar schema.

The potential impact of this intervention contrasts with that of *The Sixpenny Library*: Roux introduces the unfamiliar, the knowledge which he regards as necessary to provide passage into the alternate discourse. *No Space to Plant* makes a different move in terms of the discourses it engages: it provides individual perspectives, respects the learners' own life experiences and cultural contexts, but possibly to its detriment, it adds little that is new to the readers' experience except reading opportunities and affective response to different life experiences. What it does achieve is to translocate the readers' experience into the genre and mode of schooled literacy and literature for reading. Power is consequently redistributed into the hands of the four learners who wrote the book, Thandekile Memela, Gretta Ndukwane, Deliwe Phakathi and Tholo Qwabe who 'go ahead' into the alternate discourse, thus preparing the path for their fellow readers. The reader has to some extent been led to believe that 'these four women have taken on the alternative discourse, thus endorsing it. This subtle levering of learners from their own to the dominant discourse is merely stated to reinforce that power is never absent in these transactions, however we seek to affirm or include the learners.

The purpose of the texts is reading for entertainment, a genre which Roux and his contemporaries engaged infrequently. In Roux's project, reading and education focused primarily upon social problems, although literature had a place in the curriculum. Apart from *Great English Books and Writers* which is one of *The Sixpenny Library* series, two examples exist in his oeuvre - *James Mabeta Goes to Sea* and *The Cattle of Kumalo*. The latter is part of a continuing tradition of combining fiction and didactic material which is used by The New Readers Project

in *'What If It's Me?' Help with AIDS*. This booklet centres around teaching preventive measures and supportive attitudes in relation to AIDS. In it, one fictional character, Jack, finds out and discloses that he is HIV positive to his Bible Studies group.

The issue of discourse in texts for new literates is complex. As educators, inevitably engaged in a more or less intrusive and destructive cultural imposition, the questions arise: to what extent should one extend the learners' knowledge, and to what extent should we strengthen the learners' own self-image and confidence? This is an interesting issue in relation to Roux's project. He was determined that the knowledge he provided should be relevant to readers' lives.

He chose his content carefully, but because he was so committed to giving access to the Western cultural discourse, most of his offerings fell outside of the learners' own cultural experience.

Even the analysis of racism he undertook in *Colour and Cleverness...* was presented in terms of scientific evidence and rational argument. It was however his intent to provide access to new and (as far as he was concerned) important knowledge. One of the criticisms which could be levelled at the more Freirean approach of *No Space to Plant* would be that the learner is denied access to the wider range of knowledge which Roux advocated, and may be restricted through lack of contextual information. This would only be under circumstances where local knowledge becomes the only educational offering.

Street advocates that literacy educators should focus on '... the dynamic relationship between local and central, between specific literacy skills focused on immediate tasks and generic skills transferable situations ...' (Street in Prinsloo, 1996, 7). Publications such as *No Space to Plant* could be said to achieve this in part.

Yet, although this text dwells on the learners' experience, it does not follow Freire's critical pedagogy in the sense of questioning or debating the practices contained in the stories. This is not to say that a creative educator could not use the stories as codes to extend learners' critical thinking skills. The question arises whether stories about the learners' lives do not lose the opportunity of providing some of the 'general knowledge' which Roux regarded as so crucial to adult new literates. This raises the context within which this text is written.

Amongst the publications produced for new literates, the overwhelming majority are aimed at 'reading for pleasure' or providing stories. Stories produced in vernacular are also high on the agenda. There are some publications amongst Viva Books and the New Readers Project series which focus on civil rights and health issues e.g. *How we Vote*, *Government Pensions*, *Unfair Dismissal* and *Maintenance*. The majority are however fictional or biographical stories aimed at developing reading skills, entertaining and affirming readers' cultural and social experience.

The New Readers Project (founded in 1990), produces publications with the aim of researching the development of easy readers, as well as to 'promote a reading culture and to empower people by valuing their stories and demystifying the process of book production' (Harley, 1996a, 503). Amongst the reasons for publishing ABE material cited in this research, only Kwela Books speaks of 'Social obligation' and 'Growing public awareness' (Harley, 1996a, 504); this shorthand does not clarify whether the process of publication fulfils a social obligation, or whether the content thereof may be destined to do so. The other publishers primarily cite demand, culture of reading and fighting illiteracy as their aims.

This signals a different orientation to Roux's modernist universalising intent, not only in the decision to prioritise stories over 'essential knowledge', but also in choosing to publish in African languages as well as English. The question which one might ask in relation to this genre is whether the experience of the learners could play any further role than affirming the reader's personal experience and

providing a comforting cultural departure point before setting off along the same modernising cultural trajectory which Roux promoted. What would constitute an alternative endpoint to that of the Western modernising metanarrative? Is Roux's model of social remediation not needed more than ever at the end of the 1990's, as the economic gap developed by racial capitalism continues to widen?

#### **7.4 Issues which arise from an analysis of *Changing Lives***

USWE's set of four books called *Changing Lives* (1998), falls into the workbook genre of publication<sup>2</sup>; it could be compared to a combination of *The Sixpenny Library* and the *A B Adult Readers* but differs from Roux's texts in that it is task-led. The assumption is that there is an educator leading a group of adults through the book, but it could equally be used for independent study. The books focus on English Communication skills and Economics. The aims are:

*To help you to read, write, speak and understand English better [and] to help you find new ways of making a living* (USWE, Book 4, 1998, 5).

Through these texts, the learner is invited to discuss his or her home environment and experience e.g. by sharing problems which he or she experienced in the home environment (USWE, Book 1, 1998, 33). Many of the reading texts are also short case study descriptions of local knowledge accompanied by photographs e.g. Zelpha Ndeleni's experience of changes in the village of Cofimvaba (USWE, Book 3, 1998, 31), which lend a sense of authenticity to the series.

Across the series, but particularly in Book 1, the tasks focus on the experience of leaving the rural areas for the city and affirm the learners' local cultural experience as well as the life that was left behind. The topics chosen do, however, demonstrate some fairly restrictive presuppositions e.g. that most readers would have moved from country to city or that most readers would need housing.

Yet the discourse which emerges from the first two books values the learners'

individual experience in a number of ways, and although it encourages the learners to envision their ideal living conditions, it does not posit any grand solutions. The authors were no doubt faced with the same problem as Roux, of developing texts to suit a diversity of learners. In this regard, one must recognise that no text could offer sufficient flexibility for the diversity of learners envisaged within the ABET project. The alternative, of producing textual material for educators which allows greater scope for adaptation and choice, is an attractive possibility, but is hampered by commercial publishers' need to harness economies of scale to make their production viable. It is also subject to the expertise of the educators.

The writers do not confine the text to learner experiences, but link it skilfully to 'new knowledge' in Book 1, in the form of historical questions of land ownership in South Africa (USWE, Book 1, 1998, 41-58). Critical thinking is required in relation to this new factual information, as is problem-solving in terms of fairly complex conceptual issues. This particular educational linkage between the learners' experience and new information is very successful.

The focus of the third book is the local economy and its relationship with the national and world economy including issues like globalisation; the final book aims to '... help you find new ways of making a living and plan how to set up a small business' (USWE, 1998a, 5).

The selectors of knowledge for this series may be presumed to be the curriculum developers or writers, guided by their observations of the economic and social needs of new literate adult learners; in terms of language communication, the writers/educators were obliged to interpret a set of Unit Standards for ABET at Level 3, which had been consultatively developed over the previous few years.

The metanarrative within the ABET Policy, that it should address social and economic need in a spirit of redress, is visible at a macro-level across the series. This implies that the economic situation in which millions of underclass African and

'coloured' learners find themselves could be changed if the learners understood the economic workings of the world and embarked on a small business project.

This metanarrative implies a set of assumptions about the learners' needs: they have recently moved from the country; they are living under miserable conditions; they are in the main unemployed (which is not their fault); they are accommodated in poor housing and they can aspire to do something about it by working collectively. The discourse of 'need' alerts one to the likelihood that once again, policy-makers and educators, playing their all-powerful modernist role, have prescribed what they see as likely to bring enlightenment. This is, however, too univalent a conclusion to reach.

Although the original conceptualisation of the series may have much in common with Roux's project, the educational strategy has shifted substantially and therewith the formation of the subjectivity of the learners. Instead of the educator (Roux) offering a friendly hand and leading the adult learner all the way through the 'talking text', the learners are invited to insert themselves and their own experience into the texts. The formation of the text or educational intervention contains the learner and educator. This methodological approach repeatedly throws the learner back into his or her own local experience, thus retaining (or simulating) the sense of the learner determining his or her own path. This to some extent gives voice to subjugated knowledge, although as I have implied, this may be more an illusion than actual learner-choice.

At a macro-level, choice of what the learner wishes to learn is restricted. At a micro-level, personal and local experience features prominently in the series. Within the workbooks, the expression of individual feelings, consumer desires and critical reflexivity are all accommodated, but there is little humour or enjoyment envisaged in the process. The overriding impression is that the process of education is still as serious as it was in Roux's intervention. This seems to be a hangover from the historical past or a reflection of real issues in the readers' lives.

Within the individual workbooks, there seems to be an attempt to avoid providing univocal solutions to personal or development problems. Instead, a list of resources is provided, and the learner is left to make his or her own choices. General knowledge is perhaps the weakest point in Books 1 and 2; beyond the history of the land question (USWE, Book 1, 1998, 41-74), little new knowledge is offered. Books 3 and 4 are more challenging in terms of new concepts such as 'resources', 'local and national economies', 'foreign exchange', 'the global economy' and some of the problems contained by these interrelationships. New knowledge is mediated through making the text accessible, through frequent linking to the learners' own experience, through the themes that have been chosen and through the layout and design. Although some learners may be experienced in the area of small business enterprise, it is mediated through a Western 'schooled' discourse and may therefore be defamiliarised.

As regards a flexible response to learners' own individualised literacy needs, as conceptualised by the Social Uses of Literacy theorists, one must acknowledge that the capacity of a text-led programme (which has been developed to meet a set of predetermined outcomes) to take account of this issue is limited. This series attempts to address varied learner needs by using a variety of tasks to teach a range of skills which are set in different contexts. One is forced to admit that the level of flexibility which the South African ABET project requires is not particularly viable through standardised texts, without the mediation of many versatile and competent educators. Ultimately, USWE's *Changing Lives*, like any ABET publication, must respond to the bureaucratising thrust of the ABET system, led by examination outcomes.

To what extent does the series present a universalising view of the world and how does the project construct its learners? In the main, Books 1, 2 and 3 in the series are presented relatively neutrally, without promoting any particular solutions to the learners. There are, however, intimations of the metanarrative, for example in titles like 'Building the Future' (USWE, Book 2, 1998, 94); there is also a consistent undercurrent within which the authors take the part of the learners in issues of civil

rights.

There is a level of debate and critical thinking contained within the series, e.g. The conflict of interests between the local community of the Louwsberg area in KwaZulu Natal and the Treeco Forestry Company, (USWE, Book 3, 81-112), but there is little critical debate about the South African economy, possibly because of the conceptual limitations arising from the language level. What is in effect being mediated in Book 3 is a framework for understanding a few 'essential' economic concepts, but not for viewing the system critically. It is, however, in the structure of the series that the metanarrative becomes apparent.

Between Books 1 and 3, the content moves from the individualised and familiar world of the learner to the global economy. This structure is almost symbolic of the process of redress and development - of moving from a problem-filled individual context through a transformative process into '... the big wide world of ...' (Rollnick, 1956, 2) economy. Book 4, simply by virtue of its culminating position in the series, appears to be offered as the solution to all the preceding problems. The conflation of development and economic empowerment is paramount in this metanarrative which culminates in the educators providing the learners with the means to 'do it themselves'.

The new metanarrative which the ABET and national economic sector appear to have constructed is that small business enterprise offers the solution to South Africa's unemployment and underdevelopment problems. Becoming a small business person is advocated on the basis of the national imperative, to make the local economy '... stronger and healthier by creating and running small businesses ...'(USWE, 1998, 6).

The choice of small business, often termed 'Small and Medium Level Enterprise' is not particular to this series and is part of the national totalising metanarrative of development; it has been selected as one of the first 'elective' category areas for ABET, and Unit Standards were completed in late 1998. This series has

presumably been developed to meet a need identified by educational and economic policy developers. At the micro-level, in terms of choosing a business idea, the adult learner is offered relative freedom of choice. However, in Foucault's terms, this is apparent rather than actual freedom of choice. The institutions which weigh upon the learner at a macro-level, as well as the narrative of redress, of universalising social improvement through ABET, creates very similar power arrangements to those identified in Roux's transaction.

The recognition of plurality of cultural experience is therefore evident at task-level within this series of texts. Thereafter, one needs to question whether, having been duly affirmed, the adult learners are not being set on the same unitary modernising Western road delineated by Roux in the 1940's. In spite of the educators' attempt to move beyond totalising notions of social solutions, the metanarrative which is embedded in the structure of *Changing Lives* is too powerful to be ignored. Nevertheless within the books, there is also recognition of the significance of partial perspectives rather than the achievement of all-embracing knowledge and universal assertions.

In certain ways, Roux's vision accorded the learner more agency to choose a solution than does this programme. The learners implicated in *Changing Lives* are constructed as disempowered by their lack of education and employment in a range of social contexts. Their equality and humanity is not however in question. The texts affirm their experience and potential. The solutions which are provided imply that substantial agency is required on their part; it is they who must research and act on their problems. The vision for development is primarily economic and the problem of development is shifted onto the shoulders of the ABET learner. The small business opportunity is presented in terms of finding out '... how to strengthen the local economy by creating and running small businesses' (USWE, Book 4, 1998, 6).

The participants are encouraged to do their bit for development by creating their own wealth through establishing small businesses. The flow of power within the

transaction is far more than in Roux's context, in the sense that the learner's voice and agency is given more visibility within the transaction. The potential of development through mass initiatives in the small business arena remains however an ambitious vision and claim.

In the learner texts of the 1990's, the writers are generally more sensitive than Roux to diversity and to the learners' own personal and cultural experience. Although the aim of induction into a Westernised economic or language context has not fundamentally changed, those elements from the learners' local environment which can be accommodated are accommodated. Writers are more sensitive to the learners' own context and possibly use Freire's principles as the starting point. ABET remains, however, a process of inducting learners into a predominantly Western model of development.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This analysis of three genres of contemporary texts in relation to the grand narrative of the Enlightenment suggests that there has been considerable movement in the development of educational transactions in texts in the 1990's. The learners are far more present in the conceptualisation of the texts and local and subjugated knowledge is acknowledged and sometimes even dominates. The issue of textual offerings being to some extent limiting has been creatively addressed, but there would be further scope if publishing were not so dependent on mass production of learner texts and was able to concentrate upon providing support material for educators. Curriculum is pared down to a generalised framework of learning areas in order to allow local knowledge to take its place. The problems inherent in educator autonomy when faced with this openness and choice are still to be played out, but reproduction of the educator's past experience is one of the risks.

Whether we are simply substituting new totalising mythologies for old will be seen in the curriculum choices and courses which receive primary attention from the

ABET institution in the years to come. It seems at this point that the metanarrative of redress through economic development presents the greatest risk in terms of its hegemonic adoption by educators and learners alike.

In addition, the bureaucratising and rationalisation processes which are required at state level also promise to impose heavily upon the opportunities and desires of adult learners, even if at text level learners are offered ostensible voice and choices. It is the genealogy of the emergent development metanarrative which may be the most fruitful area for research, in order to assess the extent to which institutional power continues to govern invisibly the choices of adult learners while cloaked in the discourse of redress and empowerment.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) In the ABET policy, 'culture' is appended to the 'arts' as a learning area: this raises concern about the interpretation which is being given to 'culture'. What is possibly suggested through this combination is the Western liberal conceptualisation of culture as something practised as a distinct part of social life, rather than a more integrated conceptualisation of culture as the discourse in which one's broader activities are embedded.
- (2) Books 1 and 2 have been substantially revised based on learners' and educators' feedback; Books 3 and 4 are likely to follow the same trial-testing route.

# CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUSIONS

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### 8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall present my conclusions on the ambiguities inherent in creating learning opportunities for adults which arise from the case study of Roux's intervention and the analysis of three genres of text from the 1990's.

I shall summarise the conclusions I reached in my analysis of Roux's intervention and assess the value of the case study for this research purpose. I shall also review the lessons which I extracted from this case study and summarise my conclusions in relation to the ABET policy and some materials development initiatives of the 1990's. It is my hope that the lessons which emerge from this analysis may serve as a possible framework through which to scrutinise new ABET projects as they are developed.

Finally, I shall tentatively suggest the need for a particular kind of research in order to understand the desires of the learners or consumers of ABET programmes more fully.

### 8.2 Conclusions from the case study

I set out to explore the ambiguities inherent in creating learning opportunities for adults through a case study of the project of Edward Roux in the 1940's in South Africa. I did so by selecting and analysing the discourse repertoires in a set of texts which he wrote for adult learners and about adult education. Through analysing these discourses, I was able to delineate some of his assertions about literacy, education and knowledge and to reconstruct the metanarrative in which the

intervention was embedded.

The metanarrative which was constructed by the discourses had much in common with the Enlightenment world view; Roux's construction was, however, a particular version thereof, delineated by personal biography, educational convictions and a commitment to human equality. I compared it to another analysis by Leon de Kock of the modernising discourse of missionary educators at Lovedale College. I found that Roux's construction of the learners differed substantially, yet the same modernising trajectory is detectable. Whereas the missionary discourse presented African learners as deeply deprived but also lower on the evolutionary scale than themselves, Roux constructed them as educationally lacking. In the missionaries' discourses, their learners are constructed in terms of certain African cultural practices which are regarded as 'barbaric'; they conflate the modernising discourse and education in particular with Christian redemption and the imposition of prescriptive Western manners. Roux on the other hand constructs the adult learners as 'in need' but regards them as starting from a position of equality in everything but access to knowledge and power. Instead of Christian mythology, Roux conflates education with Western culture, but more in the sense of development of technology and science; he offers a rationalist creed.

The cultural elements which Roux and the missionary educators offer to adult learners - education, English with its particular cultural baggage and rational behaviour - are the same, but the construction of each element is different. Roux's orientation is to mass education, while his missionary predecessors were engaged in training a small exclusive cadre of proselytes. The missionary discourse places high value on the social mores of English society whereas Roux regards English as the mechanism or tool whereby adults can get access to essential information.

Education and knowledge are also differently constructed: Roux focuses on applicable, practical knowledge, rather than on the disciplining or controlling capacity of knowledge, or knowledge for its own sake. It is, however, in their educational approach, that these adult educators are most at variance, and most

similar. Roux projects his concern for the empowerment of the learners; the mission discourse suggests that they are engaged in duty. Both are committed to a 'moral' task.

What is striking within this comparison is that the impact of the modernising discourse, regardless of its harsher or gentler construction, is very similar. Its totalising capacity, which many critical theorists point to, has a tendency to neutralise critical scrutiny. The Enlightenment metanarrative had gathered its credibility from centuries of philosophical conviction; it seemed potentially beyond question, to be reality itself, which discourse was then imposed on the learners. The modernising metanarrative with its ostensibly moral trajectory or 'will to truth' as Foucault put it, underpins both Roux's and the missionaries' projects with their commitment to the development of human beings in seemingly adverse circumstances. In the course of this conflation, the tendency towards imposition is masked, and the implications for power become invisible.

Embedded within this metanarrative is the construction of African adult men as oppressed and disempowered; they are presented thus, primarily because of their lack of Western, modernist, scientific education and culture. With urgency, Roux set about preparing learner materials which would enable adult learners to gain this essential knowledge, which in terms of the metanarrative, promised to provide the solution to their situation of disempowerment.

In the course of this analysis, I explored the ways in which discourse surrounds the players in the transaction; neither may be aware of the tensions and ambiguities within the transactions. Read in these terms, it has become apparent that Roux's conflation of education and Western culture resulted in an intervention which initially appeared to be sensitive and appropriate for its time, but which was in practice prescriptive and placed the learners' epistemology in jeopardy or excluded it. Equality, rational interaction, Western-style schooling and curriculum and a body of socially applicable knowledge coupled with the ability to read in English were his solutions to the disempowered situation of adult Africans. The exclusion of

political critique within the texts is significant, in that it affords enormous potential power to particular forms of knowledge such as rationalism. Through rational argument, it is implied, we can contest and perhaps even eliminate irrational racial discrimination.

Only through assuming a stance of incredulity towards the metanarrative in the case study, has it been possible to reveal that an educator of immense personal integrity was so immersed in discourse, that he was unable to see the level of imposition within his project. Deriving from the 'enlightening' capacity of the metanarrative, his intentions appeared as fundamentally good; the same has been assumed of the adult education project itself. In addition, I must conclude that it was partly his political identity and strong egalitarian stance, which endorsed the identity of his project.

Herein lies the ambiguity within the modernist educator's intervention - he is so sure of the positive intentions of his project, that he has no reservations about predetermining what is good for the learner. The learner's relationship with the imposition, it was speculated, was likely to have been agonistic, simultaneous acceptance and resistance. There is some evidence of this in the learners' demand for classes which would lead to certification, against the educator's wishes.

The weakness in this case study results from the fact that I have not located data on the learners' response except for this anecdote and Rollnick's evaluation of the failure of *The Sixpenny Library*. The learners' relationship with the educational offering was also, however, one of substantial ambiguity inasmuch as they would probably have been attracted by the perceived benefits and power of this alternative discourse, without necessarily recognising the concomitant disempowerment to which they were likely to be subjected.

In the course of this analysis, it was important to give recognition to the totalising power of Roux's project, and the identity assumed by the educator as the source of knowledge and cultural power. Roux's selection of knowledge functioned as a

key area in determining the nature of the imposition in this analysis. Knowledge choices or curriculum was an area which concerned him greatly, and to which he returned regularly. So too was the issue of making reading easier by developing a form of accessible English. His ongoing concern was in fact to cut away the superfluous and to present learners with only the essential general knowledge which would bring equality and liberation.

Through adopting a critical stance to the metanarrative, one has been able to tear apart the constructed identity of the educator as parent or social redeemer, which has had the effect of to some extent disempowering adult learners. In Brian Street's Preface to *The Social Uses of Literacy* (1996) he cites Kell's assertion (1994) that failure to recognise peoples' own social literacies 'infantilises' them (Street, 1994, 4); equally however, failure to acknowledge the cultural and social experience of the adult has much the same impact - of rendering adults (to the educator, public and the student him or herself) as underdeveloped and needy.

The case study of Edward Roux's adult education intervention has, I believe, been appropriate as a field within which to address the research question. It has offered specific and concentrated data which has made it possible to identify the metanarrative and its power within the educational transaction. Because Roux's intervention was text-based, it has provided a substantial resource of discourse repertoires within which to confirm my interpretation. Roux's concentration on a text-based intervention has also been relevant in the sense that it provides the opportunity to compare a major area of educational intervention in the 1990's - text-based education or materials development.

The case study has however been inadequate in meeting the demands of this research question in one major respect: the lack of learner discourses makes my discussion of the impact of the power arrangements which arise from the metanarrative, both tentative and speculative. In this sense, triangulation of the research findings has not been possible. The absence of this data suggests areas for further research which will be discussed in the next section.

### 8.3 Further research possibilities

In the course of evaluating the research object - the case study of Roux's intervention - it has become apparent that the lack of learner responses to his texts or those provided by various ABET projects is problematic and hinders efficacy in a growing field. Prinsloo also points to this problem noting that:

*Writings that have literacy as their main focus have been mostly about literacy provision, or lack thereof, rather than an exploration of the social effects of its acquisition, use or lack thereof (Prinsloo, 1995, 451).*

In terms of research, this suggests that much could be learnt from making public the learners' observations on existing texts; USWE, for example has trial tested two of the *Changing Lives* workbooks, and a case study derived from their findings would be of great value. Much could be learnt if this form of data were to be gathered and disseminated rather than simply used to revise the texts in question.

Equally, research should be conducted into models of course-design wherein past and present ABET learners are asked to participate. This proposal has, however, within it the potential for its own constraint, in that the learners who are outside of the discourse will find it difficult to discuss the discourse. Equally, those who have been inducted into it, may project the internalised values of the discourse too powerfully to make any significant comments on behalf of un-inducted learners.

### 8.4 Conclusions on the ABET policy and materials of the 1990's

The application of the first set of conclusions about Roux's project, to three genres of contemporary text has yielded divergent conclusions correlating with the aims of the respective text-developers. What emerges in this analysis is that the Department of Education text is, in spite of its sensitivity to issues of flexibility and diversity, driven by the broad political and economic development agenda. In relation to this goal, the tendency is to attach immense promise to the proposed

ABET policy, and to become trapped in the mythology of developmental justification. The legislative capacity of the policy has, in practice, been harnessed to the enlightenment project and its disempowering aspects are barely visible on account of the positive developmental identity of that project.

The essentially modernist processes of rationalising and streamlining the chaos of parallel education departments and training systems through the construction of the National Qualifications Framework has become one of the leading projects for the Department of Education. Substantial emphasis is being placed on systematising and making the educational process rational; this process acquires its apparently positive ethos from the modernising metanarrative. By this, I do not mean to imply that, simply because it is a modernising process, it is destructive. It is rather that inherent in the conditions of modernity is a tendency to resort to bureaucratic, efficient, rational action in the name of development and thereby the distribution of power may be obscured; in this instance, it may happen under the guise of providing equality and redress<sup>1</sup>.

Because of the capacity of metanarratives to mask the resultant conditions of power, one needs to be wary of the totalising tendencies of bureaucratic systems. In this regard, I also put forward Usher et al's cautionary observation, that competence-led outcomes-based education, with its assertions about recognising prior experience and freeing the individual to follow his or her own learning trajectory, institutes another masked and very subtle level of imposition. The individual learner becomes a self-monitoring, self-disciplining member of the educational community, and instead of the ostensible flexibility which the system is supposed to offer, the loop of surveillance is completed, without alerting the participants to their own collaboration therein.

Another assertion which I put forward, arising from my analysis of the ABET policy and its intertextual relationship with USWE's *Changing Lives*, is that the ABET sector, driven by the national metanarrative of reconstruction, has placed small business enterprise education into the same redemptive position that Roux placed

knowledge, and the missionaries placed Christianity. For the past four years, politicians, economists and development specialists have articulated, in a range of ways, the discourse that small business development is the best hope for the economic development of the unemployed<sup>2</sup>. The construction and status of the informal sector has over the past four years been in a state of reconstruction and redemption, particularly through its institutionalisation by the state. Small business development has gained the status of a solution to the perceived unemployment crisis in which urban ABET learners find themselves. The pressure on the Department of Education to locate viable opportunities for occupational training within ABET is a contributing factor.

This analysis is not intended to demonise this option, but rather to signal that small business development fits easily into the metanarrative of development as economic empowerment, with its potential for self-sustainability; but if viewed unproblematically, it could become a new ideology which consumes educators' energy and which again promises too much. Entry into the field of small business does not pre-judge and constrain the options of ABET learners at a micro-level, but at a macro-level, the process is highly co-ordinated and controlled. At the same time, it is a postmodern option in the sense that the learners are enabled to initiate their own projects within their own cultural spaces and thereby serve their own needs while contributing to economic development of the country; more cynically, however, it relieves the state of further responsibility for the well-being of the unemployed.

It is also, to some extent an expedient imposition in that it is one of the few options which the ABET sector has identified thus far as an occupational option for adult learners at a basic level. Contrasted with Roux's project, social remediation has become the affair of the economically empowered adult and no longer the central indicator of progress.

Regarding the selection of knowledge, topics and issues, it must be concluded that both groups of text-developers (USWE and Centre for Adult Education, University

of Natal) have shifted from the educator-led discourse wherein Roux selected the topics from the field of general knowledge to one where plurality of desire, local and hidden knowledge and everyday learner-experience are affirmed. Their inclusion of the learners' voices, experience and input is significantly different. What emerges in this comparison is that the degree of flexibility and affirmation of the local varies both in accordance with the text-genre, but also in relation to how closely the texts are integrated with the broad ABET system. The reading text operates within a context where less is at stake both financially and in terms of meeting learner needs: this also contributes to its relative freedom of choice and greater affinity with the postmodern stance.

The writers of *Changing Lives* and *No Space to Plant* show more sensitivity to diversity and individual experience than was evident in Roux's texts, giving recognition to the learners' own personal and cultural experience. One might however argue that in *Changing Lives*, the theme of transition still seems to act as induction into a Western social and cultural context.

Usher et al posit an alternative identity for adult learners which offers a necessary re-orientation on the part of the educator. He argues that if we construct learners as consumers, as individuals with desires and agency, we will be taking an important step towards registering the learner's stake in the educational transaction. He cites the modernist tendency to exploit the linguistic binary opposites of justifiable, heroic, rational and truth-seeking needs as opposed to unserious or frivolous learner desires<sup>3</sup>.

*That learners make choices based on desire (including the desire to be optimally positioned in the market) rather than a search for enlightenment and the mastery of a canon of knowledge can no longer be automatically be considered perverse and uneducational. To do so is to claim that this is not what education is really about and this itself is based on the assumption that there is an ideal model of education and that education is itself directed by a set of transcendental ideals. It is to see adult learning from a purely*

*educational frame of reference as the systematic selection and delivery of learning experiences predefined by the professional educator. But the postmodern attitude would argue that this is a dangerously oppressive totalising discourse which assumes learning is a gift bestowed by enlightened pedagogues. Whilst, as adult educators, we might well want to foreground the empowering potential of education, we need to see educational forms contextually rather than transcendently, and we need to reassess the place of pedagogues within this (Usher et al, 1997, 26).*

The investigation of texts from the 1990's is necessarily brief and does not constitute an evaluation of their potential, but rather an attempt to look at their continuity with or divergence from the modernising metanarrative identified in Edward Roux's project. In the penultimate section, I shall summarise some of the analytical tools gained from my analysis of Roux's project, and from Usher et al's publication on the challenge of postmodernity for adult educators.

### **8.5 Some questions<sup>4</sup> for the analysis of ABET projects**

Through my analysis and reading, I have become conscious of a set of issues with which adult educators should concern themselves, if they wish to avoid becoming the perpetrators of modernist metanarratives. I put them forward as a tentative offering towards greater reflexivity in the practice of materials development.

In developing texts, one would certainly need to understand the desires of the learners and be conscious of the tendency of educators to prescribe solutions to other peoples' problems or needs. One could assess whether there is a predetermined, unitary or univocal vision of the world or of progress to which the text or educational programme seeks to give access or whether the text accommodates plurality. If such a predetermined vision is operative, the educator should be conscious that this is likely to curtail choice, impose the vision of the powerful and mask the process of imposition.

Alternatively one may ask whether the text recognises the significance of partial perspectives rather than striving for all-embracing knowledge and universal messages, and whether it aims to be enjoyable or enlightening. Consciousness of our tendency, as educators, to adopt the serious option in terms of our own moralising self-justification, would offer the necessary constraint to one's own modernising tendencies. One might also be conscious that when one believes that one has arrived at what education is really about, one has probably adopted a modernist stance.

The extent to which a particular learner's own cultural context is affirmed and allowed to remain intact through the text might be examined, and consideration given to how the problem of diversity of audience in published material could be further addressed. The extent to which the text gives voice to subjugated knowledge may also be an indication of its sensitivity to the diversity of learners implicated in the educational transaction. *Changing Lives* moves some of the way to working creatively with this issue. Within the same examination, one should ask whose knowledge is being affirmed, whether local, subjugated or centralised knowledge is provided, and to what extent it is structured in ways which make it accessible by learners from outside of discipline-based or schooled knowledge discourses.

Linked to whether learners' desires are being served is the issue of whether personal development and individually-led programmes are available, whether the diversity of adult learners is being taken into account as well as whether the broad vision of the state e.g. are examinations the driving force in formulating their educational path? The issue of whether enjoyment is 'permitted' in the educational process may also be symptomatic of whether education is being cast as enlightening.

In my conclusion, I appear to have set up a series of strategies to hold the hegemony of modernity at bay. Usher et al, however, point to one of the paradoxes of this process: a consciousness of modernism and its construction is essential to

the adult educator, in order to move from it. Without the construct of modernity, one has no datum to move from.

*...[A]dult educators, for example, are finding [it difficult] to completely disinvest from [the grand narratives] because although our confidence in [them] is not what it was, we seem to have few alternatives. Postmodernism cannot provide an alternative grand narrative. In this sense modernist grand narratives remain indispensable (Usher et al, 1997, 6).*

*In other words, modernist discourse provides ways of talking and knowing which we cannot readily dispense with. ... We recognise both the indispensability of modernist discourse and its power, and it is precisely because modernist discourse is so indispensable that it is so dangerous. Through the intellectual resources provided by postmodernism we see the need to critique that which we cannot do without (Usher et al, 1997, pp 6-7).*

These are only some of the issues which one might address when conceptualising texts for adult learners, in attempting to bring one closer to treating adults not as deficient and needy, but as critical consumers whose own desires are a significant part of the course development process.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) At an extreme level, Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of the way in which modernist values led to the suspension of moral judgement in Nazi Germany are a useful reminder of the anaesthetising power thereof. He writes:

*The murderous compound was made of a typically modern ambition of social design and engineering mixed with the typically modern concentration of power, resources and managerial skills (Bauman, 1991, 77).*

He notes that the functional distribution of labour and '... substitution of technical for moral responsibility ... (Bauman, 1991, 98) are conditions inherent to modernism rather than exceptional aberrations of racial prejudice.

- (2) In the Reconstruction and Development Programme document it is stated that:

*Micro producers should develop from a set of marginalised survival strategies into dynamic small enterprises that can produce a decent living for both employees and entrepreneurs (1994, 94).*

- (3) This is evident for example in Roux's criticism of the learners' desire for the Junior Certificate and certificates in general in Chapter 5 section 5.5.

- (4) Questions for the analysis of texts

A set of questions has emerged in the course of applying conclusions from the analysis of Roux's intervention to the evaluation of this selection of ABET texts developed in the 1990's. The discussion of postmodern texts by Usher et al has also been helpful in formulating these questions. They are not exhaustive but could provide guidance in further evaluation processes.

These questions are:

- Does this text or intervention set up a predetermined vision of what would be good for the learner? Is this vision confined by predetermined outcomes or does it accommodate plurality?
- Does it recognise the significance of partial perspectives or does it strive for an all-embracing universal message?
- Educationally, does the intervention/text take account of the learners as consumers with desires and individual needs?

- Is education enjoyable or just enlightening?
- To what extent is the learner's own cultural context affirmed and allowed to remain intact through the text?
- Is learning shaped by a particular notion of *progress*?
- Whose knowledge is affirmed? Is local as well as centralised knowledge affirmed? Does it give voice to subjugated knowledge?
- Is the knowledge envisaged aimed at producing efficient and efficacious workers?
- Does this intervention seek to make everyone alike?
- Does this project set out to state that this is what education is really about?

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1. Books;
2. Dissertations;
3. Journals and Papers and
4. Roux's Published and Unpublished Texts.

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**APPENDICES**

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**THE PUBLICATIONS OF JULIAN ROLLNICK'S THE AFRICAN BOOKMAN**

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Complete list of publications, November 1945.

**Source:**

Rollnick, J. 'An Informal Review on the Work of The African Bookman 1943-1945'.

NOTE: *The number in brackets at the beginning of each name is the publication number.*

**THE SIXPENNY LIBRARY**

- (21) *Colour and Cleverness*: Arthur Lee: 14 pp: 6d
- (10) *The History of Civilizations*: Michael Barnard: 14pp: 6d
- (20) *The Black Man in Africa*: A. J. H. Goodwin 14 pp: 6d
- (22) *Bantu Babel*: J. M. Nhlapo: 14 pp: 6d
- (11) *Intelligence and Education*: J. Taylor: 14 pp: 6d
- (23) *Religion in Many Lands*: J. Mackin: 14 pp: 6d
- (26) *Town and Country*: A. J. H. Goodwin: 16pp: 6d
- (27) *How Men are Governed*: Zoe Marsh: 16 pp: 6d
- (28) *Famous American Negroes*: Pauline Podbrey: 16pp: 6d
- (29) *First Men on Earth*: Dr Louis Herrman: 16pp: 6d
- (30) *Who Are the Coloured People?*: G. M. Mbeki: 16pp: 6d
- (33) *The How and Why of Science*: Edward Roux: 19pp: 6d
- (35) *Life in America*: Eric Rosenthal: 16pp: 6
- (36) *Great English Books and Writers*: Philip Segal: 20pp: 6d
- (27) *The Story of Christianity*: Jane Casson: 20pp: 6d

### **A B ADULT READERS**

by E. R. Roux and L. Lerner

- (41) *Book I*: 31 pp: 1/11
- (42) *Book II*: 28 pp: 2/2
- (43) *Book III*: 43 pp: 2/5
- (44) *Book IV*: 52 pp: 2/8
- (39) *The Easy English Handbook*: E. R. Roux: 26 pp: 1/-

### **PRO AND CON PAMPHLETS**

- (16) *Nguni and Sotho*: J. M. Nhlapo: 22 pp: 1/-
- (17) *Shall Lobolo Live or Die?*: H. H. T. Marwede, Geoffrey Mamabolo: 30 pp: 1/-
- (19) *Africans and Their Chiefs*: J. M. Mohapeloa: 26 pp: 1/-

### **EDUCATIONAL WALLSHEETS**

- (1) *The Flea*: 9d
- (7) *The Mosquito*: 9d
- (14) *The Fly*: 9d
- (25) *The Louse*: 9d
- (50) *Common Insects*: 2/6
- (51) *African Exploration*: 1/3
- (52) *African Vegetation*: 1/3
- (53) *The Alphabet*: 1/3

### **POST-GRADUATE PRESS**

Published and distributed for The Post Graduate Press by The African Bookman

- (6) *Actions and Uses of Drugs*: N. Sapeika: 282 pp: 21/-
- (13) *Introduction to Clinical Surgery*: C. F. M. Saint: 304 pp: 25/-

### **ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS**

Published and distributed for Association of Scientific Workers by The African Bookman

- (3) *Marine Biological Research*: W. Isaacs: 16pp: 1/6

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- (4) *The Cattle of Kumalo*: (also in Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho) E. R. Roux 28pp: 1/-
- (12) *The Care of Children*: L. and H. Hertslet: 21pp: 10d
- (15) *Africans and the Police*: (Zulu) Julius Lewin: 13pp: 6d
- (9) *12% Simple Interest Tables*: L. C. Jochelson: 20 pp: 6/6

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**APPENDIX B:**  
**THE SIXPENNY LIBRARY SERIES**

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- *Colour and Cleverness or What the Black Man Can Do* by Arthur Lee (Edward Roux)
- *The History of Civilizations* by Michael Barnard (Edward Roux)
- *The Black Man in Africa* by A. J. H. Goodwin
- *Bantu Babel* by J. M. Nhlapo
- *Intelligence and Education* by J. G. Taylor
- *Religion in Many Lands* by J. D. Mackin
- *Town and Country* by A. J. H. Goodwin
- *How Men are Governed* by Zoe Marsh
- *Famous American Negroes* by Pauline Podbrey
- *The First Men on Earth* by Dr Louis Herrman
- *Who Are the Coloured People?* by C. Ziervogel
- *Let's Do It Together* by G. A. Mbeki
- *The How and Why of Science* by Edward Roux
- *Life in America* by Eric Rosenthal
- *Great English Books and Writers* by Phillip Segal
- *The Story of Christianity* by Jane Casson

**APPENDIX C:**  
**A DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE TEXTS FROM *THE SIXPENNY LIBRARY***  
**WRITTEN BY EDWARD ROUX**

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The first pamphlet of the series was written by Edward Roux under the *nom de plume* Arthur Lee, published in 1944 and is called *Colour and Cleverness or What the Black Man Can Do*. As the first in the series, it may be assumed to present a defining theme for the series.

This text speaks to the adult African male reader about some of the common racial stereotypes imposed on Africans and people of colour. Roux primarily uses a 'scientific' explanation to debunk notions that brain size, intelligence and potential for 'civilization' differ according to colour. He explores reasons for racial discrimination, positing that it is often the strategy of conquerors to subjugate the conquered. He also warns his African readers against internalised inferiority saying that it is as negative as inflicting racism on others.

The text also explores the contributions of heredity and environment on human talents, but is emphatic that opportunities for education are the key determinant of success. It concludes with the achievements of a number of African writers, doctors and scientists in South Africa, and notes that there are many more successful Africans in countries where there is no 'colour bar'.

The second of *The Sixpenny Library* pamphlets which is authored by Roux is written under the *nom de plume* Michael Barnard. It is called *The History of Civilizations*, and was also published in 1944. Reference is made to it in the first pamphlet, so they appear to have been conceptualised as interdependent.

In it the author problematises what he sees as a prevailing view that white Europeans brought civilization to African savages in South Africa and that many Africans are still living lives of savagery. He explains common understandings of

the word 'civilization', offering the development of towns as one of the commonly cited indicators, as well as the ability to write, to use money, to 'make pleasing things' (Barnard, 1944, 2) and to develop particular systems of governance. Without resolving the problems of modernized societies being commonly seen as 'better', the author sidesteps the issue and states that he will use the term in the plural, 'civilizations', adding that there are many kinds of civilizations.

Through historical information, he tracks some of the pre-requisites for any civilization e.g. settlement; he focuses on the seven known original civilizations - Sumerian, Egyptian etc. He is at pains to point out that these original developments were not linked to skin colour. He explains the 'causes' of civilization in terms of reactions to dangers or crises and questions why no such civilization evolved in Africa. He counters this question with the Zimbabwean civilization which was, he says, 'still-born' on account of an overwhelming natural or social crisis. As a further supporting fact for the non-racial argument, he notes that failure to build a civilization has also occurred in places inhabited by white people e.g. Lapland. In the course of the argument, he develops a sort of balance sheet between colour and civilization.

The text explores the growth and spread of civilizations; the importance of knowledge in this process is emphasised. The author discusses the spread and impact of a range of civilizations including Western civilization. He also explores the impact of wars and the process of decline which has occurred in many civilizations.

Short summaries of four different civilizations are presented which is a characteristic feature of *The Sixpenny Library*, in this way, Roux provides his reader with 'general knowledge', singling out the Arabian, Hindu, Chinese and Western civilizations and selecting a few memorable historical, cultural and educational achievements. Writing appears to be the common feature by which they are accorded the status of civilizations.

In his conclusion, the author invites the reader to become part of Western civilization, while at the same time putting forward the possibility that '... one day a new civilization may be started by the black people of Africa' (Barnard, 1944, 15).

This text is predominantly informational and includes a world map, but it is interspersed with arguments (many of which remain unresolved) relevant to the issue of civilization and Africans' identity within this discourse.

The third booklet was published a year later, under Roux's own name, possibly because he was on home ground in the field of science. It is called *The How and Why of Science* and serves as an introduction to the discipline. In it he explains the difference between scientific and 'not-scientific' (Roux, 1945, 3) ways of thinking, introducing the tools (experiments, theories and some of the language of science), the equipment and branches of the sciences.

He also touches on what scientists do not know, but constructs this problem as a road along which more and more is revealed. In this pamphlet, the overriding message is that empirical testing offers definitive answers or truths. In the process, unscientific ways of understanding are placed under critical scrutiny and discounted.

This pamphlet follows on ten others, which focused on social, historical and political topics with the exception of *The First Men on Earth* which deals with the story of evolution. This seems to suggest that the editor followed the results of the audience survey described in Chapter 4 above rather more closely than Rollnick recalled.

## APPENDIX D:

### ROUX's DESCRIPTION OF 'WHAT EVERY AFRICAN SHOULD KNOW' FROM A PAPER TITLED *ADULT EDUCATION FOR AFRICANS*, c.1936

pp16-17.

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The full extract states:

- *'To keep them as unsophisticated as possible. Perhaps that is the meaning of segregation.'*

*Let us give an outline of what every African should know.*

- *He should know how to speak, read and write English, because without a knowledge of English it is almost impossible to understand what is going on, politically and otherwise, in South Africa. He should know English because it will be a great help to him in his daily life, especially if he comes to town. He should be able to read English because he will then be able to make use of books*
- *He should know enough arithmetic to be able to understand everyday matters concerning money, banks and post-offices, clocks and calendars, distances, areas, volumes and weights.*
- *He should know some elementary facts about his body, about food values, the causation and prevention of disease (particularly those two scourges of the Bantu - tuberculosis and syphilis), and the reasons for cleanliness and sanitation.*
- *If he is a peasant, and most Africans are, he should know how to prevent soil erosion (by rotational grazing and by limiting the number of cattle), he should be acquainted with modern ideas about fertilisers, crop production*

*and the breeding of cattle.*

- *He should know something about business and trade, especially in connection with producer and consumer co-operatives.*
- *He should know a little elementary science. This will help him to break with superstition and tabu, whether inherited from tribalism or introduced by the white man.*
- *He should understand the principles of industrial and trade unionism.*
- *Finally he should be politically conscious and realise that the emancipation of the Bantu is in the last analysis a political question.*

*You will say, You mean he must be a walking encyclopaedia! I agree that on the face of it my outline seems rather a big mouthful. Nevertheless I feel that it is an eminently practical programme. It is not nearly so big a mouthful as the Junior Certificate. Knowledge which has a bearing on the practical problems of life is not difficult to teach. Our task is to show the African what sort of knowledge will really be useful to him in the struggle for a better life in South Africa.*

*And speaking of encyclopaedias, surely our country today is in as much need of encyclopaedists as ever Europe was in the Eighteenth Century?'*

**APPENDIX E :**  
**TEXTS WRITTEN BY EDWARD ROUX ON ADULT EDUCATION AND EASY  
ENGLISH WHICH ARE REFERRED TO IN THIS RESEARCH**

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- ROUX, E.R. (c. 1936) *Adult Education for Africans*, unpublished document, 17 pages, Roux Archive, Historical and Literary Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

The text is undated. I assume that it was written in about 1936, for the following reason. In the text, Roux mentions that he had started to publish *Umvikele Thebe* (*The African Defender*) in the previous year. This newspaper commenced publication in 1935.

*Adult Education for Africans* (c.1936) appears to be a paper delivered to a group of peers, probably educators. In it Roux comments on the extent of the illiteracy problem and on newspaper readership and its potential as a medium for adult education; he advocates the use of simple English and outlines the options, discusses a potential series of booklets and their topics, presents a fairly detailed plan for adult education, bemoans African learners' eagerness for certification and outlines the knowledge which African learners should have.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (c.1941) *Adult Education for Africans in Cape Town*, unpublished 2 page document, Rheinallt Jones Collection, Historical and Literary Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

In *Adult Education for Africans in Cape Town* (c. 1941), Roux describes the origins of the Night School in District Six, and the subjects offered, the attendance and lists other night schools in Cape Town.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1942) *Education Through Reading*, (Howard Pim Pamphlet No 3), South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg.

*Education Through Reading* (1942) is a Howard Pim Pamphlet and was aimed at African readers. It introduces education, its value, the branches of knowledge, and then advocates the use of books while explaining the different genres of book and how to use them. It is a little like a study skills guide for someone starting higher education.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1942) 'Easy English for Africans', *African Studies*, 261-269.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1944) *The Easy English Handbook: A Guide to the Simplification of English for Lecturers, Writers and Teachers*, The African Bookman, Cape Town.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c.1945) *Our Illiterate Millions*, unpublished document, 3 pages, Rheinallt Jones Collection, Historical and Literary Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

*Our Illiterate Millions* (c.1945) is a short advocacy pamphlet, possibly a speech for peers or a political forum. It focuses on the lack of political will to address the problem of literacy and names some of the work being done; in this text, Roux speaks in the language of the 'war on illiteracy'.

- ROUX, W.? (c.1945) (Edited or overwritten possibly by Winifred Roux,) *Why Not Easy English? An Essay on the Problem of the Simplification of English for Use as an International Language with Special Reference to the Needs of Mass Education in Africa*, unpublished manuscript, given to Lucy Alexander by Alison Roux.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (c.1946) *Mass Education in Africa*, unpublished booklet in Easy English, 24 pages, Collection of Alison Roux, Siena. In this undated manuscript, reference is made to the Second World War being in its sixth year. This is crossed out and replaced by '... has at last come to an end'. I therefore assume it was started in 1944/5 and completed in 1946.

*Mass Education in Africa* (c.1946) is written in Easy English and is addressed to adult African readers; it is a final manuscript, obviously intended for publication. It presents the situation of Africa after the War and a vision for development, particularly for agriculture. Its focus is on successes so far in mass education and he advocates the use of English for easier communication; the principles of Easy English are explained, an 'each one teach one' strategy is motivated to address illiteracy, and he criticises 'selfishness' amongst educated Africans; different kinds of knowledge, books and media are presented which are needed for the mass provision of education for Africans.

**APPENDIX F :**  
**A LIST OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS**

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From the back cover of Public Affairs Pamphlet No 85, *The Races of Mankind*, found in the collection of Roux's personal papers in the Historical and Literary Papers Collection of the William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Income and Economic Progress              | 71. The Negro and The War                       |
| 5. Credit for Consumers                      | 72. How to Win on the Home Front                |
| 6. The South's Place in the Nation           | 73. After the War?                              |
| 10. Doctors, Dollars, and Disease            | 74. How Can We Pay for the War?                 |
| 14. Saving Our Soil                          | 75. Where Can We<br>Get War Workers?            |
| 25. Machines and Tomorrow's World            | 76. Workers and Bosses Are Human                |
| 26. How Good Are Our Colleges?               | 77. Women at Work in Wartime                    |
| 27. Who Can Afford Health?                   | 78. The Airplane and Tomorrow's<br>World        |
| 30. Schools for Tomorrow's Citizens          | 80. Freedom from Want:<br>A World Goal          |
| 33. This Problem of Food                     | 81. Rebuilding Europe—After Victory             |
| 34. What Makes Crime?                        | 82. The Kitchen in War Production               |
| 39. Loan Sharks and Their Victims            | 83. War, Babies, and the Future                 |
| 42. Adrift on the Land                       | 84. Jobs and Security for Tomorrow              |
| 43. Safeguarding Our Civil Liberties         | 85. The Races of Mankind                        |
| 45. How Money Works                          | 86. When I Get Out?<br>Will I Find a Job?       |
| 47. America's Children                       | 87. Why Race Riots?                             |
| 50. Credit Unions                            | 88. The Smiths and<br>Their Wartime Budgets     |
| 51. Read Your Labels                         | 89. Have We Food Enough for All?                |
| 53. What It Takes To<br>Make Good In College | 90. The American Way                            |
| 56. What the New Census Means                | 91. What About Our<br>Japanese-Americans?       |
| 62. How to Buy Life Insurance                | 92. Facts and Tips for<br>Service Men and Women |
| 65. Prostitution and the War                 | 93. Freedom of the Air                          |
| 66. Homes to Live In                         | 94. Reconversion—The Job Ahead                  |
| 67. Government Under Pressure                | 95. The Negro in America                        |
| 68. The Crisis in Manpower                   |   |
| 69. Vitamins for Health                      |   |
| 70. What's Happening to<br>Our Constitution? |   |

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