

**ORAL INTO WRITTEN:
AN EXPERIMENT IN CREATING A TEXT
FOR AFRICAN RELIGION**

JANET E.T. STONIER

**Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Religious Studies at the
University of Cape Town**

Supervisor : Prof David Chidester

September 1996

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

I wish to acknowledge and thank:

* Ms Nokuzola Mndende, who initiated the project, and Dr Chirevo Kwenda, who became 'the Professor' - my colleagues and friends - who have taught me a great deal and who, with me, constituted the generative team participating in this stimulating experiment of text-production.

* Prof David Chidester, my supervisor, whose own rigour and high standards, and whose generosity with his wide-ranging knowledge, experience, and creativity, did much to spark my own ideas and guide my efforts.

* My husband and companion, John, whose deep interest and involvement - having worked in a related field - warm support, encouragement, advice and technical help, have made this study possible.

* Dr Gordon Mitchell, who sought me out, started me on this journey, and encouraged me along the way.

* Assoc. Prof Chuck Wanamaker, who, with great kindness, facilitated my entry into the study programme; Prof David Chidester, Prof John Cumpsty, Dr Chirevo Kwenda, whose courses provided a firm and fascinating base for my thinking.

* Mr Victor Masephe, who was prepared to come and talk about the project at its inception.

* Jean Goldblatt, Judy Tobler and Darrel Wratten, colleagues and friends in the Institute for Comparative Religion in S.A., for their interest and support.

A B S T R A C T

This study is a description, from the vantage point of a participant observer, of the development of a new, and probably unique, method of writing, teaching and learning about an oral tradition - a method which is grounded in ways of knowing, thinking and learning inherent in that tradition.

It arose in the course of a co-operative venture - between two lecturers in African Religion and myself - to write a text for South African schools on African Religion (sometimes called African Traditional Religion). Wanting to be true to our subject within the obvious constraints, we endeavoured to write within an oral mode. The product, *African Religion and Culture, Alive!*, is a transcript of taped oral interchanges between the three authors within a simulated, dramatised format. The simulation provided the context for using the teaching and learning strategies employed in an oral tradition, but within a Western institution. We hoped in this way to mirror and mediate a situation in which many South African students find themselves: at the interface between a home underpinned by an oral tradition, and a school underpinned by a written tradition. In the book, knowledge is presented through

myth, biographical and autobiographical stories, discussion, question, and comment. The choice of this mode of knowledge-presentation has been greatly influenced by the work of Karen McCarthy Brown.

A further important requirement for us was to produce a text that would be acceptable to all the particular varieties of African religious practice. This need was met in a way that became the most important aspect of the method - the device of setting, as a core part of the work for students, a primary research component. Students are required to seek out traditional elders within their community and learn from them, as authorities on African religion and culture, the details of particular practice. This is a way of decentering the locus of control of knowledge and education, as well as of restoring respect for African Religion and preserving information in danger of being lost.

The primary research component highlights fundamental issues relating to the 'ownership' of religion, knowledge, power, reality which are explored in the study. Also considered are the implications of *writing* about an oral mode while trying to preserve as much of the character of that mode - writing by means of speaking. Text as a metaphor provides a frame for examining the process and the product - in terms

of text as document, as score, as performance, as intertextual event, and as monument and site of struggle. Suggestions are made for further research, both on the particular method of text-production under consideration, and also on the approach to teaching and learning about African Religion. Also considered is the relevance of this particular learning and teaching approach to the values inherent in the proposed new curriculum for education in South Africa.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| Introduction: a chorus of voices | |
| CHAPTER TWO | 17 |
| The text: oral into written | |
| CHAPTER THREE | 42 |
| The process: text as score, performance, and intertextual event | |
| CHAPTER FOUR | 69 |
| The product: text as monument and site of struggle | |
| CHAPTER 5 | 91 |
| Conclusion | |
| REFERENCES | 105 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: A CHORUS OF VOICES

The expansion of the term text beyond a simple label for written discourse is not new. Explorations in the field of linguistics, and concepts and terms from this field, have affected thinking across a range of disciplines in a fundamental way. Psychoanalysis, for example, has found the concepts of sign and symbol, signifier and signified, useful in attempting to illustrate, understand and describe human experience. Julia Kristeva, herself much involved in pioneering work in this field, can talk of the word as body, crossed by pre-linguistic forces, and the body as word, a signifying system (Kristeva in Still & Worton, 1990:18). In this way, text comes to be a term and idea available for broad application.

Consequently, while it has been convenient to use a narrow definition of text in order to oppose it to oral forms of discourse (Ong, 1981), the division is artificial. A richer and more ambiguous interpretation links it to its Latin derivation *texere* to weave - whence texture, with all its associations.

Bearing this in mind, and perceiving text as a set of interwoven signs that invite interpretation - that need to have meaning given - Professor Johan Degenaar suggests a number of ways of looking at text:

* as document - relating the text to the author in such a way that the reader is presented with information about the mind of the author: it is a communication between the mind of the author and that of the reader (or the mind of the sender and that of the receiver, to extend it beyond the written);

* as score, inviting a variety of interpretations; no one interpretation can claim to be *the* interpretation - all are contained in the text;

* as performance - language itself as a creative activity, "an aesthetic phenomenon, a mobile army of metaphors. Speaking becomes a dance of the tongue..." (1987:30);

* as intertextual event - the "text needs a context, but contexts are never saturated. ... text as a response to social reality. The text is then viewed neither as a self-enclosed system nor as an event open to the infinity of language, but as an artefact conditioned by the structured social situation which it conceals" (1987:119,120).

This insight into intertextuality can be extended to the day-to-day experiences of life itself - no fixed relationship between the signifier and the signified, the

individual's imagination providing the link. Implied in this is the human being as text and creator of text; the signifier and the signified (1996).

* as monument - a self-enclosed system "which is transparent to anyone who interprets the code correctly. Understanding the text entails that one abandons one's freedom in the presence of the authority of the text" (1987:119).

As a monument, a particular structure, located in a particular context, in a particular time, it is also contested, a *site of struggle*.

This multidimensional approach to text as a concept - which opens up the debate and removes the superficial opposition between oral and written - will underpin this present short study and provide the frame for considering the text-producing process. Each of these categories of approach to text will, however, be expanded beyond the descriptions given above. They will all be drawn into the analysis of the creation of a text for teaching and learning about the indigenous religious heritage of South Africa - *African Religion and Culture, Alive!*

Brief history of the process

Early in 1995, Ms Nokuzola Mndende of the Religious Studies Department, University of Cape Town, accepted a challenge from a member of the Field Review Subcommittee on Religious

Education to produce a syllabus for African Traditional Religion for Stds 8-10. She called upon two of her colleagues, Dr Chirevo Kwenda and myself, to help her devise such a syllabus. This we did, and distributed it to selected interested educators. It soon became apparent that the likelihood of this syllabus - or, in fact of any syllabus for African Traditional Religion - being given serious consideration by teachers and curricularators would be enhanced if they had some sort of manual on the subject as a resource. Such was the status of African Traditional Religion at the time that many people expressed doubt that such a religion existed or had ever existed. Within their understanding of the term religion there was African culture, but not African religion. The religion that Africans had was mainly either Christianity or Islam. It seemed to us that a handbook would help to establish the credentials of the religion. Ms Mndende then acted upon this supposition, and invited Dr Kwenda and myself to join her in writing such a book.

Using the scope of our syllabus as a guide to what should be covered in the text, we divided it into areas for study, and assigned particular topics within those areas to each member of our team. We would each research and write about the topics assigned to us. Then, in order to create a stimulating writing environment, we decided to set aside a fortnight early in December 1995 to write side-by-side in a common venue. In this way we hoped to cross-pollinate each other's writing, and share our resources.

An unexpected personal crisis called Ms Mndende away intermittently during much of the first three days of our writing fortnight. Her comings and goings broke our concentration to such an extent that on the third day, Dr Kwenda, in reply to a question from me about his academic career, started on a series of biographical stories. These were so absorbing to me as audience, and so informative on aspects of African practice, that we were suddenly aware of the powerful teaching tool that was being used in this informal way.

This insight of the third day induced us to reconsider our approach to the writing of the book. We began to examine the process on which we were engaged. Such an examination led us to wonder whether we could use some of the methods of communicating information, socialising, and teaching that are used by the tradition which we were hoping to write about. In addition, perhaps we could try to bring together into the same text, strong elements of an African epistemology with elements of Western epistemology familiar in classroom situations in South Africa, so that teachers and students who operate within both would feel a sense of fit. It might also help to address the considerable imbalance in power between these two systems of thinking, knowing, and teaching.

Legitimacy

At first Ms Mndende was sceptical about such a departure from a conventional text. It seemed to her not to be serious in the academic sense. She insisted that it was important for African Religion not to be perceived as a religion that should be taken less seriously than any of the other religions in South Africa. Using stories might give the impression to teachers and students that this in fact was not serious work, but play.

In order to test this impression, we invited Mr Victor Masephe, a teacher of Religious Education from Langa, to discuss our possible approach. In our meeting with him of 19 December, 1995, he was at first sceptical. He felt that the familiar style of textbook was what teachers and students were used to and accepted. They had, for too long, been led to believe that thinking and knowledge within a Western paradigm were the only legitimate forms of thinking and knowledge, certainly in a school context. Anything else, particularly African, given the status of African identity over the last 300 years in South Africa, and particularly the indignity of Bantu Education, would be considered inferior. African religion, he said, was considered a way of life, not a religion. Consequently, presenting it in a way that was different from the way in which other religions were presented would confirm that it was not really *religion*. "Is religion primarily or only about going to

heaven?" was a question he felt teachers of religion needed to be asked.

When we enquired what he thought parents wanted their children to be taught, he replied that most parents did not query the content of what was taught. Parents' involvement in school committees hitherto had tended to be limited to the physical condition of the school buildings, like fixing windows. In response to this information, Dr Kwenda said that he thought our approach would contribute towards home and school reinforcing one another, rather than there being a cultural gulf between them.

We explained further that the approach was in line with current thinking in educational circles - in fact across disciplines in the social sciences - where embodied experience and auto- and biographical material are often preferred as sources of information to theorising by distanced 'objective experts' (Brown,1991; Callaway,1992; Cohen,1992; Finn,1993; Okely,1992).

After further discussion, during which he was convinced that the approach would be respectful towards African ways of thinking, knowing and teaching, Mr Masephe became enthusiastic. He said he thought teachers and students would respond positively as well, but teachers would need introductory workshops and careful descriptions of the approach in order not to misunderstand it. Further, these workshops would need to take place in all the regions in

South Africa, so that as many teachers as possible could be properly introduced to the approach.

As a result of his positive response and our own conviction that it was worth reclaiming African ways of thinking and teaching - as well as a 'hunch' that we would find a way of using both African and Western teaching techniques in a successful book - we decided to try it.

We abandoned our original scheme of work in favour of breaking until the new year, when we would spend a fortnight at the beginning of February in an 'island situation'¹ to create the text.

Categorising the process

All the categories of text as listed above are clearly apparent in the process of writing this book on African Religion² for South African high school students.

* As a document

The authors intend the text to convey an attitude toward African Religion, towards African ways of thinking and

¹This is a situation in which people remove themselves from their everyday work and workplace, and sequester themselves in order to concentrate on a particular task.

²The authors have chosen to use the term African Religion rather than African Traditional Religion to avoid a misconception of traditional as unable to adapt to a changing environment.

knowing - as well as their own involvement with Western ways of thinking and knowing. It will also convey the authors' approach to education and their own ideological positions, as well as other information of which they may be unaware.

* As a score

The variety of interpretations invited by the text of *African Religion and Culture Alive!* extend beyond a reading of the book itself. The book is designed to provide the stimulus and create a frame for classroom and community performance in terms of: interviewing and story-telling in the form of biographical material, personal history, anecdotes; challenge and discussion on controversial issues; riddles; plays; poems; songs.

* As a performance

The circumstances in which the book was created illustrate text as performance. The authors sat together in an 'island situation' for two extended periods for the initial formulation and creation of the book, then subsequent short sessions of a few hours only for refinement and polishing. The format followed in these sessions was a sound recorded simulation of interaction between a university professor and his undergraduate students. The performance - the input from all three - was unrehearsed and transcribed with virtually no alteration apart from division into paragraphs and chapters, and with the addition of chapter titles and subheadings. The refinements and polishings were also oral recordings which superceded, or added to, sections of the

text. Attempts by individual members of the authorial team to write amendments or additions were rejected as having a different 'feel' and 'style', or as being too stiff (Kwenda, working session, Fri 3 May, 1996).

* As an intertextual event

In addition to the production, dissemination and use of the book as an intertextual event, the creation of the spoken, recorded, transcribed document was itself a very rich intertextual event, the description of which forms the substance of this dissertation.

* As a monument

The book documents thinking in a particular time and place, it records a particular attitude toward African Religion, using particular experiences as illustrations. It becomes an artefact in itself. As such, and also in the process of its creation, it becomes a site of struggle, including that:

- between Western and African ways of thinking and knowing;
- between oral and written ways of communicating, and passing on knowledge;
- between 'insider' and 'outsider';
- between 'reality' and 'fiction';

And the publication itself becomes a site of struggle in the contest for ownership of the symbols of religion in South Africa (Chidester, 1987a; 1990).

Methodological Considerations

Both in the approach followed in constructing the text, and that taken in reflecting on the process, the influence of recent thinking in the social sciences in general, and the work of Karen McCarthy Brown in particular, will be apparent.

In the 1970's, the Women's Liberation Movement argued that the personal is political; I contend also that in an academic context 'the personal is theoretical'. This stands against an entrenched tradition which relegates the personal to the periphery and to the 'merely anecdotal'; perjoratively contrasted in positivist social science with generalisable truth" (Okely, 1992:9).

It is this sort of view, along with some considerations of poststructuralism, which has encouraged an acknowledgement of the influence of the personal vantage point of all researchers, particularly in the social sciences, however 'objective' they may try to be.

It seemed to us that such a trend - away from a faith in the possibility of objectivity and an acknowledgment of the groundedness of knowing - is going in the direction of African ways of thinking and knowing. Further, its insistence on acknowledging the experience of people themselves, told in their own voice as far as possible (Agyakwa, 1976; Brown, 1991; Callaway, 1992; Cohen, 1992; Hallen & Sodipo, 1986; Okely, 1992), resonated with our perception of African practice, and our didactic purpose: to encourage a reinstatement of elderly traditional practitioners as local

and particular authorities on African Religion.

Consequently, it would be congruent for us to reflect this trend in the way in which we approached the production of our text. These academic considerations, combined with the serendipity of our discovery of one of our team as experienced storyteller, determined our choice of method in constructing the text.

More specifically, in our choice of autobiographical material in the context of actual interaction within a simulation, we were influenced by the work of Karen McCarthy Brown, particularly as reflected in her ethnographical study of 'Mama Lola', a Vodou priestess (Brown, 1991). Her fieldwork as an anthropologist had involved her in participant observation, which affected the course of her own life considerably, and resulted in a close friendship with Alourdes, 'Mama Lola'. After three years of Brown's being more peripheral than participant, Alourdes had offered to initiate her into Vodou.

Her offer of initiation and my decision to accept marked the culmination of two inseparable processes. One was the growth of my friendship with her. The other was a shift in the way I understood my professional work. ...

As Alourdes and I became friends, I found it increasingly difficult to maintain an uncluttered image of myself as scholar and researcher in her presence. This difficulty brought about a change in the research I was doing. As I got closer to Alourdes, I got closer to Vodou. The Vodou Alourdes practices is intimate and intense, and I soon found that I could not claim a place in her Vodou family and remain a detached observer. (1991:8,9)

Her study includes accounts of personal experiences selected from her field journal, descriptions of Alourdes' practice as a Voudou priestess over a number of years, a strong element of biography, as well as fictional contextual chapters in the short story mould based on a core of information about 'Mama Lola's' ancestors, and her theoretical reflections as a social scientist. Brown describes her book as a "chorus of voices":

I have tried to create her story through a chorus of voices, much as she creates herself through a chorus of moods and spirit energies. One of the voices that speaks in the book is hers, as carefully recorded and respectfully edited as I could manage. Yet another is my scholarly voice, distanced enough to discern patterns and relationships but not so distant as to create the impression of overall logical coherence. No person's life or culture is, in the final analysis, logical. A third voice is also my own, but this one risks a more intimate and whole self-revelation. The fourth voice is perhaps that of Gede [a Vodou trickster spirit] - the one who tells the ancestral tales in the form of fictionalized short stories and in so doing plays with truth, seeking to bring it alive for its immediate audience. (1991:20)

There are echoes of all of these voices - autobiographical, biographical, fictional, theoretical - expressed through a trio, in our text *African Religion and Culture Alive!*.

There are further echoes of some of them in my reflection on the process.

My reflection on the process dates back to the day on which we decided, after consultation with Mr Masephe (see p. 7-8), to try writing in an 'oral mode'. At this point we realised how valuable it would be to document, and reflect upon, the process. I decided to keep 'field notes' and sound

recordings as documentation, and to reflect on these as the focus of a masters' dissertation.

Consequently, I adopted the role of participant-observer, a "messy" but interesting way of conducting research.

Qualitative research in general is dynamic and imprecise.

The research process ... is not a clear cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern, but a messy interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, deduction and induction occurring at the same time. (Bechhofer in Bryman & Burgess, 1994:2)

Tesch, in tracing the history of qualitative research, quotes Maslow's point that rather than using only tried and tested methods in research, it may be important to 'invent' appropriate methods for looking at a particular issue (1992:12). Such invention of appropriate methods is particularly pertinent to qualitative research. While I certainly did not invent a method, the particular combination of my written comments during and after our 'writing' sessions, and the spontaneous sound-recorded reflection mid-session when I asked for comment and discussion among the three of us whenever it seemed appropriate, was unique.

In her initial encounters with Alourdes, Brown used a tape recorder, but later abandoned it because it was "unsuited to the casual rhythms" of their friendship. Instead, as soon as she got home, she constructed a written record of encounters and conversations, reflecting actual words and

speech rhythms as accurately as possible. As my research was less personal and casual, it was very easy and appropriate to use a tape recorder to record conversations and comments relating to the process of constructing the text. It was particularly easy because we were recording the text itself. When we digressed into discussion that did not seem immediately relevant to our purpose, we would turn off the recorder; but often the conversation would lead into a reflection on what we were doing, and I would start recording again. There were times when I deliberately asked for comment on an aspect of the process. The reflection was thus both conscious and planned, and also spontaneous and unexpected. I also took notes, recording my assessment of my own moods and responses, and those of my colleagues as far as I could discern them. It is obvious that my perception of the elements and the purpose of the process was instrumental in actually driving the process itself, as well as in selecting what to record and interpreting its significance.

In collecting the 'reflection data' subsequently, I was struck by the value of the sound recordings compared with the written 'fieldnotes'. This may have been partly due to my not making fuller written notes. The sound recordings, however, could be listened to over and over, so that nuances perhaps not perceived at the time became apparent; or new understandings of the conversation emerged. Written notes are captured at the moment of writing, in that form. They are usually the writer's interpretation only, and the

connection between the signifier and the signified is more arbitrary, one could say, than is the case in a sound recording of the same interchange.

The implications of this sort of frozen nature of written communication (Boyer, 1990:115-116), compared with the more interactive, dynamic nature of spoken communication are considered in the next chapter. That we are now able, by means of technology, to record the oral in an oral form, opens up very interesting possibilities, with important ramifications for this study. The sound recorder was an essential tool for us in creating the text. It could also become an important aid in the preservation of primary resource material envisaged as a crucial element of the book, *African Religion and Culture, Alive!*, as is explained in greater detail in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TEXT: ORAL INTO WRITTEN

This chapter examines some of the differences between oral and written communication. It also looks at ways of knowing in an oral culture and how knowledge is transmitted. The focus is whether it is possible to transcribe these ways of knowing into a written text; as well as whether some, at least, of an oral culture's modes of transmitting knowledge could be used in a written text.

An oral mode necessitates communicating in terms of speaking by means of the voice and listening by means of the ear - with all this means on many levels of human interaction, as Ong (1981) has pointed out in considerable detail. But apart from this obvious and fundamental aspect, there are the other troublesome considerations that have to do with ways of knowing and thinking, as well as with attitudes toward the transmission of knowledge and information.

The voice and the pen

"The word is something that happens, an event in the world of sound through which the mind is enabled to relate

actuality to itself" (Ong, 1981:22). Having made this far-reaching claim regarding the function of the word/sound in terms of making sense of experience, Ong argues that the active aspect of the spoken word - connected with smell, for instance - is temporal, in contrast with the spectator visual element characteristic of writing, especially printing: "the word literally locked in space". The spoken word "leaves no discernible direct effect in space, where the letters of the alphabet have their existence" (1981:8;40). The corollary to this is the immediacy of orality. Time cannot be reversed, but space can. "The alphabet irrupts into sound itself, where the one-dimensional flow of time asserts its full power, and it neutralizes this flow by substituting for sound immobile letters." And to take the argument even further, the locking in space achieved by print provides maximal symbols of order and control (1981:43-45). In fact the word *gramma* from which the English *grammar* is derived from the Greek word for a letter of the alphabet (1981:78).

In contrast, then, with the fundamental vitality and immediacy of orality, or orature, or aurature as Coplan (1989) calls it, Ong provides a rather bleak and stiff concept of written text and of literature. While sound is a clue to interiors, he says, sight presents only surfaces, reflected light. "With alphabetic writing, a kind of pretense, a remoteness from actuality becomes institutionalized" (1981:137). A focus on the visual grounds Western classical tradition, he claims.

Intellection or understanding is conceived by using a model from the field of vision. This model, with its inability to penetrate to interiors, leads, he says, to a tendency to separate into individuality - to be detribalised - rather than to be present in the very social world of voices.

It would seem, following this argument, that to capture a vibrant oral tradition and lock it into a straightjacket in a room where there is only reflected light off surfaces, would be to do it a great disservice. Natal University's Oral Documentation and Research Centre have used an even more colourful image in relation to oral tradition and education: "catching winged words", in "caged texts", as Frielick (1988) shows in the title of his paper.

It seems to be an argument about which is more valuable, with academics ranged against each other protecting oracy or literacy. David Chidester, having looked at views supporting the primacy of sight over hearing as well as Ong's and Clemens Benda's support for hearing, decides that "(u)ltimately fruitless conclusions have been drawn regarding the relative importance of the senses as perceptual-intellectual systems." Even the assumption that Hellenic culture was fundamentally visual, and Hebraic fundamentally auditory, he calls a "simple cultural truism" (1992b:xi). More important for him is the underlying purpose of asserting the primacy of sight or of sound. "Maneuvering in the field of sacred symbols, strategic claims for the primacy of sight or the primacy of hearing

have often been attempts to establish an authentic, privileged ownership of the sacred by those who see under the primacy of light or those who hear under the primacy of the word" (1992b:144). He comments further that, while they are "often imagined to be contrasted by sight and sound, both literary and oral traditions can involve visual and verbal models." This is a more fundamental way of saying that "when literacy is introduced, the two [oracy and literacy] are superimposed and intertwined with each other" (Tannen in Frielick 1988:203).

Even assuming that Ong were right, would it not be possible to communicate to a wider audience, both spatially and temporally, at least something that conveys elements of an oral tradition without sacrificing the social element, the vitality, the interiority of the voice that he talks about? The sound recorder is an obvious answer. And if these spoken interchanges, these songs, these speeches, were transcribed into writing, would they lose these aspects?

Jack Goody (1987:80,81) points out the deliberate, decontextualised delivery necessitated by the constraints of having to write down oral events before the days of tape recorders. "Until the advent of recording devices we possessed oral material only in written form; it is therefore difficult if not impossible to know how far 'utterances', the oral compositions, have been transformed into literary 'texts' in the course of being written down."

So the sound recorder is a great step towards releasing the the sound dimension of a recording.

But the sound recorder and its manipulator are intrusions into the oral situation, and must necessarily alter the context. Even where a researcher has become almost invisible, as it were, and the disjunction between the culture and language of the performance, and that of the written text are reduced to a minimum, the problems are considerable. Where the text is designed for readership in a different language from that of the performance, the problems are, of course, even greater. Coplan(1989:35) regrets, regarding his record of Basotho migrants' songs, "that these forms are mediated here by processes of translation and visual representation (English writing) that strip away the 'word music' so vital to the meaning and impact of performances upon their Basotho participants and audiences."

The visual aspect is, of course, important too. This the video recorder can supply. What the video cannot supply is the participation which is part of the performance, as Nkabinde points out: "oral tradition essentially consists in communal participation. The dividing line between the spectators and the performers is very faint, if non-existent. One may only distinguish between 'major' and 'minor' performers" (1988:270-71).

A further feature to be considered is this actual performance aspect - the dynamic nature of oral composition in the oral tradition. "Indeed the oral tradition was characterized by continual creation; it was the written that encouraged repetition, at least of established texts" (Goody, 1987:85). And Ong (1981:27) argues that writing changes the basic nature of repetition from thematic to verbatim. The implications here are that the very act of freezing the speech in writing changes the nature of the oral (Boyer, 1990:116). It differs in kind. If this is so, it is perhaps the most serious of the obstacles - one, in fact that would be virtually impossible to overcome. Once written, it is written - in that form. It does not change to accommodate a different readership, as can an oral composition. The implication is that the interaction between the text and the reader is far less than that between the speaker and his or her audience. The text is frozen. It cannot register those subtle shifts in ways of saying things and in the content of what is said - that is the character of oral communication within an oral tradition.

This has implications on all sorts of levels. In an oral tradition, societal norms are passed on by example, stories, proverbs, riddles and moral dilemmas, taboos, art, songs, games, nonverbal knowing, divination (Agyakwa, 1976:24-25), and also through rituals. Songs are also a powerful medium for comment, and for communicating what the society is

about, as Coplan points out in relation to the Basotho performances he has studied:

the public performance of aesthetic representations appeared as an expressive nexus of historical and social relationships. ... Testimony created for and by the people and not for the anthropologist, these performances encoded the impact of wider social forces and political and economic relations in rooted and resonant metaphors, values and structures of self-expression. (1989:1)

Once the society has become literate, however, it is shaped less by "face-to-face interaction backed by normative rules whose interpretation was open to negotiation" (Goody, 1987:204). Moreover, in addition to a day-to-day interaction, there is the influence of the performance itself in an oral society. "There is ... a great deal of evidence to show that African historical cultures have regarded performance genres as powerful, integrated, and to some degree autonomous modes of social action in political contexts" (Coplan, 1989:2).

The challenge is to try to preserve at least something of these characteristics in - or through - a written text. Regarding openness to negotiation of interpretation, Peek (1991a:4), referring to the process of divination, comments on how "knowledge and truth are generated by the special sensibilities of divination and then subjected to the cooperative, transformational interaction of diviner and client(s)..." He describes these interactions as "divinatory dialogues" which "perhaps fit within a larger African

dynamic in which human energies are devoted to resolving rather than to resolution" (Peek 1991b:204). Jean Comaroff's experience in her study of Tswana healing bears this out:

The open-ended metaphorical conversation which is African divination allows healers and clients to exchange interpretations of misfortune and thus subsume chaotic experience into existing symbolic categories with a degree of consensus. But, and this is the vital point to remember, the order and scope of reference of those categories may also be imperceptibly altered in the process. (1981:372)

The poet can perhaps participate in this process too. According to Coplan, the category of healer, can, among the Basotho, at any rate, be extended to the poet. He refers to "a fundamental poetic conceit of the equivalence of the poet - man of knowledge, conjurer with words, healer of social rifts and ills - and ngaka, the traditional healer and diviner" (1989:3).

Text can also be open-ended, of course, and there can be fruitful debate between writer and reader - healing interchange, perhaps, and new insights which alter the perspective and contribute to the shifts in societal attitude. But even with the aid of electronic mail, the dialogue cannot be as immediate, direct and holistic - in the sense of picking up on body language and making full use of intuition - as in an oral exchange.

Perhaps it is possible, however, to create a text, using the vehicles of an oral society: performance, narrative, proverbs, riddles, anecdotes, dilemmas - with the purpose of recreating a situation in the classroom in which there is performance, dialogue, debate, interacting on levels that include responding to body language, resolving, and occasioning subtle shifts in perception of the fundamentals?

This does not imply that it is possible to recreate an oral society, even in a rural traditional setting. Goody argues that the presence of literacy in the society itself, even if it extends to a small number of the population only, has an irreversible effect on the oral tradition of that society. According to Goody, "almost no 'oral' form can be unaffected by the presence of written communication, especially as the latter is associated with a higher status of one kind and another." (1987:82) He implies that the societal power balance is affected. This must have deep repercussions for the societal hierarchy, occasioning subtle shifts in the way in which rituals are performed, in fact fundamental shifts in the tradition itself.

Literacy differentiates. Not only do those who can read have higher status for the skill alone, they also have access to a vast store of ideas - and even vocabulary and speech forms - that is denied those who cannot read, and which is obvious to all in their language usage and the content of their utterances (Goody 1987:246,269).

The status of the written shows itself in various other ways as well. Jean Comaroff (1991:192-3) refers to the nineteenth century Tswana belief in the magical power of words shown in their custom of using printed paper as a bandage. Daneel (1970:37,38) describes Zionist healing rituals also requiring the use of paper as one of the elements.

Sanctified paper was used, for instance, to bless bottles of water which were later used for purification, exorcism and medicine.

In another and more technical sense, the influence of the written will show in the oral forms in all sorts of ways:

the division between 'literacy' and 'orality' is never a question of crossing a single frontier, a simple binary shift. ...The very existence of writing leads to the creation of verse forms which would be as inconceivable in a purely oral culture as, say the kind of mathematical table that decorates the back cover of an exercise book... . Yet, once learnt, such a ...verse form ... may appear as part of the oral tradition, or at least of oral manipulation, in a literate culture. (Goody, 1987:106).

Goody acknowledges, too, the element of oral composition in all written works "if one includes the silent speech events that precede or accompany much reflective creation. The line is never easy to draw if we are talking about societies in which writing is a common means of communication"

(1987:92). Kaschula's study of the influence of praise poetry on the technique and style of present-day, literate Xhosa preachers confirms this influence of the oral tradition - it seems to be an on-going presence. "Even though the missionaries brought with them the Bible, a

static text, as well as literacy in the form of education, the oral spontaneous style has survived and still survives today." He feels that one "needs to be careful not to be rigid in one's views of what exactly should make up orality as opposed to literacy in a society where both clearly co-exist side-by-side"; and instead of Ong's 'great divide', there "exists rather an interaction between the written and the oral" (1994:72). Further, he argues that oral and written literature are literature in their own right; "interacting at some point ... backed by the same culture and society and performing the same function of commenting on that society" (Kaschula, 1992:140, in 1994:72). Stanley Frielick makes a similar point and advocates working from an assumption that "orality and textuality are dynamically interrelated", and that it does not follow that literate tradition replaces oral. He contends that the oral tradition is living and continuing in contemporary South African literature, agreeing with Mbuleo Mzamane that African oral tradition is "lodged deep in the soul of every African writer" (1988:203-4).

Ways of knowing and thinking

That the presence of writing affects an oral tradition fundamentally, says Goody (1987:205), does not necessarily mean, as Vygotsky maintains (in Luria 1976), that the basic nature of an individual's mental processes is changed when he or she learns to write. Ong (1981:130) holds a view

rather similar to Vygotsky: "Specializing in auditory syntheses and specialising in visual syntheses foster different personality structures and different characteristic anxieties." Rather than a fundamental cognitive development, though, Goody suggests the mastery of a skill, the availability of a new tool of intellectual operation (1987:220,225). The presence of documents enables a person to lay side by side, and compare, different accounts, even from different times and places. It is easy to see contradictions.

In the light of this attitude, Goody rejects Levy-Bruhl's contention that primitive mentality is pre-logical, in favour of a view of writing as an intellectual tool to make possible logic as it is understood in the West. The syllogism, fundamental to Western philosophical tradition, he maintains, depends on the visual inspection and material manipulation, the "fit obtained between spatial layout and verbal form", made possible by graphic representation (1987:273). Even when people use writing for trade only, it is likely that they will start categorising. An object in one category cannot be listed in another as well. It is either in this category or that. It can be moved from one to another, but it cannot be in both, otherwise accuracy in trading figures is impossible.

We are talking about skills rather than abilities or predispositions, says Goody, but it is tempting to ask whether repeated use of categorising, and transferring this

strategy to all sorts of human activity, does not predispose people to begin to 'think in categories' and 'either/or'; rather than accommodating comfortably, ambiguity - 'both and'.

Kofi Okyere Agyakwa's view (1976:163) supports Goody's in the sense that he maintains that an oral society's not thinking in 'abstract terms' - in the Western sense - does not mean that the people cannot do it, but rather that their culture may not have required it of them. Their abstractions may be in the sophistication of image, metaphor, innuendo, allusion.

What their culture has provided are a variety of ways of knowing and thinking. Agyakwa argues that epistemology is culture oriented. Akan epistemology differs *in kind* from Western epistemology, and he is using the term here to denote modes of acquiring knowledge which result in habits of thought. His study aimed to find out "What happens when an individual who has internalized the indigenous Akan habits of thought attempts to learn the conventional subject-matter of Western-style education?" (1976:1).

His interest is in the processes by which knowledge is acquired, maintaining that the Akan idea of knowledge operates in three contexts: having a concept of something, mastering the mechanics of something or acquiring skills, and recognising or being acquainted with something or

someone (1976:78,79). He complains that Ghanaian educational reforms, of which he has done a study,

proceed on the facile assumption that the change from traditional ways of knowing to western-style educational methods does not involve any significant epistemological disorientation. ... The transition entails, *a fortiori*, a change in the students' basic epistemic orientation, which is an integral part of the total cultural heritage. (1976:19-20)

Comparing epistemologies is perhaps a dangerous activity, although, for practical purposes, people will have to make some assumptions bearing in mind the problems and inaccuracies. Hallen and Sodipo's study has thrown some of the dangers into high relief.

In their collaborative study with a small group of Yoruban diviners, they discovered that the Yoruban words *mo* and *gbagbo* that had been used as a translation of the English *know* and *believe* were in fact not the same as the English at all - that there are no equivalent concepts; that these concepts which were thought to refer to universal attitudes, do not in fact do that. Hallen and Sodipo call in question the possibility of any attitudes' being universal. They are also at pains to show how the English concepts fit English ideas of traditional knowledge better than do the Yoruban. In comparing the two systems, they say the following:

(1) There is something first-hand about *know* and *mo*, and second-hand about *believe* and *gbagbo*, in both systems; (2) there is greater certitude attached to *know* and *mo* than to *believe* and *gbagbo*, in both systems; (3) it is possible for information that is belief and *igbagbo* to become knowledge and *imo*, in both systems.

...
 The point of difference between the two systems that we find to be of greatest significance is the relative role of testimony or second-hand information. In the Yoruba system any information conveyed on the basis of testimony is, until verified, *igbagbo*. In the English system a vast amount of information conveyed on the basis of testimony is, without verification, classified as 'knowledge that'. Much of the latter is information that the individual concerned would not even know how to verify. Yet it is still 'knowledge that'.

How ironic that the model of African thought systems produced by English-language culture should typify them as systems that treat second-hand information (oral tradition, 'book' knowledge, etc.) as though it were true, as though it were knowledge! This is precisely what the Yoruba epistemological system, as outlined above, outspokenly and adamantly refuses to do. But the English-language system does - grossly. Therefore it, in the end, fits its own model for traditional thought systems better than Yoruba ever can! (1986:80-81)

Bearing in mind these difficulties, it is still useful to talk about knowledge as a broad category, provided it is very clear that we are not referring only to what we might call cognitive knowledge. Nonverbal knowledge, communicated by body language, is very important, and Agyakwa points out the obvious, that "nonverbal systems can only operate in face-to-face situations", not via texts (1976:53).

When he talks about processes by which knowledge is acquired, he is including dreams and divination. "A dream is a borderline case between divination on the one hand, and nonverbal knowing proper on the other. ... the traditional Akan people take dreams seriously", he writes, "that is, dreams play an important part in the way they think and act (1976: 54-55). He is, of course, referring here to dreams

which people recognise as significant. Not every dream qualifies for serious treatment.

Peek makes the point that divination systems deliberately "shift decision-making into a liminal realm by emphatically participating in opposing cognitive modes." He shows how divination creates difference which it then mediates. This difference includes male and female identity of objects, spirits, people; left and right; human and animal; human and superhuman. "While divination creates, through its use of liminality and norm reversals, a shift to nonordinary cognitive processes, it also insists on bringing these oppositions together." Various elements are used in divination to produce what Peek refers to as a non-normal mode of cognition. Both the diviner and clients need to be in a state of non-normal consciousness to ensure that accurate communication between the world of the living and the dead occurs. "Because divination deals with non-normal sources of knowledge, not only must the correct question be addressed properly to the correct source, but the diviner must also be able to recognize the correct information" (1991b:193,198,199). The diviner is in a state of heightened sensory awareness, and is able to make use of knowledge acquired in this way as well. The heightened awareness is a result of the particular rituals used in divination as well as the personality of the diviner and the particular training which he or she has undergone - all geared to facilitating access to knowledge and information

not usually available to people whose sensibilities have not been similarly honed.

Fernandez, however, draws attention to the variety of systems of divination, for example: "inspired divination and learned divination; ... open and closed systems of divination; ... collaborative and consensual divination (in respect to the relation between diviner and client) and unilateral and authoritarian procedures." (1991:216). This list is a reminder that it is dangerous to generalise from a particular divinatory practice. Coplan (1989:3) also cautions against generalising in this area:

Even the small amount of data I have collected so far in this domain has convinced me that it is in most cases misleading to begin statements with such phrases as 'the Basotho believe...' or 'Traditional healers agree...'. ... My own mentor often scoffs, perhaps disingenuously, at notions and methods related to me by other healers or ordinary members of the community.

Fernandez concludes, nevertheless, with a broad generalisation that is useful in the context of this chapter:

the best diviners are ones who are exceptionally well tuned in to the primary processes where so many of our problems lie. ... But at the same time diviners must also bring this way of knowing revealingly to bear upon troubled social situations. ... They must, thus, synthesize primary process knowing with secondary process knowing, that knowing where the logics of category, concept formation, and cognition hold sway. They must cognize the world as well as perform it. (1991:220)

A written text can cognize the world - and perhaps help to restore to diviners an elevated status in a modern world - but it cannot itself perform the world. Its knowing can only be secondary.

Attitudes to transmission of knowledge

Horton (1982:238) argues that traditional theories are founded on a 'traditionalist' assumption that knowledge handed down must be better than new adaptations because it has stood the test of time. Moreover, he contends that tradition resorts to a "consensual mode of theorising", "in which all members of a community ... share a single over-arching framework of secondary-theoretical assumptions and carry out intellectual innovation within that framework" (1982:229). Alternative theories create anxiety because they break with social consensus. This contrasts with Western scientific thought which is anti-traditionalistic in the sense that more recent theories are supposed to be better; and which tends to a more competitive mode of theorising.

It is this over-arching framework of secondary-theoretical assumptions that is passed on and considered to be best because it has stood the test of time, says Horton. Boyer (1990:8,10), however, is at pains to refute the idea that 'traditional' societies' ritual speech and action are perpetuated *because of* an over-arching worldview to which

all subscribe and which consciously informs the speech and practice. He contests the assumption that 'traditional' people repeat speech and actions because they are conserving cultural models, and that through the rituals, people are being taught a philosophy of life and death. While not disputing the probability of the existence of an overarching worldview, he argues for separating the repetition of "actions or utterances which are performed with the guidelines provided by people's memories of a previous occurrence" from a desire to conserve a worldview (1990:8). "Traditions as effectively studied are clusters of repeated, salient, etc., events. General theories of tradition, on the other hand, focus on intellectual constructions..." (1990:10). He emphasises that, far from traditional behaviour's being traceable to the distant past, it is usually based on immediately previous performances of the same type of event, and the reason given by participants for performing in a particular way is that that is how they remember its being done. This does not mean, of course, that it has not been performed similarly for a very long time. What he is saying, in other words, is that people do not set out to pass on knowledge and information by means of rituals. That they do, and most powerfully, is another and very important issue.

It is, in fact, an issue that Catherine Bell has addressed in depth. She coins the term *ritualization* to emphasise the dynamic nature of a process that constitutes itself and the 'agents' and participants involved. As Bell explains, "we

see an act of production - production of a ritualized agent able to wield physically a scheme of subordination or insubordination." (1992:100) As in the case of divination, referred to above, difference is highlighted. "It is clear that ritualization also involves a play of differences. The body produces an environment structured according to a series of privileged oppositions, which in turn is seen to mold and produce a ritualized agent." And though the "orchestration of this series into dominant and latent schemes" moulds and is moulded by the power dynamics of the society, it does not resolve a social contradiction. "People generate a ritualized environment that acts to shift the very status and nature of the problem into terms that are endlessly retranslated in strings of deferred schemes" (1992:105,106).

This last is reminiscent of Peek's observation, mentioned above, when he referred to a "larger African dynamic in which human energies are devoted to resolving rather than resolution."

The knowledge that is transmitted in ritual, then, is about the nature of the society itself as it is in that moment. It is, in fact, knowledge that is constituted by the ritualization itself and it is never fixed or final. Further, it is embodied knowledge. Bell refers to Bourdieu's idea of "practical mastery" of the strategies of ritualisation, which "come to be embedded in the very perceptions and dispositions of the body and hence are known

only in practice as the way things are done" (1992:107). And it is in the perception that *this is the way things are done* that the power of this sort of knowledge production and transmission lies.

Bell deals with the "seeing and not seeing" of ritual which Boyer is actually talking about. Whereas he maintains that the repetition of particular practices and speech events should be studied separately from worldview or cultural identity *because* knowledge of these things is not what the people set out to impart in these practices, Bell insists that this is just what is the *unperceived* purpose of ritualization.

What does ritualization see? It is a way of acting that sees itself as *responding* to a place, an event, force, problem, or tradition. It tends to see itself as the natural or appropriate thing to do in the circumstances. Ritualization does not see how it actively creates place, event, and tradition, how it redefines or generates the circumstances to which it is responding. It does not see how its own actions reorder and reinterpret the circumstances so as to afford a sense of fit among the main spheres of experience - body, community and cosmos. ... The deployment of these schemes both structures experience of the world and molds dispositions that are effective in the world so experienced. (1992:109,115)

Boyer comes close to this when he writes:

Traditions are a complex form of interaction; they involve a specific distribution of roles between people, a specific type of criteria to evaluate their utterances, a specific kind of representation about certain cultural categories, and so on. ... the *combination* of these elements makes it possible for traditional interaction to occur and result in the repetition of communicative events. Most of the

elements are likely to be found in other types of situations, perhaps even in prototypical 'modern' contexts. (1990:114)

While deep, fundamental imprinting is taking place through ritualization and divination; and dreams, and nonverbal information are contributing to the education of the people, there are also other ways in which knowledge is transmitted. Agyakwa maintains that traditional Akan education "consists of a package of assortments delivered piecemeal from birth to death" (1976:83). Boyer (1990:12) bears this out, insisting that traditional teaching does not set out to transmit theories and generalisations, but particular information for a particular situation. People do not receive ideas on ancestors, for example, in the form of generalising lessons, but in many instances of specific situations or problems.

Further, there is not the clear distinction between learning and life that has resulted from a Western-style school system (Nyamende, 1988:220). Agyakwa (1976: 212) describes the effect in Ghana of the "rigid organizational structures and sedate, formal teaching methods. The overall effect was to produce a system of education in which learning and teaching were believed to be incompatible with fun and freedom in any form. In the end, an unbridgeable cleavage came to be established between learning and play." He suggests that the difference between the colonial and the Akan attitude can be attributed to the Western privileging of mind over matter, and mind over emotion which is not

familiar in Akan thought. Ong also comments on learning and play in an oral culture:

In an oral culture, verbalized learning takes place quite normally in an atmosphere of celebration or play, as events, words are more celebrations and less tools than in literate cultures. Only with the invention of writing and the isolation of the individual from the tribe will verbal learning and understanding itself become 'work' as distinct from play, and the pleasure principle be downgraded as a principle of verbalized cultural continuity. (1981:30)

Perhaps this partly explains why, in an Akan community, proverbs are explained only to fools, and questions are considered to be inappropriate during storytelling (1976:140). So as not to create a wrong impression, however, it is important to point out that that strict division between work and play, between 'serious' subject matter and stories, is no longer a revered tenet of Western education - certainly in educational theory - and often in practice. Late nineteenth and twentieth century thought (influenced by Marx, Freud, Jung, Satre, Lacan, Kristeva, Foucault - to mention just a few) and experience in the West has managed to go a long way towards de-privileging the mind in relation to the emotions and the body. This has obviously had considerable effect on educational theory and practice.

Not only does Agyakwa comment on the work/play aspect, he also explains that "traditional people hardly drew a distinction between applied or practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge. All knowledge is acquired for the

purpose of practical application." In fact, an educated or cultured person is one who "combines wisdom, knowledge and efficiency satisfactorily in the daily conduct of his life." Knowledge for its own sake is not sought, nor is it appropriate for knowledge to be imparted *before* the person concerned is going to need it.

He isolates three areas of knowledge which have been considered important in traditional Akan education: political, religious-cum-moral and technical. To these he adds oral-aural efficiency, constituting the acronym PROMT . Because the overarching aim of traditional Akan education is to model one's life on the good ancestors, he consequently arrives at this formula for an Akan curriculum to satisfy the needs of traditional Akan people: "PROMT is a necessary and sufficient condition (or curriculum) for attaining Model-Life" (1976:84,85).

Now that the world is a global village, it is probably not possible to find a completely insulated oral culture. All have been influenced by the written. Moreover, as Ong has pointed out, our age is characterised by new stress on the auditory: telephone, radio, television. But this is not a return to an earlier oral-aural world. "The present sensorium is dismayingly mixed and we are hard put to understand it" (1981:9). It need not be dismaying, however. It could be the shake-up of old categories of thinking - old

divisions into oral and written, and THIS culture as radically different from THAT culture - in the manner of divination, so that a new synthesis can begin to emerge as an ongoing resolving, rather than a resolution.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROCESS: TEXT AS SCORE, PERFORMANCE, AND INTERTEXTUAL EVENT

A story needs a story-teller and an audience. If the story-teller is skilled and experienced, and the audience responsive, a performance of worth is likely to take place. Such a performance requires that the story be told in person to an audience in person so that the interaction is immediate and unique. Storytelling does not happen in a social or cultural vacuum. Its relevance depends on what representations the audience can associate with, or infer from, the detail in the story. A story is always changing as the composition of the audience changes. Furthermore, myths, in African tradition, at any rate, are intended to be handled differently for different age groups (Kwenda, working session, 19 Dec.1995). A story involves storyteller and audience in a complementary performance.

Text as score

Our challenge was to capture this kind of participatory performance in such a way that it could subsequently be released in classrooms in a form that was unique to each new performance, having itself served as methodological model

and stimulus. In this sense it would be the score for a variety of future performances (of story, and also of discussion and drama and various other kinds of interaction) - but a score more in the sense of jazz with plenty of room for improvisation within the rhythm and chord structure.

But before we could create such a score, we needed to find a way of ensuring that the people for whom it was intended would perceive it as legitimate and worth their while. We needed a context that would be credible. Since this was to be a book about African Religion for students and teachers, we chose such a context - the simulation of a university professor offering a course in African Religion, with a group of first year students. Being aware of the status of higher education in South Africa at present and its use to us in terms of credibility as a context, we also saw the opportunity for reinterpreting the notion of teaching and learning. Traditional African ways of learning, teaching and knowing within the context of a Western university could provide a score of considerable interest to students and teachers in contemporary South Africa.

This solution, however, presented a further problem: the actual targeted readership was high school students (approx 16-18 year-olds); the simulated audience was undergraduate tertiary level; the actual audience was postgraduate. This situation involved a double fiction. In order for the simulation to 'work', in the sense of the real audience in the writing situation's responding naturally, the level of

the questions and discussion would probably be unconvincing as those of high school students. We tried to circumvent this by entering into the simulation as fully as we could. It was a problem that we did not solve, however, and the language and concept level was too advanced for the targeted audience. With hindsight, we realise that we should probably have used as audience, representatives from the target readership.

Perhaps the most obvious and important element of the 'score' aspect of the text was the tasks which ended each chapter, and which actually constituted the core of the course we had devised.

These tasks were divided into three sections: research, theory (requiring the familiar format of essays on topics arising out of discussion in the chapter), and class presentations and discussion. Of these three, the research is probably the most important in terms of three of our major objectives in writing this text, viz:

- * affirming, and developing a respect for, African religion and culture as viable and practised in contemporary South Africa;
- * presenting the oral tradition as the major authority, credible in academic circles as well as in the community; and
- * recording information from the oral tradition which is in danger of disappearing.

The research section of the tasks requires the students, in pairs or as individuals, to approach an elderly person or persons who practise African Religion and ask them particular questions relating to the topic which has been the focus of the chapter. This would serve the double function of widespread documentation, by thousands of students, of valuable, detailed, primary information about religious and cultural practices and attitudes which would otherwise be at risk of disappearing; and of reinstating the elders in the community as authorities on important knowledge - as religious and educational authorities.

Excerpts from the research section of the tasks in two chapters of the draft manuscript of the text *African Religion and Culture Alive!* quoted below serve to illustrate the sort of detail (in *Rites of Passage*), and also the grounded, specific story aspects (in *Sickness and Healing*) of the primary research envisaged:

From the chapter on RITES OF PASSAGE:

A. RESEARCH

This is very important research. You will need to spend a great deal of time on it; and make sure that you find out as much detail as possible.

Choose a particular African clan or family, and find out from the elderly people who belong to that clan:

- * the details of their birth rituals, e.g.
- Who takes part?
- What is the function of each person who has a role?
- Where does the ritual take place?

- How many days are set aside for the ritual?
- Is a beast slaughtered? What kind of beast? Who must be involved with the slaughtering? Is there a special way of slaughtering?
- What special foods are used?
- Are there any particular distinctions between the mother of the child - and the father and his relatives? Why is this so?
- What words are spoken? who must speak them?

etc - any other relevant information concerning the ritual;

[Then there are similar details required for marriage and death rituals, but omitted here]

* any traditional sayings, proverbs, riddles, that have to do with rites of passage (birth, initiation, marriage, death.)

From the chapter on SICKNESS AND HEALING:

A. RESEARCH

- * Find someone who has been healed as a result of consulting a diviner. Tape record or write down the story of this experience.
- * If possible, interview a diviner and record his/her story of the call and also the training (obviously, not those aspects that are secret).
- * If possible, ask a diviner about which ancestors are present when divination is taking place.

We advocated that the interviews be recorded on a cassette sound recorder where possible. We suggested that there be careful preparation for these recordings, and professional presentation of them, first to the teacher to form part of the assessment required for the students' academic record, then to be used in feedback sessions to share the information with the rest of the class; and finally to be

offered to universities or publishing houses as primary research. We hoped that this whole process would also serve to meet two other of our objectives, viz:

- * to establish, for South African students and teachers, African religion as a subject of national importance; and
- * to encourage students to take pride in the process and product of their work as a contribution of national importance.

(Here - and throughout - the pedagogical context of the text as document is obvious.)

This section from the draft manuscript of the *Teacher's Manual* serves as an illustration of such preparation for recording and presentation. It is necessary to explain that we followed the advice of Ms Mndende regarding the recommended maximum size of the student group to carry out the research. Originally we had envisaged a group of three or four students. Ms Mndende, as a result of her teaching experience with such students, suggested that there would probably be 'passengers' in a group of more than two, and maximum benefit for the students would necessitate limiting the size to pairs.

A. RESEARCH

This is probably the most important and valuable part of the students' work. It is designed to preserve extremely important information about the details of African religion and culture that only the elderly have, and which is likely to disappear if it is not recorded.

A.1 The teacher will need to decide whether it will be better for his or her particular class to do this research in pairs, or as individuals.

The students should go to an elderly person or people who know(s) the tradition and record on a cassette recorder - or write down - what that person or people can tell them regarding the topic. *It is very important to observe the respect due to the elderly in the community, and the students will need to know how to greet them; and how to behave in their presence.* Although many of the students will automatically observe the etiquette, the teacher should remind all students of African etiquette before they go out to conduct their research.

It may be necessary to conduct several interviews before the students have obtained all the information they require for any one topic.

A.2 Students should make sure that a cassette recording is clearly audible and properly labelled with the name of the person(s) interviewed, the name of the interviewer(s), and the dates and places of the interviews. A written report should be presented in a professional way - if possible typed, otherwise very neatly written. The dates and places of the interviews as well as the name(s) of the person(s) interviewed and the interviewer(s) should appear on the records. We suggest a format (for both written and cassette records) like the sample below:

RECORD OF PRIMARY RESEARCH

TOPIC FOR INTERVIEW: (fill in topic, e.g. birth ritual)

INTERVIEWEE(S): (fill in full names of person or persons interviewed)

INTERVIEWER(S): (fill in full names of student or students who are requesting information)

DATE OF INTERVIEW: (fill in)

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: (fill in)

Note: If it is a written record of the interview, the students should write down their questions as well as the answers that they receive from the interviewee. Students using cassette recorders should also record their questions as well as the answers.

A.3 Recording the information on a cassette is the best way, but there are important precautions for the students to take to make sure that the recording is clear enough to use as research. They should:

* Test the recorder before going out to do the interview. ...

** Make sure that the person is willing to be recorded, and is clear about what the information is going to be used for.*

** Do the interview in a quiet place, so that background noise does not hide the voice of the person interviewed.*

** The interview should take place in the language that is spoken by the person who is being interviewed. If this is not a language that the student can speak, an interpreter will have to be arranged for.*

A.4 What to do with the completed tape-recorded or written interviews:

A.4.1. The teacher should give a mark for the research. It is not easy to assess the relative merits of this kind of work - the teacher could consider the quality of the recorded or written interview; and give the highest mark to the most professional product.

A.4.2. During the class discussion and presentation sessions - or during special feedback sessions - students should be prepared to give a brief description for their classmates of their visit(s) to the elderly person, and a summary of what the person told them....

A.4.3. The teacher could make contact with the nearest university: Department of Religious Studies, or African Languages, or History, or Education, or Anthropology - or with an interested publisher - so that this primary research can be published.

We had decided that, in order to ensure that the traditional educational authorities were validated, it was necessary to emphasise the necessity of observing the proper etiquette; and also to encourage the use of the interviewee's mother tongue, as is apparent in the excerpt above. In directing the students out of the classroom and into the community to consult the elderly as authorities, we hoped to influence a change in perception of where knowledge and status lie - to challenge Western/Christian ownership of knowledge and

religion. This aspect will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 4.

The section of the tasks under the heading: Class Presentations and Discussion is a very obvious context for the performance of the text as score. Here topics for discussion arising out of the particular chapter, and suggestions for plays, songs, artwork, etc. provide a loose frame and the stimulus for classroom performance. Here is a sample of this section from the chapter on Sickness and Healing:

C. CLASS PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

* Present the information acquired by students in their primary research and discuss interesting aspects arising from this research.

* Discuss whether people should be arrested and punished for killing others whom they accuse of witchcraft.

* Discuss any other aspect dealt with in this chapter which is of particular interest to people in the class.

* Present a play or dance drama on one or more of the following topics:

- a person seeking healing from a variety of practitioners and healing institutions;

- a situation in which some people are arguing that a belief in witchcraft is out of date, and others are saying that it is a very important way of explaining misfortune.

- any other theme from this chapter which seems suitable.

* Make up a song or a poem which deals with any of these issues; or do a painting or make posters.

Such activities are designed to involve students cognitively, emotionally, and through their senses, in engaging with the issues so that their understanding of ways of knowing and learning are broadened.

Text as performance

Our subject being an oral tradition, we hoped to write about it by performing it. A.C.Nkabinde (1988:270,1), as quoted in Chapter 2 of this study, emphasises the communal participation which he perceives as an essential element in oral tradition. He argues that the dividing line between performers and spectators is so faint as to be virtually non-existent. "One may only distinguish between 'major' and 'minor' performers". Having decided on the simulation of professor and students, we had assigned ourselves the roles of a major and two minor performers, to use Nkabinde's description.

This decision arose out of the circumstances, and we had made it almost without being consciously aware that we had done so. Our 'major' performer, the 'Professor', had informally and unpremeditatedly demonstrated the skill required for performing stories, and for drawing together and presenting the information required in a variety of other African ways. He had had the personal experience - as a traditional chief - of leadership and teaching in a traditional African context. The other important

qualification he had as performer was that he did not come from any particular South African African language group. Consequently, what he could tell would be from a recognisably African experience without privileging any one of the South African traditions. This factor introduced another element as well. As an outsider to any South African tradition, his qualification as teacher is ambiguous. It raises the insider/outsider debate in relation to interpreting traditions (Chidester, 1987b; Mudimbe, 1988; van Beek & Blakely, 1994) - though in a modified way.

The insider/outsider consideration, is in fact fundamental to the whole process of the producing and production of the book. In a section on dreams (Chapter 7:23 of the draft manuscript), the 'Professor' answers a question concerning why it is forbidden to tell to any but parents a dream about one's totem, in these words:

One's totem must be treated with respect. The ability to draw lines of demarcation between what may be shared with outsiders and what is reserved for closest kin is at the very centre of the generation, possession and utilisation of knowledge in African cultures.

The element of outside-ness which applied to all three of the authors to a lesser or greater extent, we attempted to offset by extending the interpretation of the tradition to acknowledged insiders in the persons of the elderly members of the community who would be the students' oral sources of knowledge. The 'major' performer's position, however,

provided an interesting example of bicultural fluency, being, as he seems to be, equally fluent in both African Shona and Western English/American cultures. This aspect appeared to contribute considerably to the translation across cultures which is necessary in a book which is written in English about African understanding and practices using both Western and African techniques of communication. While an exploration of this aspect is beyond the scope of this study, two comments ~~by~~ are pertinent here:

Cultural expressions can be understood, but never fully, and can be communicated transculturally, but not without loss of meaning and creation of new meaning. Our observations are interpretations, first of all, rendered understandable by both a shared humanity with all people and by a shared academic culture that hardly transcends the phenomena studied; ... (Bruner in van Beek & Blakely, 1994:4)

and

The processes of identity formation and problem solving appear to be sufficiently separate to have multiple religious systems being used at the same time by the same person. (van Beek & Blakely, 1994:4)

The students and teachers for whom the book is intended share the humanity, the academic, and also, most of them, the African, culture that was being interpreted, so the misunderstandings would, we hoped, be kept to a minimum. Then, the apparent possibility of multiple identity and religio-cultural systems' operating within the same human being encouraged us to believe that we were embarking on a useful exercise.

Any inequalities in the bicultural identity of the 'major' performer, however, we hoped would be offset by the cultural bias of each of the 'minor' performers. One of the 'minor' performers, Ms Mndende, had had considerable experience - as student and teacher - of the classroom situation we were writing for. Moreover as a practitioner of the religion we were to write about, she would be able to interact with, respond to, and even redirect the performance as she deemed fit. The other 'minor' performer, myself, as a non-African, would be able to perceive where further clarification was necessary, so that the text would be accessible to Western non-African students as well.

Orchestrating the process

The next decision was how to orchestrate the actual process. We had perceived the need for it to be a performance. We had also agreed to capture it as a score in a way that would make its transformed release a natural and easy consequence.

Furthermore, we had a structure in the form of the syllabus for African Religion, Std 8 - Std 10, that we had devised in 1995. The broad categories which we had chosen as areas for study in that syllabus would provide the scope of the book. What remained was to start.

We had set aside two weeks from 29 January to 09 February, 1996. We would spend each day together in my home, with a

tape recorder. We would supplement the performance with extra information which we would look for in resource books.

After the two weeks, we would transcribe the recorded performance.

South African African audiences at conferences, meetings - any gathering where there is to be a speaker or speakers - know the importance of setting free the spirit of oratory within the speaker, of inspiring him or her to release the capacity for really good performance. Singing will encourage him or her, so will clapping. It took us a couple of hours on our first day to realise that our inspiration was not, in fact, going to come from the books we had brought as resources. These we had already, at various stages, read. Their insights and information were known to us, even if not immediately available to recall. The realisation did not come as a conscious decision, it arose as a result of wondering where and how to begin, and of a trial recording of the 'Professor's' myth of origin. The spontaneous interaction in simulation following, and the obvious internal structure of the 'lecture' that followed the questions and comments on the myth from the 'minor performers', encouraged us to leave the books unopened and risk direct, unscripted and unrehearsed recording.

We have the inhibition of the structure we have given ourselves - the three sections and the issues to be dealt with in those sections. We also have the inhibition of the structure of the simulation - lecture - even though the vehicle is the story.
BUT THE QUESTIONS AFTER THE STORY TODAY UNLOCKED

DEPTH, FLUENCY, ARTICULATION AND RANGING TO ESSENCE.
 Whole process of writing - together, with tape recorder. Oral? team? roles? contributions?
 NB inspiration: sparking off unconscious/brain organisation, symbolic ways of knowing. Is this what praise-singing, ritual, food do? (My fieldnotes: 1 Feb, 1996).

This excerpt, and the transcription of the following conversation on this aspect, recorded on the same day, reflect the process leading to our decision. Dr Kwenda was commenting on the unconventional ways of delivering a lecture that we had just recorded.

Kwenda: .. other ways [of teaching, delivering a lecture] are more releasing. You could amaze yourself.

Stonier: Yes, for instance: if we said we wanted a lecture on myth, it would take you a couple of hours to prepare. And then you might come up with something that was rather similar to what we did here, only it may even have suffered from a kind of manipulation.

[**Kwenda & Mndende:** Mmmm] ... It seems to me that we think we are wasting time - or this is a sort of mickey mouse way of doing it. ... How can what you say in response to a question be seriously planned enough or thought-out enough or academic enough or substantial enough to be the end product? [**Kwenda:** Mmmm] In fact it could be and it can be. And one can achieve, I think, in an extraordinarily short time if one is actually pressing the right buttons [**Kwenda:** Mmm]. You can religiously spend hours and hours *working* and achieve a miniscule amount compared with working under the circumstances which, I think, looking at us, are in fact generative.

It should be noted here that we surmise that the 'Professor's' academic training, his substantial reading in the subject, his experience as a preacher, and teacher, and professional story teller, all contribute to his being able to structure coherently patterned meaningful extended discourse and fluent patterns of speech more-or-less

spontaneously. This is a variable which we did not attempt to examine. We were aware, however, that there was an element of conscious selection in his choice of particular story as a teaching tool. This became especially apparent in the section relating to African Justice. The story that he chose to relate - of the many court proceedings in which he had been involved - was one which was not dramatic. He said that if he had chosen a dramatic trial, attention would be focussed on the drama, rather than the elements of justice in question (Kwenda, working session 6 Feb., 1996).

There was another and very obvious element of selection. We wanted stories that would serve as a *vehicle* for teaching about African thinking and practices, as this excerpt shows:

Discussion of proposed format of book: in three sections, each section's topics arising naturally out of the central story for that section, which is to form the organising principle.

1. First Section: the Professor's myth of origin, told by his uncle.

Issues arising in story: myths and symbols
 African respect and greetings
 marriage customs
 rituals
 totems
 succession to chieftainship

2. Second Section: the Professor's own experience as chief.

Issues arising in story: African democracy and justice
 sexual ethics
 rites of passage (not marriage)

3. Third Section: need story to tell about worldviews and interaction with other religions and cultures; and to deal with sickness, healing and theories relating to misfortune. (My fieldnotes, 29 Jan., 1996)

This is different from using stories as *illustration* of what is to be taught - although we felt free to use story as illustration as well.

The 'unleashing' process

What was very apparent was that the fluency and free-flowing extended discourse was not available 'on tap'. It required an 'unleashing' process. We found that we could not decide that we would deal with a particular topic or aspect, and then expect the 'Professor' to expatiate on it, in story or any other form. Two very important preliminary stages were required:

- * a social 'warming-up' process.

It was necessary to re-establish and reconstitute our relationship - and also our simulated relationship - every time we came together. This stage could not be hurried. No matter how much we wanted to achieve in the day that lay ahead, we found that we could not shortcut this process. On 3 May, 1996, we had a short time in which to do a considerable amount of redrafting of a section. As Dr Kwenda and Ms Mndende had travelled together to the working venue - my home - I assumed that they would have been through the social stage, and after my participating in a brief greeting, we would start straight into our recording. We tried, but had to abandon the attempt, and it was only an hour later that we were able to start recording with any

success. It seemed that it was necessary to listen to each other tell where each was coming from in terms of experience since we had last seen each other in order for us to leave behind our separate lives and constitute our relationship in the 'island', and also in the simulation; and to become present and focussed - as this note shows.

I tried to start into work straight away because K. and M. had driven here together. BUT we had to constitute new group with me in it and the whole organism needed acknowledging. Give and take, finding each other, perceiving energy levels. Low for K. Had to get energy levels up. (My fieldnotes, 3 May, 1996)

* The 'unleashing' stimulus.

This usually took the form of a question from one of the 'minor' performers. Our strategy was to decide on what topic we were going to deal with and then for one of the 'minors' to ask something that we really wanted to know, or discuss, or comment on. This provided the stimulus, and the process developed its own momentum from this point.

We did not try to control the direction of the process. At first we thought that we should. This proved to be an obstruction. Diversions were valuable. Dr Kwenda (working session, 30 January, 1996) then suggested that we approach it as if we were filming: shoot the scenes, not in order of final sequence, but in order of convenience, and sequence and edit and elaborate later. We found this to be a productive approach. We recorded as the interaction proceeded, however it went. To our surprise, we found a coherent sequence emerging, not necessarily as we had

originally planned. In the later editing stage, we rearranged the order of the topics handled because we had the developmental ages of the readership in mind, and decided that some topics were best dealt with at the younger age, and others at the older. Within each topic, however, there was very little rearranging to do afterwards, apart from rediscovering with frustration the arbitrariness of categories, and the dynamic, overlapping, holistic nature of our knowledge. This was at the stage when we were separating the text into chapters and headings. To gather together in one section everything connected with *identity*, for example, or *ritual*, was impossible - and we gradually realised that it was probably not even desirable. There was another sort of coherence operating in which the sequence was clear. Dr Kwenda named this sequence "spirals of learning" which allowed aspects to be revisited in greater depth, or in another context, or from another vantage point. We decided, therefore, to interfere as little as possible with the structure as it has emerged in our performing it.

An interesting question for us as academics was to what extent the liberation of our own energy and creativity was due to our not having to wonder at every sentence whom we should be citing, where our ideas and questions and knowledge were coming from, and how fellow academics would respond. These were aspects we could think about later. Along with our freedom from having to look up and verify in books every thought and statement, was our freedom from having to interrupt the flow of thought and speech patterns

with citations. It was a very interesting experiment in trusting the capacity of our brains to use all we had heard, read, experienced; and to deliver it, processed, for our purposes. This, some would say, is an aspect of the intertextual event, and the space within which the interaction was taking place; the *pulsions* from the *chora* (Kristeva in Moi, 1986), as well as the interaction of the symbols of the text itself.

We observed with interest another aspect of the process: the energising quality of the interaction that produced the text. During the two weeks of recording, the 'major' and one of the 'minor' performers were not well, and there were also family issues which were cause for anxiety. Consequently, several of the days started with the performers unmotivated, ill and distracted as is apparent in this note:

M. absent again. K. sickening for a cold, dispirited, unmotivated or unfocused? Almost an hour of rambling discussion. Then African Justice. My own response: restless and not concentrating well. (My fieldnotes, 6 Feb., 1996)

By the end of the sessions, provided all three were present, however, the energy levels were high and the performers eager to continue - regretting that the session had to end. Rather than expend energy on the process, it seemed to us that the process generated energy. This observation could have pedagogical implications - although these are not within the scope of this study.

A further aspect of note related to three days when Ms Mndende was too ill to join us, and a few hours when Dr Kwenda was absent. In both cases the two present continued, but found that the interaction and the process were unsatisfactory, as the excerpt below suggests. It was necessary to repeat most of what we had tried to do in their absence.

M. back.

K. away for several hours taking Mambo to doctor.
Played tapes to M. They seemed a bit rambling. (My fieldnotes, 8 Feb., 1996)

There was obviously an element in the dynamics of the interaction that required at least Ms Mndende and Dr Kwenda, and probably all three of us. In our discussions regarding this observation, we wondered whether it was necessary, for a successful interaction of this nature, to have three people, or whether the number of people was not the most important variable, but rather the particular composition of the team of people.

It was significant to us that we were aware of no element of competition or power struggle amongst us. We did not seem to threaten each other in any way, or trespass on each other's territory. While our skills and approach in many ways were very different, they seemed to be complementary. This may have been the main reason for the easy and generative nature of the interaction. It was soon apparent that Ms Mndende was providing a grounded perspective, applying the discussion to particular instances within her

own tradition and experiences, and directing her questions and comments to these particular instances as this excerpt shows:

Then I asked a question in order to get concrete examples - calling people dogs. This was illustrative of the concept. BUT M. gave a concrete specific instance of boys' being called dogs in her experience. I thought this fairly irrelevant, but K. was pleased - as always, with her comments and questions - and it turned out to be important. (My fieldnotes, 3 May, 1996)

Her influence was an important reminder of what Boyer has argued strongly, viz that people do not receive ideas on ancestors - and on other important aspects of the religion in an oral tradition - in the form of generalising lessons, but rather in many examples of specific situations and problems (1990:12). She also made sure that gender issues were addressed: "M. wondering how to bring in women's rites and women's role. How will this come into the stories?" (My fieldnotes, 30 Jan., 1996), and would steer the process in this direction by means of her questions and comments in simulation. Dr Kwenda was providing a wide canvas, a basic theory, although the vehicle for teaching that theory was often through story and biographical reference. I provided a driving principle, insisting that we continue the process in spite of obstacles. I also provided a technical function, manipulating the recorder, transcribing the recording, providing the refreshment; as well as a monitoring function, trying to check that the frame of reference was intelligible to a nonspecialist.

I was particularly aware of my own Western orientation when I felt it necessary to have a summary at the end of the first section - "What we have learnt so far." I realised that I was not yet able to recognise as valid, teaching that was not obviously labelled as such in what I recognised as a Western pattern. I feared that the students would not know that they had learnt a, b, and c - and not knowing, they would in fact not have learnt it. After a few days of the process, however, I was able to relax about this aspect, although we have retained this summary at the end of Chapter 1 - but this chapter only. We have indicated in the teachers' manual that if the teachers find such a summary useful, they can use this device after each chapter. It was interesting that both my colleagues had similar unease - in their case, about the validity of the product as a 'real book'. They each expressed considerable relief once they had read the first draft in print. "I am now satisfied that this is a real book" (Kwenda, working session, 3 May, 1996). "When you read it, you are really interested and you just want to go on reading. You wonder about this thing, and then you find your question has been answered if you read further" (Mndende, working session, 3 May, 1996).

By 9 February, 1996, we had nine 90 minute audio cassettes to be transcribed as the book *African Religion and Culture Alive!*. We decided that the process of transcription would involve preliminary editing, in the sense that the spoken word would be arranged in sentences and paragraphs, at the discretion of the transcriber - myself.

Once the process began, however, it was apparent that punctuating, arranging into sentences and paragraphs - also sections and chapters - were not the only editorial decisions to be made at this stage. There was another and more fundamental one: to what extent should the elements of the spoken mode - the repetitions, interjections, filler words, the very rhythms of spoken discourse, which are often different from the rhythms of writing - be preserved? As it turned out, the fluency of the main speaker's, the 'Professor's', spoken discourse was such that there were very few 'filler' words and broken sentences. There was, however, an expanded, leisurely style, with repetition; and an almost intimate feel. To interfere with this complex linguistic pattern would be to undermine, and even deny, what we had set out to do, viz to write about an oral tradition, as far as possible in the mode of that oral tradition. Consequently, I transcribed virtually verbatim, merely punctuating and arranging into sentences and paragraphs.

I also felt, as is indicated in the extract below, that we should change the format of our essay topics in the 'Tasks' section of each chapter to be less polemic; and that a section should be omitted. My colleagues agreed on both issues.

2. Having read Ong, now realise that our topics for essays and/or debate in the tasks section are framed very much in the polemic mode of the "old partisan, oral-aural outlook" of feudal Europe. Perhaps that is

useful for us in trying to acknowledge African orality, but I am doubtful. [We changed the frame of the topics to be more discursive and less rhetorical.]

3. Have omitted M.'s account of the child being killed and buried and then reappearing. Doesn't really seem to connect with dreams or any of the sections. Have checked with the others. They agree. Need to merge trouble section with sickness and healing. (My fieldnotes, 19 March, 1996)

I presented the transcribed draft to my colleagues for their scrutiny on 27 March. They read it, correcting typing errors, making suggestions and changes. Dr Kwenda removed almost every 'and so on', which had been a common way in which he had ended an explanation or illustration. Ms Mndende added or changed aspects of her questions, explanations and comments which she felt had given the wrong impression. Her idiom and style of spoken English is markedly different from Dr Kwenda's or mine. It shows, we thought, a recognisably South African African way of using English, and we felt it was important to preserve this quality.

We met on 3 April to discuss the draft, to divide it into chapters, and to decide on the order of the chapters. All three of us were unhappy with the section on worldviews (one of the sections worked on in Ms Mndende's absence), and with a small section in the first chapter that had to do with greeting the 'Professor's' uncle; as well as a few other minor subsections. Dr Kwenda and Ms Mndende agreed to revise these individually, and hand the new sections to me to incorporate with the other amendments. Both then found this

an unsatisfactory way of doing it, and requested a few more corporate oral sessions as the way to revise these aspects. Dr Kwenda explained that recording together in the way we had been doing it "releases my thoughts in a different way" (conversation, 24 April, 1996).

These oral recording sessions were held on 3 and 10 May in the same venue, under the same sort of conditions as for producing the original.

What remained after this was to transcribe the new sections, check these, then expand the tasks for each chapter, and devise the introduction, and a Teachers' Manual. These we wrote as individuals, giving them to each other to check, with short meetings on 6, 13, 20 June to discuss any aspects that needed a corporate decision.

One of the aspects that we had to consider was to make sure that we had a fairly representative group of fictional students asking the questions which Ms Mndende and I had 'really' asked. This was one of the most graphic illustrations to us of the blurring of boundaries - in this case between fiction and autobiography/'reality'. We chose names for the 'students' only at this stage of the process. We had not had a clear idea of their identity before. Once they had acquired names, we found that we had to alter, sometimes only very subtly, the context of the question or comment. It was necessary to remove the strongly specific Xhosa reference of some of Ms Mndende's contribution if it were to come from a Sotho or Venda student. It was also

necessary to be aware of the gender of the 'student' in relation to the question - we had tried to have a fairly even distribution of male and female among the six fictional student characters. This aspect will be examined in greater depth in the next chapter.

Devising the Teachers' Manual and the introduction reminded us of our purpose and reassured us of the value, as we perceived it, of what we had set out to do. We had presented a framework for a process in which students would find the content. Parents and the community would provide huge influence and input. The school and the community would come together to participate in a different form of learning, and, we hope, come openly to acknowledge and value a different way of knowing (Working session, 20 June, 1996).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRODUCT: TEXT AS MONUMENT AND SITE OF STRUGGLE

However multifaceted and heterogeneous it is, poststructuralism in most of its guises exhibits certain distinctive traits, including rejection of reason as universal or foundational; problematization of linguistic reference and textual interpretation; decentering of the subject; suspicion of totalizing narratives; affirmation of the nexus of knowledge/interest/power; criticism of modernity and the legacy of the Enlightenment; stress on history and culture as discursive constructions and sites of struggle; interrogation of established disciplinary and intellectual boundaries; and sensitivity to differences, exclusions, anomalies, and margins. (Leitch, 1992:xiii)

This description of poststructuralism is a useful entry point into a discussion of the particular text under review in this study.

Who owns knowledge?

The very idea of owning knowledge is, of course, contested from a poststructuralist perspective. Nevertheless ownership of knowledge continues to be fought over.

Chapter 2 of this study, using research by Agyakwa (1976), Comaroff (1981), Hallen & Sodipo (1986), Peek (1991) and others, sought to establish that one kind of knowledge is not foundational. Peek, for example, describes how

"knowledge and truth are generated by the special sensitivities of divination and then subjected to the co-operative, transformational interaction of diviner and client(s)" (1991a:4). As was obvious to us in the initial discussion phase of this project, one of the crucial aspects was "who owns knowledge?" Further, as already noted, all three of the authors and Mr Masephe took time to be convinced that knowledge coming out of personal life experience and told in story form is legitimate knowledge, 'worthy' of academic recognition. It was also important to accept that knowledge from 'uneducated', perhaps illiterate, elders in an oral tradition could qualify as worthy of serious study in contemporary schools - as knowledge, not as interesting case studies. Further, although this was not voiced in so many words, I was aware that all three of us felt that there was an element in our own intertextual event involving an underlying contest for the ownership of knowledge. Either broadly Western or broadly African must be the 'best', or the 'true'. Acknowledging one might displace the other. It may be that, whatever we say, we are not used to accepting at a deep level that knowledge is not universal or foundational, that "(i)n the beginning was the polylogue, socially situated and heteroglot" (Leitch, 1992:xiv).

Another aspect of this is contesting ownership of knowledge by an elite. Goody makes the point very strongly that literacy differentiates (1987:246,269). Those who can read have a status which the illiterate in that same society do not have, a status derived from the skill alone, as well as

the vast store of ideas and experiences-by-proxy to which reading provides access. (See Chapter 2 of this study.) Expanding the acknowledged and legitimated sources of knowledge to voices of the elderly in the community is "getting away from ownership of knowledge by an elite. No single cluster of voices can dominate - more voices are giving a contribution. Understanding is not left in the hands of 'experts'. It is very democratic" (Kwenda, working session, 20 June 1996). It will be interesting to see how this shift in the perception of what constitutes 'legitimate' knowledge in *African Religion and Culture Alive!* will be received by teachers and students in South African schools. They have been taught to downgrade knowledge from traditional African sources. While Western educated people generally have status in South Africa, however, the situation is not straightforward.

Deliwe (1992) has highlighted the complexity and ambivalence of the relationship between traditional people and the school in his study of the 'red' (traditional) people in the village of Qhude, Transkei. He shows that while the 'red' people reject Western education and Western ways, they are also dependent on them, particularly economically.

The Qhude 'red' people's ambivalent response to Western education, has to be looked at in terms of its introduction into a society which had its own indigenous African educational system. The two educational systems worked, by and large, toward divergent goals. The Western educational system worked towards the maintenance of the European social structure, whilst African education worked towards the maintenance of the African social structure. It is

because of this divergence in goals that the Qhude 'red' people initially saw Western education as undesirable. It was the changing political and economic situation arising out of the colonial experience that led them to see Western education as necessary, although the dilemma of its being both bad and good still remained. (1992:2)

The positive aspect of Western education is perceived in Qhude to be the way in which it empowers economically. Since their own economic situation has deteriorated, the 'red' people need to send their children to school. Here the children learn to value a different kind of knowledge, and to follow different norms. "Thus some of the youths fail to observe 'red' norms, in situations necessitating such observance, and this results in conflicts between them and the elders" (1992:15). It will be interesting to see whether the teachers and the elders affected by *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* will be able to accept each other as equally legitimate purveyors of knowledge.

Then there is the question of theoretical and practical knowledge. *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* could also be seen as both highlighting and collapsing the tension between theory and practice. "Poststructuralism", writes Leitch, "collapses the traditional theory/practice distinction, framing 'theory' as one mode of practice, neither transcendental nor privileged. Theory is not superior nor prior to practice. None of this, however, spells the end of theorizing; it revalues and resituates theory." (1992:xiv) Through not privileging theory, but

giving equal weight to the details of particular situated instances of practice, this text has set out to revalue and resituate theory and practice. It affords practice status as a source of, and vehicle for, knowledge in itself - not only as an illustration of theory. The stories and interactions are the sources of knowledge. While some of them serve as illustrations of theory, many are self-contained sources of knowledge.

Who owns reality?

It would be a mistake to conclude that because a description of poststructuralism provides a useful entry into a discussion of this text, the text is being held up as an example of a poststructuralist document. The whole issue of autobiography, for instance, has been much contested, with some poststructuralists, at any rate, being attacked as a result of the 'author's death' argument (Probyn, 1993:110). Further, I should not like to attach a label of any kind. Examining any entity in order to find out what it is, its reality, in other words, is probably a fruitless exercise.

Geraldine Finn raises a significant problem. "Those of us not so heavily invested in nor so well served by the values and ends of modernism may well find much to celebrate and affirm in the collapse of its authority and control"; since "it would seem to open up spaces in culture and consciousness where we can speak, hear and recognize other

and heretofore subordinated histories, realities, reasons, subjectivities, knowledges, and values, which have been silenced and suppressed." However, there seems to be an "increasingly hegemonic" male voice, interpreting and speaking on behalf of all postmodernists (1993:128). To illustrate this, she takes the example of two Canadian male academics who take it upon themselves to speak on behalf of postmodernists, assuming that their own reality is REALITY, apparently unaware that they are generalising from their particularity as if it were universal. They are claiming ownership of the territory.

It seems that there may be a human tendency to own THE territory, whatever it is. It may be easy enough to theorise that there are multiple realities, but the reality of that very theory is posited as ultimate and mine.

While the reality that underlies the text must be a site of contestation, what we have tried to do in our text, both in content and approach, is to collapse the boundary between 'reality' and 'fiction'. Perhaps this is best illustrated in the chapter on myth and symbol in *African Religion and Culture Alive!*, where the Professor tells of a motor accident in which he was involved. His car was extremely badly damaged, and in the confusion afterwards with ambulance and police, miraculously virtually unhurt, he was standing on the edge of the crowd. "One young man approached from the other end. He was talking to someone next to me, and he was saying: 'Oh, this is one of the worst accidents

that I have ever seen. The driver of the green car died on the spot. The others have been rushed to hospital.' I was too dazed and shocked to say that I was the driver of the green car. Later I realised, when I was thinking about it, that the young man was telling a story. According to his story, he was not lying - he was telling a kind of myth. He was saying that *in his experience of the world*, people who are involved in such a serious accident, the kind of accident where a new car is completely written off - such people often die."

This approach to reality - that the myth is more real than the particular 'facts' - too, of course, is a site of struggle. Many people may agree in principle that there are multiple realities, but living out this agreement is a different matter.

Who owns the culture?

The strategy of apartheid, and particularly the Bantustan policy of the Nationalist government in South Africa (1948-1994), deliberately separated South Africans into 'own nations' which were regarded as synonymous with 'cultures'. Using language as a useful marker of 'culture' and therefore 'nation', people were divided into the Zulu nation, the Xhosa nation, the Venda nation, the Sotho nation and so on. It would be very surprising, consequently, if a perception of separate and specific cultures were not deeply entrenched

in the South African psyche, making the term 'African culture' one which people accept until they think about it. Aside from the fact that "all traditions are internally contested and subject to continual shaping, whether explicit or hidden" (Calhoun, 1993:223), there is no custodian of African culture - with all the advantages and problems which would ensue. This is an aspect which needed to be addressed in the process of producing the text. For readers to feel that they could relate to the text, that it did not belong to another 'group', it was necessary to make sure that the constructed identities of those who described experiences and specific practices were spread more-or-less among major language groups in South Africa. Another way of dealing with this issue was to highlight the 'Professor's' Shona identity, hoping that his being outside the patchwork of South African African identities, but African, would take away from any threat inherent in his specificity. The best solution to the problem, however, as we saw it, was to suggest that most of the detailed information, the real specifics, be supplied by traditional authorities within each particular student's community. In this way ownership of the culture becomes diffused.

Nevertheless, there is, in the book, a strong, clearly distinguished and broadly drawn concept of what it means to be African. The 'Professor' often says "Africans are bold and creative", or "Africans tend to...", or "Africans believe ..."

This broad description of 'Africanness', and the very fact that there is such a description makes it a site of contestation.

Who owns religion?

This question is, of course, intertwined with the previous one, and illustrates the most fundamental way in which this text as a monument becomes a site of struggle, particularly in contemporary South Africa. As such it requires a more extended examination.

It is now commonly accepted that those who make the categories hold the power. As a result of reserving the term *religion* for a certain Protestant variety of Christianity, African Religion in South African schools was denied the status of religion. At best it was 'culture', and at worst it was 'heathenism', 'superstition', 'paganism', 'fetishism', 'animism' (Mitchell et al, 1993:24). This perception has yet to be challenged in the transformation process away from Christian National Education in South African schools. In the battle for control of religious territory, the text becomes a site of considerable struggle - particularly because of the interrelatedness of religion with politics, social processes, and illness and healing.

A way of looking at this struggle is to use Chidester's idea that religion involves the "stealing back and forth of

sacred symbols", a "cultural struggle over the always contested ownership of symbols". He quotes T.O. Beidelman's reference to the "deep ambiguity and hence negotiability of symbols... This negotiability is rooted in the 'politics' of social life, especially in the area of contested power and authority. Negotiability rests in the ambiguity of symbols, which allows for continued struggle by groups seeking to define what they mean." Then he takes Beidelman a step further by suggesting that "symbols are ambiguous because they are always already negotiated, contested, and stolen back and forth in their very production and reproduction as symbols" (1987:15, 1991:190,200).

The dynamic nature of this concept is broadened into Chidester's working definition of worldview: "A worldview is an open set of discursive, practical and social strategies for negotiating person and place in a world" (1992:4). This negotiation is an ongoing experiment in being human, and of deciding who else can be included in the category of human with 'us', who must be excluded.

Conquerors and colonists tend to exclude the conquered and the colonised from the category of 'us'. In becoming 'them', the colonised find their way of life, their religion, their language - their identity - downgraded. They often become the outcasts, the strangers in their own land (Werbner, 1985:256).

F. B. Welbourn, examining the genesis of indigenous churches in western Kenya, is very aware of the importance of a place to feel at home, where one is assured of one's human-ness, to use Chidester's construct. Welbourn identifies the indigenous church as "a place to feel at home in a world where the old homes were being destroyed." (1966:138) The structure of indigenous African society had largely been destroyed under the impact of colonialism. In its place were offered two alternatives: white superiority, which was obviously unacceptable to indigenous people in terms of their being acknowledged as fully human - and in response to which Africans developed their own myth, viz Africanism - or Christianity, which offered the possibility of belonging to a worldwide community (1966:133).

This latter, though, in spite of its perception of itself as universal, turned out to be culturally-bound, and, in practice, very often "owned"; and its power structures guarded against allowing incomers from other cultures into its echelons. Michael Pye (1995) uses the term "primal" religions for those that root people in the present and within a geographic boundary (with overtones of Jonathan Z. Smith's notion of locative space). Belonging - human-ness - is a given and comes with being born into the kinship structures of the community: it does not have to be sought. "Critical" or soteriological religion, by contrast, is acquired as a result of personal choice. It can be overlaid, as it were, without ousting the grounded primal religion. Michael Pye points out, however, that

"crossovers" tend to occur: "As soon as the critical religions pervade natural societies and take on the role, or some of the roles, of primal religion for the new environment, then a primal identity formation takes over and a religion with universal implications can come to be the badge of a particular people." (1995:14) In many ways, to use Pye's categories, the Christianity brought to Africa as a "critical" religion had the characteristics of the groundedness of European "primal" religion.

There are givens /assumptions that have become part of some "crossover" Christian thinking which do not necessarily rest easily in the concept structures of all people. The very category of religion as a separate aspect, able to be extracted, as it were, from the interwoven fabric of life, is a problem to many. Welbourn refers to Bengt Sundkler's suggestion (1948) that indigenous churches "are attempts to recreate, in the name of Christ, the unity of the sacred and the secular, which is fundamental to tribal society and seems to be inevitably lost by the older churches, as they grow in membership and bureaucracy" (1966:6).

Realising the difficulty facing converts to Christianity from indigenous religions, and threatened by the staggering rise in numbers of adherents of the indigenous churches, mainstream churches have been giving much attention to the need to embed Christianity within the local culture as far

as possible.¹ Welbourn refers to questions raised by the Vatican Council "of how the Church can be at one and the same time both catholic and local, both universal and vernacular" (1966:135). How can a church be true to the principle "that the Church betrays itself unless it is wholly indigenous as well as wholly catholic" (1966:7)?

This sort of thinking has highlighted the Christian claim "to provide a myth to meet the needs of men [sic] in their particular circumstances of time and place, to find expression not only, perhaps not primarily, in monolithic institutions... but in intimate congregations" (1966:143).

And who owns sacred symbols?

Jonathan Z. Smith has drawn a useful distinction between what he describes as 'locative' and 'utopian space'. David Chidester's summary of how Smith perceives these basic orientations towards sacred space is helpful:

Anchored in specific sacred sites ... the locative orientation identified sacred space with fixed, stable centres of power. Revolving around a sacred axis, the locative orientation required the maintenance of place and position in an ordered cosmos. By contrast, however, a utopian orientation toward sacred space was in principle unanchored in any specific site in the world. Whether resulting from the destruction of a locative centre or from resistance to the imposition of a dominant, oppressive locative order, this utopian

¹ Kiernan (1995:118) estimates that there are about four thousand indigenous churches in South Africa, with a combined membership of about thirty percent of the African population - and this sort of picture is true of other southern, and central, African countries.

orientation could find sacred space either in no place or in every place in the world. (1994:225)

Building on Jonathan Z. Smith's concept of locative and utopian space, Tod D. Swanson traces the universalist notion of Christianity - and secular westernism - to the early Johannine Christianity which "remapped the world" in order to produce a unity of all believers.

But even as u-topian [sic] a religion as Johannine Christianity sustains an ethos, and every ethos competes for space in this world. Ironically, therefore, the very preparing of the nonterritorial place for unity actually remapped the world in a way that displaced competing religious cultures. By delegitimizing all territorially based religions it actually staked out a new kind of Christian claim to all the territories of this world. (1994:257)

It was not only that Johannine Christianity consciously offered a transportable - a u-topian - religion which territory-bound religions could consider and take over totally or in part if they wanted to (as in Pye's primal and critical religions), but the very notion of a universal religion, applicable to all people - the truth - implied that there was no space for any other in the 'true' definition of religion. It was, in fact, a vast take-over bid.

Secular westernism developed out of Johannine Christianity, as Swanson sees it. It is experienced worldwide, and its discourse has become a universal discourse, necessarily displacing other discourses in the process. This violation

obviously has very serious consequences for colonised discourses. Elizabeth Isichei's underlying critique of Western analysis in relation to African people - reinforcing the point made above - is that it "utilizes categories of thought, including 'religion' that African cultures do not recognize. Far from encountering traditional religions with mutuality, it describes them from the outside" (1995:7). What she does not add is that it reserves to itself the right of making the categories, of determining the discourse. Colonised people are judged, and eventually tend to judge themselves, according to its norms and standards because in order to survive they have to operate within Western discourse. It requires conscious and very vigorous effort to counter the internalised oppression that is likely to result.

In this context, then, of an invasion by Christianity and the West - of an imposition of a colonial administration, a capitalist economy and a Western discourse - Africans had to find a place to feel at home: a myth to hold their changed circumstances together, to use Welbourn's terms. Those who were taken as slaves to the New World had an even more traumatic disruption of their patterns of thinking and behaviour. Indigenous churches in Africa and religions like Santeria, Candomble and Vodou in the Americas have involved ways in which Africans have met these challenges in the process of negotiating their worldviews.

Essentially we are talking of the encounter between cultures, and the violent domination of one by the other. It is important before proceeding, however, to be reminded that there are never clearcut boundaries. Karen McCarthy Brown (1991:14) uses Clifford Geertz's notion that humans "are suspended in webs of significance" which they themselves have created. She suggests that we can speak of culture in a general sense "because human beings in relation, over time, tend to evolve shared styles of web-spinning. The individual life ... while open to infinite variation, is nevertheless recognizable as a version of one or more of these traditional web-spinning styles we call cultures."

This view is a reminder of Chidester's dynamic concept of worldview as ongoing ways in which people negotiate person and place in a world. It is with this dynamic connectedness rather than definitive categories in mind, then, that this present discussion should be viewed.

In the New World, African slaves encountered Christianity and were expected to adopt it along with the culture of their owners. Some denominations were fierce in their insistence that no elements of African expression should find a way into their worship, but others, like Catholicism were more accommodating. M. L. Daneel contends that "the Roman Catholic tradition of natural theology allows for a far-reaching accommodation or adaptation to the varied cultures of mankind [sic]" (1991:102). Perhaps this accommodating attitude - whatever its purpose - is one of

the reasons that adherents of Santeria, Cadomble and Vodou consider themselves Catholics. The process, however, has its own dynamic, and rather than Catholic control having been extended over a host of new converts, a rather different exchange has actually taken place. George Brandon comments: "If the ancestral institutional forms or support have been cut off, that does not mean that new ones have not been found, filled with African content or molded in line with African patterns of social interaction, world view or aesthetic valuation" (1990:143).

African religion and culture could have been officially banned or discouraged, but their survival in an adapted form could not be prevented. What Africans did, in fact, was to appropriate other sacred symbols.

Brown (1991:5) refers to a joke which claims, she says, with some truth, "that of Haiti's six million people 85 percent are Catholic, 15 percent are Protestant, and 100 percent serve Vodou spirits." In her study of Alourdes, a Vodou priestess in Brooklyn, Brown describes the easy way in which Catholic prayers begin a Vodou ceremony, and Catholic saints represent Vodou spirits. She describes the Catholic lithographs in Alourdes's home as follows:

The lithographs included several different images of the Virgin Mary and one each of Saint Patrick with snakes at his feet; Saint Gerard contemplating a skull; Saint James, the crusader on his rearing horse; and Saint Isidore, the pilgrim kneeling to pray by a freshly plowed field. *These I recognized as images of the Vodou spirits.* Each of these spirits has both a

Catholic and an African name: Mary is Ezili, the Vodou love spirit; Saint Patrick is the serpent spirit, Danbala; Saint Gerard is Gede, master of the cemetery; Saint James is the warrior Ogou; and Isidore is the peasant farmer Azaka. (1991:3-4: my emphasis)

Haitian Vodou, having appropriated Catholic symbols and ritual, has given them content and meaning within the context of the needs and perceptions of the people.

Haitians, like their African forebears, operate from understandings of the divine and the virtuous that are markedly different from those of mainstream Catholicism. Bondye [God] does not get involved in the personal, day-to-day affairs of human beings ... Instead, it is the spirits and the ancestors ... who handle day-to-day problems and who, if necessary, mediate between the living and God. ...

Vodou spirits are larger than life but not other than life... Virtue is achieved by maintaining responsible relationships, relationships characterized by appropriate gifts of tangibles (food, shelter, money) and intangibles (respect, deference, love). When things go as they should, these gifts flow in continuous, interconnected circles among the living and the spirits and ancestors. (1991:6-7)

This preservation of what is African in a hostile and oppressive environment as an act of survival, a subversion of the totalising discourse, is apparent in what Mikelle Smith Omari says about Brazilian Candomble Nago. He contends that the two fundamental emphases of this religion are "the preservation of 'pure' African ideas and the meticulous maintenance of the esoteric religious processes of the Yoruba-speaking peoples of West Africa." At the same time, there have been "unavoidable alterations" as a result of the socio-political environment that the slaves and their

descendants found themselves in. "Many changes that occurred ... were adaptive and defensive; the amalgamation of African gods with Catholic Saints is just one example of this type of accommodation. In some sects, conflicts caused by the pressures to assimilate into modern Brazilian society led to the incorporation of Catholic altars into the ritual dancing space of the public Candomble area" (1994:139,40).

In her analysis of Haitian Vodou, however, Brown illustrated the complexity of the process. The subversion is not really deliberate and conscious. It goes deep and is part of a total attitude of appropriation in order to survive, with a defiant preservation of the familiar constructs as the signified, whatever the signifiers.

The Catholicism Alourdes celebrates in her home in Brooklyn is the Catholicism of gesture, rhythm and intonation more than that of creed. She leads her people in the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed, all in French, in a rapid, low murmur that quite accurately reproduces Catholic mood. Yet the content of these prayers and songs - and, specifically their emphasis on sin, salvation, and incarnation - cannot in the end be easily assimilated into a Vodou worldview...

I gained an important insight into the Vodou attitude toward Catholicism ... when I participated in a popular Vodou-Catholic pilgrimage ... Each morning, ... I attended mass at ... church with my travelling companion, a woman who was both *manbo* [Vodou priestess] and a baptized Catholic. ... I asked her how she felt about the Catholic priest's insistence that those who serve the Vodou spirits would go to hell. She laughed at my question: "Oh, didn't you know, Karen? That's the way priests talk!" (1991:267,8)

Brown sees this last comment, not as naivete, but as "a wonderful example of the skill with which Haitians turn the

power of oppressors back against them", and, "On a deeper level ... as a claim that words, especially ideological ones, can appear frivolous and even expendable when compared to the complex comment on the world that goes on in a full ritual context, including that of the mass. In other words, *the mass continued to be effective for her, regardless of what was said during it.*" (1991:277, my emphasis)

The same sort of complex webspinning - to use Geertz's term - seems to have been going on in Africa itself as Africans adapted to Western domination. In negotiating person and place in a world, Africans sought to find the means of counteracting, and tapping into, the power of the West by appropriating the sacred symbols. This may have something to do with the overwhelming impact of Western domination on the day-to-day lives of the people. Elizabeth Isichei comments on Congo independents in the colonial era who seemed "particularly preoccupied with the power of the Whites, and the desire to share their prosperity through supernatural means" (1995:202).

Jim Kiernan's assessment of Zionism in South Africa is that it "harnesses" the "distilled spiritual energy" of Christianity to respond to modern African needs and channels it "through African categories of thought and action, though without denuding it entirely of Christian categories" (1995:122). He argues that they retain some African religious methods and techniques but perceive the Holy

Spirit to be their source of power rather than the ancestors.

It seems to me that Haitian Vodou and African Zionism have been reproducing African tradition by employing discursive, practical and social strategies in negotiating person and place in their changing world. These strategies have included appropriating sacred symbols which Christians regard as theirs, and matching them with meanings that have significance for the people and meet their particular needs. Often this has seemed to involve filling a Christian form with African content.

That appropriating the symbols of Christianity has evoked outraged response from mainline Christian churches highlights the question of whether sacred symbols can be owned - or whether they are, as Chidester argues, sacred because they are contested.

Sacred symbols are part of Geertz's web of significance and Elizabeth Isichei, it seems to me, is right when she says that religious meanings "are changed, nuanced, eroded by journeys through time as well as by journeys through cultures" (1995:5).

If, then, religious meanings within African Religion have been eroded over the centuries by journeys through time and cultures, the particular text, *African Religion and Culture*

Alive!, purporting, as it does, to deal with African Religion as distinct from African Initiated Churches (AICs), becomes a hotly contested site of struggle. While it may now be recognised, by some at least, as religion, is African Religion laying claim to territory that has been occupied by AICs who have appropriated many of the symbols of Christianity in order to survive? The authors of this text would say no. It is asking for its own place in the sun, since, according to the draft Constitution for South Africa, the sunshine has been declared available for all.

Nevertheless, it remains a site of struggle on the battlefield of who owns knowledge, culture, reality, and especially, the sacred symbols.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The introduction to this study included a brief history of the text-producing process, showing how it started in response to a perceived need for an accessible South African resource on African Religion for teachers and students.

During the time in which we were working on the text, work was in progress to produce guidelines for curricula for a new educational system in South Africa. The Consultative Forum on Curriculum published its report in the form of a discussion document in February 1996, followed in July 1996 by the draft *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training*, being the amended document revised by the Curriculum Development Working Group, and issued by the National Department of Education. A study of these documents suggests that in addition to being in accord with the broad ideological and educational principles underpinning the proposed new curriculum, *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* fits very well into the proposed framework, and could well meet the need for which it was designed. In particular:

* It offers - and sets out - a way of knowing and thinking, which is familiar to the majority of South Africans in their

daily lives, but which has not been used - or even acknowledged - in South African schools hitherto. This broadening of perception is called for in the document: "The ways in which different cultural values and lifestyles affect the construction of knowledge should also be acknowledged and incorporated in the development and implementation of learning programmes" (NDE, 1996b:11).

* It validates African Religion, seeking in the style, the approach, and the tasks set for student activity, to promote African ways of knowing and doing. The document stipulates: "In the development, design and delivery of learning programmes, cognisance should be taken of differing cultures, languages and religious beliefs. The selection of topics for learning and of teaching approaches and methods need, for example, to reflect cultural sensitivity" (1996b:12).

* As the text promotes the fundamental African tenet that knowledge is for using, and that there is no rigid separation between learning and life, it is in line with support for "an integrated approach to education" advocated in the document: "An integrated approach to education and training implies a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between academic and applied knowledge, theory and practice, knowledge and skills, head and hand" (1996b:12).

* The body of the text is designed as a score to be performed - in the style of jazz, encouraging improvisation.

As has been described in previous chapters, *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* is constructed on face-to-face interaction in a simulated interaction between an African professor, personally involved as a member of the tradition he is teaching about, and a group of students, most of whom are African. The encouragement of questions and comment, the genuine personal experience informing those questions and comments, and the autobiographical nature of the narratives used by the 'Professor', were aimed to limit the distance between the text and what it is describing.

Further devices to achieve this limiting of distance are the format itself which is designed to stimulate discussion and personal account from teachers and students using the book. The tone of the professor's input and answers to questions are respectful and non-authoritarian and invite response. They do not lend themselves to rote learning which has been the characteristic of school learning, as opposed to traditional learning, in African schools in South Africa. An additional aspect is the content itself which affirms orality, acknowledges the status and wisdom of the cultural elders, gives great respect and credence to divination and promotes a range of ways of knowing which includes dreams.

The text, then, is designed to promote a sense of fit between the subject itself and the way in which it is presented. Further, it is designed to promote a sense of fit between the home - the community - and the school. This aspect, along with the tasks set for the students, is designed to create in the classroom the sort of resolving

rather than resolution of issues that both Peek and Bell refer to (see Chapter 2 of this study). Further, the tasks sections emphasise, and provide opportunity and a framework for primary research by students. The document requires that:

[Teachers should] create a learning climate which gives learner [sic] the responsibility for seeking out resources, primary sources, raw data. (Eliminate reliance on textbook which is generalised, watered-down and out-of-date when it is published.)

- * encourage learners [sic] question-asking, seek elaboration of learners response
- * encourage curiosity, learners autonomy, and initiative
- * become the 'guide on the side' instead of the 'sage on the stage'...
- * have students do real-life relevant projects for their communities... (1996b:50)

While there is an inherent tension between the encouragement of learners' autonomy and initiative, and the respect for elders as traditional educational authorities, the text and the document emphasise the importance of negotiating meaning. As one of the "practical characteristics for the learning design", the document stipulates that meaning "must be continually negotiated: the message interpreted is never exactly equivalent to the message sent; failure to negotiate will tend to increase alienation in the classroom." The document stresses that "the curriculum content and process are complex and interactive", and that "the teacher's role is to access for the student powerful ideas from the discipline or subject", and that "it is important to stress 'knowledge connectedness'" (1996b:52,53).

It admits:

There will also need to be a wide range of curriculum materials available to support the work of teachers. It will be difficult for teachers, especially those who have traditionally seen the curriculum as content-based, and who have directed their energies toward encouraging rote learning, to make the kind of changes demanded of this approach to teaching and learning without wellproduced support materials. (1996b:39)

We perceive *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* as providing just such a support.

Areas for further research on the product, the text

The authors hope that *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* will be perceived by potential users to have the qualities listed above as required by the new curriculum. It has not yet been tested as a teaching and learning resource, however. Several studies could be conducted, for example in the following areas:

- * The response of teachers and learners to African Religion - first as a religion, and then as an academic subject in school. Both these concepts are new to most teachers and learners.

- * The response of teachers and learners to the narrative and interactive, discussionary approach adopted in *African Religion and Culture, Alive!*

* A study of the way in which teachers and learners implement the tasks set in the book. Are these tasks viable within the context that teachers, learners and communities find themselves? Is it a method that could be extended - to other areas of learning? to other countries?

Further, is it useful and practical to continue with the same sort of primary research, year after year? As illustrated in Chapter 3 of this study, each chapter of *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* requires students to interview elderly people in the community to find out about particular ways of practising African Religion. Will learners, teachers and the community become so familiar with the concept and practice of this primary research that it loses its effectiveness and worth? Will tertiary institutions be flooded and saturated with primary research provided by thousands of students over several years?

* What effect does the validation of elderly people in the community as educational authorities have on the relationship between the school and the community? Does it lead to conflict between the teachers and the traditional authorities as more influence is accorded to parents and the community, thus diminishing the influence and status of teachers as the sole purveyors of education?

Is there conflict between the values promoted by the school, and those taught by the traditional authorities? For example, does respect for the elderly conflict with the

questioning attitude that is being advocated in the new curriculum, and which is the cornerstone of Western liberal education, underpinning the school system in South Africa? What will be the effect of a serious questioning of the Western monopoly on ways of knowing and thinking in South African Schools?

Can the approach in *African Religion and Culture, Alive!*, then, in fact bring the home and the school closer together?

The findings of a study to investigate what a sample of African parents want their children to be taught suggest that many parents would welcome a reflection of the values of the home in the curriculum and ethos of the school (Stonier, 1996). How this can be achieved in terms of marrying seemingly incompatible Western and African attitudes to knowledge and learning, could be a subject of very fruitful study.

Areas for further research on the process

In addition to studies linked to the response on the part of teachers, students and the community to this sort of text, there are other aspects of this particular text-producing process which could provide useful areas for research - particularly in relation to their application to the production of other texts, as well as to their pedagogical

implications. These aspects concern the process itself, for example:

What could account for the generative nature of the interaction between the three authors in the text-producing process? Some of the variables could be:

- the number of people in the team. When there are two, is there an inclination to stop working when there is a disagreement or to agree too easily to keep the harmony, since there is no possibility of mediation, or of an alliance for a particular point of view?

Does the number three promote optimum contribution from the whole team? Would more than three encourage 'passengers'?

- the mix of skills in the team.

- the particular personalities of the team members. Does the power distribution between the members affect the generation of energy and creativity from each member?

- the oral nature of the text-production, with tape recorder as a permanent and virtually forgotten feature of the general environment; and little, if any, reference to written resources.

- the expertise, training and particular experience of the team members.

- the particular subject for which the text was being produced, viz African Religion, an oral tradition.

- the personal interest of the team members in the process as well as the content.

- the physical environment in which the text was generated, including comfortable seating and room temperature, the ready access to water, food, coldrink, tea and coffee at any time; and the flexible time frame.

- the 'warming-up', 'unleashing' strategies which included unhurried social reconstitution of the group, and the asking of questions in which the questioner had both a real interest and a directing purpose.

While the influence of the physical environment and individual differences regarding optimum learning in relation to small groups - as elements of learning styles - are well known to educators, there are other elements in the variables listed above, the study of which could provide useful information regarding learning, teaching and optimum use of human intellectual potential. Here intellectual potential should be understood to include emotional and intuitive dimensions.

Other considerations

In view of the history of discrimination against African Religion and culture throughout the world, and in South Africa in particular, it will be necessary to take decisive steps to restore it to a position of power and respect. This will involve a programme of re-education of the broad community, but especially teachers - not only teachers of religion, but all teachers - to include African Religion as religion, and a religion entitled to the same status as any other religion. In some respects, this re-education has already begun through the media, but more attention should be paid to African Religion than has been hitherto, in order to redress a serious imbalance. Only when people of status openly and proudly acknowledge their African Religion and culture, will the status of the religion itself improve. In our meeting with Mr Victor Masephe, described in Chapter One of this study, he suggested careful workshopping with teachers in all provinces - of the concept and approach of *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* - in order to ensure some of this re-education. If teachers treat the religion with disdain and try to dissociate themselves from African religious practices, they and their students will not be in a position to use the book. Unless self-esteem is enhanced rather than diminished by being a member of the religion, it is unlikely to be acknowledged.

Another important area for re-education of the broad community, and of teachers in particular, is in the

perception of learning itself. If the principles underpinning the new curriculum really take hold in the South African education system, this will happen. One of the basic principles is that of 'Lifelong Learning Development'.

All people are viewed as learners, lifelong, in a learning society with developmental needs, situated within capacitative frameworks and processes.

Lifelong Learning Development is 'sparked' by foreground 'learning-centredness', rather than mere 'learner-development', or content-centredness. Therefore constructing or generating new knowledge is emphasised, rather than merely transmitting or consuming knowledge. In other words, the learning process is more important than the product, and is activated in the context of a changing society. ...

With this in mind new cultures of knowledge production are continually being created through new contexts, history, development, inter-relationships, adaptation and shared visions, and processes of mutability or change. (NDE 1996a: 9,11)

If a climate actually does develop in which "new cultures of knowledge" are encouraged, cultures of knowledge which are age-old, but unfamiliar in the South African school system hitherto will also find a place. There is the chance, then, that the division between 'work' and 'play', and theory and practice will become blurred, and stories and embodied experience become legitimate sources of knowledge.

Such a broad understanding of legitimate sources of knowledge and of the nature of learning will also encourage the acceptance of the variety of 'educators' envisaged in *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* This will mean getting

away from ownership of knowledge by an elite. No single cluster of voices can dominate. Understanding is not left in the hands of experts. It is very democratic (Kwenda, working session, 20 June, 1996). It is rather like the situation described by Karen McCarthy Brown in relation to Mama Lola's family stories:

Family memories are held collectively; some persons know much more than others, but no one knows it all. The full story can only be performed by a noisy family group, with each member adding his or her versions. The real story exists only for the transitory period in which the family takes pleasure and finds meaning together in bringing their past alive. (Brown, 1991:18)

A further consideration concerns history and fiction, and reality and fiction. In *African Religion and Culture, Alive!* the boundaries are naturally, and have been also deliberately, blurred. The 'Professor' tells the story of his ancestors. He calls it a myth of origin, and then points out that such myths tend to exaggerate, and to compress or expand time periods. He says that through telling a specific story, people are saying something important about how to understand the wider world around us. His own experience, reworked, fictionalised to an extent; and the experience of myself, and Ms Mndende particularly, revealed through her comments, accounts, questions - and also fictionalised in order to be the comments, questions, accounts of a mixed group of students - form the sustained myth of the book. Perhaps this is our way of dealing with the tension between the grounded, personal, authorship of

experience demanded by feminists and other 'marginalised groups', and the decentred author of postmodernism.

It is also our way of acknowledging the selective, mythical, fictional nature of history. Karen McCarthy Brown's way of putting it is that memory "apparently works for those who do the remembering, even for the professional rememberers, in ways more self-serving than generally admitted." She goes on:

Haitians acknowledge this quality of memory more directly. Whereas we are anxious that our history not be false, their anxiety centres on the possibility that their history might become lifeless or be forgotten. Whereas in our eyes truthfulness is the paramount virtue of any historical account, in theirs what matters most is relevance and liveliness. We write history books to remember our ancestors, and Haitians call on Gede, the playful trickster who is the spirit of the dead. Mercurial Gede appears in many forms and speaks through many voices. His special talent lies in viewing the facts of life from refreshing new perspectives. (Brown, 1991:19)

Stonier's study (1996) revealed a strong desire, on the part of the parents interviewed, that the specifics of their particular traditional practice, and their own heritage, be remembered and recreated. We tried to address this by requiring students to find and record just such specific information and stories. These records, and the stories in the book itself, are also ways of avoiding an essentialist position: this is what Africans believe or do - although there are elements of essentialism in the book. The 'Professor' often says "Africans are bold and creative", "Africans believe that...". These pronouncements serve a

didactic purpose - they have the aim of raising the status of African Religion. Balanced by the heavy emphasis on the authority of the traditional elders whom the students are to interview, the tension probably works. Brown used the vivid biographical/fictional nature of her study of Mama Lola and her family and friends to avoid an essentialist stance. "My aim is to create an intimate portrait of three-dimensional people who are not stand-ins for an abstraction such as 'the Haitian people' but rather are deeply religious individuals with particular histories and rich interior lives..." (Brown, 1991:19).

Lastly, as Brown and others have pointed out, people seldom if ever live in a watertight enclosure of a particular culture or religion. Often individuals move between cultures in the course of their day-to-day activities, and seem to develop enough of a fluency in the multiple cultures that they have to encounter, to get by. Chidester's notion of negotiating a worldview as a continuing dynamic process seems to me to fit this sort of experience. What helps the process is open access to cultural territory, and even better, to some sort of a map. In South Africa, both access and maps have been lacking. The production of the text under review, and the process involved in that production could serve both as a way in and a map to the territory of African religion and culture in South Africa.

REFERENCES

- Agyakwa, Kofi Okyere. 1976. *Akan Epistemology and Western Thought: A philosophical approach to the problem of educational modernisation in Ghana*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, USA.
- Appiah, K.A. 1992. *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. London: Methuen.
- Ashley, M. 1990. *Ideologies and Schooling in South Africa*. Rondebosch, South Africa: South African Teachers' Association.
- Bell, Catherine. 1992. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boahen, A.A. 1987. *African Perspectives on Colonialism*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Boyer, Pascal. 1990. *Tradition as Truth and Communication: A Cognitive Description of Traditional Discourse*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Brandon, George. 1990. Sacrificial Practices in Santeria, an African-Cuban Religion in the United States. In: Holloway, J.E. (ed.) *Africanisms in American Culture*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press:119-147.
- Britton, James. 1975. *Language and Learning*. Middlesex: Pelican Press.
- Brown, Duncan. 1994. Orality, Textuality and History: The Performance Poetry of Mzwakhe Mbuli and Alfred Qabula. JSAS 20th Anniversary Conference: Paradigms Lost. Paradigms Regained? Southern African Studies in the 1990s, September.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. 1991. *Mama Lola. A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Bryman, A. & Burgess, R.G. 1994. Developments in qualitative data analysis: an introduction. In: Bryman, A. & Burgess, R.G. (eds.) *Analysing qualitative data*. London: Routledge:1-15.
- Buhrmann, M.V. 1984. *Living in Two Worlds: Communication between a White Healer and her Black Counterparts*. Cape Town: Human and Rousseau.
- Calhoun, Craig. 1993. Nationalism and Ethnicity. *American Review of Sociology*. 19:211-239.
- Callaway, Helen. 1992. Ethnography and experience. Gender Implications in fieldwork and texts. In: Okely, Judith & Callaway, Helen. (eds.) *Anthropology and Autobiography*. London and New York: Routledge:29-49.
- Chidester, David. 1987a. *Patterns of Action*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.
- Chidester, David. 1987b. Religious Studies as Political Practice. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. No 58:4-17.
- Chidester, David. 1989. Worldview analysis of African Indigenous Churches. *Journal for the Study of Religion*. 2(1):15-19.
- Chidester, David. 1991. Saving the Children by Killing Them: Redemptive Sacrifice in the Ideologies of Jim Jones and Ronald Reagan. *Religion and American Culture. A Journal of Interpretation*. 1(2):177-201.
- Chidester, David. 1992a. *Shots in the Streets. Violence and Religion in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Chidester, David. 1992b. *Word and Light. Seeing, Hearing and Religious Discourse*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Chidester, David. 1994. The Poetics and Politics of Sacred Space: Towards a Critical Phenomenology of Religion. In: Tymieniecka, A-T. (ed.) *The Phenomenology of the Sacred*. Doordrecht: Kluwer:211-231.

- Chidester, D., Mitchell, G., Omar, A.R. & Phiri, I.A. 1994. *Religion in Public Education. Options for a New South Africa*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Cohen, Anthony P. 1992. Self-conscious anthropology. In: Okely, Judith & Callaway, Helen. (eds.) *Anthropology and Autobiography*. London and New York: Routledge:221-241.
- Comaroff, Jean. 1981. Healing and Cultural Transformation: The Case of the Tswana of Southern Africa. *Social Science and Medicine*. 15(B):367-78.
- Comaroff, Jean & John. 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*. Volume One. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Cope, A.T. 1986. Literacy and the Oral Tradition: the Zulu Evidence: In Whitaker, R.A. & Sienaert, E. (eds.) *Oral Tradition and Literacy: Changing Visions of the World*. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation Centre:151-61.
- Coplan, David B. 1989. *In the Time of the Cannibals: Basotho Working-class Aurature and the Meaning of Sesotho*. Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.
- Cumpsty, J.S. 1991. *Religion as Belonging: A General Theory of Religion*. Lanham, Maryland: Univ. Press of America.
- Daneel, M.L. 1970. *Zionism and Faith Healing in Southern Rhodesia. Aspects of African Independent Churches*. Paris: Mouton.
- Daneel M.L. 1991. The Encounter between Christianity and Traditional African Culture: Accommodation or Transformation? In: Van der Walt, B.J. (ed.) *Cultural Diversity in Africa: Embarrassment_or Opportunity?* Potchefstroom: Institute for Reformational Studies:101-121.
- Degenaar, J. 1987. *Art and the Meaning of Life*. Cape Town: Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, University of Cape Town.

- Degenaar, Johan. 1996. Exploring Film Images Creatively. Address given to the Philosophical Society, University of Cape Town, 14 May.
- Deliwe, D. 1992. Responses to Western Education among the Conservative People of the Transkei. Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.
- Fernandez, James W. 1991. Afterword. In: Peek, Philip M. (ed.) *African Divination Systems. Ways of Knowing*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press:213-221.
- Finn, Geraldine. 1993. Why are there no great women postmodernists? In: Blundell, V., Shepherd, J. & Taylor, I. (eds.) *Relocating Cultural Studies. Developments in Theory and Research*. London: Routledge:123-152.
- Frielick, Stanley. 1988. Winged Words/Caged Texts: Oral Tradition and Teaching African Literature. In: Sienaert E.R. & Bell A.N. (eds.) *Catching Winged Words. Oral Tradition and Education*. Durban: Oral Documentation and Research Centre, University of Natal:203-211.
- Frow, John. 1990. Intertextuality and ontology. In: Worton, M. & Still, J. (eds.) *Intertextuality. Theories and practices*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press:45-55.
- Goody, Jack. 1987. *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Gyekye, Kwame. 1987. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought. The Akan Conceptual Scheme*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallen, B. & Sodipo, J.O. 1986. *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft. Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*. London: Ethnographica.
- Hodgson, J. 1987. Ntaba kaNdoda: Orchestrating Symbols for National Unity in Ciskei. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. No 58:18-31.

- Holdstock, L. 1987. *Education for a New Nation*.
Johannesburg: Africa Transpersonal Association.
- Horton, R. 1982. Tradition and modernity revisited. In:
Hollis, M. & Lukes, S. (eds.) *Rationality and Relativism*.
Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. 1995. *A History of Christianity in
Africa. From Antiquity to the Present*. Lawrenceville,
New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Kaschula, R.H. 1994. Preachers and poets: oral poetry within
the religious cosmology of the Xhosa. *South African
Journal of African Languages*. 15(2):65-73.
- Kiernan, Jim. 1995. The African Independent Churches. In:
Prozesky, Martin & De Gruchy, John. (eds.) *Living Faiths
in South Africa*. Cape Town & Johannesburg: David
Philip:116-128.
- Kirby, Jon P. 1994. Cultural Change & Religious Conversion
in West Africa. In: Blakely, Thomas D., Van Beek, Walter
E.A. & Thomson, Dennis L. (eds.) *Religion in Africa*.
Portsmouth, U.S.A.: Heinemann:57-71.
- Leitch, Vincent B. 1992. *Cultural Criticism, Literary
Theory, Poststructuralism*. New York: Columbia University
Press.
- Lodge, David. 1990. *After Bakhtin. Essays on fiction and
criticism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mazrui, A.A. 1990. *Cultural Forces in World Politics*.
London: James Currey.
- Mbiti, J.S. 1991. Sources of African Traditional Religion.
In: Uka, E.M. (ed.) *Readings in African Traditional
Religion. Structure, Meaning, Relevance, Future*. Bern:
Peter Lang:69-75.

- McAllister, P.A. 1986. Conservatism as Ideology of Resistance among Xhosa-Speakers: The Implications for Oral Tradition and Literacy. In: Whitaker, W. & Sienaert, E. (eds.) *Oral Tradition and Literacy: Changing Visions of the World*. Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre:290-302.
- McAllister, P.A. 1988. Inclusion and Exclusion in the Oral Transmission of Ritual Knowledge: A Xhosa Communicative Strategy. In: Sienaert, E.R. & Bell, A.N. (eds.) *Catching Winged Words: Oral Tradition and Education*. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre:43-68.
- Mitchell, G., Mndende, N., Phiri, I.A. & Stonier, J. 1993. *The End of the Tunnel*. Cape Town: Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa.
- Mndende, N. 1994. African Religion and Religion Education. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.
- Moi, Toril. (ed.). 1986. *The Kristeva Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. 1988. *The Invention of Africa*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- National Department of Education. 1996a. *Structures for the Development of National Policy regarding Curriculum and Related Issues*. (Discussion Document). Report of the Consultative Forum on Curriculum. Pretoria: National Department of Education.
- National Department of Education. 1996b. *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training*. (Draft Document). Pretoria: National Department of Education.
- Nkabinde, A.C. 1988. In Search of a Method. In: Sienaert, E.R. & Bell, A.N. (eds.) *Catching Winged Words. Oral Tradition and Education*. Durban: Oral Documentation and Research Centre, University of Natal:269-281.

- Nyamende, Abner. 1988. Oral Praise Poetry of the Clans: its continued survival within the ambience of learning. In: Sienaert, E.R. & Bell, A.N. (eds.) **Catching Winged Words. Oral Tradition and Education**. Durban: Oral Documentation and Research Centre, University of Natal:219-228.
- Okely, Judith. 1992. Anthropology and autobiography. Participatory experience and embodied knowledge. In: Okely, Judith & Callaway, Helen. (eds.) **Anthropology and Autobiography**. London and New York: Routledge:1-28.
- Omari, M.S. 1994. Candomble: A Socio-Political Examination of African Religion & Art in Brazil. In: Blakely, Thomas D., Van Beek, Walter E.A. & Thomson, Dennis L. (eds.) **Religion in Africa**. Portsmouth, U.S.A.: Heinemann:135-159.
- Ong, Walter J. 1981. **The Presence of the Word. Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History**. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Peek, Philip M. 1991a. Introduction. The Study of Divination, Past and Present. In: Peek, Philip M. (ed.) **African Divination Systems. Ways of Knowing**. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press:1-21.
- Peek, Philip M. 1991b. African Divination Systems. Non-normal modes of cognition. In: Peek, Philip M. (ed.) **African Divination Systems. Ways of Knowing**. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press:193-211.
- Probyn, Elspeth. 1993. True voices and real people. The 'problem' of the autobiographical in cultural studies. In: Blundell, V., Shepherd, J. & Taylor, I. (eds.) **Relocating Cultural Studies. Developments in Theory and Research**. London: Routledge:105-122
- Pye, Michael. 1995. Religion and Identity: Clues and Threads. In: De Gruchy, J.W. & Martin, S. (eds.) **Religion and the reconstruction of civil society**. Pretoria: University of South Africa:3-17.

- Rich, Paul. 1975. The Cultural Preconditions for African Philosophy. In: Georgiades, D.S. & Delvare, I.G. (compilers) *Philosophy in the African Context. "To be is to Participate"*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand:75-83.
- Setiloane, Gabriel M. 1986. *African Theology. An Introduction*. Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers.
- Sitas, A. 1975. Negritude and the Cultural Question. In: Georgiades, D.S. & Delvare, I.G. (compilers) *Philosophy in the African Context. "To be is to Participate"*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand:23-33.
- Still, Judith & Worton, Michael. 1990. Introduction. In: Worton, M. & Still, J. (eds.) *Intertextuality. Theories and practices*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press:1-45.
- Stonier, John L. 1996. Implications of 'Africanness' for Educational Planning in the Republic of South Africa: A Qualitative Study of Educational Needs. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch.
- Swanson, Tod D. 1994. To Prepare a Place: Johannine Christianity and the Collapse of Ethnic Territory. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 62:241-63.
- Tesch, R. 1992. *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools*. Reprint. New York: The Falmer Press.
- Uka, E.M. 1991. The Impact of Religion in a Traditional African Society. In: Uka, E.M. (ed.) *Readings in African Traditional Religion. Structure, Meaning, Relevance, Future*. Bern: Peter Lang:213-223.
- Van Beek, Walter E.A. & Blakely, Thomas D. 1994. Introduction. In: Blakely, Thomas D., Van Beek, Walter E.A. & Thomson, Dennis L. (eds.) *Religion in Africa*. Portsmouth, U.S.A.: Heinemann:1-20.
- Vilakazi, H.W. 1995. On the transformation of our education. Unpublished paper presented at the University of Cape Town. 24 May.

Welbourne, F.B. & Ogot, B.A. 1966. *A Place to Feel at Home.*
A Study of two independent churches in Western Kenya.
London: Oxford University Press:6-19, 115-145.

Werbner, Richard P. 1985. The Argument of Images: From Zion to the Wilderness in African Churches. In: Van Binsbergen, W. & Schoffeleers, M. (eds.) *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul:235-86.