

The following four essays deal with South Africa's transition to democracy, a track that has been traversed by a number of scholars- political scientists, sociologists and economists. It has also been traversed by a number of crucial poets who, with uncanny wisdom as I shall be demonstrating, have gone further than most in providing some profound sociological clues, seemingly invisible to social analysis, about the meaning and social consequences of this liminal period. My task here is to explicate these clues and make them work for our social understanding. The essays therefore must be read as a drawn-out "conjecture", a series of sociological hypotheses that demand more work, research and contestation.

The task of this manuscript is therefore a humble one: to add to, to decorate, to stretch, to subvert and to hopefully bend, some of our certainties around nation-building, its discourses and its dissonances. To also explicate why and how this transition holds and why the elastic band that held the many components of the liberation movement, however stretched has not snapped, or better, has not been snapped.

What I intend doing for this seminar is present two of the essays roughly covered by the first two poems, and leave the other two out of the equation. They are both work in progress and therefore rough drafts- the first one closer to finality, the second still being formed. The third focuses on KZN and the fourth on the movements and cracks that appear in this "common ground".

Listen to the first, by Masakhane Ndlovu praising Nelson Mandela:

"Ndaba
Story of all stories
Story to outlast all story-tellers
Son of Africa's orphans
do not leave-
the Festival is not finished...

You who have offended hyenas
and the hyenas' mentors
You who said I am the spirit
of transformation:
Now I am rain
Now I am shield
Now I am seed
Now I am spear
Now I am tear
Now I am laughter
Now I am man
Now I am Africa's anger
You were bolted and chained
and stacked

in a desert armoured by sharks
with Makana's skin in their teeth
Now I am shamed
and speechless
they chained you and I
was cowered....

I heard story of stories
that you were hurricane Demona
the kraals of the Boer were too weak
for your anger
so I broke them

I saw that you made a storm
of your wife
raining kindly on the shacks
raining paraffin and fire on apartheid's mansion
so I ululated
and burnt them

I heard the talk
that you were the Brew
that years had made Bitter
You were the tip that each Spear
yearned for
so I waited

You were the voice
calling for our response...
So I chanted

You did not bring the hatred
of years and the knife
Story of stories
Ndaba
You did not ask us
to gather our tears

I was speechless...
Turner of the other cheek
and when that finished
turner of the other

Labourer, you
who returned Golgotha's crosses

to the Carpenters

Thatcher of the roof of the home we never had
Where are the homes you shouted
I am the Thatcher

Eyes that smile
Index finger of justice
hand that holds the hands of children
Our Father
Our Mother
do not leave
the Festival is about to come.

Your story
outlasts its teller" (1)

Listen to the second an unfinished poem by Alfred Temba Qabula

They talked, they talked a lot
about this and about that
ignoring that the real talk
was about land,
about bones
about money
in this country without a proper name
in this camp of the restless dead
Tutu cried about the darkened skies
Mandela cried that the stalks were not bearing
green ten rand notes
FW cried that the miners darkened the gold
And Slovo and Hani saw red everywhere in the Bantustans
and streets
But Tutu and the Bishops and dominees saw rainbows
and they agreed,
and we agreed:
a fence on this plot, no fence on that
a skeleton here and a skeleton there
give a black cent and take a white rand
in this nameless country
but we prayed together in this camp
what we did not say in our prayer was
that the seasons of drought have no rainbows

My interest in the public poetry of the 1980s- how oral poetry both reflected and shaped popular and working class consciousness within a movement for the country's liberation. The poetry is undergoing a serious crisis- both its contexts and its "collaring" into a courtesan art works towards its marginalisation. I have sought the kind of poems that bear some resemblance to the craft of the 1980s, at once affirmative and critical of the "new".

Mandela's Decade, 1990-2000: the Discipline of Sociological Charisma in South Africa

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(Moses Masakhane Ndlovu, Durban, 1999)

The poet marked Nelson Rolihlala Mandela's departure from formal political life and his imagery, sharp and precise, austere and infested by historical detail and reference, marked also an emotive and profound period of South Africa's history. From Mandela's release in 1990 after a protracted and violent insurrection throughout the 1980s, to his retirement this year, the "story" is bound to "outlast its teller."

For the world community, at least the community that cared about oppression and its ruses, Mandela *was* synonymous to South Africa's democratic transition. As he retires to his ancestral area in Qunu in the Transkei and begins to share a life with his third wife, Graca Machel, a deeply emotive period is coming to an end. For the poet it is a moment of worry- the Festival has not yet happened and the homesteads are not there, to be *thatched*.

At the same time the movement and now the party Mandela has led, the African National Congress is more powerful than it ever was. His successor Thabo Mbeki is leading an organisation that has gathered about two-thirds of the vote in the new South Africa and is poised to act decisively in the country's governance and the country's future.

Most social scientists in South Africa are asking themselves and each other: what *has* the legacy

of the Mandela Decade been? Has the social laboratory of change, South Africa, transformed itself into a post-Apartheid sovereign democracy? Has the last formal racial autocracy in the world been buried? Is the new creature a society at all? Has formal citizenship meant anything to the poor black majority? And what of the plethora of social problems that persist: poverty, marginalisation, violence and abuse, battery and crime, corruption and intolerance? How *does* one account sociologically for the world around us, a world we have all built with varying degrees of commitment ?

Of course, as the passage of time doctors memories and the media spin and thread amnesia's webs, the period of democratic transition in South Africa will increasingly seem as the era of what the white press has termed the "Mandela or the Madiba Magic"- a period through which racial antagonisms have been reconciled, the past healed and the future of the country secured under the leadership of one of the millennium's last great politicians.

There is much to be said about Mandela's style of leadership and his ability to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable. To focus on his charisma alone though, is to miss the enormous feat that has kept the diverse pressures within the ANC at bay, on target and disciplined to be able to achieve a *negotiated* revolution. Such a task was especially difficult with the death of three of the most formidable representatives of party policy and direction: Oliver Tambo, Chris Hani and later Joe Slovo. Yet, not to focus on his manner of leading both within the ANC and the government of National Unity, that is, not to focus on his charisma and its tricky consequences would miss something about the character of the transition itself. In this contribution, I will follow the poet and try and situate Mandela's contribution, the contribution of an exemplary leader in the social transition to a post-apartheid dispensation.

His has been a charismatic leadership in the strictest sociological sense. As Max Weber argued a century ago, "the term 'charisma' (can) be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman and at least specifically exceptional powers and qualities." When Mandela walked out of the Victor Verster Prison to face the mass base of the African National Congress and to face too, four years of tortuous negotiation and violence, there was no doubt that the "exceptional powers and qualities" were assumed to be there in abundance by South Africa's black majority. Weber continued in his discussion of charismatic leadership that these attributes were always seen to be regarded either as "of divine origin" or (my emphasis) "*as exemplary*" and that on the basis of such qualities the individual was regarded a leader. (2).

The issue for sociologists has never been whether *de facto* such a leader possessed such qualities, but "how he (was) *regarded* by his followers or disciples." (3) There is no space here to present a complex picture of the qualities competing constituencies ascribed to his status from the field to the factory, from the rural homestead to the township house, suffice is to state that a complex mythology surrounded the apocalyptic moment of his release. The charisma ascribed to him was a result of a complex creation, a construction, an invention, both necessary and accidental in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Ann Wilner (4) in her study of charismatic political figures like Gandhi, Hitler, Roosevelt and Castro, suggested that such leadership emerges in contexts where a serious socio-economic

crisis exists and large groups of people experience distress. Both the crisis and the distress create the context for the emergence of charismatic leadership. For his or her part a leader has to be culturally embedded, perform heroic and extraordinary feats, project remarkable personal qualities and possess strong rhetorical abilities. In turn, the leader comes to be perceived by the followers as somehow "superhuman", his or her statements are believed unconditionally and therefore comply to suggested courses of action and offer unqualified emotional commitment. Mandela's charisma and its symbolic figuration happened in his "absence", during his incarceration and provides a unique example of how "crisis", "distress" and mobilisation combined to produce a figure that surprised its "owner" to no end, on his release from Victor Verster prison in 1990.

Yet sociologists tend to discuss "charisma" mainly as an aspect of authority in pre-modern movements and times. It is supposed to be a form of leadership that is displaced by the rise of modern states, political parties and large-scale organisations. Holding onto this distinction Bryan Wilson discusses "charisma" and its "primitive origins" as an aspect of religious belief and ascription in pre-modern movements. As he states in his study *Noble Savages* (5) "as modern parties are bureaucratized, or political decisions are subject to more explicitly technical considerations; and as a consequence, party political differences diminished, only the projected images of leadership and a few, often empty shibboleths serve to distinguish one party from another."

The argument rehearsed here is that charismatic leadership survives *and* enhances modern processes of mobilisation. Without disagreeing with Wilson about the main bureaucratic trend in political life, it would be fruitless to sustain such a sharp divide between supposed historical epochs. If for a moment we abandon the Euro-centric binaries that condemn the south into the "traditional", "parochial", "pre-modern", "primordial" context-that is "that" place where "charismatic leadership" would be or could be normal; if we also abandon the notion that South Africa is suspended between the two poles, half-modern and half-tribal, and look at the African National Congress as a national liberation movement of a specific character in a specific social formation, then a discussion about the symbolic figuration of charisma and the social context that produces it becomes possible.

I am using the three words advisedly: "symbolic", "figuration" and "charisma". Charisma, I am arguing is the result or the product of "symbolic figuration", an active process of quality ascription. Of course, the individual concerned *has* to be in some way an exemplary candidate to qualify for figuration in the first place. On that, the biographical details of a Mandela provide ample booty: born of chiefly lines in the Transkei, one of the first black lawyers educated at Fort Hare and already by 1949 a leading voice in the ANC's youth league and its radical challenges to the movement; one of the few black professionals a member of the new African middle-class in Johannesburg which was to re-define mass defiance and African nationalism in the 1950s; one of the leading voices in establishing the armed struggle and, not least the *de jure* leader of the ANC; a martyr sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island, spending 27 years in prison.(6)

The process of figuration is complex-it is both an active and a creative process involving a multiplicity of agencies, each "figuring" or to use a word from Stuart Hall (7) *encoding* its exemplary elements and each moulding the symbolic leader: Mandela.

Crucial here is the movement itself: as Benedict Anderson argued the “imagined community” of a nation, this profound “horizontal comradeship” that animated the last century’s political landscape has been constructed in the colonies by educated, literate, bi-lingual elites. His work emphasising print media and the literariness of the construction has been limited in one crucial respect: the process of mobilisation is a process of sound, of orality in mass gatherings, in face to face forms of communication and in every context where people socialise.. For every text, pamphlet (and in South Africa pamphlet-bomb) and script there were two songs and three oral poems, there were popular invocations and orations, and a shameless borrowing from orality to literacy and back. Figuration was a pluri-medial and poly-vocal process. (8)

A closer scrutiny of the writing, propaganda and communiqués of the ANC shows only a “mild figuration” before the late 1980s. There is little euphemization of Nelson Mandela- he is there as leader alongside other leaders, he is an exemplary prisoner among other prisoners; the emphasis is on the movement itself, its principles, its discipline, strategies and priorities. Creative writing too, by the exile poets and novelists, be they as committed as Wally Serote or Mandla Langa or not, emphasises comradeship, hope, the “movement”, indeed the abandonment of the “self” into a broader historic collectivity. (9). References to Mandela abound, but also the references to Tambo, Slovo, Mbeki, etc. There is nothing to suggest a personality cult in any of the texts.

Mandela left very little print behind too: various publications were compiled around the Rivonia trial with his famous address from the dock, at once defiant, republican and humanist. Its text has remained a crucial in understanding the ANC’s “open” and non-racial version of nationalism. As a text it functioned to inspire, but it was hardly its intention to be a call to action, a revolutionary tract or a programmatic statement at all. (10) It explained rather to the hostile court, a court that could have hung him, that his was an African Nationalism pushed to violence and sabotage by the white regime: “the violence which we chose to adopt was not terrorism. We who formed Umkhonto... had behind us the ANC tradition of non-violence and negotiation as a means of solving political disputes...” Yet , Apartheid shunned African aspirations and proceeded to limit and destroy possibilities for rational discourse: “all lawful modes of expressing opposition to this principle had been closed by legislation, and we were placed in a position in which we had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the Government. We chose to defy the law. We first broke the law in a way which avoided any recourse to violence; when this form was legislated against, and then the Government resorted to a show of force to crush opposition to its policies, only then did we decide to answer violence with violence.”

This shift in the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, from defiance to the armed struggle has met some social and historical scrutiny and critique. It has been argued (11) that such a move was not necessary and that the seeming closure, and the belief that all legal avenues were exhausted was a political mistake, that helped usher the harshest of Apartheid’s years. Both Leo Kuper and Edward Feit, left rather mixed accounts of the social dynamics of the resistance up to the Sharperville killings, the mix of resolve, heroism and naivete that defined those years is well recorded. (12) There is little though to prove anything either way-- the counter-factual nature of any such argument and the fact that history, as Walter Benjamin reminded us is always written from the perspective of the “victor” makes final judgements over

historical choices difficult.

The drama of the speech and the admission of picking up arms, or as the name of the military wing suggested, lifting the “spear of the nation” was re-enacted verbatim down the years by hundreds of township-based radicals, who memorised it from clandestine photostat copies, throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Even the most prominent of the black consciousness oral poets, the Soweto based firebrand, Ingoapele Mdingoane (13) used extracts of the speech to weave a sense of a resurgent Africa. Mandela for his part, had no hesitation in accepting responsibility for the sabotage campaign that flowed from the choice- “I do not, however, deny that I planned sabotage” he told the packed gallery and added that he did not plan it “ in a spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence. I planned it” he emphasised, as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation that had arisen after many years of tyranny, exploitation, and oppression of my people by the Whites. I admit immediately that I was one of the persons who helped to form Umkhonto we Sizwe, and that I played a prominent role in its affairs”. The touching monologue concluded with a defiant gesture: “during my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

The biographies of Nelson Mandela by anti-apartheid activists like Hilda Bernstein (14) and later, sociologist Fatima Meer (15) were affectionate accounts of his life, providing ample evidence of moral authority and integrity, spinning their narratives around the choice of arms, the speech from the dock and finally his incarceration. Although both texts helped the construction of a charismatic Mandela, they never argued that *his* life, or that *his* deeds stood at a mythical distance from the thousands who led in the growth of African nationalism and the anti-apartheid struggle. Fatima Meer’s text in particular reads in many parts like a family portrait, all too human for cult construction. Mandela was a formidable leader throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s, both biographers though make sure to contextualise his powers and situate his contribution within a broader community of national leaders.

It was only in the early to mid-1980s that the African National Congress cohered around a process, enthusiastically supported by the international anti-apartheid movement, that elevated Mandela to a special status as the apex and the medium of South Africa’s liberation through the famous “Release Mandela Campaign”. Personalising the movement, at a time of social insurrection in the country, with mass strikes and boycotts underway, with untold deaths detentions and imprisonment, was met with a lot of critical comment inside South Africa. Internally what was added as a by-line was, “and all other political prisoners”, but in the global theatre of pressure and mobilisation, the focus on Mandela was an act of strategic genius but also an act full of dangers. As Winnie Madikizela Mandela bitterly recollected years later (16): “a deliberate decision was taken by the ANC to use him as a symbol of resistance, to surround him with that so that the people struggled with a symbol of resistance and he remained that.”

The context was vital: both the Reagan and Thatcher administrations were increasingly tolerant of the Apartheid regime and were beginning to accept its definition of the ANC as a “terrorist”

organisation, too sympathetic to Moscow for comfort. At the same time, the self-same administrations were caught by the fact that the Pretoria regime was becoming a liability in its callous defence of its domination over the black majority, in the eyes of many people in the UK and the USA. If the anti-apartheid movement was to grow in strength in the West, a shift to a human rights discourse, to the pain and suffering of Apartheid, to its implications for a black majority became pressing. And so did the need to provide a figure and a story that combined both martyrdom and principle. The symbolic figure of Mandela and the struggle over his release, was tremendously successful- the story itself brought new energies into a movement that was growing manifold- it also offered Afro-American lobby groups, liberal think tanks, church congregations, a handle to neutralise the self-serving monologue of terrorism.(17)

II

Very little changed in the conceptions of leadership by the dominant resistance formations in the country: neither the United Democratic Front nor the Congress of South African Trade Unions spent much time responding to, or constructing a personality cult out of Mandela's biography. The focus of most of the serious intellectuals in the country was on what Njabulo Ndebele had called the "rediscovery of the ordinary". Sociology, oral and social history and literary studies were celebrating the endurance, creativity and determination of ordinary black people and avoided the grand narratives of "leaders". (18)

The process of figuration was more complex, subtle and pervasive. The international focus and literature on the incarcerated leader of the African National Congress provided safer narratives for the growing black press in the country: whether it was the more black consciousness and black business-inspired *Sowetan* or the more stridently Congress and church-inspired *New Nation*, they started using the stories about Mandela reported in the international anti-apartheid campaign as indirect and objective reports. Once the global establishment press in New York, Washington and London started featuring Mandela as a martyr and a potential problem-solver, the work of local journalists became easier. The publicity allowed them to circumvent the clamps on the press by the Apartheid government. By the time this humdrum which irked the regime was dealt with, the mainstream press started echoing their international mentors, focusing on the demand that Mandela should not be treated as a terrorist but as a necessary problem-solver. Print capitalism, in the words of Benedict Anderson, had a significant role in the "figuration."(19)

The stories published in the local black press, were read in the homes of the relatively small black readership in the country made up of a deeply concerned and frustrated African petit-bourgeoisie and by the more skilled and literate sections of the black working class. The importance of this in the 1980s is undoubted. When shop-stewards of the new independent trade unions in Durban were interviewed and asked whether any leaders past or present could fulfill their aspirations, the ANC names that came up were of Chief Albert Luthuli and Moses Mabheda; names also included Gatsha Buthelezi as well. Research in the early 1980s amongst trade union memberships on the Witwatersrand, showed an awareness of Mandela, Tambo, Govan Mbeki but also Sobukwe; especially among younger urban black workers, allegiances were mostly with the black consciousness movement. Although, awareness of the ANC was common-place, any

awareness of a *symbolic hierarchy* was absent. (20)

Here my task becomes difficult because firstly, I do not subscribe to a conception of media and communication that has them unilaterally *shaping* popular consciousness- readers negotiate their "reading" in complex ways (21); secondly, most of the urban and rural black proletariat in the country gleaned its information and confirmed its opinions through oral networks of communication and thirdly, there were parallel "figurations" by *proxy* in both the scripted and the oral narratives of the 70s and 80s that enhanced Mandela's symbolic power. These three *deeply* interrelated factors make it extremely difficult to decide where to start, because each one threatens to be an antecedent to the other.

I find no evidence in ANC documents, in the Anti-Apartheid literature, in the International Defence and Aid documents that the appellation "Father of the Nation" was applied to Nelson Mandela; but since the 1980s there was a volume of references that Winnie Madikizela Mandela's personae were converged into the ascribed role of a "Mother of the Nation." Mandela's symbolic power would be incomprehensible without an understanding of her contribution by *proxy* in every mass gathering, popular discussion and media focus. As the poet asserted in his lines at the beginning of the piece,

"I saw that you made a storm
of your wife
raining kindly on the shacks
raining paraffin and fire on apartheid's mansions
so I ululated
and burnt them"

Winnie Mandela and Aung Saan Suu Kyi shared one thing in common: a symbolic relationship to a man, comprehensible only in strongly patriarchal societies: whereas the latter, legitimised her public leadership role as "daughter" of the national independence hero of Burma (22), the former gained prominence as Mandela's "wife" and the "mother" of his children. The differences have also been stark: the latter, demonstrated her virtue in ascetic neo-Ghandian terms the latter has always been larger than life, excessive and fearless. Winnie Mandela feeding off a simple populism of clear black and white divides, the Boere and the people, became *his* living and ever-activating memory. (23)

She was tremendously consistent- since the Soweto riots in 1976, with intermittent house arrests and banishment in the rural areas of the Free State, she made herself available on every possible platform and confrontation- at funerals, mass gatherings and meetings. Every time, she appeared, she was the fearless Winnie, the *wife* of the ANC hero in jail. Although her reputation was clouded over the regrettable events in Soweto during the height of the insurrection and negative publicity has been following her since through to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's hearings (24) she played nevertheless, a defining role in the 1980s

In the final instance it was not what she actually said or did that mattered but how her various public personae and stories of her life were "read" by multiple constituencies; also, how a

process of popular transference, of “uploading” grafted onto her the innermost fears and hopes and wishes of ordinary people. And she was so created by the least organised and most vulnerable and poor sectors of South Africa’s black society-women and youth

South Africa through the policies of segregation and apartheid, separating African homesteads from the places of work, had remained a Migrant Labour nation- for ordinary black women the drama of waiting for husbands to return, the attacks by police and the army on their homes and children, the rebelliousness of the younger generation, the pain of men who disappeared from their lives created a powerful reading of the tragic/wife of a hero. As popular story-telling traditions verbalised the final return/release of the man would make the homesteads whole, wrong would be made right, the shredded would be stitched again. For ordinary black men, she brought with her a “metanarrative” of the exemplary wife, of an uncontrollable elemental force.

Winnie Mandela’s tragic story, was also what the international press and, to a lesser extent the local press needed- a human interest by-line. Increasingly the focus on Winnie was growing into a brilliant enhancement of the Mandela legend.

The importance of oral forms of communication in the symbolic figuration needs some emphasis: as research on the media consumption among COSATU shop-steward leaders in the early 1990s showed, despite their extensive reading of daily and weekly newspapers and their exposure to TV news, none of their socio-political opinions and forms of understanding were derivable from the press or TV. Rather, their “learning” occurred in the union office, in the gathering, in the federation’s meetings and the community. They in turn were crucial grassroots conduits of information and attitude. (25) The construction and enhancement of the Mandela story occurred in the streets and the factories through a remarkable process of transference from the ground “upwards.”

Mandela entered the vocabulary of the oral poets, the *izibongi* of the trade union movement in the late 1980s. The first one was a reference by Mi Hlatshwayo on Ndaba and the imprisoned story, yearning for a “release” so that the clans of story-tellers may return. At around 1989, Qabula orated the poem about the black buffalo kept in the House of Fish, both metaphoric, indirect references. In 1990, Ngubo composed a direct poem about Mandela that he orated in public gatherings- there, Mandela was the “avenger”; Madlizinyoka Ntanzu from the north of KwaZulu Natal composed one a few months later, describing the effect of Mandela’s release on the Boers, the Bosses and Oppressors. By 1992, Gijimbi too embroidered further attributes. By 1993, Mandela poems were everywhere.

Popular imagination grafted upwards to create a symbolic universe which was open to many interpretations but magnetically held by the Mandelas of their *own* making. Galvano della Volpe (26), in his discussion of how poetic symbols were powerfully polysemic codes, allowing a multiplicity of meanings and emotions to inflect the reader, provides some clue to the symbolic’s allure. But Mandela’s charisma was not a metaphor or a simile in a language game; rather it was a story that was constructed in negotiation with other ones. The Mandela “quality index” was being to use, new computer language, “downloaded” and “uploaded”, “upgrafted” and “projected”. Returning to the poem above the poet (and by transference the “people”) states;

“I heard story of stories
that you were hurricane Demona
the kraals of the Boer were too weak
for your anger
so I broke them”

Crucial here in the popular constructions were the elements of “exile, imprisonment and return” of “homecoming” of the “avenger” in popular narratives, of the hoped-for “festival”, of “martyrdom” that proliferated in popular culture, and how the Mandela story, captured the hopes and projections of ordinary people like an “electrolytic condenser”; or as it was explained to me by a teacher during a workshop on popular narratives- like a “kaleidoscope process”- his personification allowed the elements to be reconfigured for each eye differently. All the popular songs in public gatherings referred to a plethora of leaders but as the 1980s progressed, and the personification of Mandela increased, so did his story gained in prowess and his name made solo appearances in the verses. (27)

Fatima Meer, in her piece: “Mandela: the man behind the myth” (28) written in 1989 before his release, argued that both his symbolic standing and his isolation from the movement’s factionalism would place him in a unique position to stand above petty political differences and, these are my words, using the hierarchical symbolic status he enjoyed and the charisma ascribed to him by the masses, unify the entire black population and become a catalyst in the negotiation process. Wary of the escalating violence between Inkatha and the Mass Democratic Movement in South Africa, Meer was very concerned with the fragmentation of the aspirations of the black population. At the same time the personification of all aspirations in Mandela propagated by intellectuals like Meer further embellished the mythology.

Finally, the organisational offices of the mass democratic movement were filled with rumour and “talk”: visits by organisations to consult with him prior to his release added layers of description, impression nuance. The Mass Democratic Movement, the students and the youth, the churches and NGOs, the professional and civic organisations, each one came back, bringing a sentence, a hint, a description, a judgement. No one talked of a practical politician, a task master, a stickler for time and procedure, a man of temper or obstinacy. Everybody talked Madiba.

In short, most literature on “charisma” describes the context that allows for the emergence of charismatic leadership- social and economic crisis, popular distress among other factors; it then describes the qualities and manifest appearances of the leader and combines both aspects to help us understand the efficacy of such forms of authority. Such studies invariably reduce the people who “regard” such leaders as exemplary as passive agencies; here the argument is that there is a popular “mythopoesy”, an active figuration by a multiplicity of agencies, with the “subject” in the South African case an imprisoned and distant martyr away from the din and noise of public gatherings. The fascinating historical conjuncture of the Mandela Decade is the way this “charisma” is subsequently disciplined and transformed, by all concerned and put to *diverse* uses.

When Mandela was released, he was astounded by his own supposed superhuman qualities and

by popular expectations. He made haste to explain that he was a disciplined member of the ANC's National Executive Committee, a "servant to the people" and accountable to a movement: "I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people" he tried to shout above the crowd's roar in Capetown's parade, and he added -"your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands." (29) Such sentiments were brushed away by the restless, chanting crowd.

He said so on his first day of freedom in Capetown's Parade; he said so on each occasion- when thousands lined the streets on his first Africa tour and his tour of the USA. In both instances, the poor gathered in their thousands expecting a messianic message, a word, a gesture as the "liberator" had arrived. Over the sound of bleating brass bands, Mandela thanked people for their solidarity and explained how difficult it would still be to find a negotiated transition in his country. He said so on his farewell speech to parliament in April of 1999. The "other" Mandela though was at work despite him- heads of state, big business, white interest groups, started amassing and posing around his aura and his charisma.

III

In South Africa the "festival" lasted a few days before renewed violence and intransigence re-focused the country on the Apartheid regime. The expectation and awe at the legend, at his paradigmatic life-story, turned into worry. The first worry and shock was that Mandela had aged: the legend subsisted on the visual imagery of the surviving photographs of the 1950s and 1960s. The homecoming did not bring a heroic avenger but a practical, humanist negotiator and home-maker:

"You did not bring the hatred
of years and the knife
Story of stories
Ndaba
You did not ask us to gather our tears

I was speechless...

Turner of the other cheek
and when that finished
turner of the other

Labourer, you
who returned Golgotha's crosses
to the Carpenters

Thatcher of the roof of the home we never had
Where are the homes you shouted
I am the Thatcher"

During the first phase of the decade, from his release until 1994 when the first democratic elections occurred in South Africa, the public figure of Mandela was adjusted: enter the negotiator and the reasonable militant- he did not bring the hatred back, he turned cheek after cheek for another blow, he was the thatcher of roofs and the labourer, returning the crosses from Golgotha; from 1994 onwards, Mandela was adjusted once more as the patriarch and reconciliator, as the nation-builder- the "Eyes that smile" the kind hand that holds the hands of children, the mother and father of justice. Despite the pomp and circumstance in the public domain, Mandela's relevance and value, indeed his greatness lies both in his resistance to his ascribed charisma and his achievement of a number of simpler tasks. Hopefully the future shall read him within a grand tradition of post-colonial humanism and, within the ranks of the liberation movement to have not only put brakes on his image, but to have practically influenced South Africa's future in some very specific ways.

To find in a social system so built and sustained by hatred and violence like Apartheid such a humanism in Mandela was surprising: that 27 years in prison left not one iota of vengefulness; that the man who argued that it was time to pick up arms against the Apartheid state and to form Umkhonto we Sizwe, could be arguing for throwing guns into the sea, befriending whites and pardoning everyone; that the man, whose own family drama was bitter and the final estrangement from Winnie Madikizela-Mandela harsh, could keep a loyalty to her to the bitter end; that the man who instead of using the messianic power ascribed to him whilst in prison chose to call himself a leader accountable to a disciplined organisation.

Mandela negotiated subtly between his two selves: the leader and the legend. Already, the talk about his release was closely linked to talks about negotiations. Sensitive sectors within the state intelligence apparatus of PW Botha's government suggested negotiations during the period of insurrection and emergency.(30) But, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established later, such negotiations were to go hand in hand with one of the most brutal processes of destabilisation and counter-insurgency. Already, delegations co-ordinated by the Institute of Democratic Alternatives had arranged prominent encounters between "role players" in South Africa and the ANC leadership in exile. (31) The ANC's executive committee too, had already decided on a dual strategy of intensification of resistance, the deepening of the defiance campaign and the final "push". Oliver Tambo's calls to action and his call especially to intensify the armed struggle and to intensify mass defiance in the country on the one hand, went together with overtures for creating a climate for negotiations. (32)

When the FW de Klerk regime unbanned all political opposition and moved to release the ANC's old guard, new cycles of conflict and contestation were unleashed throughout the country. What was new, as Ahmed Kathrada argued on his release from prison, was the most tricky of terrains of struggle- negotiations. Mandela on his release was faced with the need to argue simultaneously for disciplined mass action to increase the pressure for a democratic transition and at the same time to preach peace, especially in KwaZulu Natal where the political violence between democrats and conservatives among the Zulu majority was becoming horrendous. Before long, the hostels of the Witwatersrand exploded into further violence, commuters were being shot down in cold blood as a vicious destabilisation process was intensified. (34)

He fought hard to “normalise” political life and to nudge de Klerk closer to a climate for open discussions. Yet, he could not accept discussions and negotiations without acceptance of some basic democratic possibilities. Outstanding issues that Mandela raised with PW Botha at their pre-release meeting in July 1989 and subsequently demands that the African National Congress put on the agenda before it agreed to terminate the armed struggle, were not being dealt with. (35) When Mandela wrote to PW Botha as a gesture to start discussions about negotiations *without* prior ANC concurrence, he tabled two issues: “firstly, the demand for majority rule in a unitary state; secondly, the concern of white South Africa over this demand, as well as the insistence of whites on structural guarantees that majority rule will not mean domination of the white minority by blacks.” What he asked for was a negotiation as a prelude for a negotiated settlement; what he encountered was a shifting politics of friction and avoidance, and violence escalating. (36)

Oliver Tambo on the other hand and the exile leadership of the movement was less concerned, at least in public, about the fears of the white minority, what he as the de facto leader of the movement argued was the need to unify the many strands of the liberation and resistance movements into a powerful, defiant block and enter into negotiations for a transfer of power to the people. (37)

Whilst Mandela was preaching the development of an atmosphere conducive to discussion he knew too that the mass democratic movement had to continue pressurising the regime despite its exhaustion: “our struggle has reached a decisive moment.” he argued during the second mass rally after his release, “we call on our people to seize this moment so that the process towards democracy is rapid and uninterrupted. We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts. To relax our efforts now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be able to forgive. The sight of freedom looming on the horizon should encourage us to redouble our efforts.”

He insisted though that the “struggle” had to be disciplined and co-ordinated. Weary of spontaneous outbursts of youth action in the townships, he tried to reign them in: “it is only through disciplined mass action that our victory can be assured. We call on our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa.” (38)

There was very little of the “avenger” or the “hurricane” in Mandela’s public appearances; there was no bitterness nor call to arms, his were the words of a concerned leader, deeply concerned about the “slow walk to freedom” (39). He knew that in many areas, the ability to sustain mass action was being exhausted by countless state-coordinate attacks; he realised that the mass democratic movement itself was pushing in too many directions at the same time with serious frictions between organisational styles and organisational traditions. He was particularly worried about KwaZulu Natal and was ready to argue against the grain of the mass political leadership in the province.

On 25 February 1990, two weeks after his release, at a rally involving close to 200 000 people in Durban, Mandela was adamant and provocative: “In Natal, apartheid is a deadly cancer in our midst, setting house against house, and eating away at the precious ties that bound us together.

This strife among ourselves wastes our energy and destroys our unity. My message to those of you involved in this battle of brother against brother is this: take your guns, your knives, and your pangas, and throw them into the sea. Close down the death factories. End this war now!” (40)

There was a murmur through the masses of youth from the war zones of KwaZulu Natal. They were angry and devastated by what they were hearing; instead of emotional support, a celebration of their tenacity and prowess, a public naming of the root cause of this mess, a castigation of Inkatha and its leader, a call to co-ordinated resistance, a list of devastations, they were being given a lecture by an out-of touch patriarch! (41)

Mandela did admonish the crowd: “even now as we stand together on the threshold of a new South Africa, Natal is in flames. Brother is fighting brother in wars of vengeance and retaliation. Every family has lost dear ones in this strife. In the last few years of my imprisonment my greatest burden, my deepest suffering, was caused by reports which reached me of the terrible things which were happening here. All of us are bereft of loved ones. All of us are aggrieved. Your tears are mine.”....Not only were the weapons to be thrown in the ocean, people had to accept that “what has happened has happened and must be accepted by you [the people of this region.]”

This was a line of argument that he kept consistently throughout the decade no matter how obvious the mass democratic movement was under violent siege. As he argued later too in 1994: “the greatest enemy of the people of KwaZulu/Natal is political violence. There are too many orphans and widows. Fresh graves litter the hills and valleys. Families are torn apart. Now is the time to change all this. Nothing, absolutely nothing, must be spared to ensure that life, limb and property are protected.” (42)

Mandela was convinced that the youth had to be disciplined at whatever cost. He admitted that “the youth have been the shock troops of our struggle...” Yet he added that the victories gained “only through discipline can they be consolidated and made to last. The youth must be like the warriors who fought under Shaka, the son of Senzangakhona, fighting with great bravery and skill. These heroes obeyed the commands of their commanders and their leaders. Today the community says, the world says, and I say: end this violence. Let us not be ruled by anger. Our youth must be ready to demonstrate the same perfect discipline as the armies of King Shaka. If they do not, we will lose the ground which we have gained at such great cost.” He implored people to take the “fight” to the “common enemy”: “of inadequate housing, forced removals, lack of resources as basic as that of water, and rising unemployment”. (43)

During the Durban speech he placed the responsibility for peace and development in the hands of black women. Noting that women in history had shown greater wisdom than men, Mandela urged them too: “stand up and put their shoulders to the wheel together with the community to end the strife and violence. ..I charge you with a special responsibility here today. It is you, in your wisdom now, who must begin the work of bringing peace to Natal. Tell your sons, your brothers, and your husbands, that you want peace and security. It is you who must show them the real enemy. All women know of mass poverty and homelessness, of children dying from diseases caused by hunger, poverty and repression.” (44)

It was not only the poet who remained “speechless”. The Durban rally, in the nerve-centre of the most violent of provinces, Mandela’s was public defiance of his symbolic character, his ascribed charisma and through that many of the messianic expectations that anticipated or followed his release. He was reversing the imagery situating himself within the originary nonviolent traditions of African Nationalism. He was asking people to forgive, to work for peace and to defy but under disciplined and coordinated parameters. Then came the historic Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes that sealed the process of negotiation between the Pretoria regime and the African National Congress. (45)

IV

For the international media, and especially for serious political journalists Mandela was a precious resource: it had been rare in the 70s or 80s to having to deal with a democrat who was not a product of electoral party machines- what, Wilson (46) described in his study of “charisma” as the banality of modern leadership. They found in the released president real politician, aware of global dynamics, at once analytical and tolerant, humane but harsh in his judgements of oppression and discrimination. (47)

He will not be remembered (48) though as a very powerful oral speaker or platform politician; nor will the sociological record have him “deliver” democracy. The “grand compromise” that allowed for the democratic transition will detain us later, it took more than Mandela, and more than the political and social leadership in the country to usher the democratic transition. Mandela rather, during the “Mandela Decade”, using the real and symbolic space afforded to him, his authoritative presence, the space offered to him by the respect he enjoyed among a younger cadre of leaders, this “relative autonomy” based on the mythology woven around him, sometimes using his patriarchal charm or anger, has given the ANC’s achievement a unique character in three ways:

- firstly, he insisted on a humanism animated by a libertarian idea of justice and backed by law, an idea weaned through the Robben Island experience- justice, a constitution and the courts would provide for an alternative to the noose and the prison; Mandela ensured therefore a bias towards progressive and democratic jurisprudence and towards the intellectuals pioneering it in the country.

- secondly, that the philosophical and moral grounding of the country’s development would be one based on an *African* republicanism.

- thirdly, he insisted that his moral authority to lead was part of a broader tradition of deeds, actions, practices that demanded a culture of respect and self-discipline

The rest of the vision, outlook and approaches he left to others in the mass democratic movement.

It is imperative to take these points in turn:

The class and race compromise that characterised the transition had to be bounded by a *just* constitution that guided law-making, guided the state’s work and entrenched rights. Although the ANC’s Constitutional Guidelines (49) and the liberation movement’s major human rights intellectual, Albie Sachs, who conducted a major drive since his return to create a debate about justice and a libertarian constitutionalism, were already defining the debate around justice since 1989, their adoption was uncertain. (50)

Nelson Mandela’s positive and negative experiences in the arms of the Law and “jurisprudence” were vital: as a qualified lawyer and defender of ordinary black people in the 1950s and as a victim of unjust laws; as a recipient of the rough justice of detention without trial, of laws that put to the gallows hundreds of black South Africans and heroes of the liberation movement, of legalised perversity and criminality, he was insistent that a culture of legally enforced rights should predominate. The constitutional road to democracy owes much to Mandela’s insistence on a distinction between “power” and “justice.” Later, in retrospect, during his last speech marking the last sitting of the first democratic parliament, in March 1999, during that is, his last contribution as president of South Africa, he ascribed this vision to the “people”: “the people of South Africa chose a profoundly legal path to their revolution” he argued, and added that, “those who (later came to) frame and enact the constitution and law are in the vanguard of the fight for change.”(51)

Secondly, Mandela had always been careful to frame his republicanism in an African context of post-colonial emancipation and self-determination. From as early as the days of the Youth League in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he saw democracy as an affirmation and extension of African values and a struggle against forms of fascism and imperialism. Even in his most profoundly socialist statements, he was always an *African* socialist and claimed that many of the democratic elements he stood for were embedded in Africa’s history.

His speech from the dock in 1964 was animated by the interconnection between his biography and African history- “in my youth in the Transkei I listened to the elders of my tribe telling stories of the old days. Amongst the tales they related to me were those of wars fought by our ancestors in defence of the fatherland. The names of Dingane and Bambata, Hintsa and Makana, Squngthi and Dalasile, Moshoeshoe and Sekhukhuni, were praised as the glory of the entire African nation.”(52)

His vision of the past or tradition was as a “rich resource on which we can draw in order to make decisions for the future, but it does not dictate our choices” he insisted. He argued for a selective appropriation of the past: “we should look back at the past and select what is good, and leave behind what is bad. The issue of chiefship is one such question. Not only in Natal, but all through the country, there have been chiefs who have been good and honest leaders who have piloted their people through the dark days of oppression with skill. These are the chiefs who have looked after the interests of their people and who enjoy the support of their people... But there have been many bad chiefs who have profited from apartheid and who have increased the burden on their people. We denounce this misuse of office in the strongest terms. As Luthuli, himself a chief, put it: ‘A chief is primarily a servant of the people. He is the voice of his people.’(53)

Mandela's notion of tradition involved also the three "great" religions: "Africa's history has been profoundly shaped also by the interplay between three great religious traditions - Islam, Christianity and African traditional religions....the way in which these three great religions of Africa interact and co-operate with one another, could have a profound bearing on the social space we create for the rebirth of our continent." (54) In this context the moment of Africa's religions had arrived, "no longer seen as (a) despised superstition which had to be superseded by superior forms of belief; today its enrichment of humanity's spiritual heritage is acknowledged. The spirit of Ubuntu that profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings - is not a parochial phenomenon, but has added globally to our common search for a better world." Although republican to the core he was able to gracefully celebrate the creation of a National Council of Traditional Leaders: "the respect and recognition of the institution of traditional leaders require more than fine-sounding declarations in a constitution. They should reside in our hearts.."(55)

The notions of an egalitarian past has always been in Mandela's heart. This was articulated clearly during the Rivonia trial in 1964 and has remained with him since: "I am attracted by the idea of a classless society, an attraction which springs in part from Marxist reading and, in part, from my admiration of the structure and organization of early African societies in this country. The land, then the main means of production, belonged to the tribe. There were no rich or poor and there was no exploitation." (56)

Mandela's beliefs in African tradition and his charisma worked in bridging the gaps between the liberation movement and chiefly structures in the country. Whereas for some in the ANC such rapprochement was a question of tactics for Mandela it was an issue of principle.

Thirdly, he always insisted that the leadership of the ANC was a product of a tradition of exemplary deeds: self-sacrifice, discipline, respect and service. The last myth the ANC needed was a mythical Mandela, as he often argued. Although he was crucial in the movement's decision to take up arms against the state, these were seen by him and by his generation as an extension of protest, an evil that had to be used with circumspection. As he told the 53rd General Assembly of the United Nations he abhorred force and urged leaders, "to defeat the primitive tendency towards the glorification of arms, (and) the adulation of force (57) . This belonging to a tradition of exemplary deeds, is one of Mandela's most important (and sometimes emotive and romantic) lessons to future generations: "I hope that decades from now, when history is written, the role of that generation will be appreciated, and I will not be found wanting against the measure of their fortitude and vision."(58)

Mandela's insistence that the ANC brought together many strands in its tradition of resistance- the Zulu anti-colonial struggles of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Gandhian tradition that spilled over into the broader African National Congress defiance campaigns (59), a result of what was named the 1947 the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact ; the struggles of trade unions all the way up to the 1970s and 1980s and finally the contribution from white humanists, democrats and socialists from Bishop Colenso's ordeals during the late 19th century to the present. (60)

The punishing time-table of negotiations, the demands of leadership and the relentless problems of the new social formation, did not allow much time for reflection so that these three elements of Mandela's legacy could be developed by him into a socio-political philosophy. Perhaps future generations of South African scholars will have the opportunity and creative climate to advance our thinking on the relationship between freedom, justice and law, the relationship between humanism, socialism and Africa's traditions and finally, between active and disciplined traditions of political practice and the "rest".

For the broader world community, despite stories of crime, corruption and a pathological kleptocracy in the new bureaucracy, "Mandela's decade" will be remembered as one where morality was brought back into politics. As the world's most adored "home-maker" he raised the moral stakes of peace everywhere. During the Non-Aligned Movement's gathering in Durban in 1998 he excoriated the world about the violence and the hypocrisy that killed hope. On this he was emphatic: "I speak here of the violence of hunger which kills, of the violence of homelessness which kills, of the violence of joblessness which kills, of the violence of malaria and HIV/AIDS which kill and of the trade in narcotics which kill. I speak of the destruction of human lives which attends underdevelopment, of societies over which we preside in which the very poor prey on one another with knives and guns, in which we have to contend with the crimes of the abuse of children and the rape of and other violence against women and in which those who murder and rob seem to thrive.." (61)

And he continued pointing fingers at the third world's leadership: "the violence against which I speak is also the violence of war, whether in the Democratic Republic of Congo or in Kosovo, and whether in Afghanistan or in Sri Lanka, and of the frightening threat which hangs over all humanity that is posed by the huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, and especially nuclear weapons, which remain in the stockpiles of a few countries in the world... You will, of course, have recognised the fact that what I am speaking of are the twin issues of development and peace which have been the central objectives of our Movement from its foundation and remain its principal challenges... But if we make a demand of the peoples of the North that they produce a leadership of a new type, we cannot set different standards for ourselves, indeed, the challenge we face is that we too should strive to lead by the example we ourselves set of leadership truly dedicated to serve the interests of our peoples."(62)

Behind the baffling for the global right and left Mandela's approach to international issues has been- with his affection for Castro, Gadaffi and Arafat and his reserve from castigating Babangida or Suharto; from his public criticism of the United Nations and the Security Council, the Group of 8 and the US of bullying tactics to his conviviality with Bill Clinton, have not altered his analytical point that the third world's leadership had failed its people.

Mandela's farewell was defining of his style and character: "I will count myself as amongst the aged of our society; as one of the rural population; as one concerned for the children and youth of our country; and as a citizen of the world committed, as long as I have strength, to work for a better life for all people everywhere. And as I have always done, I will do what I can within the discipline of the broad movement for peace and democracy to which I belong. I will then count myself amongst the ordinary men and women whose well being must, in any country, be the standard by which democratic government must be judged." (63)

Nelson Mandela's contribution to the shaping of the transition process has to be salvaged from the symbolic figuration that constructed his powerful alter-ego; it is a serious part of a vision that shaped the thinking and praxis of a movement during trying and unpredictable times. For the majority of black South Africans, such considerations were about the "detail" too marginal or insignificant in the drama that was unfolding. More resonant in popular consciousness were more expansive figurations that allowed them to comprehend their roles- a Mandela who was the,-

"Turner of the other cheek
and when that finished
turner of the other"...The

Labourer, you
who returned Golgotha's crosses
to the Carpenters"...The

Thatcher of the roof of the home we never had
Where are the homes you shouted
I am the Thatcher"

Read differently, "the turner of the other cheek" was the man who demanded that at the core of the transition was the need to "Forgive and Reconcile"; "the labourer" who returned the crosses of so much pain, was the animator of ideas of nation-building, of a new South Africa, of the Rainbow nation; finally, the "thatcher" of the homes was the man who argued about that justice had to be measured in terms of socio-economic equality and by an emancipation from poverty.

The Mandela Decade failed to achieve all three, however honourable they might have been as animating visions and however "speechless" they left creative popular responses. The idea of "forgiveness and reconciliation" was for Mandela a correct and irreversible step. This was also the conviction of church leaders who together with exponents of a long standing tradition of Cape White Liberalism argued that nation-building could not occur until the ghosts of the past were settled. Such arguments resulted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was both a process of confession and a dramatic staging of reconciliation that would release forgiveness, toleration and reconstruction. It was to be the grand, sorrowful performance and ritual of a society re-making itself. It was to be one of the most compromised, yet significant pieces of nation-building ever imagined. (64)

In turn, the idea of the Rainbow as a narrative for nation-building and unity (65), has proven to be a disappointment. For many of the younger people in South Africa, black and white, especially from the middle-classes, the concept found an easy-go-lucky resonance. But, it is fair to say that its failure was extensive, for some its defeat, resounding (66). Its failure can be attributed to white intransigence and to whites' self-serving indifference to the "new" South Africa. The straps of racism were too close to white hearts. The refusal of the white population to own the past, frightened and angered Mandela. The backlash from the African intelligentsia

and the emerging black middle classes brought back the rainclouds, there was no space in their status scripts for such a notion. (67).

For Mandela "Rainbowism" was based on a belief that nation-building had to be inclusive, broad enough to accommodate everyone of whatever colour: "building a single nation in our country. Our new nation will include blacks and whites, Zulus and Afrikaners, and speakers of every other language. ANC President-General Chief Luthuli said: 'I personally believe that here in South Africa, with all of our diversities of colour and race, we will show the world a new pattern for democracy. I think that there is a challenge to us in South Africa, to set a new example for the world.' This is the challenge we face today.'"(68)

His personal views often diverged from other senior leaders in the ANC and most certainly from feelings on the ground that demanded more aggression against agents of counter-revolution. Mandela's hand was always extended to reconcile with all of the ANC's enemies, including Gatsha Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Movement. To the bewilderment of many in the democratic movement, he went to the extent of praising Inkatha despite its untold aggression against democratic movements in KaZulu Natal. As he asserted in 1990: "although there are fundamental differences between us, we commend Inkatha for their demand over the years for the unbanning of the ANC and the release of political prisoners, as well as for their stand of refusing to participate in a negotiated settlement without the creation of the necessary climate. This stand of Inkatha has contributed in no small measure to making it difficult for the regime to implement successive schemes designed to perpetuate minority rule."(67) Finally, the promise that the new South African government would be able to address decisively economic inequalities and poverty was scuttled. The Reconstruction and Development Programme proved difficult to implement and later, the Government's macro-economic growth policy (known as GEAR) with its free-market bias, did not achieve many of its targets.(68) Mandela's angry admonitions against critics of these policies touched the raw-nerve of the Alliance. Had the African National Congress merely said that its *raison d'être* would be to deliver a democratic dispensation would have been enough for the majority in the anti-Apartheid movement. In signposting economic transformation and an end of inequality it made itself vulnerable to the cruel facts of continuing poverty and growing unemployment.

Future historians will have to bring their own factual scales- from the perspective inside this unfolding transition the hope for a nonracial and diverse culture of tolerance seems to have failed. South Africa is not a society of shared norms and ideas; it is rather, a social formation still bound by need and greed and held together by new regulatory social institutions. The unyielding inequality of the social system has steeled the second tier of leaders in the ANC. For example, Thabo Mbeki's polarising argument about the presence of "two nations" in South Africa, white and black, rich and poor respectively, however simplistic, reflects real frustrations with the persistent failure of white society to own the past and help transform it. It begs the question though of the adequacy and success of the means that have been deployed to alter such imbalances. The factual scales will have to decide on a more nuanced judgement, but they will have to weigh too the feeling that the Mandela decade left behind alongside the remarkable transition, a profound sense of failure felt by the very people who struggled to create a nonracial and diverse nation.

Did the African National Congress compromise on the character of the national democratic revolution? Was the principle of governance that emerged one that argued for a unity of contrary tensions and contestations held together by an overarching national consensus, naive? Was the attempt to build a nation based on “rights”- personal, cultural, gender-based and socio-economic, insubstantial? Whatever the answer researchers might give, what cannot be denied was that the decade achieved a grand compromise and a new terrain of class and race contestation.

Returning to the Rivonia trial, Mandela was clear then as he was throughout “his” decade- “... The African Nationalism for which the ANC stands is the concept of freedom and fulfilment for the African people in their own land. The most important political document ever adopted by the ANC is the 'Freedom Charter'. It is by no means a blueprint for a socialist state. It calls for redistribution, but not nationalization, of land; it provides for nationalization of mines, banks, and monopoly industry, because big monopolies are owned by one race only, and without such nationalization racial domination would be perpetuated despite the spread of political power.” The difference between the ANC and the South African Communist Party was captured by Mandela succinctly: the latter was “ prepared to work for the Freedom Charter, as a short term solution to the problems created by white supremacy, it regards the Freedom Charter as the beginning, and not the end, of its programme.”(69) The transition so far however profound, has been neither the “end” of that vision, nor its anticipated “beginning.”

What is left in popular consciousness will be the memory of a democratic leader, at once bening and cherished:

“Eyes that smile
Index finger of justice
hand that holds the hands of children
Our Father
Our Mother

do not leave
the Festival is about to come.

Your story
outlasts its teller”

Again, as Nelson Mandela concluded in his farewell speech, astute and self-effacing as ever:

“the long walk continues.”

1.I was sent this poem by Moses Masakhane Ndlovu to make it available or read it when Mandela was launching the African Renaissance Development Trust in Durban in April 1999. Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow for the poem’s recitation. Mandela’s reaction to the poem, which reached him, are not known by me. Nevertheless, Mr Ndlovu is a remarkable poet and I suspect the name disguises a known and an accomplished oral versifier in KwaZulu Natal.

2.M Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, Hodge-Edinburgh, 1947:p.329

3. *Ibid.*

4. Wilner, A *The Spellbinders-The Politics of Charisma*, New Haven: the Yale University Press, 1984

5. See B. Wilson, *Noble Savages*, University of California Press, 1989: p.3

6. A good reference for all this is of course his autobiography- Mandela, Nelson Rolihlahla: *Long Walk to Freedom: the Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. London, Little Brown, 1994.

7. S. Hall, (ed) *Culture, Media and Language*, London: Hutchinson, 1980.

8. B.Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso (Rev Ed), 1996 for a critique of Anderson’s work that brings in the orality of the process of mobilisation see my “Nation and Ethnicity in Natal’s Labour Movement” in *Societies of Southern Africa*, no38, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 1989 and “The Voice and Gesture in South Africa’s Revolution, in R.Grele (ed) *International Annual of Oral History*, Westport: the Greenwood Press. I owe the word “pluri-medial” to Astrid Von Kotze’s discussion of the theatre of “Peter Handke’s Dramaturgy”, PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1981. For a suggestive account of the active way traditions and national projects are “invented” and “constructed” see Hobsbawm, Eric J. and Terence Ranger (eds.): *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983

9. The clearest example is Wally Serote's novel *To Every Birth, its Blood*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987, describing the emotive passage from the experiences of township life and oppression to the experiences of the guerilla struggle.

10. Mandela, N. "I am Prepared to Die", statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia Trial at the Pretoria Supreme Court, 20 April 1964. Hitherto, Mandela speeches and documents from the African National Congress Archives, for a selection see, the African National Congress Web Page: www.anc.org.za Brilliant resources exist too in the Mayebuye Centre of the University of the Western Cape and the Library of the University of Fort Hare.

11. For a serious look at the form and nature of African Nationalism in the ranks of the liberation movement see the often ignored piece by Fatima Meer: "African Nationalism: Some Inhibiting Factors" in Adam, Heribert (ed.): *South Africa: Sociological Perspectives*. London: Arnold, 1971. For doubts about the Congress's strategies see R. Fine "The Antinomies of Nationalism and Democracy in the South African Liberation Struggle" paper presented at the Review of African Political Economy Conference on Democracy, University of Warwick, Sept 1989 and C. Bundy, "Around which corner? Revolutionary theory and Contemporary South Africa". In *Transformation*, 8, 1989. Of course, my assessment of the substantive debate about the form and nature of the transition itself has to wait for the completion of a broader manuscript. For a hint, see my "The Logic of Fragmentation in the South Africa of the 1990s" in *Transformation* no 32, 1998.

12. Leo Kuper, *The African Bourgeoisie*, Oxford: the University Press, 1965 and Edward Feit, *Urban Revolt in South Africa*. Northwestern University Press, 1971.

13. Ingoapele Mondingoane who died last year left very little in print. *Africa My Beginning*, Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1978 includes his "Black Trial" lengthy performance piece.

14. Benson, Mary: *Nelson Mandela, The Man and the Movement*. Penguin, 1986

15. Meer, Fatima: *Higher than hope: Nelson Mandela's biography on his seventieth birthday*. Johannesburg: Skottaville, 1988

16. ABC TV Interview, 30/May/1999

17. The success of the campaign was from a discussion/conversation with Trevor Huddleston (1991) and Siphos Pityana (1992), IDAF's co-ordinator in London.

18. See Njabulo Ndebele's piece at first in the *Journal of Southern African Studies* in 1987. See his book of essays with the same title, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1994. For an overview of the work, see Belinda Bozzoli's and Peter Delius's in *Radical History Review* and Ari Sitas, The Waning of Sociology in South Africa, in *Societies in Transition*, Vol 1 no1, 1998.

19. For a history of South Africa's oppositional press see C. Emdon, "Oppositional Press in South Africa", Mimeo, Durban, 1987.

20. See the Institute of Industrial Education's, *The Durban Strikes*, IIE-Durban, 1974; also Eddie Webster in *South African Labour Bulletin* vol 2 no2, 1975; for the East Rand see Ari Sitas, "African Worker Responses to Changes in the Metal Industry c 1960-1980" PhD Thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1984. For KwaZulu Natal, see A. Sitas, "The Autobiography of a Trade Union Movement" in *Culturelink*, - "Special Issue: South Africa" forthcoming, 1999.

21. Sitas, A. *Theoretical Parables*, (forthcoming) Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1999

22. See Aung Saan Suu Kyi's, *Freedom from Fear*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994

23. The most sympathetic account of Winnie Madikizela Mandela's life is to be found in Meer's *Higher than Hope*, op cit.

24. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's voluminous *Report* was published by Juta publishers, Capetown, 1998. For a passionate account see Antje Krog's *The Country of My Scull*, Capetown: David Phillip, 1998. Krog a poet of stature and compassion marked time as a journalist whose job was to cover the commission.

25. Pityana et al, *Beyond the Factory Floor*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press 1992.

26. Della Volpe, G.

27. The Workshops on Parables followed the completion of my *Theoretical Parables* Manuscript. The University of Natal's Community Development Research Fund supported my conducting of eight experimental workshops with grassroots creators to investigate the relationship between story-telling and learning methodologies. To all of our surprise, the narrative of the Mandela story predominated as a canonical story of exile-return, exile-homecoming, suffering-perseverance and forgiveness. The results of the workshops which of course dealt with more than the story here, will be processed and published in the course of the year. workshops to establish

28. Meer, Fatima: "Mandela: the man behind the myth". *Indicator South Africa*, 7(1), 1989,

29. Nelson Mandela, "Address to Rally in Cape Town on his Release from Prison", 11 February 1990.

30. Cronin, Jeremy: "Can the Left score in Cronin, Jeremy: "Is Nelson Mandela for real?" In *Work in Progress*, 87, 1993,

31. Boraine, Alex: Dakar report back. IDASA Occasional Paper, 10, 1987,

32. See, Tambo, Oliver R.: *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks*, compiled by Adelaide Tambo. London: Heinemann,

33. See Kathrada, A.: "Negotiations: A New Terrain of Struggle". In *Indicator SA*, 7(2), April 1990,

34. Until and including its first Congress the African National Congress tried to transform the spontaneous action-reaction, provocation-response nature of resistance into a coordinated and centrally led dialectical process of action and negotiation. See, ANC, "Year of mass action for the transfer of power to the people". Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of the African National Congress, January 8, 1991.

35. For a useful discussion of the ANC's dilemmas and actions through this period, see Tom Lodge, "The African National Congress in the 1990s", in *South African Review* vol 6 (Johannesburg) 1992. For the ANC's approach to the negotiations see African National Congress. "National Executive Committee Statement on the question of negotiations," 9 Oct 1987. New York: United Nations, 1987. Also, however brief African National Congress. "National Executive Committee Statement," New York: United Nations and, ANC, "Year of mass action for the transfer of power to the people". Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 79th anniversary of the African National Congress, January 8, 1991.

36. From, "Document presented by Nelson Mandela to P W Botha before their meeting on 5 July 1989." The document has Nelson Mandela asking not to be released. In his letter to PW Botha in 1989 he made this much clear: "the question of my release from prison is not an issue, at least at this stage of the discussions, and I am certainly not asking to be freed." He was and in his own words humbled by the world around him and the seeming impotence of the movement to make any clear breakthrough. As he declared later, - "since my release, I have become more convinced than ever that the real makers of history are the ordinary men and women of our country; their participation in every decision about the future is the only guarantee of true democracy and freedom."

37. See, Oliver R. Tambo, .: "President Tambo on Negotiations". In Sechaba, Aug 1989, See the continuation of these themes in ANC NEC: "Negotiations: A Strategic Perspective", *African Communist*, Th Quarter 1992,

38. Mandela, Nelson, "Address to the Mass Rally in Soweto", 18th Feb, 1990.

39. The clearest account of this "slow walk" is the collection of papers in Friedman, Stephen (ed.): *The Long Journey: South Africa's Quest for a Negotiated Settlement*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993. Friedman's introduction is well-balanced and incisive, given how recent all the frictions and developments were at the time of composition. See also, Collinge, Jo-Anne: "Launched on a Bloody Tide Negotiating the New South Africa", General Introduction. In: Moss & Obery, *South African Review* 6, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1994

40. Mandela, Nelson, "Address to Rally in Durban", 25 February

41. Ibid

42. Durban Rally, op cit

43. Ibid

44. Ibid

45. See, "Groote Schuur Minute"., 1990, Pretoria Minute"., 1990, ANC Archive: Documents.

46. B. Wilson, op cit

47. The first popular portraits of Mandela paint the picture of the perfect moral gentleman-principled, caring and forgiving. For a more mature assessment see Burns, John: "Mandela, Inspiration and Legend, Faces Real Politics". In *New York Times*, 4 Feb 1990.

48. See also, the generous insights in Green, Pippa and Peter Wilhelm: "The President and the Legend". In *Leadership SA*, 13(2), 1994,

49. ANC: "Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa", Lusaka, Zambia: ANC (1988), also see its slight modifications in 1991-ANC: "A Bill of Rights for a Democratic South Africa: Papers and report of a conference convened by the ANC Constitutional Committee", May 1991. Cape Town: Centre for Development Studies (UWC), 1991. Albie Sachs' contribution to the development of a notion of post-apartheid rights and justice is partly captured in Sachs, Albie: *Protecting Human Rights in a New South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990.

50. Social Scientist who had in the past provided big business and Inkatha with intellectual support were sceptical during the 1989-1990 IDASA sponsored discussions on the "Guidelines". What they urged was pragmatism and a constitution that was based on negotiated as opposed to human rights principles based on ethnic cantons and federalism. The same was demanded by the Nationalist Party and most of the 72 organisations that were "represented" at CODESA; it was the "miracle" of the negotiations to have arrived at a constitution based on the former.

51. Mandela, N "Speech at the final Sitting of the First Democratically Elected Parliament", 20, March, 1999

52. "Speech at Durban Rally", op cit

53. Ibid.

54. Mandela, "Lecture at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies", 11 July 1997

55. Mandela, . "Address at the Inauguration of the National Council of Traditional Leaders," 18 April, Capetown, 1997

56. Mandela, "Rivonia Trial"...op cit

57 Mandela, N., "Final Sitting" op cit

58. Ibid.

59. See also Mandela's piece *Gandhi the Prisoner*--A comparison of prison experiences and conditions of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela in South Africa, 1996.

60. Mandela, "Speech at Durban," op cit

61. Mandela, "Address at the Inaugural session of the Twelfth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries", Durban, 2 September 1998

62. Ibid. His vision after all was simple and clear: "the children must, at last, play in the open veld, no longer tortured by the pangs of hunger or ravaged by disease or threatened with the scourge of ignorance, molestation and abuse, and no longer required to engage in deeds whose gravity exceeds the demands of their tender years." (Mandela, "Nobel Peace Prize Address Acceptance Speech at the Award Ceremony: Oslo, Norway. December 10, 1993.)

63. Mandela, "Final Sitting"...op cit

64. See the Institute of Democratic Alternatives' Annual Reports, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 to trace the evolution of the "idea" of a Commission.

65. "Rainbow"- like ideas emerged first in the cultural movements in COSATU, the Congress of South African Writers and more specifically in the Natal Culture Congress in 1988-90 (Culture and Working Life Documents: the Killie Campbell Collection, University of Natal). They were further fed by Pallo Jordan's contribution in 1987 to the CASA Conference in Amsterdam, CASA, Amsterdam, 1987. They were part too of the Culture and Development Congress in 1993 sponsored by the ANC in Johannesburg. Then, the issue was one of *diversity*, more like "let a thousand forms of expression and their cultural formations bloom"; it took on an American twang through the contribution of church-leaders like Desmond Tutu, see: Tutu, Desmond: *The Rainbow People of God*. New York etc.: Doubleday, 1994.

66. Mandela, "Durban Rally" op cit

67. Ibid

68. Sitas, op cit, 1998

69. Mandela, "Rivonia", op cit

70. Mandela "Final Sitting" op cit

Of Land, Bones and Money: In search of the Pillars of Indigenerality

They talked, they talked a lot
about this and about that
ignoring that the real talk
was about land,
about bones
about money
in this country without a proper name
in this camp of the restless dead
Tutu cried about the darkened skies
Mandela cried that the stalks were not bearing
green ten rand notes
FW cried that the miners darkened the gold
And Slovo and Hani saw red everywhere in the Bantustans
and streets
But Tutu and the Bishops and dominees saw rainbows
and they agreed,
and we agreed:
a fence on this plot, no fence on that
a skeleton here and a skeleton there
give a black cent and take a white rand
in this nameless country
but we prayed together in this camp
what we did not say in our prayer was
that the seasons of drought have no rainbows
(Alfred Temba Qabula, 1994)

It has been a habit since the first democratic election in South Africa to script the meaning of, to use Heribert Adam's and Kogila Moodley's enticing formulation, the country's *negotiated*

revolution. It would therefore be an act of indulgence to demand of the overloaded readership of political sociology with yet another variation to its well rehearsed themes of compromise, betrayal, breakthrough and wonderment. It is an indulgence though that might be worth the few minutes generosity if a small detail that is vital to sociological insight can be entertained.

To avoid time-wasting delays, the argument here runs in the following way: the South African transition to democracy, or better, the transition to the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) which delivered South Africa's *interim* constitution was the result of a grand social compromise, a historic social compact between four inter-related sociological force-fields. Firstly, an agreement between an African power-elite in the African National Congress and its Afrikaner counter-part to arrive at a historic settlement. Secondly, a compromise between African "Modernists" and "Traditionalists". Thirdly a compromise between capital, state and labour that "participation", dialogue and mediation would form the basis of a neo-corporatist model of conflict resolution. Fourthly, a social charter binding the African National Congress's leadership with the black majority through the promise of a reconstruction and development programme. The sociological reasons behind, and the sociological consequences that resulted from them were precisely the core components of a society in its self-making. They presupposed, as I will be arguing below, the language and the means to define a new national *ontology* about, to steal from Qabula, "land, bones and money." The grand social compromise in turn, defined the parameters of institution building, of social order and legitimacy. The rest is fanciful decoration and detail.

As Van Zyl Slabbert noted in *The Quest for Democracy* both the Apartheid regime and the various strands of the liberation movement agreed on two fundamental principles: the principle of *contingent consent*, basic to all parliamentary democracies, that multi-party elections determine who governs and everyone has to accept such governance until the next elections. Furthermore, the principle of *bounded uncertainty*, makes sure that the vagaries of free social life and expression are bounded by a charter, a constitution. As argued in the *Mandela Decade* this form of democracy was the most desired outcome of the leadership cadres around Mandela.

I

Jacques Derrida on his visit to South Africa argued the impossibility of the "unpardonable" to be "pardoned." Arguing, as he did, in the shadow of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (hitherto TRC) and the legal proceedings of its Amnesty hearings his message was bound to be misinterpreted. People were bound to be confused by his philosophical and semantic manoeuvres to believe that he was focusing on the shallowness of the dominant discourse of "pardoning" and the ideology of reconciliation. In deconstructing such core notions of South Africa's "nation-building" so characteristic of the process of transition, his ideas could be used as part of the growing critique of "rainbowism."

Yet Derrida never claimed that the ideology of pardoning could not be produced and/or its grip on reality could be ephemeral or that as a discourse it could not have an overwhelming sway over people. What the doyen of deconstruction was signalling in his playfulness was its *ontological* impossibility: its "sublation" into forgiveness exercised an "erasure", a "repression" that would always remain to haunt it. Its construction as the ground for something new like a forgiving and

reconciling nation, carries with it in its intestines the "repressed", what Qabula termed the "restless dead" in whose invocation the new is supposed to pay penance to be born.

In South Africa this process harbours a further meaning- the very possibility of rehearsing this "sublation" does not only attempt to create a "national ontology" that settles the debt of the past but it also attempts to constitute for the first time a *transformed* "new" that was unprecedented. It involved both an erasure and a generative switching point so that the "us" that is South African *are* so as such, but also the un-re-cognised elements of a new beginning: a process of *scripting* the nation- a negotiation in other words, of conflicting and competing narratives of commonality and *indigenerality*. At stake were the narratives of what South Africa *is*, who the *we's* were, who the I's could be and how their claims were and how they could be scripted onto the landscape.

To the sensitive sociological ear and eye, the negotiation facilitated a new "ontology" and made at the same time certain discursive claims impossible: that the promised land South Africa was bequeathed to whites by God through a covenant would not do; and, as shall be shown later, that South Africa was a "rainbow nation", a gloss, a veneer, a shallow characterisation. That South Africa was an *African* nation brought together by colonialism more credible, but more difficult for people of Anglo-descent because they would be "externalised". Each sentence negotiated was also a mapping of a new ontology made possible by a major discursive and ideological shift..

Without founding the new discourse on a principle of "indigenerality"- an indigenerality that at once pardons and represses and pro-figures a naming for this "nameless" place of the restless dead, a transition is unthinkable. The poet is clear here, it is not a nation, it is a functional camp, a space that lacks collective meaning, as it cannot answer the question indigenerality poses: "*who are we?*" It had to create what it repressed to create- a hard labour to define itself through a narrative of pardoning and reconciliation which becomes both an ideology and an ethic which struggles (to steal from Derrida again) to become "law"

The remarkable feature about the poetry is that it works around the discursive labour which is missed by accounts that focus on the socio-economy of the event alone. Most accounts force us in a terrain that is either too broad or too narrow:

For sociologists in particular, the period between 1973 to 1994 provides a complex dilemma: the usual linear schemas of progress, mobilisation, response, breakthrough seem simplistic; the notion that vanguards make history, suspect; the feeling that people are the main animators instead, crashes against all kinds of unintended consequences and finally, that the transition is the result of some expansion or contraction in productive capacity, difficult to fathom. The story finally depends on perspectives, on the social categories that are seen to be relevant, at the kind of mix between an understanding of structural, institutional and social action perspectives. The fortunate aspect about South Africa's transition was that its social drama moved towards a breakthrough, a cathartic moment, a grand compromise and an electoral victor: the national democratic movement that sought to change the world to its image in the first place-the ANC..

For intellectuals who were part of the mass democratic movement the temptation to unpack the process of democratisation as a long and trenchant triumph of the liberation movement is very

attractive indeed: the narrative can weave itself from the formation of the Africa National Congress in 1912 to the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1956; it can continue to describe the attempts to ban it out of existence in the 1960s to the Morogoro Conference in 1969 that defined the “character” of the national democratic revolution; it can pick up the threads of struggle through to the historic Grootu Schuur Minute, which ushered the negotiations and end with its electoral triumph. In between these broad sweeps, the obstacles, the turn-arounds and setbacks, the moments of near exhaustion and irrelevance, can be added as lapses in the stubborn walk to Pretoria. It carries an attractive spin, but it is not satisfactory. Although an important and dominant organisational agency of transition, the ANC’s success *itself* needs to be explained.

Theda Skocpol in her comparative study of *States and Revolution* draws a very important lesson—that however central revolutionary vanguards might be, they do not “make” revolutions. Rather, internal social conditions and international, global conjunctures create the turbulence that permit such vanguards the possibility to seize the moment, storm palaces and establish a hegemonic sway over transitions. Although such vanguards are part of the forces that generate the turbulent conditions, they are only *one* such force. Nevertheless, the social movements and social conditions that created the turbulence will be dealt with in different pages, what is crucial in the following ones is to define the patterns of transition and their consequences. It is the task of the analysis therefore to weave a more complex and unheroic narrative of the long walk and its terrain.

All this detail leaves social scientists with the dilemma of the characterisation of, and with the social implications of the transition. The first response of social science is to go too broad, to find ways of classifying and deciphering the transition by locating it conceptually within a broader global discourse or “conceptual community” of change. Following Immanuel Wallerstein, the discussion could be shifted to a world historical stage where in this “long duree” the South African example can be seen as the last of the “anti-systemic” movements ushered on the stage since the French revolution and claim with him not that it achieved too little, but that like all outcomes of such challenges, it achieved what the world historic context permitted.

Or, it could follow a second more comparative approach that spent the 1980s well focused on “democratisation”, i.e. within the period baptised by Huntington as the “third wave”—a transition of political regimes, from totalitarianism and dictatorship to democracy that defined global politics from 1974-1990; such approaches are particularly sensitive to the compromises and negotiations, or the “elite pacting” that shifts these authoritarian and violent societies to new rules and processes. Following Huntington, the various common themes of dictatorships experiencing problems of legitimacy, the global reach of economic growth, the active role of the Catholic church in all its domains of influence, the active role of the European Economic Community in supporting democratic oppositions and simple emulation, South Africa’s transition would be placed between the experiences of the Soviet and the Latin American worlds.

Mahmood Mamdani argued though, that both approaches begged the question of what exactly was it that was being transformed: South Africa was not just any dictatorship, or merely a racial dictatorship, but a regime that shared with all other African countries a tradition of indirect or decentralised despotism. South Africa’s transition was not unlike other post-colonial transitions—i.e. a delayed second wave through which the customary was consolidated and the issue of

citizenship restricted. By focusing on the modality of rule, he was both critical of the former but also of much of the neo-Marxist literature on South Africa’s transition.

Here Heribert Adam’s and Kogila Moodley’s notion of elite pacting between an Afrikaner and African power elite to deracialise society in a partnership of “greed” has been sensitive to South Africa’s institutions of racial domination and to “transition” theory. Their work, at the time of the negotiated changes praised the “pragmatism” and “realism” of both adversaries. Read alongside Peter Gastrow’s more detailed account of the Peace Accord negotiations they provided an adequate account of the pragmatics of compromise and reciprocal self-limitation.

That the stalemate of struggle, the political and economic crises it related to, the peace efforts that marked the fatigue of insurrection and counter-revolution and then the terrain of “the negotiated revolution”, all these conjunctural forces cannot be resolved through the pragmatics of “pacting” and in turn such discursive shifts cannot be talked through “by committee” engaged in “talk and talk.” What needs emphasis, in a non-reductionist way is how the new generative principles of an inclusive “indigenerality” emerge, which do not exist in any prior discourses as such.

If there is a problem with their analysis is that it makes the process too pragmatic and too abstracted from the feelings and solidarities that allowed it to occur. Discursive and ideological shifts cannot occur piecemeal, either instrumentally and/or by bargaining. Without taking one iota from their contention of elite pacting, I would like to claim that this was facilitated by a remarkable emotive and cultural adjustment, a powerful shift in the subterranean belief systems of both the powerful and those who waited for their turn to power. True, there was a revolution within the revolution led by corporate interests that proved to be decisively influential; but, the shift in the “national ontology” came from the robe and the cross, *across* denominations, from *above* and from *below*.

In concert then, transitions are not about economic crises and the process of violence and negotiation that stir them on—they cannot be reduced to the economic interest-level alone, they are profound events in the modalities of politics, ideology and culture. They are also moments that are liminal, between and betwixt, that create a plethora of interventions, status groups and scripts.

To be more specific: if as Alberto Martinelli (2000) has argued the “nation” as constituted through modern states always combines an “epos”, a “topos” a “genus”, an “ethos” and a “logos” that fix its particularity and therefore it actively includes and excludes to constitute its “demos”, each side’s constitutive elements of belonging in South Africa were clouded in discord and contestation. It is very improbable that “it” could be imagined through negotiating committees. And although the “topos” was this “camp” without a name (Afrika *Borwa?* *Suid Afrika?*)—any act of the constitutive imagination exercises unfathomable erasures and repressions.

Each one’s historicity was contested and their meanings clashed. Their discourses generated symbolic static, tension and non-negotiability. Unlike all other recent transitions to democracy where their national questions were more or less settled (and where such settlements were shifty they fragmented), the “national ontologies” here were insurmountable. To re-state the argument: South Africa’s democratisation was unique in that it try as we may, to compare one transition to another and especially the South African one to others of the “third wave”, for example, the Latin

American ones, seems difficult on one residual and irreducible factor: that the “national question” was not in question in the latter, but in need for development in the former! The 19th and 20th century constructions of nationhood in the Americas had settled the one special question: the ontology of belonging, i.e the discursive (sometimes deeply one-sided ideological) construction of the *indigen*.

What permitted the negotiation to proceed was an “ideational” shift into a third space, possible only if brought onto the historical terrain by any party or movement that could *abstract* itself from the “historical.” That is, at a certain moment, a discursive shift does occur, a tangential space is opened and instead of the “material”, the “ideational” holds sway. A process that, as Ndlovu observed in his praise-poem turns Mandela into the “turner of the other cheek/ and when that finished/ turner of the other.”

Of course such a third space cannot in its ideas throw a blanket over the entire terrain, but it does need to cover enough of the landscape to become the new “common ground” for a generative transformation of the competing discourses.

In Qabula’s prosaic lines it is Tutu at first who focuses upwards to the “darkened skies” and it is he and the bishops and dominees who see, despite the tears, “rainbows”- as against Mandela who gazes downwards at the stalks refusing to be greened by ten rand notes and FW who similarly sees the miners (through their struggles) darkening the shine of gold; by contrast Slovo and Hani see red everywhere an ambiguous colour which could signify blood in the Bantustans and streets or a spreading communist influence. (There is a further ambiguity in the first three as their colour patterns black, green and gold may symbolise the ANC, and therefore the rainbow provides a contrasting modality- but as the poem was unfinished by the time of Qabula’s stroke it is difficult to move towards a certain closure)

What provided for this shift was an ecumenical, normative and ecclesiastical conception by Christian churches from “both” sides: the establishment English and Afrikaans speaking churches, the SACC and the NGK, arriving at a consensus about the regrettable past. The role and actions of the Churches after the historic Rustenburg synod of the NGK and the declaration that bound them to a common project get a brief mention in Gastrow’s account of the peace process (p9-16) Their practical work alongside the Consultative Business Movement is well recorded, but their discursive intervention and its defining influence is absent. And so is research on the moral outrage of church congregations and gatherings during the critical years of insurrection.

To simplify: the “epiphany” that was achieved went something like this: the children of God, bounded by the territory called South Africa, no matter what their histories, share this land and its future. The follies of the past must be forgiven, confessed, faced. The horrors of the present must be stopped. Humility has to define all competing sides; Apartheid was a mistake, using God to justify Apartheid, a regrettable sin, but now look at Mandela: despite the past, his imprisonment and his suffering he is ready to forgive and reconcile; look at de Klerk despite his past he is ready to atone. From there, the poet yields the discourse into lines:

“Labourer, you
who returned Golgotha’s crosses

to the Carpenters”

or in Qabula’s qualification “but we prayed *together* in this camp”

The ecclesiastical abstraction from historicity, this third space, could in turn facilitate the work of negotiations and their pragmatic shifts as long as religious atonement was *ever-present*: then, the negotiations could lead to the pragmatics of compromise over “land, bones and money,” and the bartering that Qabula expresses in his work. :“and they agreed./ and we agreed:/ a fence on this plot, no fence on that/ a skeleton here and a skeleton there/give a black cent and take a white rand/ in this nameless country”

At the heart of this negotiation was the issue of land and its ownership; if there was ever a subtext in the emotive exchanges between Afrikaner intellectuals and the African National Congress leadership, it had to do with nationalism’s deepest ideo-form: the relationship between a territory, “the” land and people. As the negotiation was being carried out by urban and urbane power-blocks , it risked the possibility of failing substantively; by accepting that the “children of God” were also children of this soil, it opened up the possibility of discussing more pragmatic forms of redress vis-a-vis property relations. In accepting a cut off- point at around between 1910-1913, it entrenched and comforted, not only agrarian interests but also the most formidable possessors of land: the mine magnates of the Witwatersrand. In achieving this, the often alluded to compromises around the repressive state apparatus and amnesty, pale into insignificance.

Secondly, it involved a compromise between “Modernists” in the liberation movement and “Customary” authorities. This compromise was seen to be more than necessary due to Inkatha’s mobilisation of chiefly structures and the role of many amakhosi and izinduna all over the Bantustans in the Apartheid state’s counter revolution; it was also animated by the ANC’s weakness in the countryside as its strategic priorities were well-focused on the urban insurrection. Here Mahmood Mamdani’s description of continent-wide accommodations in the wake of post-colonial experience are of great analytical value.

Thirdly a compromise between capital, state and labour that “participation” , resolution, dialogue and mediation whatever the adversity took on a palpable form through the National Economic Forum which by all intents and purposes prefigured the post-apartheid corporatist approach embodied in NEDLAC.

Land

In 1992, Joe Slovo took the debate started by the ANC’s NEC to the communist party and the trade unions through his famous “sunset clauses”- the ANC led by Mandela and Thabo Mbeki shifted the discourse from a politics of the streets to a politics of negotiations. The negotiations represented a victory of the mass democratic struggle and emphasised that “a peaceful political settlement has always been the first option of the liberation movement” In this light, and the light that the armed forces of the state, the police force and more broadly the civil service could play a disruptive, counter-revolutionary role, it argued for a policy of accommodation of their interests, an amnesty, and a first period, a government of *national unity*. (50-51)

For, Slovo the argument was about the “conjunctural balance of forces”- a direct insurrectionary and or military victory was not on the cards. This settlement would open up the terrain for deeper transformations, as long as *the interim constitution* created the parameters for the dismantling of Apartheid. For most of the left who agreed with Jeremy Cronin that “the process of transformation must be one of both reforms *and* qualitative breaks, significant, if still partial ruptures” (20) the proposals were deeply disturbing. That the ANC abandoned the politics of “structural reform” and settled for an accommodation within the status quo argued John Saul is flawed. What the negotiations did to the movement though was to change its “organisational style”; that each negotiation and struggle brought with it a “foretaste (of) what emancipation means” (p84, p114)

The elite pacting that occurred between Afrikaner and African power elites was not about the civil service; that was by comparison an easy one. It was a settlement around the country’s Land Question. Land as property and Land as a central aspect of the idea of nationhood, a central component in its symbolic order. If there was a common history between the white settlers and African societies it was around the expropriation of land by the whites and the consolidation of black societies inside demarcated enclaves by 1910. The Land Act confirmed that closure. By agreeing that land claims could only be entertained after the 1910s, it de facto and de jure confirmed the colonial status quo for both Afrikaners and English settlers. In the latter case it confirmed the right to property of the Randlords, the mineowners and mining houses that constituted the pillar of South African wealth.

Not that the concession was insignificant: it confirmed that the 3 million people relocated and resettled afterwards to consolidate the Apartheid dream had a claim in the countryside and had a claim in the urban areas. For the Afrikaner Landed bourgeoisie, this was an ineluctable condition for pacting.

Bones

The compromise and accommodation with Traditional Authorities, Chiefs and Headmen was perhaps from a modernising perspective the most controversial. Women intellectuals and more broadly the Women’s Alliance were the most vocal about it-it would *de facto* sustain the subordination of African women in all the areas controlled by customary authorities; and as African women constituted the majority, and the backbone of the 16 million people there in the countryside, it would have marked a tremendous defeat for women’s individual and collective rights. It would also have created a schizophrenic existence in the country as women would move through two legislative terrains in a single day. Although finally, such accommodation would only cover 13% of the land designated as Native Reserves in the old South Africa, such an area in KwaZulu Natal would capture a vast area.

The compromise followed four social dilemmas: that the nature of the South African revolution was urban and had little base in South Africa’s countryside; that the ANC’s weakness and the mass democratic movement’s weakness in the countryside could only be reversed by making speedy alliances with chiefs; that the seeds of counter-revolution were everywhere and that the

Inkatha Freedom Movement of Chief Gatscha Buthelezi had already mobilised the royal house of King Zwelithini and the majority of KwaZulu Natal’s chiefs; finally, that the “struggle” in the Homelands was deeply implicated in rural patronage politics. But most important was an ideological trap brought onto the terrain by culturalists- that Africa’s traditions needed self-expression, and the explosion of cultural activity in the mass democratic movement moved from a broad rhetorical statement about African culture by urban movements to a practical engagement the moment migrant workers started gaining in confidence.

The ANC’s weakness in the countryside had to do with its tactics and strategies as a revolutionary movement:- when Umkhonto we Sizwe was formed and the armed struggle was begun the emphasis of revolutionary activity was urban. Despite discord in the countryside like the Pondoland rebellion, and the understanding of peasant discontent so clearly enunciated in Govan Mbeki’s the *People’s Revolt*, revolutionary leaders argued about the difficulties in pursuing a strategy of rural guerilla warfare. Not only were the Homelands vulnerable and controlled but South Africa, unlike the rest of Africa, had a significant industrial base, marked by a migrant labour system and urban centres of potential strength in the townships. So they sought a mix of symbolic struggles against targets in town combined with mobilisation in the townships and urban insurrection.

Any account of this pillar of compromise has to bring into focus CONTRALESA, the Inkatha Freedom Movement, the patronage politics of the Transkei, Bophutatswana, KwaNdebele, and the despair of chiefs in the north over youth politics and also, how, ordinary people and workers preserved in the popular discourses of resistance and oratory much of the “rural in the urban”. Both the creative wings of the political, cultural and labour movements were made up of recently proletarianised migrants- through them traditions of the countryside were re-worked, preserved, transformed and re-defined, but kept in active memory. The links between city life and the country have always been permeable and so did core belief systems about bridewealth, land rights, customs and their future.

Money

The third arena where a compromise was worked through was between labour, capital and the state- it translated a period of intense class struggle into a system of regulated adversity. This compromise, pioneered by a fraction of South Africa’s bourgeoisie and the trade union movement led by COSATU was at first reluctantly embraced by South Africa’s apartheid state. But, in a climate where the Peace Accord was shaping new ways of conflict resolution; the decision of COSATU to move from the politics of resistance to the politics of participation and collective bargaining, the costs of continuing adversarialism over economic decisions paved the way to the National Economic Forum.

The shift from social movement unionism was not gradual. It was decisive: Peter Waterman, Eddie Webster and Glenn Adler have coined the term “social movement unionism” as a typology of trade union practices. It is a flawed category though because it captures *some* activities and practices of the federation but obfuscates too many. COSATU as a federation, its affiliates, its shop-stewards, its members, its cultural wings and its intellectuals involved themselves in manifold initiatives and a variety of movements. COSATU shifted towards participation and co-determination after a number of affiliates did so; but when it did, and in this created a system of

neo-corporatism, it started withdrawing from adversarialism, but many of its structures didn't. Social movement activity continued. The shift in trade union practices brought on a new sense of optimism from National Party *verligte* intellectuals active in industrial relations. But if this cadre of post-Wiehahn experts welcomed the shift, "community-conscious" employers in the headquarters of capital accumulation, renewed and redoubled their efforts to seek a model of co-decision making.

South Africa's capitalist class was not united; the 1976 uprising nudged elements of the corporate, monopolised sector on a serious path for reform. Natal's landed bourgeoisie and urban industrialists had already started looking for a third way- after the Natal Indaba searching for an appropriate political federalism alongside Cief Buthelezi and the leadership of Inkatha, devising strategies to strengthen the black middle class and for ways to discipline the increasingly volatile labour force- parallel unions, in-company unions and later UWUSA.

Many of the mining magnates of Johannesburg had, in their personal capacity championed charitable causes and strove to improve race relations. What they professed in their voluntary associations and networks was a far cry from what was being practised by their NCOs on the mines - the exemplars of forms of domination, segregation and exploitation of the black majority in the country. This distinction between private and public, between the sphere of sympathy from the sphere of practical wisdom, was a significant lever for the mobilisation of energies to marginalise the Apartheid state. This more cosmopolitan elite, which always claimed liberal sentiments was vital for the change of corporate approaches which in turn allowed it to occupy the epicentre of "reasonableness" in a country brutalised by violence.

So an "apolitical" form of contestation started occurring behind the back of the transition led by capitalists at the helm of many of the gigantic corporations. As they came to feel much of the brunt of strikes and stayaways, they increasingly separated their interests from the interests of the political elites in the Nationalist Party. The Apartheid regime for its part, through the alarmist "total onslaught" ideology developed a modality of behaviour and a unity of command that was relatively autonomous from corporate immediate concerns; the search for alternatives sponsored through the Urban Foundation and the Institute of Race Relations on the one hand and a growing acceptance of trade unionism and collective bargaining after the Wiehahn Commission in 1979 were the first steps to the grand compromise between all of them embodied in the National Economic Forum.

Saul and Gelb argued in 1986 that South Africa was in the grips of an "organic crisis" that could not be sustained by the Apartheid state. The close connection between capitalism and Apartheid in South Africa they argued, made sure that the change in the latter could not be achieved without deep-seated socio-economic transformation. What did they not foresee was that they would unhinge powerful interests that would roll their own drums and like in the corporate bourgeoisie's case fight for their own revolution within the revolution. It was therefore, strictly speaking not an organic crisis, it was a crisis that opened up the possibility of a transition, but it also spliced the interests of capitalists from the actions of the race oligarchy that controlled the country's social institutions.

Starting from the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce's initiative to define conditions of

peace-making around the violence between Inkatha, the UDF and the trade union movement, employers all over the country who believed in their ability to mediate and problem- solve begun informal networks and later more formalised initiatives to arrive at ways for Conflict Resolution and Peace. That these were buttressed by trade union participation and pressure all the way to the formal Peace Accord needs little mention.

If the first three compromises opened up the space for the negotiations, a fourth pillar of the transition was a social compact between the liberation movement and the "people". Note the subtle shift in Ndlovu's Mandela poem seeing his hero turn from an "avenger" to a "home-builder"-between the leadership of the national liberation movement and the alliance around the Reconstruction and Development Programme. But both poets articulate the disquiet embedded in its erasures:

Thatcher of the roof of the home we never had
Where are the homes you shouted
I am the Thatcher

The Social Charter

If the negotiations for democracy were the tactical field that united everyone between 1990-1994, the Reconstruction and Development Programme was its programmatic goal. Although the politics of negotiation had their dress-rehearsal in the Peace Accord with its multitude sites of dialogue and argument and a commitment to a different way of reconciling the country, what Gastrow called an "extraordinary and daring experiment", what is missed is how by the end of the process, the ANC managed to sideline pretenders and get down to the guts of the monster.

By 1990 the ANC is not only the dominant liberation movement in South Africa, it is also in the strictest sense, *hegemonic*. It managed to encompass the turbulence starting from 1973 to the insurrection of the 1980s, and the social movements that shook the country in the factories and townships within its discursive domain and its ever growing power-bloc. It managed to insert itself as the only alternative in the midst of polarised social conditions and social crises. Contrary to many common sense approaches, the Congress's spectacular growth occurs *after* 1983 and occurs furthermore on the basis of a number of "pre-conditions."

Firstly, the banning and destruction by the Apartheid state of the Black Consciousness movement which flowed out of the 1976/7 insurrection opened up a significant political vacuum in the country. It created the opportunity for the Congress movement to re-establish itself as a serious alternative for the angry and radicalised black youth. The most important breakthrough was the establishment of the Congress of South African Students in 1979 and its rapid spread through the escalating educational crisis thereafter in the whole country. From there, the link to the unemployed youth of the townships was easy. Unlike, the previous period of protests with its total rejection of Bantu Education- this round linked the protest and the rejection to the demands of the Freedom Charter and to a class perspective- that the interests of students and youth coincided with the interests of the organised black working class because the whole Bantu Education system was designed to make of them hewers of water and rightless proletarians. Until the insurrection of 1984, COSAS committees were to be found in all the urban centres of South

Africa.

Secondly, the “bust up” with Chief Buthelezi’s Inkatha movement changed the character of the ANC’s approach to political struggle in the most populous areas in South Africa- Natal and KwaZulu. Throughout the 1970s, the ANC and Congress supporters chose to work alongside Inkatha and channel grassroots initiatives through the Zulu movement, after the bust up, most energies were put into creating viable and alternative grassroots movements.

Thirdly, the proliferation of militant strikes and the spread of grassroots challenges in the townships and, between 1979-1983 the growth of interactions between striking workers and community groups, school strikes and parent bodies in the townships, created the need for coordinating initiatives in which Congress activists played a central role. These “centres” or “cells” like the Community Action Support Group in Johannesburg which was a precursor to the United Democratic Front, proliferated. The initiatives were at first inclusive- their initial make-up involved black consciousness-based trade unionists and leaders.

Fourthly, the growth and consolidation of the largest trade union federation in 1985, COSATU, bringing together the various democratic strands of the labour movement and later, the adoption in 1986 of the Freedom Charter by it, as its guiding document, established the most important breakthrough in the ANC’s ability to be hegemonic, that is to provide the intellectual and moral leadership for the transition.

Nevertheless, both the social conditions that generated social movements and the social movements themselves *shaped* the African National Congress as forcefully as it, in its own right gave the various currents a liberation language, and through the South African Communist Party brought socialists in line for the “national democratic revolution” as a first phase of a transition to socialism. Although the “master-narrative” of the Freedom Charter provided the broad parameters of discourse, the actual language of politics was shaped by the interaction of the ANC with the multiple initiatives on the ground. COSATU created the climate for the ANC’s hegemonic project. Its initial document on Growth and Redistribution was aimed at creating an electoral pact and guaranteeing; for the SACP which looked at deepening the transition’s first phase, and, the contract with the masses.

Fifthly, the process was shaped by the inability of the South African government and the Afrikaner power-elite that ruled through the Nationalist Party’s networks to find a solution, to the chronic impasse in the country. On the one hand, reform wings in the party sought accommodation and stability, on the other, a relentless counter-revolution trying to shape the terms of the accommodation was underway. John Saul and Steven Gelb described this period of limited reforms following Antonio Gramsci as a period of “uncurable structural contradictions” that led to increasing efforts to “conserve and defend” the Apartheid order and “within certain limits, to overcome them.” Each attempt created a new terrain of reform and a counter-move and mobilisation for liberation.

On the aftermath of the “grand compromise”, South Africans were left with an interim constitution that reflected most of the suggested guidelines of the 1988/89 proposals. The robust

realpolitik of the ANC’s negotiating team led by Cyril Ramaphosa had more or less narrowed the focus down to the parts that mattered-the Nationalist Party, the Democratic Party and in its absence, Inkatha. And behind the facade of a party-based give and take at CODESA that put in place the profound social checks and balances of a new country in-the-making.

The compromise had three inter-related results: not only a containment of social class cleavages but also the rules of their operation; not only the containment of ideological claims but opened up the space for new status scripts that rolled the process forward; thirdly a new institutional matrix for restructuring. Although the institutions that buttressed apartheid were functionally altered, in terms of poverty, no relief.

The assumption that the “compromise” came too soon, that more sustained mass action would have created better prospects for transformation and as such a transfer of power to the working class begs a serious reality principle; the assumption that abstractly out there was a pure proletarian revolutionary instinct always and ever-ready active in proletarian, strictly class terms, has both been argued and debated. Undoubtedly, black workers responded in vigorous class terms to most of the challenges of Apartheid. But to argue that without understanding agency, tradition and popular definitions of struggle; of how they in turn interacted with visions of power and transcendence and how both interacted with the experience of national and racial oppression, is to misread the form and nature of class struggles *in the country*. For Saul and Gelb, critics tended to “overestimate the spontaneous clarity of a proletarian revolutionary consciousness at the peril of understanding the possible hegemonic contribution of a more broadly nationalist project.” (P173)

For those distant from rumblings on the ground it would be easy to think in neat sociological categories- the black working class communities in the urban areas despite stratification across age, gender, stratum or class were believing themselves to be supporters of the ANC, albeit for different and sometimes, competing reasons. Whether it was because they believed that it could finally defend their embattled households or to discipline the youth; to defeat the Boers or to advance the interests of their stratum or class; to settle deep historical scores or new ones, ANC support soared beyond activist circles. COSATU in turn, withdrew from leading the resistance or claiming to be the epicentre for the struggle. It sought rather to play an effective role in the peace accord, to intervene in policy and increase the “class-bias” in the alliance and through a “reconstruction” document gather around it social movements that fought for economic equality. For its part, the United Democratic Front after a few oscillations collapsed into the ANC.

Between 1990-1994 the major pillars of the South African transition were in place- the “negotiation over land, bones and money” made sure that the grand compromise, made up of smaller substantive agreements was in place. That this was achieved at all was a social miracle facilitated as it was by a discursive transition that envisioned and fixed the parameters for new identities and identifications. That the material basis of land relations was not altered, that the Bantustan oligarchies and patriarchies were entrenched, that the Big Three were now as partners the “productive classes” of South Africa and that in turn, for coherence and discipline, growth and development were to follow seemed unthinkable in a society bent on killing and maiming.

I am arguing therefore that all the above was bounded by an ideational *indigenerality* facilitated by the ecumenical notions of the “reconciling” and “forgiving” discourses of the sacred; that the

“erasure” and “repression” involved in the ahistorical abstraction that made them possible provided a generative principle that allowed for the negotiations and the compromises to take on a palpable form; that the grand sociological cleavages of class and race are under “erasure”, there is little doubt; that it also permits the imagination of a national ontology that is multi-genic, polyglot, land-bound and democratic; that its “reconciling” moment has become its own “epos” to follow Martinelli above, is remarkable. As a generative discursive principle it brings with it new legitimations and claims. Yet, the “restless dead” are with it despite the barter over land, bones and money. Qabula’s climatic observation that “droughts” do not usually known for rain or “rainbows” hints at the cracks appearing on the common-ground of indigenerality.

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