

Indigeneity and Theatre in the New South Africa

Arifani James Moyo

Royal Holloway, University of London

PhD in Theatre Studies

2015

Declaration of Authorship

I, Arifani James Moyo, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

Date: 30 June 2015

Acknowledgements

The writing, research and all sponsorship for this PhD thesis were part of the international, multidisciplinary humanities research project, *Indigeneity in the Contemporary World: Politics, Performance, Belonging* (2009 – 2014), a project that Professor Helen Gilbert initiated and led with funding from the European Research Council. The project headquarters was the Centre for International Theatre and Performance Research (CITPR) at the Department of Drama and Theatre, Royal Holloway University of London.

The project looked at “how indigeneity is expressed and understood in our complex, globalising world”, and the diverse ways in which indigeneity’s “cultural, political, ethical and aesthetic issues are negotiated” through “performance as a vital mode of cultural representation and a dynamic social practice” (www.indigeneity.net). The core research team included anthropologists and arts scholars with experience in indigenous peoples’ movements of the Americas, Australia and the Pacific Islands. The project widely networked, and also hosted numerous fellowships, with indigenous scholars, artists and activists from around the globe. My task was to explore the topic of ‘Indigeneity in the New South Africa’.

I thank Professor Gilbert for this extraordinary experience, and for supervising the PhD. I also thank Professor Matthew Cohen, Doctor Lynette Goddard and Professor David Wiles for their generous support of the supervision. I am grateful to my ever supportive colleagues, friends and family whom I cannot adequately acknowledge here, as well as my indigenous educators, whom I cannot properly credit for so much inspiration. Thank you, reader, for your time.

I remember meeting Robert Owens Greygrass, a Lakota storyteller, a remarkable man.

Abstract

In recent decades, the emergence of a global indigenous peoples' movement has renewed the significance of indigeneity as a theme of pan-Africanist ethnology. This thesis looks at the semiotics of indigeneity in post-apartheid South African intercultural theatre, focusing on four high-profile works of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The study of theatrical examples helps to ascertain what 'indigeneity' means for creativity and subjectivity, thus sensitising both the empiricism and the critique of ethnology. The method of study combines comparative and dramaturgical approaches, focusing substantially on subtext in order to philosophically develop theatre's poetics of indigeneity for both dialectical and didactic engagement. I argue that South African indigeneity is most palpable through the metaphysics of filiation, which theatre narrates through the themes of nativity, orphanhood and adoption as progeny desire intimacy with progenitors, closeness to origins and belonging in milieus. The examples include Richard Loring's dance-musical-percussion pageant, *African Footprint* (2000), Magnet Theatre's avant-garde dance-drama, *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* (2004), Isango Ensemble's post-classicist opera-film, *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* (2005), and Yael Farber's post-naturalist drama, *Mies Julie* (2012). These aesthetically and ideologically diverse works show that the poetics of filiation is very malleable to different ends; thus it beckons a fresh humanistic turn in the pan-Africanist critique of cultural performance. Such a turn could treat creative outputs as works of ontology, while subjectivity is centrally the articulation of crucial affinities through which peoples formulate identities.

Contents

Introduction.....	6
<i>Theatre, Philosophy and the Return of Indigeneity in Pan-Africanist Thought</i>	
Chapter 1	28
<i>'Indigeneity' as Metaphysics of Filiation in Twenty-First Century South Africa</i>	
Chapter 2.....	84
<i>Nativity, Orphanhood and Adoption in Richard Loring's African Footprint (2000)</i>	
Chapter 3.....	136
<i>Colonial Orphanhood in Magnet Theatre's Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints (2004)</i>	
Chapter 4.....	191
<i>Postcolonial Faces of the Orphan in Isango Ensemble's uCarmen eKhayelitsha (2005)</i>	
Chapter 5.....	241
<i>Contesting Inheritance through Contesting Filiations in Yael Farber's Mies Julie (2012)</i>	
Conclusion	299
<i>Filiation as Key Concept for Understanding South African Subjectivities of Indigeneity</i>	
Bibliography	317

Introduction

Theatre, Philosophy and the Return of Indigeneity in Pan-Africanist Thought

During the twentieth century, a global indigenous peoples' movement, representing more than three hundred and seventy million people (UNPFII), and following historical decolonisation and civil rights movements, gained pace and became highly visible in cultural and political forums. This movement is extremely multifarious, and has taken advantage of the considerable technological and cultural developments of the information age, enabling a vast interconnectivity of representatives of indigenous people groups and various institutions participating in the movement around the world (Levi and Maybury-Lewis 12). It is a political, humanitarian and cultural arena, wherein diverse ideologies, agendas and exigencies meet under banners such as human rights, peoples' rights and cultural regeneration. Decades of global institutional campaigns finally resulted in one of the movement's most important achievements, the historic 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN). Many parts of the contemporary movement resemble the world's diverse, preceding decolonisation struggles, including the twentieth-century pan-African expulsion of European colonialisms. Pan-African humanitarianism has participated in the new international advocacy of indigenous peoples' postcolonial rights and restitution; thus the very question of 'indigeneity' makes its 'return', that is, back into the program of pan-Africanist intellectual engagement with culture and identity.

This moment of 'return' beckons a fresh philosophical response; yet pan-Africanist intellectuals have generally not made much of the fact.¹ Scholars have often been either too uncritical or too critical, neither case allowing enough breathing room for the emergence of an appropriate attuning to the new indigeneity as a unique challenge to cultural theory. The uncritical contingent tends to rehearse the racial essentialism and decolonisation stylistics of an older pan-Africanist consciousness, which either incorporates or rejects the new indigeneity. The overcritical scholars are so impatient and sceptical that the new voice of indigeneity, facing its own enemies, does not have a fair trial, even when the judge attempts neutrality, for this neutrality still cannot permit the thought that indigeneity might be a genuine voice of reason, not just a political actor seeking legitimisation from other authorities of reason. Indigeneity's new appearance, specifically as 'return', generally finds no adequate acknowledgement among those who feel that they already know indigeneity very well as they applaud or dismiss it. There are exceptions, such as Adam Kuper's anthropologically critical essay, "The Return of the Native", which scholars in social studies and anthropology usually regard as the most memorable polemical response against the indigenous peoples' movement. The essay did indeed note that a thematic 'return' had transpired, but Kuper then reduced this 'return' to simply a problematic new primitivism; thus the essay and similar critiques have not ultimately broken the general intellectual pattern, whereby the 'return' is merely an ideological and pragmatic situation to support, resist or analyse noncommittally. This pattern has led to a philosophical gap, which is evident, not through particular theoretical discussions, but through the very dearth of the kind of exploratory thinking of

¹ I have previously dealt with the problems of African philosophy in my short monograph, the arguments of which I will not repeat here, but even my own earlier work does not overcome the limitations that I am now describing.

which my thesis is an attempt. Such exploration takes the return of indigeneity as a special incitement not to 'judge' indigeneity but rather to make its voice properly audible.

Scholars are not wrong in associating newer concepts of indigeneity with older ones, and not allowing the differences to become too much of a distraction; yet the distinctiveness of this moment puts even an intergenerational understanding of indigeneity on the line, so that neither colonial primitivism nor anti-colonial essentialism can claim to be the continuing historical meanings of indigeneity. The effect of this moment of the 'return' is so forceful that it demands an update of the interpretation of the subjectivity of indigeneity, any Afrocentric indigeneity, of yesteryear and of the current dispensation. The return of indigeneity has taken place at a time when the intellectual milieu of pan-Africanist social and cultural studies has been in the midst of a complex institutional and epistemic process of decolonising knowledge. This process is by no means a coherent execution of some clear policy, but rather an ethical and ideological drive that motivates diverse pan-Africanist scholars as well as local thought leaders in different countries. The monumental pan-African task is to reconstitute knowledge and identity through new data, new approaches to data, and new ideas about what it means to 'belong', or at least what kind of diverse particulars belonging entails. Demagogues, religious and cultural specialists, as well as charismatic persons of the media or popular culture, all have a say in informing the public of the prospects for identity and belonging, while pan-Africanist academic researchers and thinkers must give an account of how diverse peoples are living, dying and making sense of their own lives. This intellectual work must take place while global knowledge legacies, and legacies of prejudice, continue with the momentum of the past as well as the reinforcement of contemporary reality, influencing perceptions, attitudes and, potentially, actions with high stakes for human life in distinct third world locales. The philosophical meets the institutional

and the cultural, so that there is a pressing need to improve understandings of what this familiar figure, 'the native', really represents with regard to ideological investments and actual human experiences. The solutions will not come from a dubious fascination with the 'native body' and its practical conditions, but rather through intelligent inquiries into the public rendering of human subjectivities in creative cultural works that the world can access. Theatre rises as one such creative work that has so much to say to the world about the conditions and prospects of human subjectivities, while the study of the creative arts has more generally become an important work of pan-Africanist philosophy, a work that still needs more minds attending to it.

My disciplinary context is theatre studies, not philosophy, and my primary interest is in what theatre does, not in canonical philosophical ideas; yet in order to bring in a genuinely humanitarian sensitivity to knowledge of peoples, cultural creativity must be both object and subject, not merely object. This indispensable imperative forcibly shoves theatre right onto the frontline of the process of cultural philosophy, as theatre becomes the knower; thus my task is not mainly to know about and record the existence of new theatre, but rather to tease out what theatre seems to have known about culture and human life. The discipline of South African theatre studies, prolific in its regular output, also has its wonderful major genealogies of the medium, including classics like Loren Kruger's *The Drama of South Africa: plays, pageants and publics since 1910*, Martin Orkin's *Drama and the South African State*, and Temple Hauptfleisch's *Theatre and Society in South Africa: Reflections in a Fractured Mirror*. The multidisciplinary field of South African performance studies also has a healthy productivity since its pioneering background works like David Coplan's *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*, Peter Larlham's *Black Theater, Dance, and Ritual in South Africa*, and Duncan Brown's *Oral Literature and Performance in*

Southern Africa. These works and the research areas that they opened up have generated an important academic record of black and indigenous theatre and performance histories in South Africa (Hauptfleisch, “Tipping Points” 281–282). The record shows the dynamic heterogeneity, syncretism and continuous change in South Africa’s black and indigenous performance cultures emerging in cities and rural areas, through political complexities, and within the melting pot of South African modernity, wherein tradition and cosmopolitanism come together or come apart. The scholarly field itself is very heterogeneous, but history, historiography and cultural materialism remain important emphases in the general approach of critical writing about South African theatre and performance. This means that when indigeneity enters South African theatre and performance theory, it is likely to be a social or cultural variable; in other words, the indigeneity of cultural practitioners, or the indigenesness of particular performance praxes, are axioms of research, even if scholars have not neglected the critical imperative to scrutinise or perhaps deconstruct ethnocentric essentialisms of peoples, praxes and cultural realities.

My thesis will also allow indigeneity to endure the critique of ethnocentrism, but in order to achieve this, it is necessary to first clear the muddle in the notion of the ‘native body’. Such a concept has been problematic because of its collaboration with both colonial or neo-colonial primitivism and Afrocentric essentialism. In this synopsis, I will focus on the history of primitivism first, then connect it with the more contemporary problems of the body in performance, and finally return to Afrocentric essentialism. The history of imperialism involved widespread colonial legacies of racist representation, freak shows and minstrelsy, which fabricated the native body as a theatrical grotesque. Imperial power relations were never simple; yet the negotiation of relationships by no means neutralised the realities of exploitation, humiliation and oppression. In this and the previous century, indigenous

restitution campaigns have sought to redress various injustices of that era, such as the arrogation of human remains, the denial of culturally appropriate funerary procedures, and the dehumanisation of biographies. This restitution is itself a large and complex international movement that reveals the public and intellectual understanding of how legacies of staging the native body were part of an entire imperialist episteme that enabled structures of injustice within the very mechanisms for the global circulation of representations.

The native body, as epistemological construct, has been the target of a multidisciplinary postcolonial critique exceeding the scope of, but speaking strongly to, the study of historical performances. This critique produced some groundbreaking historiographies particularly toward the end of the twentieth century. Some important contributions built on Michel Foucault's foundational poststructuralist sociology, which narrated Western histories of the body in works like *The History of Sexuality* series and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Foucault's genealogical arguments redefined 'the body' as an epistemic construct in which governmental 'biopower' invests itself, engendering dynamic relationships of surveillance and subversion between institutional actors, such as medical practitioners, and their 'subjects'. Foucault was emphatic that these creative relationships can complicate apparent dualities of domination and dependency, while the mutual negotiation shapes both corporeal subjectivity and knowledge. Alexander Butchart's major postcolonial work, *The Anatomy of Power: European Constructions of the African Body*, used Foucault's methods to critique the South African medical establishment, with its own history of a colonial biopower that also constructed race. Gustav Jahoda's monumental work, *Images of Savages: ancient roots of modern prejudice in western culture*, took a more archival approach to document historical stereotypes of peoples of different continents, including Africa. Jahoda's work shows the extent to which tropes of cannibalism,

beastliness or childlikeness were long part of an international colonial racism. These tropes emphasise the closeness to the natural, the primal or the degenerate; thus the stereotype's temporality goes backward and forward at the same time, portraying a primitive being that is not-yet-human but simultaneously already in degeneration from the pinnacle of evolution. The stereotype immediately disposes of its own invention, imagining a foreign body only to banish this body from real temporality into the time zones of colonial mythology.

Anne McClintock calls the location of this body an 'anachronistic space', which is part of the colonial imaginary. McClintock's major postcolonial literary critique, *Imperial Leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*, uses materialist psychoanalysis, combining various perspectives, including Marxist social analysis, Julia Kristeva's post-Freudian feminist theory of abjection, and Edward Said's critique of Orientalism. McClintock shows that the anachronistic body, in its various racist, sexist and classist formulations, was a projection of the colonial imaginary, therefore a symbolic summary of the neuroses and anxieties of the Victorian hegemony. In particular, this anxiety expressed the identity of a colonial masculinity that imagined the exotic ecology and social body as a monstrous maternal feminine. These neuroses merged colonial power with colonial desire and rape fantasies, which were usually explicit in the chauvinistic narratives of the hegemony. Colonial desire is the title theme of Robert J. C. Young's book, which illustrates that the repetitive and ambivalent colonial fantasy of sexually possessing the exotic body simultaneously articulated fear of miscegenation; thus the exotic body still could not enter the same temporality as the colonial fantasist. Sexual fear is the topic of Paul Hoch's book, *White Hero, Black Beast*, which shows how the masculinity of white racism also imagined the black man as the embodiment of a monstrous 'other masculinity'. This is historically important because of the link between the clash of civilisations and the clash of

masculinities, to which the introductory chapter to Robert Morrell's book, *Changing Men in South Africa*, attributes some of the country's memorable colonial wars and social catastrophes.

These various dynamics of the invention of the native body are part of a centuries-long knowledge-making process, the title theme of Valentin Y. Mudimbe's seminal book, *The Invention of Africa: gnosis, philosophy, and the order of knowledge*. Mudimbe uses a Foucault-style epistemic genealogy to show that the African continent itself, as a geographical body with human and natural realities taking place on it, has had to bear many different epistemological investments, including those of European imperialism. This episteme has been immensely prolific in its narratives, as various authors have illustrated. The outputs of colonial fantasies about the native body have ranged from bizarre ancient anatomies and erotically feminising cartographies to chilling modern eugenics. The complete critique of colonial imaginaries is a vast area that I do not intend to summarise here. The few sample arguments that I have outlined above give a sense of the historical implications that have made the native body so problematic. It is in this context that some of indigeneity's sternest pan-Africanist critics have been so weary of what they see as a return of primitivism. This particular weariness is arguably a greater intellectual challenge than the otherwise equal, ethical concern that some pan-Africanists express about the partisan politics of indigeneity. These concerns deserve a serious response, but I will argue that the return of indigeneity is not a return of the native body, which, in fact, my thesis will replace with something better, for this is what has been missing in the extensive critique of epistemic racism and xenophobia. Achille Mbembe, an important critic against Afrocentric essentialism, has also emphasised the need for pan-Africanist thought to finally depart from the overwhelming critical focus on racism and stereotyping, and to produce new knowledge about how third

world peoples understand their own realities. I suggest, despite Mbembe's own reservations, that the return of indigeneity has presented an opportunity for just such a pan-Africanist philosophical redress, but before my arguments can take off, it is necessary to draw some distinctions between indigeneity and the native body. Performance theory can enter here.

Performance theorists have engaged in myriad ways with 'the body' in general, from phenomenological and even biological approaches to heavily semiotic interests in the spectacular body, especially on stage. There is a stream of performance theory that utilises the critical sociological and historical perspectives on the body as a problematic ideological construct, but there is another stream that sees the body being the target of sexist, racist and homophobic repressions that have been as violent as colonial fetishism of the exotic body. The latter stream belongs to vast cultural and intellectual legacies that have responded to paradigm-changing Freudian psychoanalytic discoveries about Western modernity's repressions of the erotic nature. Perhaps the most significant arguments in this anti-repression stream have come from Western feminist and queer performance theorists and practitioners remembering the atrocities and discriminations that patriarchy has perpetuated within the religious, political and cultural establishments of Western countries. Scholars like Rebecca Schneider and Susan Broadhurst, writing about a time of a great cultural resistance of the feminist and queer body, for example in the Western performance art, dance and physical theatre experiments of the late twentieth century, noted subversive culture's bold epistemic defence of the body as such, and the chthonic or Dionysian female body especially. This was a complex intellectual and creative movement, emerging at the same time that the performing body was becoming theoretically problematic, for example, after the huge influence of Richard Schechner's theatre anthropology, with its seminal concept of "restored behaviour" (35), which facilitates analysis by ontologically separating the performance act from the

agent. The epistemological implication of this is crucial for the second part of deconstructing the native body. The first part was to dismantle hegemonic prejudices that impose upon human reality, but the heavily literary methodologies of historical analysis were not capable of sufficiently undoing the ontology of the native body specifically as a construct of local, indigenous cultures themselves; yet this undoing was also ethically necessary.

The native body of local essentialisms met such undoing mainly through performance theory, which reveals the inevitable relativity of this body as a text that cannot sustain itself even under basic empirical scrutiny. South African theatre and performance scholars have shown that there is no such thing as a 'native body' that naturally dances in an unchanging, 'ancestral' way. Native bodies are an illusion that performance creates as human beings instruct or imitate each other, actively creating and recreating their own 'ancestral way' to dance; yet this process is always within a geographically and historically inimitable context, which ensures an unquestionable cultural and social indigeneity for the body. The issue is not simply to deny ontological essentialism but more importantly to establish the right aetiology. The 'native' body comes from culture, not from nature, and to understand its cultural existence means totally moving away from corporeality, to subjectivity, not repressing or marginalising the body but rather humanising it to such an extent that there is no clinically impersonal 'it' anymore, only 'her', or 'him', as personal beings who may or may not want to lend their bodies to an impersonal phenomenology at a particular time and place. This is a progressive rather than polemical move, taking its cue from the modern phenomenological unravelling that dates at least as early as Edmund Husserl's dissent from biological empiricism, via Frantz Fanon's anti-imperial critique of the ethnocentric universalism of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's quintessentially Western narrative on the body, and then arriving at McClintock's postcolonial feminist deconstruction of Fanon's masculinity bias in the

rendering of a revolutionary black body. There has been a continuous critique of hegemonic universalisms of the body and a demand for more specificity, which raises the question of just how much specificity the body needs in its theory. Performance epistemology is one that seems to have gone ‘all the way’.

The performance perspective shows that ultimately, the body cannot demand respect unless it belongs to a completely idiosyncratic person, whose own particular thoughts provide the primary perspective on her body; otherwise, what the body attracts is fetishism. Perhaps a respectful fetishism, in service of the liberation of a chthonic body, is conceivable; yet it is difficult to see how any fetishism can be an adequate defence against atrocity, which begins not with the repression of the body but instead with the denial of the precious personhood of each vulnerable human being whom the body signifies. If Western performance theorists and practitioners have asserted the ethics of the visible body, this ethics has not divorced the body from the personality of the performer, hence the 1970s’ and 1980s’ pioneering and notorious personal vulnerability experiments or sexual stunts of countercultural artists like Marina Abramović, Annie Sprinkle and Carolee Schneemann. These were part of a movement that emphasised the isolation of the individual artist exposing both her body and her subjectivity, often in provocative or dangerous ways, to an audience that offers no guarantee of understanding. This radical personalisation of vulnerability resisted fetishism even while the phenomenon that Schneider calls ‘the explicit body’ resisted the censorship of chthonic corporeality.

There is an ethical risk here too, namely, that the personalisation that is so indispensable to the radical humanisation of corporeality might appear as mindless individualism or even narcissistic exhibitionism. The ethics of corporal specificity must go beyond personalisation, and here poststructuralist thinking can help. Writers like Chris

Weedon and Judith Butler made landmarks by building on poststructuralist foundations, including Foucault's studies of power and subjectivity in what he called 'discourses' of the body, and Louis Althusser's influential Marxist theory of subjectivity as the institutional 'interpellation' of individuals. Poststructuralist thinking eventually got rid of the highly individualistic concept of the self as the intellectual movement saw subjectivity proliferating within language and ideology, wherein power, conformity and subversion were constantly interlocking. There has been a long Western philosophical and critical history of theories of subjectivity, the poststructuralist and postmodern perspectives being only one generation in an intellectual heritage's preoccupation with redefining subjectivity. The point is not to enforce a poststructuralist view, evaluate competing philosophies or even attempt an 'African' perspective in historical isolation from the 'Western' heritage that has become foundational to international critical thought. What is important to take from poststructuralist thinking is the main idea that corporeal specificity is not in mere individualism but rather in conceiving that each individual has an inimitable contingency of choices to participate in particular collective notions of subjectivity, of which the participant can take personal ownership.

These are issues for a longer debate at another time, but for my thesis, the premises will prove their indispensability through their effectiveness in yielding interesting results. Indigeneity is a collective identification in which individuals participate; therefore, the corporeal specificity of indigeneity is not in the opinions of one particular person, but rather in the reasoning of a familiar, collective poetics of personhood. It is this poetics that I am after, a poetics that often explicitly advocates indigenous existential collectivism, but does not erase individualism as such, for the cultural actor must still act within her own, inimitable life.

South African artists, and indigenous artists from overseas, have understood this as clearly as their Western counterparts. Contemporary indigenous performance artists like Samoan designer-orator-ritualist-installationist Rosanna Raymond and Māori choreographer-dancer-installationist Victoria Hunt, have been at the cutting edge of postcolonial performance art, deconstructing the colonial fantasy of the native body while simultaneously materialising corporeal specificity and enacting collective healing through indigenous praxes of cultural and spiritual restitution. These artists use elements of ritual, public intervention and visually striking corporeal self-presentation emerging from their own heritages and cosmopolitan influences, thus aesthetically showing the continuities between history and memory, genealogy and autobiography, ethnicity and personality. If Western performance artists have demonstrated the poststructuralist-feminist idea that the personal is political, indigenous postmodern performers have made this politics postcolonial, perhaps in a similar way to bell hooks' memorable dissent from a Western feminism that had harboured white classism and ethnocentrism, though this is not to suggest a particular artistic polemic. In the years around the turn of the century, leading South African performance artists like Tracy Rose and Steven Cohen deconstructed the ethnocentric, sexist and homophobic premises about the body within both colonial desire and local chauvinisms. South African performance art has often combined ethical protest, ostentatious parody and healing ritual to deal with the country's legacies of violence. The relationship to indigeneity has been a complex and often ambivalent one as the artists generally see South African indigeneity as a hegemonic ideology, of which they are cautious. Like international counterparts, South African performers have isolated the vulnerable, personal body in theatrical situations that variously engender graveness, scandal or uncommon intrigue while allowing critical reflection on hegemonic objectifications and resistant subjectivities.

These grains of international performance theory and history show that the body is a site for many contestations and designs, which is precisely why subjectivity has had to assert itself. This requires certain resources, such as the feminist, postcolonial and indigenous cultural perspectives of performance art overseas. South African indigeneity has not been an adequate resource for either philosophical or artistic creativity, because nobody has developed it in such a way. This lack means that the creative personhood of the new indigeneity is missing even from South African theatre and performance theories, wherein indigeneity is at most a performance construct. This critical empiricism is epistemologically indispensable for performance analysis, but I would like to push the performance perspective much further than empiricism in order to amplify the new indigenous voice of reason at this crucial moment of the return of indigeneity in pan-Africanist thought. I want to know what this voice really has to say, and I do not believe that it has had the best audience, even from me; therefore my aim is to become a better audience. I call this philosophical process ‘audition’, the aim of which is to establish the ethical qualities of a performing and reasoning cultural voice as a candidate for empowerment within intellectual forums. Continuing with the theatrical metaphor, it is my contention that pan-Africanist thinkers, even some of the most ethnocentric, have been casting their preferable epistemological actors without giving indigeneity a fair audition, if any at all. A good audition needs time, sensitivity and openness, rather than the excessive judgement of appearances, which is the result of overreliance on empirical and semiotic evidence. Appearances are by no means insignificant, but even if the appearance is good, even if the evidence from a particular setting suggests that indigeneity is on the right track as a basis of postcolonial justice, the question is whether the voice of indigeneity has the talent to credibly portray a particular reality of third world subjectivities.

To use a different metaphor, indigeneity, as an ‘object’ of knowledge, is like a potato in my hand. Different epistemological outlooks propose different answers to the question: what shall we do with this potato? Empiricism, for example in genealogical verifications of ancestry, aims to produce a scientifically accurate physical description of the potato. Phenomenology, for example in some studies of performance materiality, aims to describe how the potato appears to the senses and becomes real to cognition. Deconstruction questions the very concept of potatoes and looks at motives of power behind the rhetoric on potatoes. Historiography looks at genealogies of ever-changing representations and competing conceptualisations of potatoes. I just want to cook that darn potato and eat it. My thesis does not test, defend or dismantle the claims of indigeneity. I show how to make these claims, and indigeneity itself, useful for engaging philosophically with theatre and culture in post-apartheid South Africa. Making indigeneity useful does not necessarily mean unscrupulously co-opting it into some sort of partisan politics. That would indeed be a way of cooking the potato, but we also want good cuisine. We want a cultural philosophy that can help us to become ever more sensitive to the sensitivities of other human beings.

The main objective of my thesis is to explore and theorise how indigeneity identifies and represents itself as subjectivity within the aesthetics of post-apartheid South African intercultural theatre. South African theatre and performance anthropologists and genealogists have collectively shown the prevalence and impact of indigeneity in South Africa’s vast theatre culture at least from the pre-apartheid colonial era to the contemporary, and complex, cultural dispensation. This prevalence and impact have been possible through the myriad, ongoing historical transmissions and modern formulations of ‘ancestral’ performance practices, especially oral traditions, dance and music within the contexts of religious ritual, communal ceremonies and folk culture. Scholars have also been critically attentive to the

complexities of the postmodern and the cosmopolitan, which are always in creative tension with primitivism and essentialism in attempts at, or claims of, cultural preservation. My contribution does not challenge the theories of any of this empirically rigorous scholarly work, but rather aims to show the depth of indigeneity itself as a performing subjectivity at the very core of spiritual and psychological identities that express themselves within their particular cultural vocabularies.

This is the fundamental question that I am asking: what can theatre tell us about the meaning of indigeneity as a means for being human? This question is conceivable because theatre, being a philosophical knower, is not only an object of performance anthropology, but also a performing anthropology of subjectivities in the world beyond theatre. It is not too much to say that theatrical creativity is almost inseparable from ‘autoethnography’ according to Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of a postcolonial semiotics emerging from a heterogeneous zone of cultural contact and collaboration, wherein otherness, inequality and subversion can all take place. Pratt, using examples of native crafts from colonial frontiers, maintains that autoethnography can allow the seemingly marginal agencies to produce an empowering anthropology of their own communities, even if their creativity must work within a colonial relationship. Writers like Orkin, Kruger and Hauptfleisch have similarly explored the dynamics between collaboration, self-representation and political engagement in South African theatre history. The most useful observation, for my purposes here, is that South African drama and theatre provide social and cultural anthropologies of real identities even while a particular story on stage may be fictional, the actors not representing their personal lives, and the professional management of the creative project not necessarily under the control of some kind of community initiative. The semiotic freedom of theatre here liberates my aim of exploring the subjectivity of indigeneity in South African theatre, an aim that I

pursue by going deep into the exemplary cultural poetics of a few theatrical fictions rather than attempting a performance genealogy that could adequately serve as an original cultural anthropology.

This objective involves three main parts, which are not a strict linearity of argument but a rough linearity of methodological development that necessarily allows for overlaps. The first part is to reinterpret indigeneity as subjectivity within social and cultural norms. The second is to re-contextualise this interpretation specifically as an epistemology for analysing theatrical representations. The third is to look at how theatre's own dynamic versatility as a medium brings the same indigeneity into very different theatrical expressions of subjectivity. The point here is not to 'test' a theory of indigeneity but rather to maximally strengthen its articulation, inviting other writers to do the testing, thereby growing the philosophical inquiry into different contexts, representations and notions of indigeneity at the moment of its 'return' in pan-Africanist thought.

South African intercultural theatre is an apt context for this kind inquiry because indigeneity has been a key concept in the very development of the aesthetic. This artistic categorisation, 'intercultural theatre', brings together works from quite different genres, and it is indigeneity that clarifies what these works have in common. Intercultural theatre is itself a topic of substantial, international debates in performance studies, which often focus on the dynamics of collaboration between cultural actors from different backgrounds. This topic is also theoretically and ethically contentious, mostly because of bad ideas and malpractices that have occurred within Western performance studies and professional theatre hegemonies, of which Rustom Bharucha wrote the most memorable polemical criticism during the 1990s. It is not my task here to develop a specific theory or critique of intercultural theatre, but let me highlight one crucial characteristic of the practice in South Africa. Pratt describes

autoethnography as simultaneously being part of and incorporating processes of ‘transculturation’ according to Fernando Ortiz’s famous concept referring to “the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another . . . the loss or uprooting of a previous culture” (102) and “the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena” (103). The autoethnography that scholars have observed taking place in South African theatre participates in transculturation, and this, I suggest, is key for understanding the significance of indigeneity in intercultural theatre. One of the common practices in the creativity of South African intercultural theatre is the extraction, recycling and syncretisation of restored behaviours from different indigenous performance heritages, and often also the merging of the indigenous elements with extractions from foreign sources. This has led to some stunning results, for example in the early works of avant-garde director Brett Bailey, who advocated the international intercultural performance epistemology while pioneering experiments with chthonic indigenous South African spiritualities and ‘ritual theatre’ in the last half-decade of the twentieth century. The syncretising of the indigenous has been a key idea in the South African theatrical axiology of novelty and relevance as the post-apartheid ethos, by no means uniform but still ideologically distinctive, called for the celebration of a multicultural nation and the end of barriers of prejudice.

The theatrical examples in my thesis all come from the first decade of the twenty-first century, a decade of groundbreaking highlights such as the UNDRIP, the completion of South Africa’s first ten years of democracy, and the country’s hosting of the first African FIFA World Cup. The works that I look at are nationally high-profile and internationally successful samples from particular, prevalent genres of South African theatre; thus they represent cultural aesthetics to which the world has access. This is significant for my philosophical context because whatever these works say about indigeneity enters the

international circulation of ideas about South Africa, but my argument is not mainly about the influence of theatre and performance in bringing about the visibility of particular concepts of indigeneity. This is not to downplay visibility, which is part of the postcolonial semiotic transactions of the global indigenous peoples' movement. Critical anthropologists John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff illustrate the vastness and expediency of cultural visibility in their groundbreaking semiotic and materialist study of the South African 'ethnicity business', which has thrived most strongly within the tourism and heritage sectors. The performances that I look at are exemplary as works of such visibility, but rather than repeat the illustrations of prevalence or arguments about expediency, my thesis shows the philosophical pertinence and profundity of indigeneity in a small selection of quintessential pieces of South African intercultural theatre.

Regarding the understanding of indigeneity and theatrical context, the works of performance scholar Helen Gilbert are methodologically instructive, by bringing the semiotic methods of poststructuralist cultural materialism into a dramaturgical focus on the concept of 'embodiment', which itself has had a substantial theoretical development not unlike the critical epistemologies of the body that I have outlined above. Thomas J. Csordas developed a groundbreaking anthropology of embodiment from "the methodological postulate that the body is not an object to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the subject of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture" (5). Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo's book, *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australia*, uses an embodiment perspective to politicise the ideals of cosmopolitanism, which often calls upon the participation of indigenous peoples. The embodiment perspective shows how performance in diverse settings can simultaneously represent and complicate idealisms. This embodiment perspective does not necessarily install the body for its own sake, but rather

brings the indigenous body into the reasoning of indigenous cultural agents. This move is both phenomenological and dialectical, acknowledging the body without permitting a dehumanising separation between cultural corporeality and subjectivity that still asserts its intellectual sovereignty to define itself. Gilbert does not allow methodology to become too separate from analysis, but the theoretical result itself shows that the theatrical body not only 'inhabits' context, but also, as in Csordas, constitutes context. If subjectivity is to attain its theatrical agency, semiotics must culminate in the body.

My thesis follows the same route, but my approach is more rationalistic in the sense that I begin with a philosophical audition of indigeneity's reasoning, and then take this reasoning back into, rather than out of, the performing body-as-evidence. This reversal is crucial because if indigeneity can win the philosophical title of 'reasonable ethos', it must have a fair chance to fight to keep this title despite the contingencies of contextual evidences that may sometimes accuse indigeneity of being unreasonable. In opposition to indigeneity's harshest critics, I contend that the mistakes of particular individuals, groups or institutions should have no power to disqualify a reasonable ethos. This is a 'guns don't kill people' argument. Indigeneity does not automatically dehumanise personhood. Racists and jingoists do that. Would the world be better without any indigeneity at all? Would it be better without guns? I cannot say, but I am not sure that everything was okay before these things become part of reality. Imperialism and slavery must have had a use for the brutal erasure of indigenous identities. Indigeneity must have somehow threatened the very episteme of the machine, or else the economics would not require such brutality. We can debate this another time, but what is certain for now is that we have the choice and responsibility to become better handlers of the ideas that we have, as long as we can determine, firstly, through a fair

audition judging both philosophical talent and semiotic appearance, that a particular idea is reasonable.

I have made extensive use of scripts and audiovisual recordings for my deep readings of performances, one of which is properly a commercial film. My reading stance in all cases revolves around theatre; thus I read the literary and audiovisual materials as framings of the theatrical. While this textual orientation would not be ideal for phenomenological readings, the close engagement with text is conducive to the plunge to the depths of subjectivity. The point is not to settle on what theatre does ‘in the moment’ for live audiences, though I do not completely ignore this when relevant to my main questions. The reading itself collaborates with and contributes to theatre’s work of producing a subjectivity and a voice of indigeneity that can enter pan-Africanist philosophy at the point of the ‘return’.

The reading is also comparative, placing different dramas in complementary dialogue for the purpose of sculpting a multifaceted impression of indigeneity in a dynamic South African intercultural theatre. In Chapter 1, I set the table for this comparative study by looking at the core existential meaning of indigeneity as a concept of identity, which I argue is essentially about the metaphysics of filiation, constituting the subjectivity of the progeny through relationship with progenitors. In Chapter 2, I look at how this metaphysics of filiation performs its subthemes of nativity, orphanhood and adoption through historical narrative in Richard Loring’s ‘cultural nationalist’ dance-musical-percussion pageant, *African Footprint* (2000). In Chapter 3, I look at how the performance of mythopoeia and trauma connects the theme of orphanhood to realities of colonial violence in Magnet Theatre’s avant-garde multimedia ensemble dance-drama, *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* (2004). In Chapter 4, I explore how postcolonial gender violence and the complex resistance against it render different faces of the orphan in Isango Ensemble’s post-classicist

experimental opera-film, *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* (2005). In Chapter 5, I focus on the contestation of belonging and inheritance, through the contestation of rights to filiation, and the ‘judicial’ reason of the progenitor herself in Yael Farber’s post-naturalist drama, *Mies Julie* (2012). These four examples show how indigeneity has embodied itself in very different theatrical narratives and politics. My readings draw out the reasoning of this subjectivity, which desires human intimacy as well as the existential security of being close to origins within diverse cosmological and environmental milieus. I conclude by making filiation and relationship the conceptual keys for understanding the reasonable subjectivity of South African indigeneity and bringing this into pan-Africanist cultural philosophy.

Sensitivity and patience are vital for this work; thus an analytically cold or theoretically expedient writing is inappropriate. I write analytically, emotively and meditatively, not in a hurry to process the theatrical semiotics into cerebral conclusions, but rather staying with the dramatic feelings and associations themselves, which may take the imagination even away from the text, into a poetics of the morphology of indigeneity’s values, passions and comprehensions about human life in specific contexts. There is certainly a didactics in this, but it is a didactics for myself first, as an applicant to the Ghandi school of ‘being the change we wish to see in the world’. I am not a writer with a lesson, but rather a writer learning lessons, and exposing the learning process, lest it seem as if the one who preaches never needed to hear. I invite my readers to join in this contemplative spirit, escaping the harassments of manifold dialectical exigencies in that great hustle we call ‘critique’, in order to come face to face with the beautiful, complex and sometimes difficult humanity of which these pages are but one, and fallible, subjunctive mirror.

Chapter 1

‘Indigeneity’ as Metaphysics of Filiation in Twenty-First Century South Africa

I have suggested the humanistic philosophical imperative to establish indigeneity as a reasoning and reasonable ethos entering the cultural body, for example through theatre, in order to portray third world subjectivities that call for a sensitive intellectual and affective response. In this chapter, I outline a theory of indigeneity as just such a reasonable ethos in South Africa. My premise is that South African indigeneity involves two main, equally integral concerns: ethnology and metaphysics. I contend that the anthropology of the scholarly field of indigenous cultural studies has generally focused on ethnological problems, while metaphysics has received a theoretically lightweight treatment. The chapter then proceeds to elaborate on this metaphysics, which builds on the ethnology by providing a modality for rendering subjectivity. I argue that the central theme of the metaphysics of indigeneity is ‘filiation’, which entails the active self-identification as ‘progeny’ of a particular ‘progenitor’, and hence the pursuit of a relationship of dependence with the latter. I provide an impressionistic rendering of the different characteristics of such filiation within social norms, cultural values and institutional appropriations thereof. This is not a quantitative survey of texts, activities and rhetoric, but rather a ‘phenomenology of ideas’. This is important for my thesis because, like Fanon, I am fundamentally against ‘phenomenological colonisation’ through the transplantation of Western philosophy, but unlike Fanon, I need more than anti-colonial protest. I want to reasonably conceive the mind of the collective self that thinks its own way to the body without necessarily reacting to colonialism.

The conceptualisation aims not for something ‘empirical’ but instead compellingly familiar, something that indigenous cultural agents themselves could engage with keenly. The description uses social observations, including those from my own experience, as conceptual stimulus, not ‘proof’, though the theory is also not simply a logical deduction or a demand for phenomenological legitimacy. The point is to make indigeneity as metaphysics of filiation part of widespread customs and general understandings that also happen to come into performance and theatre. This way, my subsequent arguments about the relevance of the theatrical examples do not primarily rely on the prevalence of a particular theatrical genre or the market impact of a particular commercial drama, but rather on the dramas engaging powerfully with a prevalent poetics of identity and belonging, and then showing this engagement to a wide national and international audience. This is appropriate because I do not want to make unrealistic claims about the influence of particular performances or genres within the whole multifarious South African ethnology of indigeneity; yet the theatrical art does have a great agency to engage this milieu in creative and potent ways. In this chapter, the attention is on the much more influential metaphysics of filiation itself.

I adopt the generally familiar epistemological stance that one cannot divorce ‘indigeneity’ from broader issues of being, belonging and cultural identity in South Africa. On the one hand, indigeneity helps to understand such issues more deeply, and on the other, identity politics and poetics helps to contextualise the significance of indigeneity in South Africa. In exploring these possibilities, it is also important to recognise the contingent mutual permeability of the contexts of South Africa and southern Africa. This permeability necessitates a twofold theoretical caution. Firstly, while I am aiming to give an account of indigeneity specifically in South Africa, arbitrary colonial borders cannot rigidly confine the analysis of historically dynamic cultures and societies with genealogies extending to pre-

colonial times. Secondly, colonial borders are not totally insignificant, for they indicate territories of contemporary political dispensations with considerable efficacy to circumscribe the circumstances of populations within respective countries. I use observations about the broader southern African context to better understand aspects of the context of South Africa, which shares a wider historical setting with neighbouring countries but ultimately defines its own history. A separate critical argument will be less useful and compelling than allowing the analysis itself to demonstrate the appropriateness of my theoretical strategy. The crucial point to emphasise for now is that indigeneity has emerged with different inflections within various, unique national contexts that nevertheless add up to a perceptibly pan-Africanist political sphere with its distinct ethnology and metaphysics of identity.

I take 'ethnology' to mean any conceptualisation of the identity of peoples within their particularity. The ethnology of indigeneity has to do with questions like: what is an indigenous population? Who is part of this group? What empirical and political criteria can legitimise or refute claims of indigeneity? Scholars in anthropology, sociology and other relevant disciplines have been particularly productive in dealing with these sorts of questions. Colonial abuses of ethnology made the term itself liable to suspicion, but it is still etymologically appropriate for what it denotes, namely, any instance in which someone wants to 'talk about a people'; therefore many scholars produce ethnology even without using the term. I understand 'ethnography' as a descriptive portrayal, more phenomenological and relativistic than ethnology, which produces categories of ethnicity according to empirical factors and also according to how peoples distinguish themselves from each other. There is certainly no strict practical separation between ethnology and ethnography, for to isolate either would result in distortions, ethnological ignorance being as dangerous as ethnographic insensitivity, but the differentiating nuance is important for the

current philosophical work. My phenomenology of ideas is not about the ethnography of specific cultures and communities; yet I still need ethnological premises because these include the question of origin, which is cardinal to the metaphysics of filiation. In the subsequent chapters, the theatrical examples themselves will provide particular embodiments of autoethnographies to complete the epistemology of my treatment of indigeneity and theatre in the new South Africa.

Internationally, the appellative, ‘indigenous people’, has an extraordinary diversity of understandings, ramifications and frequent associations with other designations like ‘aboriginal peoples’, ‘first nations’ or ‘native peoples’. Indigenous peoples are generally descendants of ‘original peoples’ that occupied particular areas before the onset of national histories of modernisation. In humanitarian ethnology at least, the respective groups are usually identifiable through any combination of the following points of guidance from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII):

- Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (UNPFII)

More succinctly, these are the seven themes: appellation, genealogy, ecology, sovereignty, uniqueness, marginality and ideology. Scholars around the globe have debated these themes and the applicability of various ethnological criteria in respective settings. The UNPFII likewise emphasises the need for sensitivity to empirical specificities as well as to how indigenous peoples understand their own identities, lives and circumstances. The complexity of meaning does not point to philosophical anarchy but rather to a high degree of sophistication in the way that the global indigenous peoples' movement has gradually refined its general epistemology and communication. Within this refinement, there are always particular situations of unskilful or disingenuous handlings of the ethos, poetics or politics of indigeneity. I would consider the above points the rough core of a contingent international ethnology of indigeneity within the most important part of the movement, which deals with the restoration of justice and dignity for subaltern societies. I would go further and suggest that ancestry is the most indispensable axiom of indigeneity, even if genetics and genealogy are often multifarious. Indigenous peoples' existential sensibilities do not have adequate anthropological reflection in merely genealogical concepts of indigeneity (Ingold 133); yet the axiom of ancestry is the only one without which it would be impossible for indigenous peoples' advocacies to make a compelling, retrospective case for justice as restitution.

The African Commission recognises that it is politically correct to regard the word 'indigenous' as applying to all national peoples that have descended from pre-colonial societies (ACHPR and IWGIA 88). In southern African countries, this means that the ethnically heterogeneous black majorities are indigenous, usually in contrast to descendants of settler populations that arrived during or after European colonisation (Crawhall 3–4). The ethnicities in question are complex intercourses between lineages, and there have emerged different political usages of the poetics of indigeneity in diverse circumstances (Pelican 52–

53). In recent decades, indigeneity has revitalised the identity poetics and politics of smaller, aboriginal subaltern groups that historically precede black majorities in their respective countries (Hodgson 1042). The new pan-African indigenous peoples' movement has cited both historical precedence and extreme disadvantage as bases for a special advocacy of rights (Sylvain 1075). This new indigeneity and its politics have caused controversy in some instances while bringing about much activity in the humanitarian, developmental and communitarian sectors (Tauli-Corpuz 45–46). The communication strategy for such activity involves generating new ethnologies, which frequently emphasise marginality as a key identifying characteristic of indigenous peoples (Marschke, Szablowski, and Vandergeest 484–485). In response to this emphasis, public representations largely aim at raising awareness of indigenous subalterns, their dignity, admirable qualities and rights that institutions have withheld or violated.

This is the pan-African ethnological context in which post-apartheid South African definitions of indigeneity have developed. The aboriginal ancestral peoples of southern Africa, occupying the land since the Stone Age, were the Khoesan groups, including San hunter-gatherers and Khoekhoe pastoralists, each a multiethnic and multilingual collective. During the Iron Age, large 'nations' of west-central African agrarians and pastoralists speaking numerous 'Bantu'² languages dispersed southward and established politically complex 'mediaeval' kingdoms, from which the myriad large and small ethnic collectives of the postcolonial southern African black majority have descended. In South Africa, the

² The word 'Bantu' etymologically means 'peoples', and refers to a large family of languages with a common origin. The word also functioned as a colonial ethnological designation, but denoted such a substantial and diverse population that it was effectively a racial term. The ethnological usage became derogatory; thus it is no longer acceptable in political and intellectual forums. The linguistic usage remains, though rigorous tact is often advisable.

descendants of this ancestry include the Zulu and Xhosa national majorities, as well as minorities such as the Ndebele, Venda and Tswana peoples. Colonialism treated all pre-colonial peoples as racial others, but apartheid also placed many of the Khoe and San descendants in the category of 'coloured', which was essentially for 'biracial' populations. Transoceanic genetic complexity did indeed become part of South African social reality, but an ethnic erasure also occurred in the demographics of apartheid, so that at the beginning of the post-apartheid dispensation, Khoe and San identities were "invisible" to "political discourse" (Crawhall 3). This situation changed in the last half-decade of the twentieth century as the new indigeneity revealed South Africa's aboriginal subaltern minorities, some of whom abandoned or added to their 'coloured' status in a restitution of ethnic identities. This cultural reclaiming was part of movements for community development that included humanitarian-ecological campaigns for land restitution. These campaigns led to groundbreaking resolutions as the Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki administrations incorporated the new indigeneity and its politics of restitution into the post-apartheid agenda of reconciliation, multicultural integration and nation-building. This process of incorporation set South Africa apart from most other African Union states, which have often interpreted the new indigenous peoples' movement as a potential postcolonial political dissent.

Another crucial influence in South Africa's reception of the new indigeneity is the notion of 'African Renaissance', which became highly topical during the term of President Thabo Mbeki, a key spokesperson and ideologue. The reasoning of the African Union Charter for African Cultural Renaissance moves in two directions at once. The first is the utopian aspiration for African Union states to achieve a technocratic developmental leap akin to the modernisation of European countries during their own historic Renaissance. The second is an essentialist and universalising poetics of pan-African identity, belonging and

authenticity that beckons cultural protection and preservation. The charter's general rhetoric betrays the continuity between African Renaissance thinking and the older pan-African nationalist and anti-colonial consciousness, which is the historical basis of the mainstream political ideology of African Union states. Pan-Africanist nationalism encompasses an essentialist poetics and politics of autochthony, which can relate to the new indigeneity, but also a majority rule ethos, which may or may not engage with the perspectives of aboriginal minorities.³ This ethos retains the emphasis on genealogy without guaranteeing a response to the marginalities, campaigns for sovereignty or ecological claims of indigenous minorities. South Africa's uncommon integration of the new indigeneity into the majority ethos effectively makes justice for indigenous minorities a matter of African Renaissance.

Pan-Africanist essentialism, even as a majority politics, resembles indigenous essentialisms elsewhere in the world; thus the cultural arguments of African Renaissance advocacy sound like some overseas indigenous scholarly perspectives, which claim the right to produce knowledge differently from the standards of 'Western' institutions. The overseas notions of 'indigenous epistemologies' usually have their pan-Africanist echoes in academic fields like 'traditional knowledge systems', 'African philosophy' and 'Afrocentric' thought. The South African new indigeneity has only set itself apart by focusing its advocacy on the

³ I treat the words 'indigeneity' and 'autochthony' as meaning essentially the same thing. Anthropologists have occasionally tried to draw a distinction, for example in Gausset, Kenrick, and Gibb's volume of the journal *Social Anthropology*. Their distinction is politically contextual rather than etymologically necessary, but my main problem with it is that the entire discussion is Anglo-centric and seems more about scholarly diplomacy within the discipline. The terminological predicament does not translate to other languages, even other European languages, which may not necessarily have such an option of words; thus even the political distinction is questionable. The attempt at terminological distinction also does not solve any fundamental ontological problems for indigeneity/autochthony.

rights of minorities, but otherwise participated in the mainstream political stance that all indigenous traditions have a role in society-building. It is in this context that indigenous cultural advocates represent the worldviews of South African minorities, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal. Worldview advocacy is crucial to the relationship between pan-Africanist essentialism and knowledge; thus knowledge creation itself is a key point of divergence that defines the critique of pan-Africanist essentialism.

Three distinct but often overlapping academic fields are exemplary in this divergence, namely, professional anthropology, Marxist social theory and critical postcolonial African studies. Professional anthropologists generally stay away from worldview advocacy – even if they must study particular indigenous cosmologies – opting for empirical and critical approaches that have a high degree of scepticism. The ethical commitments among anthropologists range from seeing indigeneity as an expedient premise of justice worth supporting to finding this expediency itself ethically troubling. The diverse perspectives of anthropology have been part of the institutional history of the global indigenous peoples' movement (Gausset, Kenrick, and Gibb 135), but a disciplinary and ideological consensus has been impossible to reach (136) as all perspectives find compelling contextual evidence for their respective arguments, whether for or against the political expediency of indigeneity(139). Marxist and revolutionary pan-Africanist scholars follow the anthropological empirical distance and ethical concern with a stronger weariness of the social implications of indigeneity within mainstream politics, economics and nationalism. Perhaps the most striking example is the work of Michael Neocosmos, who has illustrated the post-apartheid ideological and institutional reduction of citizenship to black South African indigeneity, a reduction that engenders political passivity, systemic xenophobia and social violence against black foreign nationals from African Union countries. Critical pan-

Africanist scholars in fields like African cultural studies and postcolonial studies often add poststructuralist relativism to the empirical and ethical scepticism toward the epistemology of indigeneity. In this trend, there is a strong critique of the phenomenon of nationalism-as-indigeneity, a phenomenon that Kwame Anthony Appiah sees as suffocating to the progressive ethos and sentiment of “cosmopolitan patriotism”(618). South African theatre and performance scholars try to balance all these diverse epistemological influences with attention to the details of text, embodiment and other concerns of performance. Kruger’s genealogy of South African drama draws on the concept of ‘theatrical nationhood’, which is central in her earlier work, *The National Stage: Theatre and Cultural Legitimation in England, France, and America*. This concept highlights theatricality and artifice in order to deconstruct the performance of legitimacy in nationalistic pageantry. Ashraf Jamal sees theatrical nationhood as a target for aesthetic deconstruction within the South African avant-garde. In such critical writings, theatre is a medium that characterises both the utopianism and the ontological limits of nationalist authentications.

The pendulum swing of intellectual stances, from essentialism to scepticism, reveals the stakes and problems with the ethnology and ideology of indigeneity, but what does this pendulum really hinge upon? I contend that while the identification with essentialism blocks analytical insight into real cultural dynamics, creative possibilities and even ethical considerations, the sceptical stance, which enables such insights, can also cheat philosophy by withholding the patience of following a premise, like indigeneity, right through to the very end of its own reasoning. The evaluation of political expediency, though critically vital, cannot address the question of what indigeneity really wants to say about third world subjectivities, and how indigeneity can work as a genuine, creative and sensitive engagement with humanity rather than a hypocritical modality for partisan manipulations. The critical

judgement must allow opportunity for redemption. My thesis is a Socratic opportunity for indigeneity to state its case and provide convincing evidence that it has the capacity to participate in the humanisation of third world identities in South Africa. Indigeneity must show that its most sincere poetics is entirely separate from the perverse jingoisms that have held such poetics in bondage to warrant intellectual opposition. If indigeneity can be free, it could become a believable voice of reason with its own analysis of culture, human life, and performance. This theoretical sovereignty would make indigeneity challenging not only to South African jingoism, but also to the critical cosmopolitanism of postcolonial thinking, which would no longer be able to slap indigeneity on the nose for too much talk of authenticity. This is a necessary risk, for jingoism will not stop misusing indigeneity until the latter becomes more thoughtful, rather than reactionary, in its poetics of restitution, which has too often degenerated into the politicisation of selfishness. This has manifested quite starkly in South Africa through the topical crisis of xenophobic violence, the perpetrators of which regard their geopolitical indigeneity as grounds for exemption from fair economic competition against foreigners from African Union countries. The violence is illegal, but the thinking is, as Neocosmos argues, ideologically mainstream and not infrequently expedient for the demagogue; all this is precisely what necessitates a humanising conversation that is sensitive even to the desires of some insensitive people. The best critical treatment of indigeneity is not flat dismissal or suspicion, but rather philosophical nurturing and a firm ethical challenge to grow a backbone and stop pandering to chauvinism.

This crossroads is the limit of inquiries into the politics of ethnology, but my critique is reaching mainly for an epistemological limit, at which point to enter the inquiry into the metaphysics of indigeneity. One more look at anthropological scholarship can clarify this boundary, which is about the relationship between indigeneity and ‘authenticity’.

Anthropologists have participated on all sides of the authenticity debate during the processes of developing and challenging South African ethnologies of indigeneity. During the 1990s, the work of experts like video ethnographer Hugh Brody and linguist Nigel Crawhall, in their contribution to the groundbreaking †Khomani San identity and land restitution campaign, established a postcolonial empiricism for the South African paradigm of indigenous authenticity. This brand of anthropology has also been instrumental in the humanitarian movement to establish and standardise particular ethnologies of indigeneity that the African Union can accept. International perspectives have been influential on the pan-African humanitarian argument (Sylvain 1075), which points out that, within African Union countries, aboriginal subalterns “are some of the most vulnerable groups” due to “their desperate situation and . . . gross human rights violations” (ACHPR and IWGIA 8). The combination of aboriginality and exceptional humanitarian exigency results in a stronger political claim, thus placing great stakes on the anthropological verification of genealogical authenticity.

More critical anthropologists have not only questioned particular competitive claims of authenticity, but also questioned the very premise of authenticity as an epistemological possibility. It is from this fundamental contention that Kuper’s paradigmatic critique shakes up the entire legitimacy of the indigenous peoples’ movement itself as well as scholarly interest in the concerns of indigenous peoples. Kuper objects to both the political ethics and the anthropological epistemology of ethnologies of indigeneity, even accusing the whole indigenous peoples’ movement of dangerous postcolonial ethnocentrism as well as a primitivism that recycles and reinforces colonial stereotypes. This critique effectively regards even the empiricism of the ethnology of indigeneity as unscientific and therefore intellectually unethical.

Kuper's passionately polemical response to authenticity is rare, even if scepticism remains the norm of critical anthropology. Most writers regard indigeneity as an indeterminate and multifarious construct that is politically expedient in most circumstances and in complex ways. Over the years of debate and controversy, scholars have generally settled on this third solution, which is in principle similar to, but not exactly the same as, the diplomatic openness within legal, constitutional and human rights documents. The rough academic consensus is that the public poetics of indigeneity has a lot to do with the creative cultural production and distribution of authenticity as cultural capital. Scholars do not allow the problems with 'authenticity' to become a distraction from the focus on analysing the benefits, risks and methodology of the construct.

A crucial philosophical move in this vein is the shift from the focus on 'being' to the emphasis on 'becoming'. After this shift, understanding indigeneity is not about debating whether indigenous peoples 'are' what they say they are, but rather about looking at how they consciously 'become' what they say they are. The process of "becoming indigenous" involves rallying up as a group to become part of a global network and politics that thrive precisely on the ideological, cultural and situational heterogeneity of the indigenous peoples' movement (Levi and Maybury-Lewis 5). Apart from participation in global institutional processes, cultural praxis, especially through performance, is perhaps an even more socially vital mode of negotiating indigeneity (Gilbert 174). The 'praxis of becoming indigenous' is a useful point of departure for my purposes of linking ethnology with metaphysics in the poetics of indigeneity.

One of the empirical problems with an ethnological focus is that it mainly pertains to 'expert' forums, which are inaccessible to many cultural agents who passionately assert their indigeneity. If interaction with anthropologists helps in the dissemination of knowledge to

certain communities, it is still difficult to see how ethnological agreements, whether factual or cosmological, can be sufficiently inspiring for the fervour of the chorus of indigeneity. If this fervour is an outcome of ideological indoctrination or the temptations of political expediency, this still does not explain the powerful drive of indigenous creativity, which is not always expedient but in certain situations countercultural, inconvenient or even hazardous. This puts ethnology and its various criticisms into crisis as they cannot explain everything about the import of indigeneity in cultural activity.

The main limitation of anthropological and sociological articulations has been the paucity of engagement with metaphysics. Such a limitation arises from an oversimplification of the problem of being-versus-becoming. These two terms have a complex history in Western philosophy, which is not the direction of this argument. The only distinction I want to draw is between already embodying something itself and embodying the process toward something itself as a future state. The disciplinary boundary of keeping authenticity at an epistemological distance means that anthropology must also keep being-embodiment at a distance, in favour of a becoming-embodiment, at least with regard to indigeneity. This leaves no room for the question of how being-embodiment constitutes indigeneity even while becoming-embodiment has a work to do within cultural politics. The very concept of becoming indigenous suffers philosophical starvation due to this bias toward becoming-embodiment.

I suggest that becoming indigenous is not only about collective praxes and poetics that construct authenticity, but also about deeply subjective experiences of being-in-a-particular-way, which encapsulates 'indigeneity'. This being-embodiment subsumes and precedes becoming-embodiment. Indigenous people are already something before they become something else, and after this becoming-something-else, indigenous people remain

the original something-that-they-were; thus they are more than successful candidates for whatever new-something they have become. This preceding and subsuming being-embodiment includes being human, being a particular ethnicity and being oneself. Such being-embodiment is part of the qualification for becoming-embodiment, but the latter was never the primary aim of the former. Being-embodiment has both intrinsic and extrinsic import, exceeding yet permeating becoming-embodiment. Anthropology has had to bear ethical pressures that eventually pushed the discipline into a diplomatic focus on becoming-embodiment in order to evaluate the production of authenticity without endorsing essentialism, but cultural philosophy must start with being-embodiment and focus on subjectivity. When the cultural agent says, 'I am indigenous' (being-embodiment), the anthropologist thinks, 'that statement is a modality for becoming indigenous' (becoming-embodiment), which sends 'indigeneity' into the future as the scholar sees the cultural agent chasing after an elusive authenticity, but the cultural agent is often expressing a conviction, not an intention. This conviction often works with memory, looking backward to the roots of belonging in communal and personal experience. The statement, 'I am indigenous', implies retrospection in order to claim what is true of oneself 'now', not merely what is an appealing prospect. The anthropologist chooses not to endorse such truth claims, a perfectly legitimate choice for empirical research, but within the experimental forum of cultural philosophy, it is necessary to follow indigeneity to the core of its reasoning.

These are not mere conceptual games. Thinking seriously about being-embodiment is vital to the ethics of critique, because unless we begin with a subjectivity that is already sure, whole and lacking nothing, the focus on becoming-embodiment produces a violent writing that portrays indigenous cultural agents as incomplete people because they are perpetually in a process of becoming something that they are not. This ontological negation may very well

please poststructuralist and postmodern sensibilities, but such theoretical pleasure comes at the expense of honouring the subjectivity of another human being whose selfhood presumes its own wholeness after having grown in the ground of being-embodiment. It may be philosophically conceivable that this selfhood is not a credible humanism,⁴ but who has the authority to conclude such a thing on behalf of another human being and despite the latter's objection? This is at least a kind of philosophical paternalism, and disputable on that very account, but even such dispute would not get to the core. Here is the core: if being-embodiment subsumes and exceeds becoming-embodiment, the subjectivity of an indigenous person is already whole before the acquaintance with ethnologies that specifically describe 'indigeneity'. This already whole subjectivity is not only an ethnic identification. It has all the poetics, passions and profound existential commitments that will be conducive to indigeneity's particular contemplation on origins and belonging. What are these contents?

⁴ Malreddy Pavan Kumar provides an excellent critical and historical treatment of the concept of 'humanism' and its relationship to indigeneity. This treatment describes an ethically self-contradicting European Enlightenment humanism that was both universalistic and ethnocentric – therefore imperialistic – then the postcolonial critical deconstruction of such ethnocentric universalism, and the failure of postcolonial deconstruction itself to ultimately transcend the Western biases of liberal cosmopolitanism informing the education of many prominent postcolonial critical thinkers. Kumar argues that the indigenous peoples' movement, and in particular the UNDRIP, has challenged both the colonial and the postcolonial by clearing a postmodern space for other humanisms, namely, indigenous humanisms, which start not with a position for or against Western humanism, but rather with the axiom of indigenous peoples' sovereignties to define their diverse humanisms for themselves, and to articulate such humanisms for the world. These indigenous humanisms are dynamic realities rather than theories. I accept but do not repeat Kumar's sufficient arguments; instead, I am responding to the cue to treat 'humanism' as something that indigeneity itself must develop within particular, practical contexts, the rendering of which is the task of my thesis.

I argue that the metaphysics of filiation is the cardinal being-embodiment that expresses itself through the becoming-embodiment of ‘becoming indigenous’. This metaphysics already suggests itself in the etymological sense of the word, ‘indigenous’, and other close terms like ‘native’, ‘aboriginal’ or ‘autochthonous’, though my argument is not a result of etymological conveniences. These terms are different verbal pointers to one ontological premise, which establishes two main entities – the origin itself and the person who comes from the origin, that is, the progenitor and the progeny. The metaphysics of filiation is about experiencing the relationship between progenitors and progeny. The relationship itself defines and makes it possible to identify ‘progenitors’ and ‘progeny’. Indigenous persons are ‘indigenous’ because of two mutually defining criteria: one’s status as progeny, and one’s relationship to the progenitors. The ethnology of indigeneity deals mainly with the progeny – who they are, what they do and what they claim within the public sphere. Essentialist ethnologies come ‘from inside’, attempting to reveal indigenous ‘character’, or ‘wisdom’, perhaps through moral didactics, cultural apologetics or political consciousness. Empirical ethnologies seek to identify indigenous peoples and describe their characteristics ‘from outside’, scientifically considering genealogical, environmental and social facts. Critical ethnologies focus on the creativity, agency and expediency of identity formation rather than on establishing factual certainties for their own sake. The hypercritical anthropologies and sociologies are post-ethnological, but they have not gone further than that, because there is indeed nothing further in that direction of negation. I have opted to go backward to the foundational premise of indigeneity, a premise that is even more fundamental than the particular worldviews of indigenous peoples. The premise is that these are the progeny of their own progenitors.

The metaphysics of filiation does indeed rally diversely with essentialist, empirical and critical ethnologies alike. This metaphysics establishes an indigenous being-embodiment for the people that a particular ethnology has identified as ‘becoming indigenous’.

Metaphysics and ethnology enrich each other but are not reducible to each other as the poetics of indigenous identity and belonging constantly asserts the premise of filiation.

Within southern African poetics of indigeneity, there are five main candidates for the role of ‘progenitor’: (1) the Creator,⁵ (2) ancestors/elders/parents, (3) the consanguineous collective, (4) land/country, and (5) cultural heritage. These five are arguably the most significant but by no means the only possibilities. Each one has a context that vastly exceeds that of indigeneity and the metaphysics of filiation, which specifically characterises these five candidates as progenitors, whether personal, impersonal or a personification. Ethnology classifies an entire ‘indigenous’ community, but the individual person discovers indigeneity as subjectivity through relationship with at least one – though almost always more than one, usually three or four – of these five progenitors, which are mutually distinct but also have deep ontological and practical interrelations. With or without the specific categorisation, ‘indigenous’, one is firstly and permanently the progeny of one’s progenitors, and indigeneity is not the only possible outcome of the metaphysics of filiation, which vastly exceeds the scope of indigeneity as only one concern for identity poetics and identity politics in southern Africa.

This is not to say that indigeneity is expendable. It is not, but an indigeneity that differentiates itself from the locality of ‘settlers’ is an outcome of recent history. This kind of indigeneity is still a culturally and politically significant identity concept in southern Africa;

⁵ The entire prose of my thesis will only use the neutral term, ‘Creator’, in order to respect all diverse religious protocols about denotation, as well as the sensitivities of some of the non-religious readers. This also serves my theoretical purposes in this chapter, as will be clear. I am not arguing for theological universalism, though I will engage with different Faiths and worldviews.

nevertheless, the metaphysics of filiation is the key to engaging with the subjectivity of indigeneity.

On these grounds, I do not see indigeneity as merely a construct of colonial or postcolonial institutions, even if the ethnology of indigeneity has a particular, and complex, institutional history. I have casually challenged the hypercriticism against indigeneity, but now that my philosophical foundation is complete, let me execute the dialectical polemic more aggressively, because this is a serious postcolonial issue. It is highly problematic when hypercriticism overemphasises, in order to ‘blame’, global and especially ‘Western’ institutional mechanisms, for example, those of UN offices. History repeats itself as non-Westerners are once again originators of nothing; indigenous people owe even their identity paradigms to culturally foreign regimes of subjectivity. There is no room to recognise indigenous peoples’ extensive and deliberate influence on the institutional humanitarian framework itself. Such erasure creates a ‘false copyright’ akin to the notion that ‘civilisation’ came with the European settlers. Alternatively, hypercriticism knocks indigenous peoples themselves precisely for having influenced an international advocacy with their own worldviews: ‘How dare these wayward little ones act so astutely in matters of world-management? Don’t let them talk you into their madcap essentialism or you will go native’. Perhaps the hypercriticism is from a black intelligentsia: ‘These illiterate peasants are embarrassing us with their simpleton essentialism, attracting Western hippies and do-gooders like flies. Shut them up’. I have spared no punches here because if indigeneity is to have a fair chance to represent itself as a voice of reason, there must be no interference from the usual authorities of critical reasoning – no blustering, insensitive opinions during the stressful audition. None of this is to dismiss the good intentions of any scholars, even in the hypercritical assault on indigeneity. We all have good intentions, but it seems only

reasonable to presume that the best intentions are usually those of the indigenous humanitarians who endure many trials as they fight for justice, the wellbeing of their communities and the dignity of human life. Indigeneity is more than its institutional history, more than its political expediencies, and even more than its performance. The 'more' appears crisply when the metaphysics of filiation is at the centre of ethnology.

My theoretical strategy is rare but not without its helpful precedents in critical thinking about culture and identity. Said, in *The Word, the Text, and the Critic*, a philosophical and methodological commentary on Western literary and cultural criticism, draws a distinction between the two "existential actualities" (5) of "filiation and affiliation" (16) as contexts of education, creativity and subjectivity. Said associates filiation with heredity, or at least heritage (be it cultural or intellectual), and affiliation with the modern ethos of voluntarism that is independent of "natural bonds" (20). Filial social orders emphasize tradition, bequeathal and procreation. Said treats these themes both literally, for an anthropological description, and metaphorically for a description of processes of cultural education within modern institutions. The apparent binary between filiation and affiliation is questionable, since filiation, though it may be 'factual', will be ontologically unattainable without acknowledgment, and such acknowledgement is itself a form of affiliation. Filiation cannot be passive or simply factual. The progeny must accept it, even as a 'fact', and this acceptance is volitional, even when it is compulsory in a particular cultural context, making filiation both 'natural' and intentional. Said recognizes all this, and indeed proceeds to show how culture itself deconstructs the duality between filiation and affiliation; yet a conceptual distinction must remain implicit for such deconstruction to have a target. The deconstruction approach does not serve Said well; for the rhetorical binary obscures the very subjectivity of filiation, which culture itself seldom presents as a mere fact of natural bonds.

Harold Scheffler finds no empirical or analytical use for binary and deconstruction at any point in his highly pertinent anthropological article, “Filiation and Affiliation”. The article provides an international study of concepts of filiation as the very basis for group affiliation within various indigenous cultures. Anthropologists have explored the possibility of drawing other conceptual distinctions, for example between ‘filiation’, as an interpersonal concern, and ‘descent’, as a genealogical and historical concern (1–2). The anthropological field of ‘kinship studies’ has developed complex taxonomies with terms like ‘patrification’, ‘matrification’ and so on. Scheffler provides a fascinating account of this theoretical field in another article, “The Descent of Rights and the Descent of Persons”. This account details how specificities of filiation and descent affect various cultural laws of inheritance and rights within respective communities. I will explore, later, the ramifications of this link between filiation, inheritance and rights from a more philosophical rather than legal stance. My current objective is to define the philosophical territory itself through the brief evaluation of the most relevant anthropological attitudes toward filiation.

The main problem for the field of kinship studies, as R. H. Barnes suggests, is that scholarly theories may demand classificatory regimes that do not necessarily correlate with how, if at all, peoples verbally define certain relationships. I would argue, further, that peoples can conceive relationships in ways that are simply not accessible to anthropological thinking; for example, a genuine philosophical consideration of spirituality is generally out of reach for many empirical and critical anthropologists. The goals of empiricism itself are highly problematic due to the sheer diversity of cultures that can only belong together taxonomically through dubious, if enduring, generalizations of the non-Western ‘other’. The irony is that, the more systematic the taxonomy, and the more precise its terminology, the more unhelpful it is since any attempt at multicultural generalization is sure to not only fail

empirically, but also reproduce academic ethnocentrism. This leaves no doubt that even anthropology must transcend empiricism.

These are all ethnological concerns, and my main purpose has not been to troubleshoot ethnological methods, but rather to suggest philosophical goals that require going beyond ethnology altogether. The ethnological gaze cannot access subjectivity, which sustains itself, not through technical distinctions, but through emotionally compelling categories of personhood. One such category is what I call ‘the progenitor’, though in cultural practice, it is usually ‘mother’ or ‘father’. Taxonomical distinctions like filiation-versus-descent are really quite meaningless; for there is great existential significance and emotion precisely in identifying non-personal or non-immediate progenitors in the most personal, immediate terms, such as ‘mother’ and ‘father’. The emotive power is precisely in those areas that seem too vexingly vague or diverse for anthropological taxonomy to generalize its findings into ‘kinship theory’. It is not enough to merely critique such empiricism; for critical relativism too is at a loss when facing the task of how to render the subjectivity of indigeneity in a creative and humanizing theory.

My task for the rest of this chapter is to write the southern African metaphysics of filiation. Surely this will not be the last word on the matter, but it is my best interpretation, in which I merge the phenomenology of ideas with ethnographic impressionism. I engage with common and uncommon knowledge while gazing broadly at the complex and vast life context of southern African subjectivities. This involves some use of ideas and insights from southern African worldviews and cosmologies, even from religions; yet this is not an inscription, interpretation or syncretisation of specific beliefs and narratives. The aim is to draw out of the southern African thought-context, belief-context and knowledge-context a metaphysics that is ontologically ascertainable as a distinct thing yet still belongs to its

ethnology, in this case the pan-Africanist ethnology of indigeneity. I also show how cultural and social contingencies can help to inform the cosmological picture of the identities of progenitors and their relationships with progeny.

Among all the contributions to the poetics of indigeneity, theology provides the context for the starkest rendering of metaphysics as both distinct and inseparable from ethnology. Theism names different characteristics of the Creator, but within the metaphysics of filiation, the most significant characteristic is the progenitor role. The focus on this aspect is not something to set indigenous theisms apart from mainstream or global theisms, since these frequently emphasise the progenitor identity of the Creator, who in the most familiar international theism is a Father. This Divine Identity entails various key roles, such as those of Instructor, Protector and Provider. In their different contexts and formulations, southern African theisms have a great deal of nuance beyond the occasional dichotomisations of monotheism versus indigenous spirituality. The nuance is also more than merely the phenomenon of religious syncretism, which in any case is a difficult thing to establish without intellectually reasserting the very binaries that syncretism invalidates. Performance is the key dynamic site for engaging with the subtlety of indigenous perspectives on the Creator. Religious expressions may indeed involve some intercultural or international theological exchange, but this is a trivial matter for those individuals who seriously seek to express a relationship with the Creator. The nuances of southern African theisms also complicate the conventional wisdom of seeing ‘African religion’ as indigenous religions only, while world religions are ‘foreign’. There is no doubt that the historical global movements of foreign religious societies had a major role in changing the southern African religious landscape, but by now, for world religions at least, the indigenous-exogenous binary is misleading. It tends to happen because of religious or theological bias, most often

when someone wants to reject a particular religion or theology, for example, through the familiar idea that colonisation forced Christianity on natives. The history of religious abuse is one thing, the history of religion another, and a careless conflation here dishonours the fact that persons can exercise their own discernment regarding whether to accept or resist new teachings under respective conditions of coercion, persuasion and, yes, inspiration. Christian converts under religious inspiration, and still possessing their faculties of reason and judgement, did indeed choose the Faith of the missionaries over ancestral heritage. It is condescending to regard this as merely mental colonisation. It is also dubious to attempt non-theological contextual or psychological ‘explanations’ of religious choices. My argument about theistic filiation is not about such explanation. I am arguing that theism engages profoundly with the metaphysics of filiation, not that this is really what religion is for.

The agency of theologically reasoning persons means that theologies, as elements of worldviews, have a particular cultural, social and political agency. World religions have shown enormous power to build international, multicultural communities that are otherwise difficult to conceive even in a postcolonial age. Theistic humanitarianism challenged slavery, colonial atrocity and apartheid, not only criticising the most brutal practices but also theologically invalidating the very ideology of racism and tribalism, which leftist politics could not always purge. Pan-Africanist socialism and neo-communism largely failed to provide a solution to “the problem of the twentieth century . . . the problem of the colour line” (Du Bois 24). One significant pragmatic context for the agency of theism is the mingling of ‘religion’ with ‘culture’. Theism, as a purely ontological commitment, needs cultural manifestations – such as rituals, customs and products – in order to become ‘religion’; yet theism constantly pursues the universal while culture particularises, even through the homogenisation of particularities. The ensuing creative tension between religion

and culture can be highly political, for example when Christian conversion upsets traditional gender norms by introducing a theological rather than ‘feminist’ censure of polygamy or underage marriage. Internationally, religion and culture again dance an ambivalent tango with each other. At moments when intense global cultural syncretism and the political enthronement of an aggressive liberalism ironically frighten many back into their caves of social parochialism, religion may assume the task of coordinating the cosmopolitan. Christian world evangelism and transoceanic clergy transfers are no longer Eurocentric but rather polycentric,⁶ including the multidirectional circulation of religious labour, leadership and products even from African Union countries to overseas territories. This means that even the most conservative theologies have a postmodern agency in coordinating cosmopolitanism.

The above descriptions privilege Christianity as the dominant international religion in southern Africa, and theism as the dominant theological stance, but this does not rule out

⁶ Stan Chu Ilo uses the word, ‘polycentric’, to describe an intellectual stance for theological analysis, which recognizes that “in World Christianity there are no more major and minor players; there is no mainstream theology or centre of Christianity, because mission is now from everyone to everywhere” (137). I do not find a convincing argument that there is no theological centre at all. There are certainly ecclesiastical hierarchies and orthodox teachings, which are not dispensable to millions of believers; nevertheless, certain aspects of Christianity, including world evangelical missions, are increasingly polycentric in comparison to European colonial evangelism. The rich history of Western reformations and revivals, as well as schisms, should remind us that Christianity has never had only one global centre with no internal complexities or challenges from the margins, of both a radical and a conservative nature. It is not a question of arguing between centre and no-centre, or one centre versus a multiplicity; for the very notion of a ‘centre’ is subjective and relative, even in a critical analysis. One might ask, for example, just how much consensus it takes for any group of institutional actors to constitute a ‘centre’ together rather than a polycentric assembly, and who decides this. It is for the sake of these cautions that I prefer to specify what observable phenomena are polycentric and how.

religious and theological diversity. The Abrahamic religions in southern African countries include not only Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but also the Bahá'í Faith, Rastafari and various Afro-Zionistic movements. Southern African countries also host diverse Eastern religions and spiritualities within Buddhist, Hindu and other less influential heritages. There are theologically heterodox international groups like Quakers, Spiritualists and Scientologists. There are also numerous New Age followings. Indigenous southern African ancestral religions, already a vast diversity, have engaged variously with all these influences, not always resulting in particular collective spiritual movements but often proliferating new idiosyncrasies of personal belief. All the larger religions have complex genealogies and institutions, their continental histories emerging from, and branching out again into, myriad local stations of activity and change. Southern African religious realities can quickly outdate even contemporary taxonomies and distinctions between beliefs or praxes, some of which do not even have adequate appellations. This makes theology itself diverse. There is certainly a dominant theistic poetics, but this is by no means a suggestion of creedal uniformity, or even a guarantee of creedal precision on the part of the individual believer. All this complexity means that an attempt at defining 'African' or even 'indigenous' theism would be less useful than engaging with the existential ramifications of theistic affinity within particular cultural territories. The point is not to debate what particular communities believe about the Creator, but rather to look at how theistic poetics articulates subjectivity, not as the most crucial theological concern, but nevertheless as a matter to which theology attends.

The above details of cultural and religious diversity, as well as theological agency, are important because I am not attempting an original theology but rather observing how the already active theism disperses, empowers and utilises itself within its cultural and religious milieus. I treat 'theism' as singular because what we are dealing with here, for the purposes

of this inquiry only, is the basic fact of theistic affinity, not the contextual complexity of multiple theistic declarations, the specificities of which do not change the basic fact; yet this affinity has a complex social distribution, as I have described. Such context is not secondary to the metaphysics of indigeneity and the subjectivities that emerge therein; a sensitive humanistic treatment of this emergence must fully render not only theism itself but also the diversity of circumstances of theism. This is a 'humanistic' rendering because it refuses to disembodify the agency and dispersal of theism from the agency of theists who disperse themselves and act within their worldviews. This means that religious diversity and dispersal cannot be dispensable footnotes to theory while the very conceptualisation of variables like 'agency' and 'subjectivity' remain the property of expert critical and sociological analyses that clinically distance their epistemologies from the worldviews of peoples. I do not contend with this distance in general, but it is an impediment for engaging fully with the metaphysics of indigeneity. The other relationships in my description of filiation below all show the dynamic relationship between the affinity itself and its multiple contexts-of-affinity.

The complexity of religious agency does not rule out the fact that theistic affinity still has its dominant modes and poetics, which strongly inform the metaphysics of filiation even beyond the context of religion. It is worth exploring, then, how the most mainstream cosmopolitan theological heritage active in southern Africa, Trinitarian Christianity, enters the metaphysics of filiation and bears on notions of indigeneity. Filiation has long been an important topic of Trinitarian theology, but the Catholic Church, more than other

denominations, uses the specific term, ‘divine filiation’,⁷ to describe the relationship between the Divine Persons of the Father and the Son, as well as the adoption of saints and believers, by grace, to become ‘sons of God’ according to New Testament teachings. The Gospels indicate a radical ontological distinction between this divine filiation and various ‘earthly’ filiations, as Jesus says “do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven” (Biblica, Matt. 23.9).⁸ Christian doctrines generally regard this distinction not as a disqualification of human filiations but rather as a matter of putting first things first in Christian identity; thus human filiations are legitimate for their own purposes within the limitations of the temporal order, which the Creator ordained. The metaphysics of filiation within indigeneity likewise encompasses both divine and earthly filiations, which overlap as

⁷ The Catholic theological tradition extensively covers the topic. Pope John Paul II, who is perhaps the most helpful modern pedagogue, emphasizes the Biblical foundation of the doctrine:

For as St. Paul teaches, “all who are led by the Spirit of God” are “children of God.” (Rom 8:14) The filiation of divine adoption is born in man on the basis of the mystery of the Incarnation, therefore through Christ the eternal Son. But the birth, or rebirth, happens when God the Father “sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.” (Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 1:22) Then “we receive a spirit of adopted sons by which we cry ‘Abba, Father!’” (Rom 8:15) Hence the divine filiation planted in the human soul through sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit. “It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”(Rom 8:16) Sanctifying grace is the principle and source of man’s new life: divine, supernatural life. (Pope John Paul II)

⁸ I am aware of the current trend, within more secularist strands of theological scholarship, to have controversial authenticity debates about Biblical biographies and authorships. Such argument would be a profitless diversion here, since my aim is to understand the metaphysics of identity and subjectivity within precisely those contemporary worldviews that draw directly from the Bible.

part of a broader filiation with multiple progenitors, including the Creator, ancestors and parents. We might say that the metaphysics of filiation within indigeneity is a ‘multilateral filiation’, collecting within itself different ‘unilateral filiations’, such as divine filiation (with the Creator), specific human filiations (with ancestors, parents and elders), and diverse metaphorical filiations (with the consanguineous collective, land and country, and cultural heritage). I would argue that the multilateral filiation may give a subjective feeling of coherence to identities that include various unilateral filiations. This would certainly make sense to the Jewish saints of the New Testament church, as simultaneously sons of Abraham, sons of Israel (the land) and sons of God. St Paul goes as far as to say that filiation with Abraham is primarily spiritual, and ethnocentrism has no place at all:

For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children . . . In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. (Rom. 9.6-8)

The promise is the universal redemption of the Christ, so that those who “belong to Christ . . . are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3.29); hence “those who have faith are children of Abraham” (Gal. 3.7), and more stunningly, “a person is a Jew who is one inwardly . . . by the Spirit” (Rom. 2.29). It is not possible to fully explore here the rich Biblical metaphysics, let alone the vast church doctrines, but it is clear to millions of non-scholarly Christian Bible readers that they are to see themselves as children of Abraham, by faith, and children of God, by grace. This exemplifies the sophistication of multilateral filiation, whereby, even in the ancient Biblical teachings, spiritual genealogy can be both

crucial to identity and independent of genetics. The effect of multilateral filiation is to diversify rather than disqualify genealogy, thus providing new options beyond either genealogical exclusion or indifference to origins.

This theological exploration is not about reducing the metaphysics of filiation to the influence of Christianity on southern African culture and society. Confucian ethics, which is even more explicit about the dynamics of multilateral filiation, predates Christianity; hence, regardless of missionary history in southern Africa, a non-racist critical ethnology can only presume that all ancient societies, possessing the same human intelligence, were equally capable – as the ancient Chinese and the Apostolic-Messianic Jews clearly were – of independently discovering this multilateral metaphysics of filiation.⁹ My stance here is not a polemic against Christianity itself, which would agree with its foundational theologian, St Paul, that, even before the Apostles exported their spiritual heritage, Gentile peoples had the ethos “written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness” (Rom. 2.15). Divine

⁹ Guang Xing provides a comparative study of two of the major Eastern cosmologies, arguing that “Confucianism considers filial piety as the highest norm to be followed by all members of society, while Buddhism considers karma as the basis of ethics, although it also teaches filial piety as the most important ethical conduct.” (30) Filiation itself is, of course, the premise of identity and subjectivity without which there could be no filial piety, a voluntary moral response to an involuntary kinship. The importance that both Confucian and Buddhist ethics place on filial piety makes filiation itself the very grounds for any prospect of a social personhood. All this is stunningly comparable to the southern African metaphysics of filiation that I describe; yet it would not be feasible to make a deterministic historical argument on cultural influence from China to southern Africa, or even to Israel. This striking example shows that it is unnecessary, even dubious, to try to attribute the southern African poetics of filiation to any overseas influence for the mere sake of establishing causality. We simply cannot know how much of this filial ethos pre-literate and pre-colonial southern African societies had developed before meeting the colonialists, who disingenuously denied that any ethos they themselves valued could have already been part of indigenous worldviews.

filiation is only one – albeit arguably the most existentially profound – unilateral filiation among others within the multilateral filiation of indigeneity.

Like the Creator, ancestors are spirit beings, but they are distinct from and subservient to the Creator. In numerous southern African indigenous religions, ancestors are the addressees of supplications through prayer, ritual and sacrifices; however, ancestors are also invisible mediators between the Creator and incarnate humans who petition for divine benevolence. One learns about all this not from any cosmological literature but from growing up within a particular social context and absorbing the general understanding. The concept of ‘ancestors’ is itself mutable, the word sometimes strictly referring to spirit beings in the afterlife and sometimes including incarnate parents and elders, who will soon join the invisible ancestors under the earth. In this regard, conventions differ from one society to another. Each indigenous spiritual tradition has its unique beliefs about death and the afterlife, but in general, death is not only an end to incarnate life, but also a rite of passage from one kind of life to the next. The transitioning soul may require the assistance of the incarnate relatives, who perform particular rituals or rites to ensure the safety of the passage. There are varying beliefs about the boundaries and distance between life and death. Some traditions maintain that the souls of the ‘living-dead’ may continue to traverse the earth. The living-dead may observe, protect or even haunt the living. There are also different beliefs about the distance between ancient ancestors and souls that have recently departed from their mortal bodies. Traditions offer different beliefs about how soon the transitioning soul can meet the ancestors, or whether the soul of the descendant becomes equal in status with the ancient ancestors. Describing beliefs is tricky because of the temptation to portray them as somewhat like ‘doctrines’. In reality, most southern African indigenous beliefs continue through intergenerational transmission in the form of collective cultural praxis, which

involves mimesis and oral instruction. There are no institutional mechanisms that have the capacity to effectively police what people say and think about the afterlife (such policing is not even effectual in literary religions). Cultures cannot guarantee creedal consistency, and there cannot be consistently clear distinctions between the worldviews of ethnic groups in close proximity, but the broadest beliefs of many groups are similar while their poetics are complex. Two cultures may share an identical spiritual idea but have different symbolic and narrative traditions to communicate the same idea. The traditions themselves may still share contents or ways of interpreting contents. All this happens while global and continental homogenisations distribute generic products and representations to different southern African localities. The endless transfer of practices and poetics is pertinent, but ultimately an unreliable resource for finding the intercultural commonality of myriad southern African ancestral traditions. The metaphysics of filiation is the only consistently necessary aspect of different ancestral traditions, and ancestors are important progenitors in many indigenous traditions.

Primordial ancestors are at the furthest point of temporal origin, while parents and elders are the most recent human progenitors. An indigenous narrative about ancestors is not only spiritual and cosmological but also genealogical. Similarly, genealogies are part of spiritual ontology; hence incarnate parents and elders simultaneously serve, answer to and represent the invisible ancestors. In the indigenous metaphysics of filiation, having a social and spiritual identity entails maintaining strong relationships with parents and elders. Southern African dominant moral codes, including cosmopolitan ones, generally emphasise the duty to honour parents and elders as well as persons in positions of authority. This is not something unique to southern African or indigenous cultures; yet, the African Union has revealingly ‘Africanised’ and institutionalised the ethos of honouring elders. What this

institutionalisation reveals, for our purposes, is the importance of filiation to the very structure of political thinking. Chapter II of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) describes a citizen's duties, which must complement human rights. Article 27 states that individuals have "duties towards . . . family and society, the State and other legally recognized communities and the international community". According to Article 29, an individual must "preserve the harmonious development . . . cohesion and respect of the family . . . respect his parents at all times" and "maintain them in case of need". Such statements are not merely demands from the political hegemony but rather the expression of common cultural mores that informed the upbringing of African Union leaders and bureaucrats.

Harmonious intergenerational and hierarchical relations are also an important aspect of enjoying the relationship with the Creator, since religious duty itself includes filial reverence, service and devotion toward human parents, as the fourth commandment of the Decalogue specifies. The multifarious application of filial duty – as axis of social, institutional and cultural relations – is also quite explicit even in religious instruction. The Banjul Charter could have easily cited the following Biblical exposition from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who

administer or govern it. This commandment includes and presupposes the duties of parents, instructors, teachers, leaders, magistrates, those who govern, all who exercise authority over others or over a community of persons (CCC 2199)

I am not suggesting that the Banjul Charter drew upon the CCC; the unlikelihood of this is precisely what makes the coherence between the two documents interesting. Filial piety, an ideal with which Confucius influenced an entire culture – ‘filial piety’ being the common English translation of the Chinese term, *xiaojing*, “the root of . . . virtue . . . out of which grows . . . the service of parents . . . the service of the ruler . . . completed by the establishment of character” (I) – is the topic of an ancient moral agreement between worldviews with vastly different social histories.¹⁰ Deterministic or functionalistic cultural genealogies would be the clumsiest ways of trying to make sense of this agreement. A better way is to see filial piety as integral to the axiology of filial harmony – in the sense of the progenitor and the progeny enjoying a happy relationship – which is intrinsically pleasant wherever it is attainable, thus intuitively desirable.

¹⁰ I thank my friend and colleague, Doctor William Shüler, for the crucial suggestion of looking to Confucius for a classical philosophy that is notably relevant to (though not specifically dealing with) indigeneity.

Filial piety is also an emphasis of ‘ubuntu’, an indigenous southern African ‘humanism’ that is common to numerous cultures.¹¹ Scholars like Christian B.N. Gade and Nicolito A. Gianan have properly investigated the literary and oral history of this concept; I will focus on bringing ubuntu into the metaphysics of filiation. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and Statesman Nelson Mandela provided the most internationally popular understanding of ubuntu as mainly an ethos of humane character. Such emphasis came about in the context of the nonviolent struggle against apartheid and the post-apartheid movement for national reconciliation. Ubuntu also has to do with filial compliance to social mores, customs and governances within respective cultures; thus ubuntu aims not only for humanitarianism, but also for intergenerational and hierarchical harmony. It summons individuals to actively contribute to social wellbeing by accepting the authority and revering the wisdom of the elders. The advocacies of ubuntu often try to describe it as an ‘ethos’, an ‘ethics’ or even a ‘philosophy’, but this is misleading because ubuntu is not so systematic. It is more like a popular sentiment with moral suggestions and likely roots in traditional ideals of which there is no adequate literary historical record. The ideals of filial piety and humanitarianism are certainly a ‘virtue canon’, but this canon does not accurately represent the vast range of collective and individual understandings, not all of which are conducive to justice, and not all of which are sympathetic to ubuntu itself. It can easily camouflage traditional chauvinism, especially regarding gender and patriarchy; thus it creates very

¹¹ Ubuntu is the isiZulu term, from the same etymological root as ‘Bantu’, the name for southern Africa’s largest language family (see footnote 2). The two words refer to humanness, humaneness and personhood. ‘Ubuntu’ has become the internationally representative pan-ethnic term, but different societies have their respective unique yet comparable concepts, sometimes with rhyming terms, like ‘chivanhu’, in chiShona, referring to traditional heritage, custom and etiquette, with all forms of domestic and social justice implicit, and the practice of which makes one ‘munhu chaiye’, the ‘true person’.

diverse feelings about it depending on the life experience of the hearer, so that some have reason to detest it. In reality, it is impossible to say what ubuntu actually is; we only know some of what diverse advocacies, scepticisms and resistances think it is. I do not need to see the face; the wardrobe of masks is enough to tell me that there is a show going on. Ubuntu's virtue canon shows that the metaphysics of filiation is one sure current in the stream of moral sentiments reaching southern African societies.

Ubuntu is also integral to the reasoning by which pan-Africanist essentialism conflates identity with otherness, especially otherness as difference from 'Western culture'. The compensatory rationale of pan-Africanist essentialism not infrequently regards ubuntu as the one thing that is missing from the otherwise superior West, a worldview deficit leading to Western society's disastrous loss of humaneness and respect for elders. There is certainly a prejudice in this perception, but the claims are not so wild. The observations are real while the description is inaccurate due to a subtle Afrocentric xenophobia. It is not 'Western' society but rather national and global plutocracies, which are everywhere, circumscribing gerontocracy so that only elders with money and power can have security and influence. Poor and powerless elders are at risk of social abuse or neglect in any geopolitical context. Industrialism exacerbates this as retirement renders ordinary people 'useless' to the labour economy; hence a safe and comfortable retirement is the main practical goal of one's working life. Senior citizens forfeit the rank of 'elders' and become 'the elderly', subjects of charity rather than reverence. Certain discrete gatherings, especially for religious, cultural or communitarian causes, including those in indigenous and ethnic contexts, continue to provide senior citizens with opportunities to become 'elders'. The former labourer and family provider transforms into the new life force of a local community as the axiology of filiation enters a crucial restitution of parental dignity, which belongs to (but is not the only prospect

of) human dignity. This gives the impression that some kind of traditional values, such as religious or 'indigenous' values, are missing from some other kind of society that is different from 'ours'. These ancient values are intercultural, international and necessary to human thriving.

Among incarnate relatives, elders, parents and grandparents are the most important members of the consanguineous collective, which itself is an organism and a progenitor giving birth to individuals. Etymologically, 'consanguineous' means 'together in blood', in other words, 'of the same blood'. In its ordinary and legal uses, the adjective usually applies to members of the same family and lineage; for convenience, I make a distinction between 'closer' and 'greater' consanguineous collectives. It is not easy to draw a conceptual boundary between the two, or even between consanguineous collectives and society at large. Indigenous idealisms themselves may describe humanity as ultimately one big consanguineous collective; yet indigenous cultures often maintain the importance of exclusive consanguinity in the constitution of a unique society and its internal partitions of kinship. The boundaries of exclusive consanguinity are both indispensable and contextually specific, but also historically contingent. In past traditional dispensations, the largest formation of the greater consanguineous collective was the ethnic nation, with its distinct language, culture and cosmology. Some of the larger ethnic nations were also complex political organisations of peoples sharing sovereign kingdoms under the rule of dynastic monarchies. An ethnic nation of this kind comprised multiple tribes, each with its own province, possibly a regional dialect, and a dynastic chieftaincy. The tribe included many totem groups, each with its unique oral heritage, ancestral names and possibly customary taboos under the subjunctive authority of a totem forbear. A totem group included a number of clans, each with a distinct family memory and under the guardianship of the family elders

as a community. A clan was a number of families, each with parents, grandparents and possibly great grandparents, thus different unions of filiation for every incarnate progenitor and progeny, the respective relationships shaping individual biographies. A ‘personal life’, the existential axis of subjectivity, was inseparable from the experience of filiation, for better or worse; estrangement or disownment were certainly always possible, but even these belong to the metaphysics of filiation, as I will illustrate in the subsequent chapters.

Colonial ethnology created all sorts of confusion with its own uses of concepts like ‘tribe’ and ‘clan’, attempting to associate locality within ‘simplicity’ in order to defend primitivism, but the racism of the past is not the only problem here. In reality, no literary ethnology can tame the diversity and flux of popular conceptualisations of respective social groupings. The above outline draws from my own background knowledge only to assist the imaginations of foreign readers. This picture also does not reflect the intercultural and interethnic scrambling of consanguineous assemblages. The genealogical pyramid is a cultural idealism that not only meets contemporary challenges but also did not remain rigid even in the past. I am not referring to the questionable romanticism about deliberately non-hierarchical traditional societies here. The main complication of the genealogical pyramid is the reality of exogamy at all levels, from marrying outside the clan to marrying outside the ethnic group. Under patriarchal rules, the wife becomes part of the husband’s family, contributing her fertility for the continuation of his lineage; thus she becomes herself an organ in the organism of the consanguineous collective that birthed her husband. She becomes an ethnic sister, which usually means that she must learn her husband’s language, observe his customs and adjust to his cosmology as necessary. His parents become her parents, and she may gradually become competent in articulating the family memories. This process of becoming an ethnic sister is a process of performance and part of ubuntu, a

showing of filial piety that leads to deeper filiation at the level of subjectivity if the in-law relationships are good. The husband also has duties toward his in-laws, and his filial piety must perform well, particularly during prenuptial negotiations and transactions. Good ubuntu in this sense is part of good courtship, but the resulting interfamilial bonds do not counteract the genealogical exclusivity of the man's family, which his wife must join as a full member, effectively changing her own identity, if she is to bear children for the continuity of the paternal lineage. These are all 'ideal' circumstances according to ideas about old customs, which do not necessarily reflect many contemporary experiences, especially for metropolitan and cosmopolitan persons who do not live within traditional social dispensations. Not everyone is in touch with their families from the paternal lineage, and many who are can nevertheless identify strongly with their families from the maternal lineage. Even if the traditional genealogical pyramid is in place, it does not necessarily determine everything about how a person subjectively experiences being part of the consanguineous collective.

The genealogical pyramid engenders a 'temporal' sense of belonging within groupings that range from the 'most recent' family, via clan, totem and tribe to the 'most ancient' family, which is the ethnic nation. This is an ideological configuration, and the basis of sentiments that are part of affective experience, hence by no means inconsequential; yet the ontology of affinity also reckons a 'proxemic' range from the 'closest' kinship to the most 'distant'. People may still use categories of 'clan' and 'totem' for their sense of identity, but at the deepest level of affinity, the retaining of particular genealogical concepts is arguably less important than the proxemic understanding that one belongs to a 'first family', a 'greater family', and a 'much greater family'. What this precisely means for an individual will vary from one family context to the next; a 'first family' may not be exactly the same thing as a 'nuclear family'. First cousins or step-siblings, perhaps from the same household

or community, may identify each other as first siblings.¹² Living circumstances may not be the only condition for this, since not all particular cultural and social conventions strictly regulate the ontology of affinity according to genetic proximity. A sister is a sister, and a brother is a brother, though this by no means detracts from the importance of genealogy in practical matters such as inheritance. The point here is that the organism of the consanguineous collective is very ‘organic’ in its substance and subtle in its ontology, using contingent and specific cultural vocabularies to render itself legible as part of identity poetics.

The consanguineous collective relates to each individual member as someone who is both organ and progeny; in other words, an individual is simultaneously ‘in’ and ‘from’ the larger social organism. All progeny are organisms in their own right. The procreative progeny-organisms are also organs of reproduction within the body of the greater social organism. The consanguineous collective and its manifold progeny-organisms-as-organs belong together in an oneness that makes filiation deeply inter-corporeal. The personal body is an incarnation of the collective body, and personal intelligence a neuron of collective intelligence, which in turn thinks the total thought-gathering of fathomless personal intelligences through generations. This is why a highly individualistic, empirical or critically neutral anthropological authorship has always been ethically and epistemologically problematic for writing about indigenous peoples. An organ from another body cannot adequately express the feelings of a whole different nervous system. Indigenous scholars and cultural agents must do this; moreover, indigenous knowledge is not simply about genetic

¹² I am using categories like ‘first cousin’ and ‘step-sibling’ for the convenience of English-speaking readers. Such categories are neither the universal norm nor something very strange to African families, which vary in their uses of indigenous or exogenous concepts.

prerogatives to produce certain data. The issue is not authenticity but rather particular and profound forms of relationship.¹³ Being an organ involves living through, and maintaining, practical and existential dependency on the great organism, the survival of which requires every organ to embody the collective will-to-life. This is the nervous system that cannot find adequate expression through someone whose personal existentialism really does not depend on the survival of the particular consanguineous collective under scrutiny.

The above prose shows that the consanguineous collective is a unique dimension of the metaphysics of filiation, but one more emphasis can bring this home. The consanguineous collective includes parents, elders and ancestors, but also spouses, children and even total strangers. Filiation with the whole great organism is qualitatively different from filiation with ancestors, parents and elders. One's children and spouse are not one's progenitors; yet the relationship with spouse and children is still part of the metaphysics of filiation because all kin are part of the great progenitor-organism of the consanguineous collective. Relating to one's own progeny is always an instance of relating to the whole social organism from which the family originates.

All this has important spiritual and cosmological ramifications. Since each person is an organ living inside the body of the great progenitor-organism, the 'origin' is also a 'milieu'. It is comparable to the part of the body where biological progeny reside and act like organs; in other words, the consanguineous collective is a 'womb'. This means that the incarnate life is a foetal growth, so that death, as a rite of passage, is also a birth into the afterlife. Invisible ancestors have gone there as 'new' spirits, into a 'new' life; thus they have gone 'ahead' in spiritual time even though 'behind' in historical time. The spirit realm is both

¹³ I do not claim the title of 'indigenous scholar' in this sense of someone who expresses and lives within a particular indigenous epistemology. I am defending it here as part of the Socratic audition (see Introduction).

past and future, origins and destiny. Life emanates from and returns to the Creator. One remembers the ancestors while hoping that they, who came before and have now gone ahead, will remember and embrace their own who came after and are still behind. If death is birth, then one of the most important aspirations is a long incarnate life, that is, sufficient time in the womb. Elders are worthy of respect and trust not only because they represent ancestors and know past traditions, but also because they are the most mature, ready people to go to the next life; they are leaders into destiny. Premature death – that is, death before the right age of maturity – is premature birth into the afterlife; thus early death causes much religious and spiritual anxiety, resulting in various ritualistic responses. Such responses may be about dealing with ‘curses’ and other evils, but are also to ensure that the premature entrant will find safety in the netherworld under the watchful parental eyes of the invisible ancestors and the Creator. Theology, eschatology and genealogy meet each other through the metaphysics of filiation.

The themes of land and country continue the metaphysics of origin-as-milieu-as-womb. In southern African poetics of autochthony, the concepts of ‘land’ and ‘country’ are not only geographical or ecological but also spiritual and existential. The ‘land’ is not merely the surface of the soil or the natural environment but rather the whole thick potency of chthonic fertility and climatic force from which the fullness of life springs forth. The natural milieu is like a body for the benevolent and judicial Creator; yet the ecology can also continue without the theology, and vice versa. Even without theology, an indigenous ecology may describe the natural milieu as having an ‘intention’, though this may not necessarily mean a highly rationalistic ‘intelligence’ as such. This will-capacity makes the natural milieu a ‘being’ as much as a phenomenon, thus a willing progenitor. Human beings are progeny of the earth-being, the filiation with whom is one of the bases of subjectivity; yet human beings

are also inhabitants of the natural milieu and participants in the ecosystem; thus humans are effectively organs of the chthonic body. The progeny are simultaneously ‘from’, ‘in’ and ‘of’ this body, again like foetuses; hence the natural milieu is a life-womb in which one grows until one is ready for the rite of passage through death. In numerous indigenous cosmological poetics, the spirit realm or netherworld is interchangeable with the earth itself as both a current, physical place of repose for mortals and an ancient, supernatural place of origins to which the very spirits of the ancestors have returned. In certain cultural poetics, it is normal to refer to ancestors reverently as the ‘ones below’. The chthonic progenitor does not expel but rather reabsorbs its progeny-organism-organ through death. Some groups and individuals may experience the filiation with the earth-being so deeply that to lose the land is not simply a tragedy of dispossession; it is to lose the only context within which one knows how to ‘live’ – meaning practical and existential survival – and expects to ‘die’ – meaning spiritual survival. Indigenous ecology is about the holistic dependency on the chthonic progenitor, ‘motherland’ or ‘fatherland’, appellations that are not merely poetic but rather represent quite serious ontological commitments.

This serious ontology also has a serious terrestrial politics, which treats belonging and propriety as exclusive to those from this land rather than from other, especially overseas, lands. Such exclusivity is profoundly compelling precisely because the earth is a progenitor to the whole of humanity. The children all get their respective entitlements according to the ancient judicial wisdom-of-time that placed peoples in their own lands, a wisdom that is ultimately a work of the Creator. Justice in indigenous rights partisanship is not a socialist principle of equal distribution but rather a proprietary ethos of correct ownership. Indigenous peoples want justice, but more specifically, they want what is theirs, for under proprietary justice, not everyone can have this or that ancestral land. Environmental dependency is

important, but it cannot be in isolation as a criterion for proprietary justice, which must link with the whole metaphysics of filiation, firstly acknowledging ancestral ownership, then presuming the ancestors' right-to-bequeath, and finally bringing the descendants into the contemporary proprietary argument. Ancestral filiation, confirming the status of 'progeny', guarantees the status of 'heirs', which in turn presumes the right to inheritance, leading to the proprietary rights of indigenous peoples. This chain of reasoning provides the rationale for land claims, but it is the dense ontology of terrestrial belonging that engenders the passionate desire for restitution. Inheriting the land is part of being in relationship with the ancestors themselves, who not only bequeath the homeland but also are 'in' and part of that very earth. There is more at stake here than economic and political expediency, though the land is certainly important for the survival of peoples. The metaphysics of terrestrial belonging is part of a complete and profound indigenous humanism.

The international poetics of indigenous humanism has already found an elegant way to express both terrestrial universalism and proprietary distinctions. The duality suggests itself in the alternation of two main, equally familiar appellations, 'Mother Earth' and 'motherland'.¹⁴ The motherland has a finite community of belonging while all peoples are children of Mother Earth, the anthropomorphism of whom is more noticeable. Mother Earth is very much like a goddess, birthing and nurturing all life forms, rewarding the good that

¹⁴ I thank my friend, Doctor Hugh Ortega-Breton, for nudging me with psychoanalytic-sociological ideas about the significance of the 'mother figure' in the poetics of indigeneity and ecology. I have not ventured into psychoanalysis itself because, as my thesis will show, indigeneity's reasoning on subjectivity is remarkably explicit and deliberate about its own psychology for the purpose of rendering itself intelligible and maintaining its integrity, its togetherness. The indigenous humanism of this body of selfhood emphasizes the wholeness of the person, thus ethically resisting the kind of 'dismemberment' drive that characterizes the general approaches of critical psychoanalysis and deconstruction.

human beings do, but also lamenting the bad and possibly punishing humanity through natural calamity, as do some of her counterparts from various global theological narratives. In this way, the characterisation of Mother Earth has an arguably stronger suggestion of a particular ‘intelligence’ within the earth-being.

Paradoxically, this very distinction between motherland and Mother Earth – a distinction between simple will-capacity and intelligent will-capacity – is also what makes them ontologically inseparable, not only from each other but also from other cosmic agencies. Southern African traditional cosmologies may attribute various natural difficulties to the anger of the ancestors rather than the Creator or the earth-being, but since ancestors are part of the earth and represent the Creator, the wrath is effectively from one source, namely, the progenitors. Possible offenses worthy of such wrath include poor stewardship of the earth, failure to maintain traditions and filial piety, or rampant social injustice; the particular offenses usually interrelate as aspects of a general offensiveness. The punishment may also be a general curse with many manifestations, including adversarial weather conditions like droughts or deadly storms, an adversarial biodiversity manifesting through disease, pests and problems with dangerous animals, as well as adversarial human behaviours like war and lawlessness. The progenitors’ wrath may either target the progeny only or aim to trouble humanity at large. This narrative is a familiar part of Old Testament¹⁵ monotheistic prose on natural realities and divine justice, but certain indigenous traditional cosmologies may also speak directly about life-creating, life-sustaining and life-destroying deities that discipline humanity. What is central to the metaphysics of filiation is not any particular characterisation

¹⁵ I am using the terminology of the Bible because this is the form in which the majority of southern African people read the writings of the Tanakh as part of Christian Scriptures.

from a particular belief system, but rather an ontology that can find itself within different cultural and religious vocabularies.

There is certainly a complex gender politics in all the talk of the ‘femininity’ of the earth. International indigenous poetics about Mother Earth may link this feminine agency to certain traditional or contemporary indigenous gender egalitarianisms and even matriarchy. This may or may not involve an ideology of gender neutrality. Southern African indigenous cosmologies do not necessarily integrate the feminisation of the chthonic body with strong feminism; in fact, gender oppression and sexual violence are major problems within numerous southern African indigenous societies. Pan-Africanist indigenous peoples’ rights advocacies have identified these problems as major developmental hurdles even for the communities of indigenous minorities (Mukundi 53-54; Crawhall 33). More broadly, the chauvinistic pan-Africanist essentialisms are not averse to incorporating the poetics of ‘motherland’ even while maintaining sexism and jingoism. Again, as I mention in the Introduction, colonial racism had its own poetics of the feminisation of ‘foreign’ land as a savage body and a target for rape. These are important indications that the feminisation of land does not automatically signal a feminist poetics or prevent chauvinism. I am also not yet describing a particular ‘rhetoric’ on the feminisation of land, but rather giving an impression of the phenomenology of the terrestrial, and the ontology of the chthonic, as involving a sense— not a credo – of the progeny’s habitation within the world-womb. My main interest is in portraying an existential sensibility rather than reporting a specific belief; nevertheless, my choice of metaphor is not random, for this sensibility does have distinct cosmological adumbrations as I have described. Some of these have proven implemental for indigenous feminist, communitarian and ecological ethics.

I have suggested ontological links between international and pan-Africanist poetics of the feminine earth; now here is a noteworthy example of global Earth-Mother activism contributing directly to developmental work with an indigenous people in South Africa. The Gaia Foundation, an international Green organisation, funded the Venda indigenous peoples' cultural regeneration and sacred natural sites protection initiative, Mupo Foundation. The Gaia Foundation has supported other indigenous peoples' ecological sustainability initiatives around the globe. The name of the organisation is a deliberate reference to James Lovelock's Gaia Theory, a scientific description of the earth as a system of biochemical interdependence. The Gaia Foundation draws on Gaia theory extensively for an ecological rationale, but the cosmological association is not casual:

So when we use the term 'Gaia' today, we are invoking an idea with a very ancient history, which for many millennia expressed the feeling of early people that Earth was the Universal Mother, such that the human story and the Universe story were one and the same. The significance of the name 'Gaia' for us today is that she was the last Goddess of Earth in the west, the last time that our Earth was formally revered as sacred. ('Gaia: Stories of Origin')

This is a strong statement about the earth as a maternal progenitor, literally a physical organism but also a divine agency that deserves religious reverence as the origin and sustenance of the world. The whole natural purpose of human existence is in this context:

Our work is founded on the recognition that the Earth is a dynamic living whole whose complex processes have maintained the conditions for life to

evolve over millions of years. Humans are an integral part of these living processes and we depend on them for our own wellbeing. It is for this reason that we must ensure that we find a mutually enhancing way to live on the planet, the only home for all species, including ourselves. ('About Us')

The message is simple and powerful: reverence complements cooperation with and care for the progenitor. The imperative of ensuring environmental sustainability is not only about human survival and ecosystem continuity but also about moral improvement, which itself is not only a transcendent ideal but also a precondition for the pragmatic goals. "If we do not understand that the crises we face are symptoms of a deeper moral, ethical and spiritual crisis, no technical fixes will help us. Creating a viable future is about justice-for humans, for the Earth, and future generations of all species". In this moral argument, indigenous communities and their goals become crucial for addressing the human and planetary concerns. "By reviving indigenous knowledge and protecting sacred natural sites, local self-governance is strengthened. This enables communities to become more resilient to climate change and the industrial processes which have caused the many crises we now face" ('About Us'). The Gaia Foundation focuses greatly on assisting indigenous communities to ensure the continuity of ancestral knowledge for the preservation of local environments. There is no transferrable 'global' methodology for saving the environment. It is the indigenous worldviews and heritages themselves that must provide various moral and ecological perspectives within respective localities. In this context, being indigenous means being a responsible human who knows how to revere and nurture the planet as a living progenitor that supplies both life and identity. Such ethics brings the ontological into the practical.

In narratives of indigeneity, cultural heritage is indispensable to natural heritage, since the ancestors passed on both the land and the praxis of living on it. This praxis is pragmatic and poetic; indigenous lifestyles are not only about environmental survival but also about the creativity of descendants and ancestors alike. The land-ancestors-heritage-creativity connection informs the communitarian activism of indigenous minorities as well as the mainstream populism of sovereign southern African nations. Genealogy and geography are inseparable in cultural memory, each one necessary for making the other significant; the poetics of ‘country’ must reverently mention the ancient inhabitants, while the poetics of ancestry needs its nostalgias about the landscape of epic journeys and great kingdoms. In some traditional rites, descendants feed their ancestors by pouring beer onto the soil. Traditional dance choreographies emphasise the stamping of the feet, which traditionalist sentimentalities associate with the earthy orientation of indigenous spirituality. Popular Afrocentric essentialisms sometimes contrast this earthy corporeality and spirituality with elevation-centric cultural imports, like ballet, which came with the heaven-centric religions. Such dualism may push cultural politics too much to the detriment of theology and anthropology, but it does reveal some cosmological commitments that crucially link aesthetic heritage, earth and ancestors.

The theological-anthropological weak point still requires redress before engaging further with heritage; a quick ‘thought experiment’ will help here. The Book of Genesis provides the theologically foundational premise that the Creator made humans out of the soil, to which mortals return. The first people in Genesis are hunter-gatherers living freely on the benevolence of the Creator. The story of origins ends with a change to pastoral and agrarian lifestyles, the vocations of which are important to the identity poetics of the ancient Israelites. Human stewardship of the earth remains a prominent theme throughout Genesis, but from

Abraham onwards, the Creator's specific promise of returning the descendants to the ancestral land is a major theme of the genealogical narrative beyond Genesis. This Book is deeply resonant with the basic social, environmental and spiritual themes of southern African prehistory and history. It is not at all difficult to see how southern African followers of Abrahamic Faiths can strongly identify with Genesis while maintaining an intense interest in their own autochthony and cultural history; in fact, Genesis, as a theological anthropology, can easily inspire this very passion for origins. The Scriptures are available in numerous southern African indigenous languages, and translations inevitably involve not only new words but also new poetical modes and idioms that have their own previous cultural associations. There is no need to mention 'liberation theology' and other bold experiments here, for even the most orthodox classical theologies are full of cultural and generational particularities. What is important is the metaphysics itself, and in the canonical Scriptures, the identity and indigeneity of the Israelites evolves through all the themes that I have described. The narrative revolves around the Creator, who made the natural world, gave the Jewish ancestors their Law – a complete justice and etiquette system hinging on both religious and filial pieties – and then guided the vast ethnic nation to its ancestral lands, for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of Israel and preserving its heritage. I am not saying that the metaphysics of filiation is the real meaning of the Scriptures; it is not. What my thought experiment and this chapter have argued is that this metaphysics has an ancient, and uncannily consistent, intercultural anthropology.

While the natural heritage of land is a fundamental part of the cultural heritage of some communities, there is also more to indigenous cultural heritage. A significant new institutional response is the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH). The convention came after decades-long debates

about the exclusionary axiology within the concept of ‘world’ cultural heritage according to previous UNESCO definitions, which had overlooked the praxes of societies that did not build monumental structures such as the most famous temples and fortresses. The convention’s preamble points to “communities, in particular indigenous communities” as main actors in the work of producing and reproducing intangible cultural heritages, which variously help in social development, and ultimately in “bringing human beings closer together”. I have already noted how the indigenous peoples’ movement has long considered cultural preservation an important work, the undertaking of which the UNDRIP declares an indigenous peoples’ right. The movement’s themes of community survival and collective dignity are fundamental to the rationale of the CSICH.

This policy on cultural heritage brings anthropology into dialogue with humanitarian axiology. The anthropological premises are evident through the description of both the form and purpose of intangible cultural heritage. Article 2, paragraph 1, defines intangible cultural heritage as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”. Such dynamically social, temporal and ephemeral cultural work is “transmitted from generation to generation” and “constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history”. Intangible cultural heritage is a psychological and spiritual asset that “provides . . . a sense of identity and continuity” to respective communities. The humanitarian part not only focuses on human development, but also highlights an ethos of multiculturalism, as the CSICH specifically aims to protect assets that can serve the purposes of “promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity” while remaining “compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as

. . . sustainable development”. This makes cultural survival in indigenous and folk contexts integral to a global moral ecology.

Such an outlook includes its own international phenomenology of culture. Paragraph 2 suggests five main “domains” in which intangible cultural heritage manifests: “(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language . . . (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship”. A supplementary fact sheet explains that the list is neither exhaustive nor rigidly categorising but rather suggestive of the major common indicators, often merging within a single event, through which it is possible to determine the manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. The sophistication of the CSICH does not preclude questions about the logistics of ‘safeguarding’ intangible cultural heritage (Kurin 72), the empirical difficulties of the concept of the ‘intangible’ with regard to dynamically physical indigenous and folk cultures (70), as well as the UNESCO prose’s “tendency to freeze social life in time, to imagine stable boundaries where none exist, and to attribute to social groups (especially indigenous ones) a vague, even mystical otherness” (Brown 45). This in turn raises the question of how to view these practices for ethnological description without giving into ethnological voyeurism, which treats the interesting ‘other’ as a passive object of the inquisitive gaze. I suggest that addressing this question requires going beyond the cultural phenomenology itself, not by abandoning it but by going deeper into its humanism.

I began the philosophical quest by arguing for a writing that is receptive to the reasonable voice of indigenous subjectivity, a writing that is about finding a healing expression rather than an incisive dissection. Such expression must use the indigenous metaphysics itself as much as bookish perspectives and analytical binoculars. This

undertaking is not primarily a hunt for facts and phenomena, but rather an inspiring encounter with the world that we already know. Such encounter is to help us to develop better sensibilities for appreciating the people of that world. The encounter itself helps to define and draw out the metaphysics underlying the poetics and politics of performance. One of my broader philosophical aims is to help in bridging gulfs between indigenous and non-indigenous ways of knowing culture. This seems quite necessary when the topic of discussion is the return of indigeneity as both philosophical object and epistemological challenge in pan-Africanist thought. The focus on subjectivity is essential.

Cultural heritage helps in the moulding and remoulding of subjectivity for indigenous peoples in South Africa. This moulding and remoulding may be through upbringing or through later choices, for example, when a mature person embarks on a process of self-discovery by learning the 'old ways', perhaps in the context of a family reunion. Cultural heritage is a universe of practices within which to not only locate the self but also to actively seek an experience of filiation that constitutes selfhood. The self is not merely a social construct and an outcome of social cause-and-effect but rather a decisive answer to the call to participate in human life. The progenitor makes that call and the progeny answers. Traditional initiation rites enact this principle through the interaction between the elder who gives instruction and the young initiate who submits to ceremonial authority in order to gain social recognition as a new adult.¹⁶ This certainly is reminiscent of an ideological interpellation, though I am not necessarily making a deterministic argument here. Tradition and heritage are more than social conditions for making subjectivity. I classify heritage as a

¹⁶ Arnold van Gennep, in the seminal study of rites of passage, explained that many traditional cultures define youth and adulthood as social identities rather than strictly biological labels. What is significant for my purposes is the fact that the youth and the elder together literally enact the call to social identity as a crucial concern of the relationship between the progeny and the progenitor respectively.

‘progenitor’ because the universe of heritage can only manifest through the organism of the consanguineous collective, and becoming someone with heritage means being in relationship with progenitors. Practically, one needs mentors from whom to learn one’s own cultural heritage. The mentors should have experience and authority in the matters concerning the particular heritage. Experience and authority generally come with age. There is also a difference between observers exploring a heritage and actual cultural proprietors becoming full transmitters of their own ancestral culture. Cultural propriety begins with genetic membership within the consanguineous collective, but also requires ethical, epistemological and spiritual immersion of the whole self, whose speech, action and life is one with that of the ancestors. The proprietor evolves a sense of social and private self through emotional relationships to parents, elders and other kin. One may also experience conscious personal bonding with ancestors in a religious sense. Social ties, blood ties and spiritual ties are all equally essential to cultural propriety, heritage and the indigenous self.

The cosmology of the oneness of all things means that cultural practice itself, including performance, is a way of embodying and continuing the presences of the progenitors. We are not talking about postmodern paradoxes of ‘ghosts’ and so on. In the metaphysics of filiation, kinship ties include the whole genealogy, from the very first members to the last that will be; thus the notion of ‘community’ extends in time, including those who lived, those who are living, and those who will live. Ultimately, all are living, within their own respective times, and the Creator experiences all generations at once, while each generation acknowledges the others in cosmological praxis. Cultural heritage is an outpouring from the past into the present; this past-present continuity is incarnate through the intergenerational social organism of the consanguineous collective. The organism itself lives in different times at once, because its ‘form’ is unimaginable without envisioning the

intimate, inter-temporal collectiveness that comprises multiple generations continuing into each other while each remains within its respective century. This is how the metaphysics of filiation renders its own temporality.

It is clear that the metaphysics of filiation entails the thorough interrelation of different concerns, from theology to genealogy to cultural ecology. Each renders itself precisely as it helps to render the others. The distinctions are dynamic in performance too, which engages diversely with existing ethnologies of indigeneity while the metaphysics of filiation remains evident. A variety of poetics, politics and ethics emerge from the metaphysics of filiation, which grounds and cultivates subjectivity as primarily the intimacy between the progenitor and the progeny.

The metaphysics of filiation either redresses or prevents a general and profound existential problem, namely, the alienation or bereavement of one who has no relationship with progenitors, in other words, the plight of the motherless and the fatherless. Whether culturally, socially or spiritually, indigeneity comes in to rescue or protect persons and peoples from the condition of orphanhood. I use the word, 'orphan', both literally and metaphorically. Indigenous cultural movements often aim to reintegrate communities and provide individuals with opportunities for nurturing as children of heritage. The ethos of revering and relying on elders has both a practical, society-building objective and an existential, identity-shaping aspect with psychological and political efficacies.

This is very significant in southern Africa, wherein a contemporary epidemic of death follows a long history of death, which perpetuated orphanhood on a mass scale. The human casualty in African Union countries has become a global crisis as around the continent, human life and wellbeing have constantly faced a host of severe natural and unnatural threats, which surely need no elaboration here. Diverse communities struggle to deal with the

social and economic consequences of mass orphanhood, a very serious practical and humanitarian concern for third world societies within southern African countries. Cultural poetics and political generalisations readily employ the image of the orphan to invoke the plight of the third world subject under historical conditions such as social displacement or cultural defacement, which in the past have also been actual goals of colonial strategies seeking to sabotage traditional southern African political powers. The conditions of orphanhood may not always result from a foreign enemy's murder of the progenitor; in the postcolonial age, intergenerational conflicts and estrangements may also produce orphans as times change in respective nations. Orphanhood can increase its proliferation during tumultuous changeovers of political dispensations.

There is no guarantee of consistently harmonious relations between the progenitor and the progeny; rather, such harmony is a moral aspiration that beckons the consistent hard labour of culture in service of society-building. Successes are bound to be precarious, finite and high-maintenance. Performance and cultural poetics may contribute to this labour of harmonising; yet any narratives and dramas with relevance and impact will inevitably reveal some of the threats or realities of disharmony, so that even some apparently mainstream ideological works have surprisingly complex poetics on indigeneity in South Africa. I explore such complexities in the performance studies that follow.

Chapter 2

Nativity, Orphanhood and Adoption in Richard Loring's *African Footprint* (2000)

I have argued in Chapter 1 that indigeneity is both an ethnology and a metaphysics, namely, an ontology of filiation, whereby subjectivity emerges through self-definition as 'progeny' of various kinds of human, anthropomorphic or generally corporeal 'progenitors', including (1) the Creator, (2) ancestors, parents and elders, (3) land and country, (4) the consanguineous collective and (5) cultural heritage. In this chapter, I explore how the poetics of filiation informs the historical narrative of Richard Loring's dance-musical-percussion pageant, *African Footprint* (2000). I argue that the performance renders black South African history as the movement from pre-apartheid racial 'nativity', to the catastrophe of social and cultural 'orphanhood' during apartheid, culminating in the post-apartheid 'adoption' into the filial identity of indigenous citizens as children of the 'fatherland'. In this way, *African Footprint* uses the metaphysics of filiation to bring indigeneity into the poetics of patriotism.

African Footprint is a large-scale, full-length dance-musical pageant focusing on South African performance heritage. The show developed through choreographic workshops and, after its official launch, quickly became one of the most nationally and internationally successful commercial theatre projects in South African entertainment history. The synopsis on *African Footprint*'s website is explicit about the intentional political function and significance of the show: "Since its inaugural performance in front of Statesman Nelson Mandela and world leaders on Robben Island on Millennium eve, 'African Footprint' has gone on to become South Africa's longest running musical . . . entertaining people all over the world" ('Welcome to African Footprint'). In addition to the Robben Island performance, and throughout the show's global touring history, *African Footprint* has had many dramatic

highlights, from audience with various international celebrities, politicians and royals like HRH Prince Charles to numerous prestigious commissions, like FIFA banquets in anticipation of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 soccer World Cup ('African Footprint - Show Highlights'). The show has appeared on television in different countries, and footage is available in a commercial DVD release. Touring destinations include Broadway, the West End and South Africa's major casinos. Achievements include numerous South African theatre awards and credit for major developments in South African professional theatre. The evidence of such developments, the publicity suggests, is the fact that *African Footprint's* "dancers, singers and drummers – drawn from South Africa's cities, townships and rural areas alike – have gone on to amazing success stories in their own right" ('Welcome to African Footprint'). On Loring's own separate website, a description of the show seems both figurative and literal, celebrating the national representation for South Africa, as an African Union country, on the stages of cultural diplomacy: a "90-minute musical story of Africa's emergence onto the world stage... the long-running hit has put more than approximately 200 South African performers into the international spotlight..." ('Richard Loring - African Footprint'). *African Footprint* is one of the most visible examples of the live, global performance of South African national identity and cultural heritage through theatre.

With minimal narrative intricacy and a revue-like format, *African Footprint*, according to the DVD cover, "celebrates the culture, rich history and people of South Africa, through a unique journey of song and dance that fuses the rhythms of both ancient and contemporary Africa".¹⁷ To facilitate the journey, *African Footprint* presents a series of nostalgic ensemble sketches stylising iconic scenes of ordinary life and extraordinary

¹⁷ All subsequent quotations from the DVD cover, and all my descriptions of the performance itself, use film documentary director John Bonham Carter's 2007 DVD release.

moments in various centuries and decades of South African history. Nineteen DVD chapters suggest the epic journey, from “Creation/Genesis” right through to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The aesthetic focus is on the cultural heritages of indigenous peoples and proletarian groups in tribal or modern settings. The spectacle alternates between partly mimetic portrayals of specific social environments and musical interludes featuring performers in modern designer costumes with colourful traditional textiles, beads and other materials, from various heritages, giving an ‘intercultural’ and ‘ethnic’ feel. The choreography continues the cosmopolitan and intercultural experimental movement of South African ‘Afro-fusion’ dance. This matches a typically South African ‘fusion’ soundtrack that merges the global fusion sound of mainly rock, pop and jazz influences with South African world music, incorporating traditional, folk and urban genres. The musical accompaniment combines live and non-live elements, the live sound involving both traditional and modern instruments and percussions, some of which occasionally appear as props on stage. All this comes together in a hybrid aesthetic of intense audiovisual sensation with a central didactic that cites the poetry of influential South African humanitarian writer, Don Mattera. Press releases mention the fusion aesthetic as one of the main attractions of the show: “This dazzling musical fuses the hypnotic heartbeat of the African drum, the cheerful pennywhistle and the inspiring words of Don Mattera with Kwela-jive, traditional gumboot, tap, contemporary ballet and hip-hop pantsula into an ‘explosive stampede of song and dance’” (Bambalele 20). This spectacle of heritage celebrates difference and diversity, and such celebration has been a major emphasis of South Africa’s post-apartheid nationalism.

African Footprint is a very mainstream show, exemplifying and consolidating widespread performance and marketing practices, thus by no means unique in its cultural work; yet, as a single theatrical product, *African Footprint* is exceptionally notable because

of its impact in South African theatre and entertainment history. In terms of its performance genealogy, *African Footprint* emerges from a few roots at once, including the legendary and controversial South African ‘tribal musicals’ like Bertha Egnos and Gail Lakier’s *Ipi Tombi* (1974)¹⁸, international rhythm pageants like Michael Flatley’s *Riverdance* (1995) or Dein Perry’s *Tap Dogs* (1996), and South African black culture in its vastness and diversity, from popular practices that have mostly local audiences to those that have developed within cultural tourism markets. At least one other big-budget, similarly successful South African show, Todd Twala and Thembi Nyandeni’s *Umoja – the Spirit of Togetherness*, has the same influences, aesthetic and politics as *African Footprint*. Twala and Nyandeni started their careers as performers, and toured internationally in *Ipi Tombi* during its day, before becoming successful post-apartheid South African television personalities and dance-musical entertainment entrepreneurs. *Umoja* narrates South African cultural history and modernisation, from pre-colonial tribal settings to the beginning of the twenty-first century, through ensemble dance-musical sketches that emphasise indigenous cultural vibrancy and diversity. *Umoja* also achieved its commercial ambitions, global reach and institutional acclaim with the same cultural diplomacy rationale as *African Footprint*. The similarity between the two shows reinforces that *African Footprint* is special not because of what it does, but rather because of how well it does it. Record-breaking commercial longevity, incomparable institutional recognition and a staggering achievement of awards set *African Footprint* apart as one ‘paradigmatic’ work within a particular entertainment genre that has established itself strongly in South Africa.

¹⁸ *Ipi Tombi* was controversial because of accusations of racist stereotyping and apartheid apologetics, but South African theatre professionals often remember *Ipi Tombi* as just another prestigious show that launched careers. My association of *African Footprint* with *Ipi Tombi* is strictly genealogical, not ideological.

The cultural ethnology of *African Footprint* focuses on indigenous black peoples of South Africa. This focus is noticeable because of the show's explicit rationale of representing the 'diversity' of the nation, a rationale that was crucial to the remarkable visibility of the show. Such a rationale was not merely an idea, but rather integral to creative choices such as the inclusion of a multiracial cast, with a few 'white' and 'biracial' performers playing 'black' historical character roles, so that the show celebrates ethnic diversity without maintaining racial lines in the theatrical execution. *African Footprint* portrays all the indigenous black ethnic groups as participants in one linear national history; yet the ethnological focus on black peoples means that the show either reduces national history to black history, or uses black history as the basis or metonymy of a national history that is implicitly inclusive within geopolitical bounds. I argue the latter, because of the show's forcefully liberal, cosmopolitan and post-apartheid aesthetic and politics. *African Footprint* lets black history encapsulate, indeed produce, the humanistic national character and ethos of a multiracial and multicultural post-apartheid South Africa that also aspires to a pan-Africanist postcolonial identity. This manifests not only through rhetoric but also through theatrical action, which 'nationalises' the iconic indigenous cultural heritage of black people; thus there is an indispensable link between the phenomenology of cultural heritage and the notion of black history. Heritage and history both contribute to national memory.

South Africa is not a 'black nation', but in *African Footprint*, 'black' fictional characters (not only black performers on stage) serve as cultural 'envoys' in a necessarily selective diplomatic representation of 'the nation', hence the dramaturgical focus on black history. This approach can, of course, raise concerns, which I deal with later; for now, my stance is that there are more philosophical options than opposition or advocacy of the aesthetic. I will show that indigeneity itself, specifically as a metaphysics of filiation, is the

more humanistic context in which subjectivity asserts itself even beyond or against ideology, as some of the character dramas illustrate. The result is something more profound than the mere preference for alternatives to nationalism or essentialism. The aim of my analysis is not a ‘better’, non-essentialist politics but rather a better philosophical grasp of the metaphysics of identity and belonging. Such metaphysics, manifesting in performance, does indeed play with generalisations. I am not in a hurry to critically oppose this theatrical generalisation as ‘wrong’, which would be an uncritical, even if academically mainstream, response. I want to know as much as possible about the poetics of *African Footprint* on its own terms, and what subjectivity has to gain from it, especially for the purpose of providing ways of belonging. There is no modality of belonging anywhere that can be totally inclusive of everyone, not even the concept of ‘humanity’, which still depends on what a particular culture or society defines as attributes of being human. My hope, rather, is to learn about how indigeneity engenders its own humanism, from which even ‘outsiders’ can gain intimacy by seeing the very desire for belonging itself as a familiar, human experience, even if the cultural or geopolitical context is unfamiliar to some audiences.

This chapter shows how *African Footprint* produces an indigenous humanism, in part by recreating national history. This theatrical history-making is part of a wider social and cultural process in South Africa. Ciraj Rassool observes how, in the aftermath of apartheid, the politically expedient cultural rendering of new national histories competed with literary, academic history writing and pedagogy as modalities for educating the nation:

Beyond the boundaries of the academy, in South Africa in the last decade of the twentieth century, histories have erupted into the public sphere in visual form. Tourism, monuments, museums, televisual histories, and the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission have been arenas in which histories have emerged . . . These visual histories are presented as ‘revelations of hidden heritage’, previously submerged by apartheid. (Rassool 5)

Rassool does not join the circle of scholars who have despaired at the apparent overshadowing of academic history (2–4), but rather contends that this complex post-apartheid situation beckons a sociological critique of history-making praxes in both academic and cultural spheres (4–5). Critical social theorists have generally produced such a critique by emphasising power and trade as the two main players in the South African game of history, heritage and memory.

Rassool and other critical social theorists, like Comaroff and Comaroff, Lynn Meskell and Scarlett Cornelissen, have argued that South Africa’s cultural tourism and heritage sector has had a post-apartheid ideological, commercial and creative renaissance, the significance of which is more than merely market impact. Heritage has become the main popular and institutional site for producing, performing and contesting national memory and political subjectivities (Rassool 1, 21; Meskell and Scheermeyer 154). This memory production and the performance of subjectivities are part of pursuing national aspirations for political, social and economic renewal, thus not only shaping conceptual environments but also changing practical realities for the post-apartheid South African populace:

The tourist industry in post-apartheid South Africa has been given the responsibility of constructing, packaging, and transmitting images and representations of the ‘new’ society and its past to a perceived growing audience of international visitors. This industry is not only seen to generate

enormous benefits for an ailing economy but it also enables the citizens to partake of the modern international world order. Tourism is seen as a system on which its economic and modernising benefits have the potential to trickle down to local communities which were previously marginalised. (Rassool 5)

The ubiquitous representational practices of South African tourism and heritage have not only recreated the past but also recycled and nationalised the colonial gaze (Witz, Rassool, and Minkley 278). It is a 'colonial' gaze in the sense of its taste for primitivism and its use of international political and economic power to dictate the production of images about South Africa. The colonial gaze is only one, albeit powerful, stakeholder in the negotiation of images and meanings within the visual culture of tourism. In postcolonial South Africa, the state, the market and private capital have been the three main, ideologically complex agencies bringing communities, histories and heritages into the massive movement to perform the new nation for tourism and hospitality industries. The spectacle of heritage is crucial to the country's cultural diplomacy.

Cornelissen details how the semiotic production of a 'South African' character of place and populace links to the local and global imperatives of political economy. Marketing in the global tourism industry has established the strategic importance of place branding or place imaging, which involves the perpetuation of certain kinds of representations of destinations as idiosyncratic and desirable (Cornelissen 675). Entering the vast scholarly critique of the multifarious semiotics and global political history of what John Urry influentially called the 'tourist gaze', Cornelissen reflects on how the private capital of overseas stakeholders still controls the destination imaging of the South African tourism industry (678–680). Rassool and Leslie Witz have done more substantial work on showing

how post-apartheid South Africa imported and localised the tourist gaze. They argue that the international mechanics of the tourist gaze has reconstructed the image of South Africa as a place of adventure, the discovery of the exotic and the promise of modernity in a time when globalisation summons countries to show that they know their place (336). Global power relations within the tourism economy replace official colonial power but continue privileging Western political agencies and recycling historical motifs of representing South Africa as the wild, open land with its subservient tribal people, available resources and accessible pleasures. Rassool and Witz emphasise that the semiotic economy of tourist imaging, with its panoramic concept of South Africa as a ‘world in one country’ (336), is under the tight ideological control of diplomatic strategies and superpower demands in an international political order “where almost nothing is left to chance” (337). Cornelissen argues in this vein, observing that the global control of South Africa’s place imaging complicates nation-building because of the priority of profit and the market efficacy of historical stereotypes about South Africa. These contingencies undermine the hope of the South African government to use tourism for black economic empowerment at community and corporate levels, as well as the even grander goal that President Mbeki emphasised, to change the global image and understanding of South Africa. These tensions cause an ideological disparity in the montage of South Africa. The government and local institutions call for representations of South Africa as a cosmopolitan, liberal country with a rich and inimitable heritage, encouraging both patriotic and diplomatic esteem. Overseas agencies demand the far more lucrative reproduction of ecological exoticism through colonial motifs of adventure, wildness and conquest. There is less cultural focus, and when human beings appear, ethnological primitivism has its day.

This situation is certainly problematic, but I will show that theatre has responded proactively, precisely by appropriating the metaphysics of indigeneity into a boldly humanist dramaturgy that finds expression even in the highly mainstream aesthetics of *African Footprint*. What makes this aesthetics ‘mainstream’ is its particular appeal to the tourist gaze. The complexities of political economy (Cornelissen 685), colonial legacies of representation (Witz, Rassool, and Minkley 280), and the question of possible textual or practical resistance (291) are all familiar themes in the criticism of postcolonial capitalism and the tourist gaze. These themes carry over to indigenous cultural studies in no insignificant way. What is important for my purposes is to note the centrality, reproduction and contesting of ethnologies of indigeneity within the postcolonial gaze, which incorporates both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perceptions with an emphasis on authenticity:

Postcolonial tourist ventures drew upon familiar fantasies of “nativist authenticity,” in which the basis of indigenous life continues to be the tribal unit, designed as traditional. The tourist theming of South African society continues in the age of exploration and discovery, primarily through the cultural village and the township tour. The irony of South Africa’s modernity is that the country is still mapped and memorialized for international and domestic tourists as a sequence of routes from tribe to tribe in rural and urban settings. (Witz, Rassool, and Minkley 291)

What I want to highlight here is the suggestion that the same imagery, and therefore the same ‘tourist’ gaze, pertains to the concerns of both local and foreign viewers. The foreign tourist receives “a set of snapshots of South Africa and its past, providing the tourist with portable

histories and an exalted sense of knowing the whole” (Rassool and Witz 3); on the other hand, local tourists, who may very well share in such sentiments, also encounter South African place imaging as a method by which institutions explicitly attempt national identity formation (Rassool 1) and the development of patriotism (7). Tourists, as citizens or foreigners, not only look but also perform by visiting places, contributing financially to the industry, and becoming themselves part of the ‘scenery’ of South African national and cosmopolitan diversity.

Theorists have not only analysed this in terms of power and participation. The visual histories that Rassool associates with reconciliation and heritage are, for Meskell and Scheermeyer, part of a ‘therapeutic’ process involving the whole nation, but with an emphasis on communities of trauma at the margins of the political hegemony (156). This has been particularly evident in the excavation of local community histories of apartheid. Heritage is ‘therapeutic’ precisely because it is contingent upon traumatic histories that necessarily show up even when collective memory attempts to excavate ‘heritage’ for its own sake. The therapeutic process is part of the ‘depth’ of the political, not a separate process from the political, and certainly not without the dilemmas of ideology:

Trauma cultures may be doing the work of therapy, in a collective sense, but also in an inherently political one. South Africans are being educated through various cultural productions about what is best remembered and what is best to forget. The very recent past and its horrors can be foregrounded, yet the longer, more complex colonial history of the country, and the reasons why apartheid was successfully entrenched in the first instance, have been subsequently downplayed. (Meskell and Scheermeyer 156)

Meskill and Scheermeyer illustrate that some of the staging for this political therapeutics takes place through heritage works for tourism; thus the tourist gaze is by no means exclusive of traumatic histories. In Rassool's observations of various heritage sites, even remembrances of the anti-apartheid struggle enter the panoramic view of the tourist gaze (5). The implicit agreement among social theorists is that the tourist gaze, while mediating the political economy of globalisation, is not simply about outsiders looking in, but rather a transaction point where different local and global drives meet and perhaps negotiate. Such plurality is the main observation in Urry's brief commentary on the recent effects of globalisation regarding the legacies of the tourist gaze. Urry prefers to speak of "multiple gazes" that are part of postcolonial cosmopolitan complexity and inequality (*Globalising the Tourist Gaze* 7), but there is no empirical difference between 'multiple gazes' and multiple desires in a multifarious gaze. The crux is this: place imaging for cultural tourism and heritage is pluralistic in its agendas, including power, identity and therapeutic responses to history.

These critical commentaries on the tourist gaze address a very broad and multifarious semiotics, but fundamentally, the gazer is either an 'insider' or an 'outsider' to any aspect of the milieu that a particular representation portrays. This is especially the case geopolitically, though a performance or representation involves multiple kinds of boundaries and permissions, which make it unlikely for a viewer to be purely an insider or outsider. The visitor of a community heritage site could be a cultural and geopolitical insider, but an outsider to the particular community that is performing for tourists. The visitor from overseas might feel like an outsider in almost every way, but receive messages from the performance itself about topics like humanism, ecology or reconciliation, allowing opportunity for foreigners to participate at least ideologically. The complexity does not nullify the general

feeling of being only an insider or only an outsider, for such feeling is not an empirical or critical conclusion but rather a subjective response, which is not totally passive, since the tourist premeditated it through the very intention that earlier said ‘I want to see a foreign country (in which I am a curious outsider)’ or ‘I want to enjoy my country (in which I am a proud insider)’. This makes it feasible to argue that two of the most ideologically profound concerns for the tourist gaze are exoticism and patriotism. *African Footprint* has a fecund semiotics for both sentiments; I focus this chapter on the latter, and deal with the former in Chapter 4 by looking at a much richer performance for exploring the semiotics of exoticism. *African Footprint* is certainly a spectacular display of South African cultural uniqueness for an international audience, but I illustrate below how the expression of patriotism is the strength of the show, as well as the heart of its purpose. The show’s work of cultural diplomacy is part of building the esteem of the nation precisely through its success in getting attention on the international stage. More than simply advertising the nation to outsiders, *African Footprint* aims to convince insiders that they are worthy of such advertisement.

Newspaper writers have readily responded to the patriotism of the show. Most revealing here is the recurring theme of ‘pride’, including the pride of the performers and the pride of South Africans generally. This theme has informed both local and overseas reports as they have evaluated the efficacy of *African Footprint* in producing ‘pride’. There are two distinct bases for this pride; the first is simply to belong to South Africa, as country and nation. I will let this poetics speak for itself in a few good examples. The South African *Sunday Mail* reports that *African Footprint* “showcases the pride and spirit of Africa to an audience who now wants to go there” (“Amps Full-on for This Folkloric” 95). The *Toronto Star* announces a show in which the cast “celebrate at once their diversity and their common pride in their African heritage” (Walker E01). In Sydney, the *Sun Herald* quotes *African*

Footprint associate producer, Debbie Batzofin, commenting on the ensemble: “They love being in the show and they’re proud of their country” (Iaccarino 4). The article supports this claim with the words of principal dancer, Thabo Komape, who “is very proud that his nation’s story has found its way on to international stages”. The dancer speaks of the imperative to “show a different picture of Africa . . . show that it’s not just poverty”, an imperative that requires “a celebration of our culture”. Such place imaging is surely, in Komape’s view, what it will take to engender national pride, which partly involves feeling confident to appear before the gaze of outsiders. In New York, the *Buffalo News* specifies the show’s intention of “offering a message of hope and pride in mother Africa” through the “tale of how today’s generation of Africans – more specifically South Africans – walk in the footsteps of their ancestors and need to be reminded of their roots” (Sucato C7). In these words, patriotism means taking pride in one’s ancestry, homeland and heritage.

In another issue, the *Buffalo News* interviews Loring, who asserts patriotism almost in opposition to exoticism. Loring mentions the goal of “promoting South Africa”, and then brings attention to “the full ethnic makeup of South Africa, which is Tswana, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans-speaking, English-speaking, male and female” (Dabkowski C1). Such diversity is “saying to you, this is us, South Africa, celebrating not only our democracy, but our freedom of spirit and our cultural heritage”. This message requires theatrical content that Loring expects to surprise or educate the overseas target audience:

[When] you think of Africa, you think of leopard skins, you think of spears, you think of shields, you think of lions, you think of elephants . . . But you don’t certainly think of 12 people onstage doing a tap dance or 18 people onstage doing a Pantsula, which derives from the townships of South Africa,

heading soccer balls to each other and tap dancing at the same time. (Loring in Dabkowski C1)

The interviewer steers the conversation to situate *African Footprint* within the history of South African cultural diplomacy. Loring recalls: “Even through apartheid and the embargo, there would always be somebody who would break through that embargo . . . a tennis player, or a Louis Armstrong”; yet Loring is quick to specify the difference between apartheid and post-apartheid cultural diplomacies. He sees the latter as not disengaging geopolitics and theatrical professionalism from the imperatives of economic and social uplift; hence *African Footprint* has served to “create a living for a number of people” and “given them a platform, given them acknowledgment, given them pride in who they are”. Such comments show how national pride, as an ideological and emotive concern, goes together with the second quality of pride, namely, the sense of artistic, professional and personal achievement, which is a more immediately ‘practical’ concern.

The patriotic ‘belonging-pride’ of citizens is distinct but not separate from the ‘achievement-pride’ of the successful artiste. This distinction is most evident in newspaper features that focus on individual biographies and personalities. In *African Footprint*’s tenth anniversary year, South Africa’s *Pretoria News* interviewed Komape with fellow dance leader, Alfred Phakathi. “They are proud to say that they’ve danced on every continent. Not only are they seasoned travellers, they feel empowered as men, and businessmen, by what they have seen and learned” (Sichel 4). Overseas, in Melbourne’s *Sunday Herald Sun*, Phakathi “says he has earned the right to be proud” (Zwar 107). The newspaper describes his experience of overcoming odds in the common struggle to become a professional artiste:

For the past three years his explosive and enthralling performances have won standing ovations all over the world. He has provided his wife and child with a house and car – a luxury for a black man living in Johannesburg – and his mother is never without groceries, thanks to the regular income he receives from the show. (Zwar 107)

Phakathi reports his mother's response to this success: "She's so happy I'm in *African Footprint*. I make her proud". It is interesting and significant here that the emotive uplift of achievement-pride is as interpersonal as the more obviously collective belonging-pride of patriotism. Publicity materials do not divide the rhetoric as I have for my suggestion of the difference between the two qualities of pride. In the general prose, it seems that achievement-pride is necessary in order to bring agency into belonging-pride, since the grounds for the latter is often citizenship-by-birth, which is a passive, accidental citizenship, while the pride of achievement celebrates an active person with notable prowess, thus grounding patriotism in heroic citizenship. This is precisely the kind of citizenship that indigeneity must produce if it is to be conducive to the philosophical goal that I established earlier for my thesis, namely, the goal of comprehending indigeneity as a reasonable ethos.

I argue that the metaphysics of filiation, as the core of indigeneity, is crucial to the facilitation of patriotism in *African Footprint*. Patriotism itself is one of the familiar ideological demands of South African indigeneity because of the importance of land and country as 'progenitor', the ontology of which I have detailed in Chapter 1. In particular, indigeneity beckons a cosmopolitan kind of patriotism consistent with, but still going beyond, South Africa's post-apartheid ideology of liberal multiculturalism and pan-Africanist nationalism. This is as complex as Appiah's notion of cosmopolitan patriotism, which I noted

in Chapter 1 as contributing to a critical perspective that has deconstructed the association of indigeneity with nationalism. I also mentioned Neocosmos, who observes that violent jingoism arises through the reduction of citizenship to indigeneity (587). I have suggested above that the ethnology of *African Footprint* portrays indigenous black peoples as metonymically representing the whole nation, thus equating indigeneity with nationality. Appiah's cosmopolitan patriotism challenges precisely this equation: "Cosmopolitanism and patriotism, unlike nationalism, are both sentiments more than ideologies. Different political ideologies can be made consistent with both of them" (619). One feature of Appiah's theory is the interest in migration and immigration as realities that complicate the nationalistic overemphasis on permanent location within the country of origin as grounds for a spatial sense of identity (618). Finally, Appiah's patriotism challenges nationalistic liberalisms that advocate humanistic values only within the bounds of a particular citizenship (620); thus Appiah's ethics meets that of Neocosmos's critique of liberal South Africa's xenophobic nationalism. It would seem that *African Footprint* – as a work of place imaging that celebrates South African locality, metonymically merging indigeneity with nationality, and representing multicultural liberalism – might not be a cosmopolitan patriotism in Appiah's sense, and may be representing a bad politics in Neocosmos's sense.

Intuitively, I do not feel that *African Footprint* is a chauvinistic performance; my burden is to prove this intuition through an ethical analysis of patriotic indigeneity in the show. What I must attempt is not a specialist philosophical axiology but rather a consolidation of the most apparent communications of a complete 'ethos' – in the sense of a worldview and milieu of aspirations with moral ramifications – motivating one particular performance. My analysis focuses on dramaturgy and semiotics rather than reception, for what is at stake here is the ethos that the show directly explicates for itself, not the question

of how audiences respond in their unfathomable ideological heterogeneity. In pursuing the theatrical ethos, I do not intend to play censor, or alternatively provide a history and evaluation of particular ethical teachings apart from the performances. The goal of this chapter is to establish the most mainstream way in which indigeneity speaks for itself through theatre, expressing a sovereign rationalism with its own ethical aetiology that often reaches for teleology.

The call to patriotic indigeneity is the most overt of all the verbal messages in the performance of *African Footprint*. Lyrics and poetry, mostly in English and including a few phrases in indigenous South African languages, reproduce the classic rhetoric of South African patriotism, cultural esteem and spiritual uplift. During the theatrical prologue, singers in regal, colourful traditional textiles present themselves as “the children of Africa, Africa’s children, its future, its hope and its soul . . . here to stay . . . African-born . . . proud . . . home . . . proud to call Africa home”. These words establish subjectivity as ‘nativity’, which I define as the particular stage of the narrative of filiation concerning the mutually elucidating themes of personal birth and collective origins. Nativity not only shapes the ontology of subjectivity, but also extends so far as to capture cosmology as the children of Africa “look at the dawn and it’s an African dawn”. They further declare: “We feel like we feel because we’re African-born”, thus rendering nativity the very cause of human capacity for affect. In moulding the progeny, nativity also insinuates the progenitor, for by declaring their existence as “Africa’s children”, the singers cast the African continent as a birth-giving agent who has children. This is at least a cosmological, ecological and geographical rendering, and possibly also, if only by implication, a cultural and social one.

The next movement of the prologue brings such implications into a clear didactics. A drum-wielding traditional herald, using the words of Don Mattera, speaks in the famous

oratory style of Zulu praise poetry, which typically celebrates the majestic South African landscape while also bringing together all these aspects – environment, political history and cultural identity:

This land, South of Africa, the whole land, each grain of sand, north to south, east to west, the given earth, the best land, the prostrate valleys, the angry mountains, the smiling hills, this beautiful, beautiful, beautiful country must be healed, with all the love it takes to pump one heart and fill it with a dream. These robust rivers, the timid brooks, the dams, the lakes, the lagoons, rivers that fall from the sky, foaming, floating, flowing waterfalls, Limpopo ventricles that feed the soil, Howick, Umfolozi, UThukela, Orange Valley, memories of battle against settler steel, these sacred waterways, must be washed, with all the tears it takes to cleanse a stream. Yes, this land, South of Africa, will be healed! (Bonham Carter)

The anthropomorphisms and emotionalisms do not characterise the land in isolation, but rather emphasise the organic unity between the progenitor-land and its people as progeny. On the one hand, it is not the people, but rather “the prostrate valleys, the angry mountains, the smiling hills” that “must be healed, with all the love it takes to pump one heart and fill it with a dream”. This healing is to address the trauma of “the timid brooks” that “feed the soil” like a nurturing parent. The anthropomorphic land is clearly the primary subject of healing. On the other hand, the mention of “memories of battle against settler steel” insinuates specifically human subjectivity, while by no means ruling out the poetic possibility that the land itself remembers, and it is the land itself that somehow fought against settler steel. The

ambiguity means that either the environmental body or human beings themselves may provide “all the tears it takes to cleanse a stream”, and since the ritual requires “all” the tears, it is likely to involve both the progenitor and the progeny, who are one in feeling and memory, one in the elemental continuity between water and tears, therefore existentially one. This oneness becomes theatrically palpable after the poem, when the drummer and his team plunge themselves into a mighty rhythm in the midst of a spectacular storm, complete with stage effects of lightning, thunder and smoke, giving the impression of cosmic energy erupting existence out of some primal darkness. The rhythm of the cosmic body of the universe gives birth to the rhythm of time, humanity and drums in South Africa.

In both its aesthetic and its thematic approach, *African Footprint* has a deliberate resonance with other internationally successful ‘rhythm shows’ that self-consciously ‘package’ national or ethnic identities. On his website, Loring credits the Australian *Tap Dogs* as one of his inspirations (‘Richard Loring - History’). The cover matter of the *African Footprint* DVD quotes a critic who said that *African Footprint* “is to South Africa what Riverdance is to the Irish and Stomp is to the Brits”. In *African Footprint*, identity and belonging are prominent themes, indigeneity a crucial source of poetics, and heterogeneity an aesthetically significant context of culture. The show is effectively South Africa’s answer to what is already a global phenomenon of dance and music spectacles that theatrically brand nations on the international stage of cultural diplomacy. *African Footprint* is about imaging the indigenous South African family for foreign guests. Indigeneity is crucial because it encapsulates the unique identity of this otherwise very cosmopolitan family. The poetics of filiation is the main mode of simultaneously communicating and defining this indigeneity. Such poetics takes even the engagement with geopolitical outsiders beyond the entertainment of exoticism and otherness, into a humanistic theatrical hospitality that invites its guests to

come in and meet some of the members of a big national family.

It is not only the children that articulate their identity through filiation with the land-progenitor, as the parent also has a voice in the first dance movement of the show. A group of highly agile dancers with the simple adornment of prehistoric South African hunter-gatherers leap onto the stage, performing stylishly 'tribal' acrobatics in a jungle-like atmosphere of sunlight patterns and 'tribal' mallet and percussion soundtrack. A very loud, elderly baritone voice-over declares: "I am the quest, giver of life, alpha without omega. I am Africa". Halfway through the dance, the ensemble walks toward the auditorium in slow motion, suggesting the long walk of evolution, after which the ensemble ripples into an energetic marching and stamping to lead into a spectacular disco choreography. Father Africa has declared himself to be "the quest", which the people are taking through their prehistory, but also the "giver of life" for the living people, as well as the "alpha without omega", in other words, the endless beginning, the perpetual origin that renews itself in every successive generation. The progenitor and the progeny are one life, originating and perpetuating itself, and referring itself back to its nativity, the nativity of the children of Africa. The dance-drama moves through centuries of South African tribal history, until the militant pre-colonial Zulus appear, wielding their culturally distinct spears and shields for a courtly warrior dance, and Father Africa declares: "I am the quest, beginning without end. My spirit moved the chanting tribes. I am no stranger to this earth. It is mine". The spirit of Father Africa, who is the quest upon the land, the perpetual nativity of the people, and the movement of the people, describes himself as if he is also a native, "no stranger to this earth", and a proprietor of the land; thus he both recognises and possesses himself, so that being Father Africa partly means self-knowledge and self-ownership, which is the beginning of responsibility.

The ramification is that the children of Africa are also children of self-knowledge, and

children of responsibility, bringing indigeneity into ethical awakening and empowering consciousness, all this in the noticeable theatrical absence of a colonial enemy to engage the historically famous Zulu army. The warrior dance continuing, Father Africa emphasises again: “I am the Limpopo, giver of life, alpha without omega. I am Africa”. When the dance ends, a court bard with his distinguishing chivalrous garments and a spear enters and honours the leader of the troupe with the traditional greeting, “Ndabezitha!”, which means “Conquer your enemies!”, verbally highlighting the ironic theatrical absence of the colonial enemy, who was the most imposing rival of the pre-colonial Zulu Kingdom. This is stunning because the historical fame of the Zulu nation is partly due to the fact that they did actually prove to be a difficult opponent for European colonialism. Loring would have easily got away with a simple celebration of this fact, which is part of contemporary Zulu ethnic memory and historical identity; yet the scene in *African Footprint* is more about victory over any forces that would have threatened knowledge and responsibility. The message and task of *African Footprint* is more spiritual than ethnological in its use of the poetics of nativity, which psychologically unifies the progenitor and the progeny; hence in the song of the bard and his warrior choir, against the visual backdrop of rural South African hills and huts, and with the sound of an Afro-fusion pop ballad, one generation narrates its existence as being of every age and every place:

When the fair sun rose, it found us waiting. We shaped the land. We rode the wind. Look at us. We have been here before. We walked the desert sands, danced the streets of Egypt. We cut the stones that shaped the pyramids, whispered with them long before others came to our shores. Bayethe iNkosi! (‘King of kings’) . . . We have been here before. We have been here before.

Our eyes were stark black stars, raging in the night. Long before the snake came to our children in the garden, we looked at God and saw our Image in His eyes . . . when the fair sun rose, it found us awake and waiting. We have been here before. We have been here before. We have been here before. We have been here before. Bayethe! (Bonham Carter)

This narration brings home the passion of filiation through identification with the progenitor, in this case, a fatherland that has also “been here before” as the very spirit that “moved the chanting tribes” who now declare that they themselves have been here before, in all times and all places. The reference to Genesis shows that this poetics is indeed quite self-consciously attempting to invoke origins and nativity in the same mode as that of the Torah’s profound meditation on the creatureliness of the Creator’s Image, Adam, whom the New Testament interprets as a prophetic type of the Messiah, the Biblically definitive and timeless filial Person, Who is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. This poetics does not suggest a worldview clash between indigenous and Biblical contexts, or even a ‘syncretism’ as such. The filial, indigenous person, being part of humanity, is actually an Image of the same Creator that the Torah describes. The children of Africa are also children of the Creator, who is the Ultimate Progenitor and therefore the Divine Parent and Originator even of the fatherland with which inhabitants affiliate as offspring, for each earthly parent is also a child of a previous parent. I outline in Chapter 1 how theological anthropology is one of the modalities for rendering subjectivities of indigeneity through filiation, because the usually anthropomorphic Creator is one of the different kinds of progenitors with which the progeny identify in order to articulate and, in articulating consolidate, indigeneity.

The scenes that follow develop this core of the poetics of filiation through nativity,

maintaining the spiritual and historical themes. The Genesis theme continues in a tender dance duet between a tribesman and his maiden, their surroundings a forest paradise – through the suggestion of stage lighting and orchestral world music – until a second tribesman interrupts the courting and initiates an energetic stick fight with the rhythmic uplift of various traditional percussions. The drama transitions to a celebration of the Tswana people, who perform a complex ensemble stick dance, then an intimate chorus with a few men around the dusk fire, singing “Kealeboga Modimo” (“Thank you, Supreme Creator”), and dancing around a human flame before cheering on her tribal-balletic dance solo to the ambient drums. The drama then breaks away from historical representation for a grand musical interlude, during which lead singers in designer costumes with traditional textiles return to the theme of celebrating nature, spirituality and long journeys of origin and destiny in an upbeat Afro-fusion pop song. A group of modern rural musicians then performs some Bushman folk music with traditional instruments and hearty chanting. A 1950s Sophiatown saxophonist joins the rhythm and heralds the transition to an urban environment of the iconic township, to which the poetic voice of Father Africa dedicates a few nostalgic words, before various celebratory scenes of jazz, tap dance and mischief. At this point, the whole dramaturgy of nativity reaches its climax, where South African indigenous culture has emerged for the first time into a mature cosmopolitan modernity, and goes into the next part of the narrative of filiation for the children of Africa.

The epic dramaturgical trek through scenes of history, tradition and modernity is another aspect of *African Footprint* that belongs to an international genre and has both a political and commercial significance. Using overseas examples to create something uniquely South African for both local and global spectators, *African Footprint* is quintessentially ‘theatre for tourism’. I have noted the importance of traditional heritages to place branding;

however, place branding itself is not reducible to the representation of tradition. Susan Bennett argues that contributing to tourism and destination marketing is a major, aesthetically defining function of all highly commercial and spectacular mainstream theatrical works that appear in central places like Broadway, the West End and major casinos (412). This argument results in a considerable broadening of the aesthetic and thematic criteria to define theatre for tourism, which does not have to be a theatre that represents the home context or identity of the performing company. It is always a theatre of representing difference, but only because all theatre represents difference somehow. The development of the narrative of *African Footprint* shows that modernity is a vital theme, with which South Africans can identify as part of their own poetics of patriotism.

This dialogue not only highlights the aspirations of the nation, but also reveals the social and historical complexities of the emergence into the postcolonial state, and indigeneity is at the centre of this revelation. The early part of *African Footprint* is a journey from prehistory to modernity, retaining the focus on tribal societies and therefore conceptually separating ‘modernisation’ from colonisation. The sequence of centuries shows tribal societies looking increasingly modern in their adornments and characterisation without a cliché comparison between ‘primitive’ natives and natives in the midst of Westernisation. The hunter-gatherers at the beginning of the narrative, with their wildness of movement and simplicity of appearance, contrast with their own descendants, Bushman folk musicians, who appear later and look traditional but by no means primal. The Bushman musicians perform a recognisable folk dance, with collective stamping and traditionally manly carriage, rather than the choreographically abstract wildness of the ancestral figures. The Zulus appear between the ancient hunter-gatherers and the modern Bushmen. The central African ancestors of the Zulu nations migrated into southern Africa during the Iron Age, and therefore represent

a major development of South African modernity. The ensemble's onstage presence is appropriately more suggestive of a society that has reached a certain level of political sophistication. Their choreography is militant, uniform and more sparing of stylisation. Their ballad, "We have been here before", has an orchestral 'desert' sound, suggestive of the Egyptian civilisation that the song mentions, rather than the heavily percussive 'jungle music' of the earlier ancestral scene. The dance and music of the Tswana people have even less stylisation, and the Bushmen of the folk music interlude perform an actual tradition. These representations establish the narrative of modernisation clearly with only 'tribal' drama before the saxophonist enters to represent the urban world, so that the historically recent form of urbanisation is a stage, not the definition, of South African modernisation. The scenes that follow highlight urbanisation as a force to contend with as culture, society and individual lives change radically.

So far, I have shown how *African Footprint* represents indigeneity through the metaphysics of filiation by characterising South Africans as children of the fatherland. My thesis argues that filiation, as the bond between the progeny and the progenitor, is the core of what it means to be 'indigenous', that is, to be begotten (being progeny) by someone (the progenitor). I have identified land and country as one, albeit poetic but nonetheless ontologically important, category of 'progenitor' in the southern African metaphysics of indigeneity. Another category is the consanguineous collective, as an intergenerational social body, which births individual progeny and includes the family unit – at the most micro scale – as well as various larger formations such as the ethnic nation. The consanguineous collective is surely the most indispensable of my categories of progenitors with which progeny seek the relationship of filiation. This category certainly applies, in principle, to the earlier scenes of *African Footprint*, because of the show's general ethnological focus on

black people, an ethnically heterogeneous collective with a common prehistory, but both this prehistory and black society are too vast for my reading to be really effective in drawing out some depth from these earlier scenes. The following scenes of urbanisation have much more ethnological detail, dramaturgical complexity and personalisation of character. These scenes show in detail how urbanisation disturbs the traditional matrix of relationships, wherein parenthood, kinship and marriage are crucial experiences for defining subjectivity, community and identity. The poetics of indigeneity here focuses on the consanguineous collective as the main progenitor with whom the progeny seeks to maintain the bond of filiation. The urban environment and all its social effects rupture the kinds of filial bonds that have appeared earlier, namely, bonds of nativity between the fatherly earth and the children of the land, or between the Creator and the religious progeny.

It is important to understand that there is a self-sustaining teleology, not only in *African Footprint* but also in the other studies for my thesis, and that this teleology does not come from performance; it passes through the latter. I do not present the teleology as textual evidence merely to argue that ‘this is what theatre says’; thus, I will keep rehearsing this teleology, not to suggest a formula, but rather to emphasise that the sovereign teleological structure remains intact in very different theatrical situations. The metaphysics of indigeneity is not reducible to teleology, but it does use teleology very creatively. Nativity, as I have shown above, is the point of origin, a point of primal bonds of intimacy between the progenitor and the progeny. During the rupture of these bonds, filiation remains as a constant, for the contingencies of intimacy cannot stop the children of the parent from being the children of the parent. What they lose is the intimacy itself, which had guaranteed the confidence of nativity. Filiation becomes an experience of loss, through estrangement, abduction or bereavement, which creates distance from, or even ignorance about, the

progenitor. If nativity is a foundational theme in the poetics of indigeneity, then historical contingency and often violence, which must be part of the memory of indigenous peoples, bring the narrative of origins and emergence in nativity to meet the tragedy of ‘orphanhood’, which I see as not the negation of filiation but rather filiation precisely through mourning the loss. The scenes in *African Footprint* show urbanisation as a contingency that disturbs the security of the consanguineous collective of the traditional nuclear family. This disturbance brings the characters from nativity into orphanhood, which becomes theatrically manifest through the histrionics of mourning and, at the same time, subjunctive restitutions of elements of what the grieving orphan has lost.

The saxophone interlude, which interrupts the Bushman folk song and leads into the urban scene, represents the new culture of the metropolis, a culture that comes with anxieties about the loss of traditional roots; yet this culture also allows different modes of belonging. The appearance of a lively 1950s Sophiatown neighbourhood with its stylish, cosmopolitan residents, an impressive tap dance routine, and a comical love triangle between one fickle philanderer and his two equally charismatic seductresses, all add toward a very nostalgic picture. One of these women leads the entire neighbourhood ensemble into “Fastlane Jive”, an energetic song and dance portraying the socialite culture of the legendary multiracial suburb during its heyday. The scene comes close to realism as the performing crowd enjoy the popular music of the time, showing off their iconic cocktail costumes and jive dance moves, though the choreographic unity of the scene lifts it above realism. The celebratory scene sets up the city as a place where life and relationships continue, thus ruling out of its historical message any simplistic opposition between the disturbance of urbanisation and the innocence of tradition.

The song ends as a very meek woman in traditional clothes enters the scene, clearly

out of place and anxiously looking for someone. The musical accompaniment changes suddenly from the loud jive club sound to a gentle acoustic steel-string guitar and woodwind arrangement, bringing a rural, but still modern, atmosphere into the urban setting. She embodies a traditional identity that has become out of place in the city, an identity that the earlier scenes of *African Footprint* have shown to be about the metaphysics of indigeneity through filiation within the theme of nativity. She approaches the philanderer, who by this time has already settled the earlier romantic dispute and now stands in an intimate embrace with his new girlfriend. The rural woman musters the courage to pull him away, despite his initial resistance; when she has his attention, his girlfriend reacts in distress while another man from the crowd pulls her to the periphery of the confrontation. In the ensuing drama, it becomes clear that the rural woman is the original wife of the philanderer, and her intention is to save her marriage and restore the family. She leads the cast in “Buyani Madoda”, (“Return, You Men”), a delicate song about the grief and disintegration of rural families missing husbands and fathers whom colonial economics and poverty have forced to work in the city. During the verses, the heroine describes her particular family situation, entreating her own husband, and during the chorus the whole cast chants a general beckoning for men to return to their homes. This narrative makes the missing husband symbolic of the indigenous progeny who, by abandoning his family, loses intimacy with his roots in nativity, which the grieving wife embodies. The heroine tries to put her husband’s arms around her, but he oscillates between embracing his wife and looking away toward his girlfriend, who waits among bystanders of the confrontation. The girlfriend now represents his new identity, a non-consanguineous belonging and intimacy in the city, which does not exclude the subjectivity of indigeneity by filiation, but does change the context of filiation from nativity to orphanhood, for the man is now out of intimacy with his progenitor, the consanguineous

collective of the family. The marital confrontation highlights this transition from nativity to orphanhood. At one point he tries to return to his girlfriend, but the whole group of bystanders aggressively sends him back to the conversation with his wife. This group reaction suggests the incompatibility of the two relationships, the marriage and city affair, intimacy in nativity versus filiation through orphanhood, incompatible because these are not states, which could be simultaneous, but stages, one necessarily replacing the other. The man will not be able to go back to his wife, but there is another dramaturgical purpose for the conversation. The girlfriend subsequently becomes part of a trio of city women providing choral support for the rural heroine and reiterating her message that the progeny, though now an orphan, must aspire to restore intimacy with roots. At the climax of the song, the rural woman takes the centre stage in a spotlight despite her husband's attempt to take her away from such a visible position. He cannot silence this cry of identity in his own heart. Near the end of the song, the girlfriend leaves her chorus group and attempts a sympathetic touch with the rural heroine, who refuses and walks away, representing the loss of intimacy with roots. The rural woman then leads all the city women in procession to form a choral tableau in the background as the man, in his isolation, becomes the focus of the stage. The chorus of women represents his journey of identity, with the two stages of filiation: rural nativity and urban orphanhood.

This scene shows how the issue of identity brings to the fore the issue of responsibility and maturity. The man has failed in these areas because he lacks a strong enough sense of self and sense of life purpose. His philandering was not about desire but rather about disorientation arising from helplessness in the midst of the economic coercion of urbanisation, which has forced many individuals like him to relocate at the expense of their families. The initial purpose of such relocation was to earn money, which was part of his

domestic responsibility as a man in his culture, but the site of opportunities for such earning is precisely where he has encountered the most difficult challenge to his personal sense of responsibility and purpose. His particular identity and roles at home are of no value in the city, for no one needs him as a traditional man; his original social dignity is void. The humiliating loss of responsibility leaves him with a painful sense of inadequacy, and then the sense of entitlement to pleasurable romance as a distraction from the pain. These are all effects of the condition of orphanhood, which uproots the responsible individual from a place where his social dignity was intact. This social dignity and the responsibility that it implies are proper to manhood; thus there is no general notion of 'adult' responsibility but rather 'manly' responsibilities, which are different from 'womanly' responsibilities as well as the responsibilities of boyhood. The enduing of family and social responsibilities according to sex and age is a characteristic of the specific indigenous culture. It is not merely an organizational construction of gender roles. The importance of the consanguineous collective and filiation within the metaphysics of indigeneity means that all aspects of genetics and physicality matter to the psychological and social placement of the individual. I do not see this corporeality as a general ethical problem to solve, but rather treat it as a reality of subjectivity that may or may not be the source of particular problems in particular circumstances. What the gender dynamics does immediately reveal is the ontological depth of the experience of responsibility, which is not simply about ethics, rationales and choices, but rather an indispensable part of identity, and neither totally malleable nor totally rigid.

This is clearer when looking at the respective journeys of the women in the Sophiatown scenes. I have addressed what they represent for the man; yet they are not merely his psychological symbols, but rather independent characters, each in the midst of her particular engagement with identity and indigeneity. The man has a symbolic role in such

engagement. The rural woman is still in touch with her roots of nativity, but she also experiences loss through her husband leaving. She walks through the journey of displacement into the city, and performs the mourning. She has not lost all her intimacy with roots, but has had to deal with a severe disturbance in her world. Hers is a liminal subjectivity between nativity and orphanhood. I deal with this kind of subjectivity in more detail in Chapter 3, where it is the focus of the performance of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*. The city women are all already orphans, out of touch with tradition and confident in their urban environment; yet they also compete for the man and respond sympathetically to the rural woman in her mourning. It is clear that these cosmopolitan orphans, who are still progeny of the missing progenitor, also need intimacy; thus their subjectivities of orphanhood are reaching toward some kind of a restitution of the self by 'adoption', which I understand to be the creation of new filial intimacy after the irreversible loss of a previous parenthood. One way to pursue this adoption is through the eros of a new marriage, which engenders fresh intimacy with the consanguineous collective of the spouse. I deal with this kind of drama more substantially in Chapter 4, for my analysis of love and belonging in the journey of Carmen, the heroine of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*. These are not random fictions but rather theatrical adaptations of familiar social situations; hence there is a hint of such in *African Footprint*.

It is through their respective character journeys that the women in the Sophiatown scenes engage notions of womanly responsibility within a changing environment. This engagement takes place mainly through the negotiation with gender roleplay, as the characters' reveal their assumptions about responsibility through their responses to multiple

possibilities of role.¹⁹ The city women, being outside conservative traditions, are in a position to take on more liberal gender roles, particularly in the roleplay of sexuality; thus they embody a more aggressive eros, but *African Footprint* does not offer stereotypes. The characters are neither simply liberal women nor simply seductresses, but rather, complex human subjects handling life in whichever way makes practical and emotional sense to them. These characters may indeed play predictable roles in relationships with men, but the roleplay alone cannot fully represent the emotional experience of each city woman, who can have feelings that are not necessarily convenient for the social drama of which she is also a collaborating author. Each individual's unique and unpredictable emotional capacities, as well as liabilities, constantly stretch each player beyond the play, so that there is a creative tension between feeling and action. The complexity of the city women's subjectivity evidences itself precisely while each performs a predictable role instrumentally, doing so for a finite time, within a definite public space and through the finite histrionic vocabulary of a sexually and socially aggressive womanhood. The performers in *African Footprint* show this form of womanhood through a confident carriage, assertive use of stage space, and freedom of physical interaction with other characters, especially men. The rural heroine contrasts this urban physicality with a timid look, cautious use of space and reluctance to interact. Most recognisably, she turns away from eye contact and turns her body inward to show the traditional countenance and posture of a socially submissive femininity. This is not weakness by any means, for despite her apprehension about the unfamiliar environment, she does not show any sign that she would consider giving up on her search, and she maintains the

¹⁹ I am treating 'role' as something distinct from responsibility, although fulfilling responsibilities is a type of fulfilling a role. The two concepts must remain separate because even irresponsible behaviour can be a type of role within a drama that is precisely about the quest for responsibility. The very existence of such a drama means that responsibility is not automatic in a world where one is already playing a role.

demeanour of personal dignity while enduring the public humiliation of her husband's negligence. The rural woman uses her performance of submissive femininity to highlight her vulnerability and hide her strength, while the city women seem to perform their strength over their vulnerability. All disguises unravel during the crisis of "Buyani Madoda", in which the urban heroine shows her distress and the rural heroine emerges as strong, leading the chorus of city women. These details show that the gender roleplay is both complex and conscious. Each character must negotiate her self-representation in a way that makes sense to her as she uplifts herself to engage with the possibilities of womanly responsibility.

All this happens within complementary gender relations, even for the urban characters, who still have gender difference in their roleplay; yet gender complementarity does not mean ethical separation. The traditional woman can only address her own responsibility within a dialogue that also addresses manly responsibility, which is precisely a responsibility to the woman and to the fruit of her womb. The song, "Buyani Madoda", explicates the traditional woman's principles on what the priorities for her and her husband should be. He should leave the city life, with all its promises, and be a man at home, even if it means that the family may forfeit the material benefits that the breadwinner's work in the city would have ensured. This is surely a tough choice for both husband and wife. It is already clear what migration to the city does to the rural family, but there are also risks in returning, and these risks have to do with the reasons for leaving in the first place. Poverty, isolation and unemployment would further humiliate the man, and his dependants would suffer with him. The home may become a place of conflict. If the man cannot withstand such trials, he may still fail in his marital and parental commitments – thus the family may still disintegrate – yet to fail to act now would ensure such disintegration. The harshness of this choice tests and exposes the real moral substance and psychological strength of both characters as reality

beckons them to find a common resolve.

The rest of the ensemble also has a role in this ideological, emotional and pragmatic negotiation. They do not merely witness the confrontation but actively participate in two ways. During the song, they act as a ‘chorus’, in the classical sense of being figures of conscience performing outside the character drama, and providing commentary that amplifies various arguments and clarifies the stakes. Secondly, members of the chorus group act as supporting characters that mediate the dialogue as well as serve the protagonists variously with moral challenge, reprimand or sympathy. The entire theatrical arrangement is both a mourning act and a subjunctive restitution of the scarce intimacy. The characters in the chorus have complex lives and roles because of the complex urban environment in which they reside, yet ultimately also form a community. They are able to deliver a clear message about what is morally, emotionally and pragmatically challenging, because they all understand the troubles and temptations of urban life. It makes theatrical sense that when one couple’s prospects are at risk, the wild party of “Fastlane Jive” now morphs into an ideologically cohesive chorus for a message on responsibility. No one proposes an alternative ethics and pragmatics or shows disregard for the sufferings of the protagonists. Everyone wishes that men could and would return home. This is a powerful moment in which *African Footprint* makes its entire dramaturgy of indigeneity efficacious in producing – not just depicting – a resolve to responsibility.

The result is that even the mourning of the leading actress is a morally efficacious action, and part of her womanly responsibility. She performs a subjunctive restitution of the familial order through her song. In so doing, she defines her own womanly responsibility as precisely this: she must protect and, if necessary, restore the intimacy of the family. This is surely not a job for only one person. The traditional role of the man – as breadwinner – and

the traditional role of the woman – as homemaker – are practical components of one collective responsibility, for both persons must be responsive to the mandate to preserve the intimacy of the family. Manly responsibility means taking care of family intimacy while acting within the roles of husband, father and breadwinner. Womanly responsibility means taking care of family intimacy while acting within the roles of wife, mother and homemaker. These values set the traditional woman in contrast to the seemingly more liberal city women earlier, before their incorporation into the song of family restoration. Such incorporation suggests that the dramaturgy of *African Footprint* itself advocates traditional family values. This anticipates a bolder didactics and more literal moral alliance between the urban heroine and her rural counterpart in a later scene. It is not my task to either censure or defend the traditional ethos itself. I am rendering it clearly to contextualise the conversation between the characters. Family intimacy, through manly and womanly responsibility, is an important context in which the metaphysics of filiation emerges for the progeny, rendering subjectivities of indigeneity. The family is the most intimate context of cultural nativity, as well as the context of the most painful experiences of cultural orphanhood, which is not an abstract loss but rather one that often occurs through personal traumas of bereavement, estrangement or abduction.

The mourning and subjunctive restitution are retrospective emotional and moral efficacies, which confirm the condition of orphanhood but ultimately cannot reverse it as a historical movement. The scenes that follow are about illustrating the orphanhood of ‘the black man’ as a particular historical figure of pan-Africanist generalisations of urban modernity. Such generalisations, which the show portrays, have constructed a version of black masculinity itself with the aim of conscripting and rehabilitating the ‘black man’ for a pan-Africanist politics of decolonisation. The politics itself makes the very subjectivity of

‘the black man’ possible as a response to colonial and apartheid ontology, in which “the black man is not a man” (Fanon 8) but rather a subhuman, infantile and effeminate figure of primitivism. The figure of the black man is about political agency, but more specifically, the political agency to choose the fight for national liberation over the basic struggle to survive, the agency of being responsible for freedom.

The scenes in *African Footprint* represent this through the drama of imprisonment as the man, after his separation from his wife, finds himself behind bars, presumably for political reasons. The prison also represents the psychological state of the character in his various predicaments of identity, morality and irrevocable change from the traditional order to the colonial political economy. The black man has also been a prisoner of dangerous desire, which made him liable to colonial bribes, and from which he now seeks liberation through Marxism. The black man is also a masculine symbol for the nation; therefore the scene is metaphorical of the imprisonment of South Africa under the legacy of apartheid. This metaphor doubles as metonymy of the many actual imprisonments of political targets, including and most famously black leaders like Statesman Mandela. The use of the prison image is itself conventional for anti-apartheid and post-apartheid narratives of liberation. Political imprisonment is a central theme in most versions of Statesman Mandela’s biography, and indeed in his own cultural politics of indigeneity. His generation and class of pan-Africanist intellectuals and leaders rejected tribalism insofar as it served apartheid; thus they saw such tribalism as a type of prison from which to escape through black universalism. During the years of his physical imprisonment, Statesman Mandela sought, through spirituality and humanism, liberation from the prison of racialism itself. These historical associations can enrich the reading of the prison scene in *African Footprint*.

The song, “Buyani Madoda”, slows down from its climax as the protagonist, now

sitting on a block in a cold and isolating spotlight with the shadow pattern of a prison cell, removes his stylish party clothes from the earlier Sophiatown scenes and puts on his austere prison uniform. The visual signs represent the mourning of his orphanhood. He takes out a letter from his pocket as his wife's melodic voice continues to lament about the long absence that was initially due to the migration into the city. The prison environment makes it clear that there is no turning back. The man is now in the clutches of destiny. He reads while the music serenades his wife's voice: "Oh, I wish it wasn't so". These words confirm that it is indeed so. The women's chorus adds: "Come home. We'll be waiting – waiting here for you . . . waiting here for you." The words heartbreakingly labour the fact that the waiting will be futile, suspending the grieving spouse in a liminal condition between her own nativity and her own orphanhood. In counterpoint, and alternating between speech and song, his wife asks: "Should I wait? Are you still mine?" This doubt, contradicting her previous statement, makes her suspension apparent. She concludes: "That's all I need to know. I'm waiting her for you." Only memory and longing linger, for the intimacy is really gone. All the women disappear completely from the stage, leaving the prisoner alone in darkness and silence.

A second prisoner appears in his own cell at a separate location on stage, as an invisible chorus of men sing a bare prison song about orphanhood. The baritone chorus bewails with the reprise, "Sengikhumbula abazali bami" ("I remember my parents"). The second prisoner initiates a ritualistic self-undressing until both men are only wearing their underwear. This is the second visible costume change for the protagonist in a short time. His dressing and undressing theatrically suggests psychological dismemberment. The two men clear their piles of clothes from the stage and poise their strong bodies for a fight as the singing stops and a martial soundtrack begins, with rumbling bass drums, reverberating cymbals and other percussions. The rivals encircle each other briefly, and then explode into a

brawl that is too choreographically stylish to look truly dangerous, yet also showing off the intimidating strength, agility and genuine risk-taking of the performers. The performance alternates between straightforwardly dancelike behaviours and recognisable gestures from the martial and gymnastic sports. A flute adds to the soundtrack a ritualistic and meditative melody, which later becomes the main reprise of “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrica” (“God Bless Africa”), the original gospel tune that became the lead verse of the post-apartheid South African national anthem. The fury of the fight begins to wear out, and the physical relationship between the two men becomes an ambivalent alternation between struggling against each other and literally trying to uplift each other. A loud baritone voice-over, the same voice that spoke as Father Africa much earlier in the show, now speaks: “My hand, dark brother – take it, and together let us run to freedom’s dream. You are you, and I am me.” The dance coming to an end, the men reconcile with a brotherly grasping of each other’s hand, while the flute and drum arrangement is slightly livelier and distinctly folkloric, but still at a reverently slow time signature. The prison initiation ceremony is complete.

This scene shows the dynamics of the most acute experience of the pain of orphanhood, and how the black man deals with such pain as it becomes the creative furnace of his anti-colonial nationalist subjectivity. The fight against someone just like himself, and the theatrically spectacular representation of a life-and-death physical struggle, emphasise the severity and desperation of the condition, which Mbembe has identified as a major theme of pan-Africanist anti-colonial philosophies of subjectivity:

... on the level of individual subjectivities, there is the idea that through the processes of slavery, colonization, and apartheid, the African self has become alienated from itself (*self-division*). This separation is supposed to result in a

loss of familiarity with the self, to the point that the subject, having become estranged from him- or herself, has been relegated to a lifeless form of identity (*objecthood*). Not only is the self no longer recognized by the Other; the self no longer recognizes itself. (Mbembe, “African Modes of Self-Writing” 241)

This is an existential depth of the experience of orphanhood in the history of the black man. The return of the voice of Father Africa, speaking the thoughts of the black man himself, brings back the ontology of oneness between the progenitor and the progeny. Filiation strengthens itself through the very condition that had erased intimacy with roots in nativity, for as I have argued, the consciousness of orphanhood is itself a modality of filiation. The reconciliation reintegrates subjectivity, transforms the character, and also refines him. In his nakedness, the protagonist has had to show himself as the raw substance of a man. He has endured the conditions of his orphanhood both in the world outside and within the violent underbelly of the apartheid system. He has proven himself fit for a new life and a new responsibility to pursue “freedom’s dream”, because he has grown from a helpless orphan, subservient to colonial capital, into the mature black man of an emerging South African modernity that needs leaders to liberate it. He has reconstituted himself, ensuring the subjunctive restitution of his political masculinity. It is a subjunctive restitution because political masculinity is a thing of no empirically measurable substance; yet one can have a visceral sense of having, losing or recovering this thing. The new political masculinity recovers the social eros that had begun to deplete due to the melancholic scattering of eroticism in the city and the disintegration of the family. It has taken the suffering of orphanhood to electrocute the dull sensibilities and fashion a revolution out of the black man.

This metaphysics harkens back to influential minds like Steve Biko and Frantz Fanon,

who conscripted masculinity to the service of liberating consciousness from the stupors of colonial existence. Such conscription is starkly literal in Biko's reflections on the claustrophobia and combat of the interrogation room, and the resolve therein to fight like a man, forcing the interrogator to do the same (153). Such feeling in the prison scene makes it quite noticeable that revolutionary women do not appear at all in the historical narrative of *African Footprint*, but this absence has a dramaturgical cause rather than an ideological one. The drama portrays the realities of urban migration, imprisonment and the politicisation of masculinity through one character's journey, which gives a sense of a personal tour of history. It is important to add that *African Footprint* is not a show about the anti-apartheid struggle specifically, but rather a celebration of the diverse contributions that previous generations have made toward forging the nation. This artistic intention ultimately does not value political revolution above any other work, for example, cultural preservation and innovation, which indeed are the main focus of the show; hence when the prison dance is over, the next scenes pay tribute to women who did not join the political activities of the anti-apartheid struggle, including the single black mother who dedicated her life to raising the next generation of South Africa. Her appearance in *African Footprint* is a very significant moment, and I meet her again in Chapter 5, for my analysis of *Mies Julie*, in which she has a substantial dramatic role and is highly critical of revolutionary politics.

The next scene resumes the earlier theme of women mourning, this time without subjunctive restitutions of the family life, but rather focusing on the trials of womanhood after the separation of wife and husband. The single mother must redefine her womanly responsibility under the new condition, 'widowhood', in which there is no longer a possibility of sharing an existence with the man she knew, since he has died to this reality. In the historical situation, a family may presume the physical death of a relative who has

disappeared into the prison system. The rural woman and the city woman come together to represent the theme of widowhood as pertinent to women from different walks of life; yet the scene does not homogenise the experience to the point of not showing any conflict between the women. The scene carries on the themes of estrangement and reconciliation from the preceding prison drama.

After the prison dance, the two men return to their respective cells and recover their clothes, signalling the completion of the protagonist's transformation. He finds another letter in his pocket, this time from his former girlfriend, as the sound of an acoustic steel-string guitar introduces a new song. The letter and the guitar end the theatrical isolation of the prison scene, the letter by bringing news from outside and the guitar by providing the sound of outside. The author of the letter describes the suffering of the protagonist and his wife, as well as her own suffering:

S'thandwa (beloved), I am told you no longer love me, but every stride, every step you take, is a journey into pain. I understand. It is the same with me.

Yesterday I saw another woman weep for you. I was at one with her love and pain, and together we are one with your love and your pain . . . (Bonham Carter)

During the speech, both women appear in warm spotlights that signal the world outside, and also suggest mental images that the man has of the two women. The speech ends with words of encouragement, beckoning the prisoner to "look up" and "say yes". The musical accompaniment gains more layers as a standard pop arrangement of rhythm, bass and ambient sections; the acoustic guitar remains at the forefront of the groove mix. Together, the

women sing the emotional ballad, “You, Me”, in which they expand on the message of the letter. The first verse expresses an ambivalent sense of mutual identification. The singers both “know what it is to be a woman”, and recognise that they are “the same”, but each doubts and wishes that the other could fully understand her experience, while claiming to have already attempted to empathise with the other. It is as if each heroine must wrestle with herself, seeking to somehow achieve an ubuntu experience of oneness, empathy and forgiveness. The two women seek a subjunctive restitution of this affect and its rationality, for some common good. They do not specify what this common good is, but the song lyrics suggest that the women want to strengthen their agency of ‘mothering’ the society of the nation. It is because “the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that steers the way”, that women can be “mothers of the nation”, who “at birth . . . shared creation”. The two characters almost jarringly rise above their respective humiliations and embitterments, asserting in unison, during the chorus: “. . . you and me, you, me, in our loves, in our lives, in our anger, in our pain, you and me, we’re just the same”. Through lyrical repetition, the characters emphasise this sameness, thus effecting a subjunctive restitution of a radically intersubjective womanhood. This relationship redefines womanly responsibility, and even politicises femininity, because the oneness among women is the condition of collective strength for the purpose of mothering the nation. The prominence of this politics over interpersonal conflict becomes even more profound as the song progresses. In the second verse, the two heroines assert that they are “. . . worlds apart, yet . . . both women”, whether “a lover, companion, friend or wife”, and they are “bound by a force, that force is life”. The list of contingent domestic roles comes under the fundamental social responsibility to nurture the national life force, which has become the new major context of belonging, not replacing but certainly upstaging the indigenous traditional contexts to which the nation’s orphans and widows can never return.

This is the crucial turning point at which *African Footprint* shifts gear from the theme of orphanhood to the theme of adoption, which I have earlier defined as a new experience of filiation after the irrevocable end of a previous ontology of indigeneity through nativity. There is no replication of nativity, but adoption allows a new filial intimacy after the period of orphanhood, which is filiation through memory and mourning. Adoption may involve a new parent or alternately a new parenthood with the original parent, who had effectively died to the previous relationship. This death does not always mean an annihilation of the actual parent, but it necessarily (if the word ‘orphan’ is to be useful) means the traumatic and permanent ontological end of intimacy in nativity. Nationalism, as a new context of social belonging and a new rationale for ancestral memory, promises new intimacy with roots.

This is indeed a subjunctive restitution, which has to pass through pathos, but ultimately give priority to its ethos. The mothers of the nation address the audience directly, with gestures of invitation to come to know the heroines as “the same”. The second repetition of the chorus reinforces the imperative to rise above emotional challenges in order to experience sameness, nationhood and national motherhood. The bridge leading to the end of the song involves cyclical chanting of the title words, “you, me”, and the supporting message, “we’re just the same”. In their histrionics throughout the song, the two performers maintain the complexity and ambivalences of the relationship between the characters, showing a clear struggle to embrace the values that the song espouses. This struggle eases by the end of the song, as the performers exchange smiles and share a consummating hug without inhibition. The performers exit the stage in a celebratory, sisterly embrace.

This scene and the preceding prison dance mirror each other in their theatrical didactics on manly and womanly responsibility, which need a new rendering for the stage of adoption within the drama of filiation. Each scene shows the afterlife of a traditional spouse

whom the circumstances of urbanisation and apartheid, as well as emotional distances, have separated. In both scenes, a newcomer to a particular place – prison for the free man, and the city for the rural woman – confronts an alter ego who is a confident inhabitant of that place. The prison fight is akin to an initiation ritual that physically and psychologically challenges the initiate in order to make him fit for a new status and new responsibility. The meeting of the widows challenges both of them to reconstitute themselves as mothers of the nation. The acrobatic tussle of the men stylises an emotional battle, while the tender intercourse between the women shows their emotional agility. The prison fight and the drama of the black man's political masculinity also recall populist fervour, such as manifest in the famous anti-apartheid revolution song, "Nansi indoda emnyama, Verwoerd!" ("Behold the black man, Verwoerd!"), a militant warning to the architect of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd. The song of the women is more about reasoning, forgiving and enduring sorrow as the very birth pain that is necessary to mothering the nation. Revolutionary men and progressive women – these are the responsible sons and daughters of South Africa.

The characters become such potent ideological figures in part through the presence of performers who are the very embodiment of national aspirations. The major social theme of both scenes is reconciliation and the consummation of a forward-looking national brotherhood and sisterhood. This theme is so theatrically forceful that it causes a 'slippage' of dramatic intent from inside to outside the fictional frame, so that the ontological volume of the live performer begins to match that of the character; in other words, the subjectivity of the artiste becomes as palpable as that of the fictional character. The prison reconciliation incites applause not only because of the fictional resolution of conflict but also because spectators appreciate the brotherly support and trust between the two dancers during their physically daring fight scene. The women's reconciliation likewise charms spectators by

making the relationship between the artistes theatrically palpable. Their characters have been in a love triangle with the unfaithful husband of one of them; thus the moment of their reconciliation, in such a simple drama, is not believable even with a substantial suspension of disbelief. The applause is not for the fictional reconciliation, but rather an appreciation for the artistes, who have pleased spectators with a women's version of the same attitude as that of the men in the prison scene. The women, as artistes, have demonstrated a bond of sisterhood. Brotherhood and sisterhood, for nation-building, are part of what spectators expect from the artistes, who consequently are like the fictional characters as embodiments of responsibility.

It is within this context of defining political responsibility in South Africa that the progeny can change their status from orphanhood to adoption. It is Father Africa, the original progenitor, who adopts these orphans for a new reality of parenthood and filiation. *African Footprint* establishes the new national identities as it soars toward the conclusion of the performance. Iconic figures of South African culture dance, beat percussions and sing their way into the post-apartheid era, celebrating the diversity that thrives within bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood. A large group of mine workers – an image of both apartheid-era and post-apartheid black culture – open the new chapter of national history with a fierce djembe drum session. These characters represent the proletarian labour force who, like the mothers of the nation, built the country behind the scenes of the revolution. Many of them were men who left their rural homes to work in industrial areas. They lived through the realities of urbanisation, family tragedies such as the drama that I have explored above, and also apartheid experiments in institutional brutality. Many of the migrant workers went through experiences of cultural orphanhood, but also were themselves practitioners, transmitters and innovators of culture. They are still building the country's infrastructure and

nurturing its evolving culture. One of their ideological roles is to represent pan-Africanist hope, hence playing the djembe drum, a cultural import from central Africa, and which has gained global recognition for its frequent use in musical exoticism, especially to create a 'jungle' sound. The distinct djembe sound has already been part of musical arrangements from the beginning of the narrative of *African Footprint*. The mine workers connect themselves to the past by using their own hands to create the sound to which pre-modern and modern figures were dancing, singing and fighting in earlier scenes. The performers take their rhythm into a spectacular showcase of gumboot dance, a distinctly urban South African performance, with complex clapping and stamping routines, and easily noticeable traditional influences of martial acrobatics and choral chanting. The dance also has an intense creativity that constantly experiments with any local and cosmopolitan contemporary dance ideas that the gumboot dancers can access. This dance has maintained its relationship to the tourist entertainment sector since the days of apartheid, whenever a mining area was accessible to visitors. The dance has an obvious significance to the commercial strategy of *African Footprint*, which packages South African popular dance heritage for the global and mainstream national market of culture, but the scene also goes beyond this context. A group of tap-dancing factory workers join in for a mock competition between gumboot and tap, beginning with a duel between two team leaders, and going into a spectacular showdown between the two armies of dance. It is a theatrical and corporeal eruption of passion for togetherness in the bonds of sisterhood and brotherhood, which preserve the life force of the nation. These bonds of belonging define the subjectivity of the children of Africa, the indigenous progeny of the fatherland, in their status of adoption through accepting the political responsibility to uplift the nation.

This poetics finally establishes the ground for consolidating the theatrical celebration

of history, heritage and identity in a multicultural South Africa. A few of the gumboot dancers take their positions in the background as musicians with both traditional percussions and modern instruments, for the Afro-fusion pop ballad, “Footprints”. The lead songstress wears a designer dress with elements from different traditional attires – most recognisably, the conical shape of Zulu women’s hats, the long cut and stitching style of Xhosa women’s dresses, and much bead work, which is an aspect of several South African traditional material cultures. The song is a meditation on “footprints, across the sands of time, footprints, be they yours or mine, out of the past into the future”, marking “our destiny, our history”, in which “footprints, intriguing and sublime, footprints with a steady stride” are the assurance that “what will be will be”. The song progresses as several figures of identity enter and stand still at various points onstage to form a tableau of difference and dispersal, recalling the title theme of the 1980s hit song, “Scatterlings of Africa”, by legendary South African fusion rock artist, Johnny Clegg. Some of the figures wear their familiar traditional outfits for their respective ethnic cultures, including those that featured in the earliest scenes of the show. Other figures represent urban identities according to vocation, including a mine worker, an academic in his graduation gown, and a nurse. The consolidation of history and hope soars to a lofty choral climax as *African Footprint* concludes its main message about heritages and legacies of the past, with an opening for the future.

African Footprint ends by bestowing the responsibility of maintaining the indigenous cultural rhythm onto the new millennial generations of South Africa’s children. The final scene portrays South African culture in the atmosphere of excitement that characterised the decade of preparing for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. The World Cup was a major opportunity for South African tourism (Cornelissen and Swart 117), and *African Footprint* exemplifies the response from the arts sector, but again, brings its poetics and

politics of filiation and heritage into cultural commerce. The scene is still a didactics on time and generational change, focusing on the final decades of the twentieth century and the entry into the twenty-first century. A highly charismatic impressionist opens the scene by delivering an exciting soccer commentary with the background noise of a full stadium. The location is recognisable as South African because of the sound of vuvuzelas, which made their own international cultural headlines because of a controversial attempt to ban these loud plastic trumpets from the 2010 games. The impressionist represents youth culture, with his soccer fan hat, referee's whistle and sports t-shirt over loose pants and black tennis shoes. The costume designer has also stylised the pants through rag-like colour patterns that increase the pop vibrancy of the look. The next image is a row of restroom cubicles, behind which a group of soccer players combine ball tricks and tap-dance in impressive choreographic unison. The stage becomes more energetic through the arrival of street dancers with the same appearance as that of the impressionist, apart from the change to kengo hats and various complete outfits of colourful rag patterns. They bring in the frenetic footwork of the 1980s street dance movement of pantsula, but they dance to a soundtrack of kwaito, a phenomenon that began during the 1990s, mainly involving the fusion of South African hip-hop and house music. The dance ends with national flags waving behind the ensemble, and the drummer-poet – who opened the show by calling for the healing of the land – returning, in modern ethnic clothes, to give the final message: “Look at us. We are the future. Our feet are drums, beating the heritage of our native land. Yes, look at us. We are tomorrow”. The whole cast of singers and dancers returns, all in modern ethnic clothing, for a medley of all the main earlier songs, about “Africa's children”, who “have been here before”, leaving “footprints” in the “sands of time”. The musical finale takes the soaring choral voices from a highly emotional, patriotic ballad to a celebratory disco. This concludes the now complete

urban adoption of South Africa's children with the new parenthood of the fatherland.

I have treated *African Footprint* mainly as a dramaturgical rendering, and my analysis has followed the story of indigeneity through the poetics and metaphysics of filiation. The drama of *African Footprint* has a historically linear progress from nativity to orphanhood and finally adoption within South African nationalism. This linear treatment is by no means the only possibility for South African theatre, and in fact, none of the studies in my thesis have the same rendering of time, or even of subjectivity. I do not value any single rendering above others, but rather prefer to see how each performance makes its own approach work for its particular purposes. *African Footprint* employs time-linearity in order to narrate national history as a progressive emergence into postcolonial reality and identity. The ninety-minute performance has an enormous story to tell, and this telling has an elegant simplicity; yet I have shown that the simple drama conceals a great sophistication of rendering the metaphysics of indigeneity. South Africa is not a nation of only indigenous people, and the image of much greater diversity has been crucial to the country's cultural diplomacy. How does *African Footprint*, with its dramaturgy of indigeneity, achieve its own rationale of celebrating the greater South African diversity? This question requires a stepping away from the dramaturgical detail to a broader perspective on the performance.

There are two problems to solve, the first being the challenge of placing indigeneity within greater diversity, while the second is to do with the politics of diversity itself. The nationwide industry of celebrating diversity comes with its risk of rendering difference natural and primordial in order to juxtapose cultural identities within the melting pot (Rassool 8). Theoretical solutions may be conceivable, but would not solve a cultural predicament. *African Footprint* shows how theatre and performance can respond brilliantly here, through the treatment of live corporeality. The core ensemble is multi-ethnic and

multiracial, though mostly black. Performers are highly capable ‘all-rounders’ who can sing, dance and act, their fit physiques making them also good-looking models. They have not only gained skills in different performing arts disciplines, but have also mastered socially and culturally diverse performance traditions and trends. Each versatile, inter-cultural performer personally embodies the very principle of diversity, and casting for the show is effectively colour-blind and ethnicity-blind. The drama, requiring the cast to portray many different characters and contexts, makes heritages corporeally interchangeable, so that the collaborative mimesis of heritage is a gesture toward universalism rather than a divisive activity. The show represents South African indigenous heritages through cosmopolitan bodies. This is not something unique to *African Footprint*, but rather an aspect of the genius of the theatre and performance culture from which *African Footprint* originates. South African cosmopolitan bodies are constantly visible, not only in tourist entertainments and professional theatre productions, but also in non-commercial and non-professional activities of the ‘grass-roots’ world. The centrality of the cosmopolitan body sets indigeneity in a complex relation with difference, undoing otherness at the very moment of its suggestion, and leaving the metaphysics of filiation as the real axis of the subjectivity of indigeneity.

The diversity question relates to another, final question of how *African Footprint* could stand against a highly critical postcolonial gaze that may be wary of mainstream cultural products and their politics. I would contend that here the mainstream has a non-polemical relationship to marginality. *African Footprint* is an elite performance, but by no means an elitist ethnology. In practical terms, it is important to note that there is no plausible epistemological or even ideological contrast between the highly commercial theatre world of *African Footprint* and smaller, community contexts of performance. In my experience of the South African theatre world, there is not usually an assumption that business and cultural

politics can or should be separate, even when the work is for and by ‘common people’, since economic empowerment through industry is a grass-roots imperative. A performance like *African Footprint*, with its slick packaging and high profile, is by no means irrelevant to the grass-roots ethos of South Africa. The show represents a highly visible consolidation of performance modalities, moral ideals and cultural poetics that are familiar in socially and economically diverse contexts of collective heritage revival, transmission and innovation. *African Footprint* shares with many less glamorous projects the emphasis on workshop theatre processes that involve, to whatever degree, individuals from non-elite backgrounds, with the expectation that subsequent to their success as artists, they will have something to ‘give back’ to their families and communities. Indigeneity is significant here because of the popular notion that the indigenous cultures on display provide the ethos of uplifting society through culture. This theme extends to the cosmopolitan desire of South Africa, a nation that has been exporting testimonies about its continuing uplift from the brutality, alienation and backwardness of apartheid to a new national reality. In *African Footprint*, there is continuity between local heritage and cosmopolitan desires, grass-roots ideology and cultural capitalism.

The celebration of South African cultural and social heterogeneity is also part of the pursuit of an ideal of uplifting the nation on stage, in the auditorium and beyond the theatrical occasion. Local and global spectators are an even more heterogeneous community. The tourist gaze, looking at *African Footprint*, is the gaze of global heterogeneity seeing a reflection of itself in the spectacle of South African indigeneity. *African Footprint* shows the cosmopolitan body not as mere spectacle but rather as the form of a fully human presence ready to engage the world. This human presence expresses not only the patriotism of particular indigenous persons, but also the intuition of an indigenous patriotism.

Chapter 3

Colonial Orphanhood in Magnet Theatre's *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* (2004)

So far I have described the southern African metaphysics of indigeneity as an ontology of filiation relating progenitors to progeny (Chapter 1), and how this ontology dramatises and historicises itself in mainstream poetics through the themes of nativity, orphanhood and adoption (Chapter 2), which are also three consecutive stages of a linear narrative of black South African cultural history, as Richard Loring's national theatre-pageant, *African Footprint*, exemplifies. *African Footprint's* narrative leaves out pre-apartheid colonial violence, the focus of Magnet Theatre's more intimate multimedia theatre project, *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* (2004), which I discuss in this chapter. I describe how this sensitive exploration of the /Xam people's history, cosmology and mythology portrays its Bushman characters not as an 'extinct tribe' but as liminal figures of transition from nativity to orphanhood during a time of colonial atrocity. I contextualise the performance within multidisciplinary scholarship on the San oral heritage in the historical and ethnographic records of the famous Bleek and Lloyd archive, which was the main source text for developing *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*. This archive and the performance it inspired provide powerful commentaries on the historical struggles of First Peoples in particular. I show how the performance and its artistic rationale conceptualise colonial violence as an offensive against First Peoples' nativity, an offensive that perpetuates orphanhood by engineering death, deracination and exile on a mass scale.

Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints was a high-profile avant-garde show, winning critical and public acclaim to add to the artistic prestige that both Magnet Theatre and the collaborating company, Jazzart Dance Theatre, had already established over the years. The

show differs from *African Footprint* in that the latter makes its impact part of its ‘message’, which is that South Africans have what it takes to dance on the global stage of cultural diplomacy. *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* is an important study for my thesis because it arguably provides an ideologically complex frame of one distinct historical locality of indigeneity to respond to the mainstream pan-Africanist cultural and political generalisation that *African Footprint* represents. This is not to suggest that *African Footprint* lacks complexity; yet in my analysis of the pageant, I have focused on sketching the expression of a universalising poetics of indigeneity through filiation, a poetics that indeed captures some of the complexities of history, in particular, the complexity of the post-apartheid nation’s relationship to ‘modernisation’, the grand logistics of which entailed colonialism. My analysis of the text does not make complexity into a contextual problem for Loring’s ideological rationale for *African Footprint*; rather, I have looked at how this rationale itself encounters and processes historical complexity into a dramaturgy that is elegantly simple, not simplistic. *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* has a very different rationale altogether; it is deliberately and explicitly counter-ideological. Its rationale not only encounters and processes but also aims to illustrate and emphasise, in order to foster reflection on, historical complexity. This makes *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* an exciting performance and work of poetics to put into dialogue with *African Footprint* on the themes of indigeneity and the dramatisation of history.

The historical ethnology of *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* focuses on the /Xam people, who were “the largest South African San population of the eighteenth and nineteenth century” (Crawhall 7). The /Xam are ancestors of “thousands of people in the Northern Cape”; the province includes areas such as Prieska, which is home to “semi-nomadic farm labourers known as Karretjie Mense or Swerwers (cart people or wanderers)” (7).

Institutional consensus recognises the genealogical place of the /Xam as San ethnic progenitors of a contemporary demographic of “descendants” (Mukundi 2), but it has been more difficult to establish “any coherent community structures that have maintained a /Xam identity” (Crawhall 7) in post-apartheid South Africa. The standard historical explanation is that colonial genocide, deracination and dispossession made postcolonial ethnic and cultural regeneration entirely impossible for the /Xam people. The ‘extinction thesis’ is thus the ethnological consensus. I do not intend to make a particular case for or against this extinction thesis on a factual basis; yet its influence is noteworthy because of the important, diverse and ethically profound cultural and political response that the extinction thesis itself has engendered. This response includes the production of *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*, as well as the intellectual and cultural outputs that were part of the background against which the performance developed. My analysis treats *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* as, in part, a politically potent theatrical and subjunctive undoing of the concept of /Xam extinction, a concept that has also established itself as ‘context’ within both scholarly and non-scholarly public or institutional narratives about the /Xam peoples’ history and culture. The multidisciplinary scholarly field of ‘/Xam studies’ is by no means epistemologically uniform; hence the extinction thesis itself has a dynamic rather than static articulation.

The oldest intellectual trend is to apply the extinction thesis as empirically axiomatic rather than ontologically problematic. Dorothea Bleek, writing as a folklorist during the time of the /Xam’s confrontation with colonisation, identifies them as a “tribe” that is “now nearly extinct” (302), and subsequently, postcolonial scholars look back at this extinction as a tragic historical fact with no further significance. Robert Ross, reviewing Alan Barnard’s ethnographic book on KhoeSan peoples, commends the fact that “when what he [Barnard] describes clearly no longer exists, as is the case with the beliefs and social practices of the

Cape and Lesotho mountain bushmen (the /Xam and the /Ng) who became culturally extinct in the late nineteenth century, he scrupulously uses the past tense” (469). Crawhall links South Africa’s colonial genocides, “which drastically reduced the number of Khoe and San people”, to “the demise of San and Khoe languages”, in which category Crawhall mentions /Xam as one specific South African San language that “died out” before the “mid-20th century” when “most Khoe and San South African languages were extinct, or spoken by a few terminal speakers” (“Going to a Better Life” 326). In a parenthetical note within his discussion of various southern African traditional religious practices, W.D. Hammond-Tooke acknowledges /Xam as a language that is “now extinct” (286). Lyn Wadley, Bonny Williamson, and Marlize Lombard, in their archaeological study of southern African Stone Age uses of ochre, mention clues from the material practices of peoples in the modern age, including “the extinct /Xam from Bushmanland” (662). Writing about San cultural complexity against various old misconceptions, Magdalena Brörmann-Thoma includes “the extinct group of the /Xam” (23). J.D. Lewis-Williams, drawing upon /Xam narratives in order to interpret San rock art, avoids the mention of extinction with regard to the /Xam peoples and their culture, even while clearly referring to historical narrative practices, until, at the end of article, the author’s biography states: “He was asked to translate South Africa’s post-apartheid motto into the now-extinct /Xam language” (262). What these examples illustrate is that the extinction thesis has become a ‘normal’ way of establishing historical context regarding the /Xam peoples, whose place and significance in South African modernity seems to be precisely about disappearance and absence.

Other scholars go further than the empirical application of the extinction thesis, not questioning it in any way but using it as a critical axiom and rationale for various respective scholarly and creative engagements with /Xam history, language and culture, as well as the

ethnology of the /Xam. Pippa Skotnes, dealing with issues of representation, regards the encounter with Bushman paintings as an opportunity for the contemporary researcher to “speak with the dead”, who are “doubly dead, for all bushmen languages and the cultures they articulated were virtually wiped out by the early part of the twentieth century” (301). Colonial animosity explicitly desired this outcome, but Skotnes, connecting to Bleek, finds that even a sympathetic European ethnological gaze saw “a race destined to quick extinction” (301). Helize van Vuuren, discussing the problems and politics of translating /Xam oral heritage for contemporary literary production, balances critique of such politics with acknowledgement of the ultimate merit in the encouragement of appreciation for the cultural heritage of the /Xam, whom van Vuuren refers to, twice in a very short book review, as “the extinct /Xam” (78, 79). Elsewhere, van Vuuren discusses how critics have used the extinction thesis as the basis for an ethical contention about the use of /Xam poetics in contemporary literature (“Antjie Krog” 231–232), and here too, van Vuuren engages with the contention on its own philosophical terms while leaving the extinction thesis in its place as axiomatic to debate. In a rigorous analysis of colonial and postcolonial legacies of representing KhoeSan peoples in South Africa and Europe, David Johnson briefly quotes from President Mbeki some comments that include a reference to the ‘extinct’ /Xam language (Johnson 545), but the colonial concept of extinction, particularly its teleological association with KhoeSan peoples, is not a target of critique in Johnson’s discussion, which nevertheless goes into detail about how European writers engaged with colonial atrocities. Julia Martin comments on how contemporary imaginaries see the ethnological record of /Xam culture as “a record of practices and attitudes on the brink of extinction” (139); yet Martin’s essay, while dealing critically with issues of engaging with this ethnology, does not probe further into the very perception of /Xam culture as extinct. H.P. van Coller and B.J. Odendaal, looking at Antjie

Krog's work on /Xam poetics, mention Krog's claim that the language of the /Xam "was already five thousand years old when the pressures exerted by other peoples indirectly and directly brought about its extinction at the end of the nineteenth century" (van Coller and Odendaal 107). Van Coller and Odendaal deal with the complexities of literary representation of /Xam poetics, but the initial placement of the language within the ontological zone of 'extinction' does not become problematic in their analysis. Dan Wylie comments on the vast Bushman influence on South African culture, an influence that has occasionally been the subject of satire, such as when Gus Ferguson alleged that the entire the existence of a /Xam language might be a historical hoax (252–253). Wylie sees a tragic irony in Ferguson's antics, because the language is "effectively extinct, no one can now speak it"; therefore it "might as well be a hoax, for all its efficacy in the modern world" (253). In all these examples, critical relativity can move most epistemological forces, except the thesis of the extinction of the /Xam.

A few authors have made tentative moves into suggesting that extinction might be problematic, though these moves have been somewhat anticlimactic. The concept of extinction is particularly significant in Alan Barnard's discussion of the use of the /Xam language in constructing the post-apartheid South African national motto, and Bushman rock painting imagery in the South African national coat of arms. Barnard notes that the absence of a self-identifying contemporary /Xam collective, plus the historical significance of their tragedy in colonial South Africa, proved convenient for the post-apartheid government to produce a highly emotive national image and slogan that could represent the ethnically diverse, multicultural nation without privileging any specific contemporary language group (10, 15). The idea of a national motto in /Xam appealed due to "the fact that the motto was not in English", as well as "the fact that it was in a Khoisan language, and an extinct Khoisan

language at that”, even if such a motto would also “remind us that there is no Khoisan language among South Africa’s eleven official ones — a fact that has caused some concern among speakers of Nama, the only Khoisan language still spoken in South Africa by any sizable population” (15). Extinction is, indeed, a significant axis around which the politics of representation turns for the South African national motto and coat of arms; yet Barnard’s observations do not lead to a discussion about ‘extinction’ itself as a thesis that has gained national consensus regarding the historical status of the /Xam. This national consensus is by no means unremarkable, since the same government participated in the famous, groundbreaking 1999 land restitution for some ≠Khomani San families and communities that, during their legal and political campaign, had had to provide ethnographic data to define themselves as indigenous people according to a developing ethnology (Levi and Maybury-Lewis 27). Jerome M. Levi and Biorn Maybury-Lewis, who also make an axiomatic reference to “the extinct /Xam people” (32), draw a stunning ethnological conclusion about the ≠Khomani San land claim in South Africa:

In the case of the ≠Khomani San, they could not claim self-determination, nor the other rights that flowed from it, until they first existed again as a people, and it was not until the success of the 1999 land claim that they were reconstituted as such, proving that, unlike extinct species, peoples can be brought back to life. (Levi and Maybury-Lewis 37)

The concept of bringing peoples ‘back to life’ in this context surely cannot mean anything other than that the peoples in question are either alive or dead to recognition, which seeks ethnological persuasion through empirical data. The heterogeneous international indigenous

First Peoples' movement has long acknowledged and demonstrated that being alive to recognition means being alive to politics, because the ethnographic data concerns the crucial and constant overlap between the movement's four major themes of representation, recognition, rights and resources (Hodgson 1037; Levi and Maybury-Lewis 23). Levi and Maybury-Lewis, following Dorothy Hodgson, describe complex interrelations between these four themes, which are part of the decades-long emergence of a vast international advocacy. In summary: First Peoples' activism have employed various strategies of public representation in order to achieve political recognition as distinct people groups who can claim their often overdue and urgent rights to specific natural and institutional resources, including land, access to important legal platforms, and developmental support from governments. Levi and Maybury-Lewis take a step forward by bringing in the theme of existence to reply to the question of extinction; however, like Barnard, Levi and Maybury-Lewis do not go into the ontological problem of the extinction thesis.

Irene Staehelin, writing on efforts at San cultural, social and environmental restitution in South Africa, gives a more substantial, though similarly rudimentary, confrontation with the problematic aspects of notions of extinction in relation to today's Bushman people groups:

It is a worldwide phenomenon that indigenous groups suffer disproportionately from poor health, hunger and abject poverty.

Overwhelming apathy results not only from a lack of food, but also from finding oneself in an uprooted, hopeless condition. The well-intended efforts of development organizations flush with donor money to provide food, schools and clinics have more often than not failed to uplift such communities.

The failure is laid at the feet of the people themselves as they are labeled self-destructive, genetically pre-disposed to alcoholism, or worse yet, weak links on the human chain of evolution destined for extinction. (Stahelin 164)

In this analysis, Stahelin puts into a contemporary context an idea that was part of colonial teleology, namely, the idea that certain indigenous groups were “destined for extinction”. In the contemporary context, this idea serves to blame the victims of colonisation for their failure to conceal the social effects of colonisation. The theme of extinction, which Darwinism keeps firmly in place, thus becomes a common currency between colonial malice and postcolonial disavowals of guilt underlying the false aetiology of underdevelopment affecting respective indigenous populations. There is also, arguably, a hypocritical morality of ‘disappointment’ in the apparent failure of indigenous peoples to cooperate with efforts to rescue them. The opposite tendency – blaming colonialism for everything (Mbembe 241–242) – is equally dangerous and has led to widespread abuses of politics in Africa (252). Stahelin’s perspective is neither paternalistic nor complicit with what Mbembe calls a “postcolonial paradigm of victimization” (251) that is more familiar in jingoistic appropriations of indigeneity. Stahelin seems to point to somewhere beyond, but the analysis does not break out of its own epistemology in order to articulate itself as a different stance; thus while revealing some issues within perceptions of postcolonial San peoples, the analysis still speaks of “the extinct /Xam Bushmen . . . a kin group that was not allowed to survive to the present” (165). Stahelin’s critique illustrates the main problematic political associations with the extinction thesis; the critique also implies, but does not explicate, an ontological problem.

This epistemological limit is characteristic in the works of a few authors who go further than Staehelin toward undoing the extinction thesis, but like Staehelin do not enter the ‘beyond’ point. Michael Wessels touches the line without crossing it, and oscillates in the spectrum between that position and the earlier stage of using the extinction thesis, itself intact, as a critical axiom grounding the analysis of issues of contemporary epistemology. In a discussion on various controversies about literary presentations of /Xam poetics, Wessels critiques the contradictions inherent in the contemporary ethical demand for literary reverence in light of the ‘extinction’ of the /Xam (“Antjie Krog , Stephen Watson and the Metaphysics of Presence” 30). He notes the practical complications for contemporary ethnographic creativity; yet throughout the analysis of such complications, the extinction thesis remains axiomatic, with no hint that it could also be problematic. Wessels then makes a critical leap forward to the verge of troubling the extinction thesis both politically and conceptually. In an outline of developments in /Xam studies, he indicates that the extinction thesis has not been totally without response; there has been some critique of scholarship that does not pay attention to the roots of the extinction thesis in colonial teleology (“New Directions in /Xam Studies” 70, 72, 79). Neither such critique nor Wessels’ account thereof leads to a serious philosophical analysis of the ontology underlying the extinction thesis. Writing elsewhere on views about /Xam religion, Wessels acknowledges that colonial ethnology considered extinction “an evolutionary inevitability” for Bushman peoples (“Religion and the Interpretation of the /Xam Narratives” 45); yet apart from the historical association with colonial racism, Wessels gives no ontological reason to question the use of the extinction thesis; therefore, outside the context of colonial thinking, the extinction thesis may still have legitimacy, if only for empirical and historical categorisation. Wessels then reverses to the previous stance, where the extinction thesis remains ‘safely’ axiomatic while

provoking questions on method. In a methodological discussion on the interpretation of /Xam narratives, he uses the extinction thesis to suggest a permanent contextual barrier due to “the rapid extinction of /Xam as a language with a community of speakers”, who are now part of a “grim frontier history” (“A Story of a /Xam Bushman Narrative” 6). Anne Solomon similarly oscillates between the stages of treating the extinction thesis as critical axiom and nearly dissecting this axiom as a critical target. In an exploration of the problems of historical ethnology and interpretation, Solomon regards the extinction of the /Xam language as a matter affecting any contemporary research on the /Xam, whatever the disciplinary context, thus necessitating critical methodological reflection (“Broken Strings” 27). The extinction thesis here is the very rationale, not the target, for critical evaluation, despite the observation that scholarly ethnologies have developed a “conventional” emphasis on “the ‘extinction’ of the /Xam”, who consequently “have become something of a cipher of relatively unspoilt autochthony destroyed by colonial oppression” (29). Solomon seems close to pushing the ‘extinction’ piece out of its comfortable space in the ethnological jigsaw, but does not complete the action; hence, while she elsewhere challenges some aspects of empiricist and structuralist thinking about /Xam cultural history, the extinction thesis still serves as a critical axiom that accounts for why some reading tasks are “impossible” (“Writing San Histories” 105). Wessels and Solomon both represent a theoretical stance that is arguably ambivalent about the extinction thesis, which at one point is a critical axiom, then again a potential target for criticism of its politics, though neither author will contemplate doing away with the ontology of the axiom.

Barnard, Levi and Maybury-Lewis, Staehelin, Wessels and Solomon are all representative of authors who, at various points, view the extinction thesis as an ethnological construct that is consequently liable to, and indeed has occasionally undergone, critique.

What is remarkable is that such critique has been largely ineffectual, arguably because it is unsustainable in a significant way within the ethnology of /Xam studies. What makes it unsustainable is that it can only politicise and render problematic some correlations between colonial and postcolonial trends, for example, by showing how the extinction thesis migrated from colonial teleology to postcolonial historiography. This critique is ethically pertinent, but epistemologically inconsequential, for it only makes the extinction thesis potentially ‘politically incorrect’, but not theoretically expendable, which would require an ontological breakdown. Such a breakdown would, in turn, require a convincing rationale. I contend that the extinction thesis does, indeed, call for such a dismantling, on profound ethical grounds, which are not about polemical rejection of the historical axiom, but rather about redeeming the extinction thesis by ending its inappropriate intellectual despotism within a postcolonial critique that must seriously rebuke the sort of mindless Darwinism that justified so many colonial atrocities. The question is: how is an ontological dismantling of the extinction thesis feasible? Levi and Maybury-Lewis provide a clue in their statement about ethnological representation bringing peoples ‘back to life’, that is, making indigenous First Peoples alive to recognition and therefore to politics, so that the assertion of a people’s existence may enable various claims of collective rights to resources for the sustenance of physical human life. I have noted that Levi and Maybury-Lewis answer the ‘negative’ perspective of the extinction thesis with the ‘positive’ theme of existence. This is a crucial sociological tip, but it cannot progress, philosophically, to treating the whole question of indigenous peoples’ political existence as pertinent to more than the relationship between ethnography, representation and activism. As important as these themes are, it is more fundamentally an ethical exigency that an existing indigenous people group must become alive to recognition; what is at stake is the dignity of a people standing upright and visible among other peoples

within a heterogeneous society. A people without recognition does not lose its intrinsic dignity or worth, but nevertheless requires the relational dignity of appearing and asserting its existence before the whole nation and its government. This is also a historically profound necessity for postcolonial ethics, because of the colonial legacy and epistemological violence of declaring or predicting extinctions of people groups whose land the colonial expansion aimed to appropriate. The myth of empty lands could, indeed, serve as a rationale for genocide, since the colonial institutions would not tolerate any evidence that, by discrediting the myth, refuted the legitimacy of colonialism even within post-Enlightenment Europe's own humanist (but not yet humanitarian) legalism. This colonial pathology of epistemological violence continued into the apartheid and post-apartheid period, as palpable in disputes between some white farmers and their former Bushmen labourers with testimonies about racism, abuse and ecological exploitation on the farms. The testimonies sometimes met with defensive accusations that the claimants were not even 'real' Bushmen. Ethnic authenticity becomes the subject of contention through a simple statement like 'you are not a real Bushman', which is a personal extinction thesis, since, by logical implication, if you are not a real Bushman, yet you do exist here and now as a person, it means that you cannot exist and be a Bushman at the same time; therefore, if you truly are a Bushman, you do not exist. The claimants of Bushman identity, already knowing conclusively that they are indeed who they say they are, have only the option of extinction when entering any conversation with the accuser who brings the charge of identity falsification. The accusation is thus a form of intellectual violence, which becomes a subjunctive murder through the intentional ontological eradication of a fully alive and human self-as-ethical-claimant using indigeneity as a frame for being human. The murderous logic, by ethical implication, takes the 'epistemological innocence' out of the standard critical practice – which surely needs no

elaboration here – of subjecting claims of authenticity to mandatory scepticism. It is a grave ethical matter that authenticity must rise again, despite critical anthropological fashions, and assert the ‘true existence’ of indigenous peoples now, and such a turning point is profoundly consequential to notions of extinction in narratives about the history of the /Xam peoples.

The extinction thesis reaches its limit, and the point beyond it is what I refer to as a post-extinction antithesis. I call it an ‘antithesis’ because it can only make sense in its dialectical relation to the extinction thesis, whose influence, as I have shown, is overbearing. The post-extinction antithesis is a creative stance with an ethical effect; it is not about contending against the extinction thesis on a ‘factual’ basis; yet its metaphysics engages with the deeper ethical implications of the extinction thesis in terms of how modern ethnology declares who is historically alive and who is historically dead. The post-extinction antithesis does not aim to supplant the extinction thesis, but rather beckons toward a necessarily indeterminate ‘existential synthesis’ of past and present in order to engender a healing historiography. It is not simply a question of subjunctive revivals and the phenomenology of the coexistence of the living with the dead. It is a question of breaking the barriers of intellectual subjectivity that makes the world of the ‘now’ epistemologically sovereign over all other worlds, a sovereignty that is at the root of defining and separating the world of the dead. In other words, an existential synthesis abstains from the very presumption that we can call anyone ‘dead’, even if our intention is to subvert the distance between the living and the dead. There are no ‘dead’ or ‘extinct’ peoples; there is no rhetorical necessity to even use these words. It is enough to point out that certain groups have been the targets of genocide, which is devastating in its proliferation of many personal deaths, but does not necessarily conclude ‘extinction’ as a condition of permanent historical ‘death’ for an entire people. This rhetorical move is ethically necessary. Atrocities are real, but do not give licence to ‘put

away' an entire people into the closet of historical deadness. It might seem necessary to speak of 'extinction' in order to acknowledge the gravity of the atrocity; yet in many cases, the use of the extinction thesis has not lead to any serious reflection on atrocity; therefore, the concept of extinction is not at all necessary, and furthermore, that the concept is expendable is not the ultimate basis of my contention. Words have the power to create, reinforce or destroy an ontology. The move from an extinction thesis, via a post-extinction antithesis, into an indeterminate existential synthesis, is about ontological reverence for peoples that faced a form of extreme violence not possible without a murderous colonial ontology that first declares the targets fit for their place in history as 'extinct', a term that is most familiar in ordinary language when discussing flora and fauna, in which category colonial taxonomy, by no means accidentally, included indigenous peoples.

At this point, it is important to note that the specific word, 'extinction', is not the only way to name or describe what it connotes. Authors may also speak of 'annihilation', 'extermination', 'wipe out', 'dying out', and many other expressions, including descriptions in many words, though the dominant tendency is to use 'extinction'. In my whole discussion above, I have emphasised the citation of the word 'extinction' because it has a particular force and particularly problematic connotations. 'Extinction' is arguably less harsh than 'annihilation', which perhaps helps to explain its appeal; yet the latter arguably retains more outrage than the former: 'extinction' is for dinosaurs and dodos; thus putting human beings in this category does dehumanise the suffering and desensitise the conversation, all good intentions notwithstanding. I have contended that a challenge to the rhetoric of extinction is extremely necessary, and that such a challenge must hit the ontological core of the notion of extinction; yet, because this is not primarily a problem of rhetoric, the atrocity of the word must remain visible to the critical reader. My collection of admittedly clunky terms,

‘extinction thesis’, ‘post-extinction antithesis’ and ‘existential synthesis’, works within this context of an analysis and a protest, both ontological and rhetorical, confronting atrocity as both physical and metaphysical process.²⁰

Indeed, the intellectual rationale behind *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* involves this epistemological movement. Director Mark Fleishman’s doctoral thesis, *Remembering in the Postcolony: Refiguring the Past with Theatre*, details the creative processes and theoretical work that shaped a number of Magnet Theatre projects, including *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*. The thesis follows the familiar postcolonial direction of politicising memory, or processes of remembering, as Fleishman explores ways in which “performance and a particular practice of dramaturgy is one way of intervening in this process of remembering; one way of making the silent dead speak” (3). In the chapter on *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*, Fleishman uses the performance and its developmental process to “explore issues of time (which are also issues of space) in /Xam narratives”, considering also “a particular understanding of silence” and “the complex and multifarious relationship between systems of indigenous knowledge and acts of contemporary performance practice in the postcolony” (113). Fleishman approaches the task through dense phenomenological

²⁰ Johann Gottlieb Fichte introduced the triad of terms, “thesis-antithesis-synthesis”, in a purely philosophical study of consciousness, reality and the transformation of the former through the latter. Scholars usually regard the triad as an attempt at “a formula for the explanation of change” (Ritter 114), which occurs when an original thesis encounters an oppositional antithesis with which to grapple toward a creative synthesis. The triad is familiar in its popular misattribution to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, but he vehemently rejected it, and philosophers have since differed on whether to use it to interpret his work (Mueller 412). It is not my aim to specifically comment on the complex theories or to try to apply them onto the performance context, which develops its antithesis precisely through the aesthetic opacity that resists theoretical presumption. I use the terms, “thesis”, “antithesis” and “synthesis”, in their most literal sense, but draw inspiration from the idea that the triad can describe change through opposition that eventually engenders the new.

theories to which I will not do justice here; my aim is to identify how *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, and Fleishman's rationale, confront the extinction thesis with a post-extinction antithesis, and intimate the possibility of an existential synthesis. Fleishman's methodology and texts strongly engage with, but do not serve to specifically exemplify, the practice of performance as research (32); thus the aesthetic efficacies of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* are parallel with the intellectual moves, and the thesis is not a retrospection but rather a mnemonic presentation that performs in the present, deliberately engendering its own aesthetic (56), which in turn has emerged from and is only legible as the result of a developmental theatrical historiography (45). In keeping with this conceptualisation, which is convenient for my purposes, I treat Fleishman's writing and the performance as one expression inhabiting different forums, namely, the page and the stage, in epistemological (though not temporal) simultaneity. I do not 'compare' the performance to the theory but rather write 'with' Fleishman, who leads the way into my discoveries about the move toward existential synthesis in the performance.

In setting the ethnological context for the mnemonic presentation of the performance, Fleishman employs the extinction thesis, then immediately subverts it:

For the San, stories inhabited the landscape. They floated on the wind, coming from a distance, behind the backs of mountains and along well-travelled tracks. They drifted towards those who were alert to them, those who sat waiting for them to float into their ears. (Fleishman 105)

Thus the presentation begins by privileging the poetics of the /Xam, with their unique way of apprehending story through landscape and the body. Fleishman follows the /Xam poet

bringing story from the realm of space to the realm of the senses, namely, the ear, a receptive organ, which represents the non-adversarial relationship to nature. This stage of the presentation is before the extinction thesis. Fleishman sets up the reality of the /Xam poetic experience without reference to colonial history. The question arises: how does he know these things? Fleishman replies by establishing the epistemological context:

We know these things because they were told by //Kabbo, a /Xam elder, to the German-born linguist Wilhelm Bleek in the 1870s. //Kabbo's words were written down in a phonetic script devised by Bleek and translated into English . . . This record is one of more than 13,000 pages of similar records transcribed by Bleek and his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd, from the words narrated to them by //Kabbo and a small number of other /Xam narrators who lived with them in their house in Mowbray between 1870 and 1884. (Fleishman 105–106)

This move puts the poetic introduction into historical reality, bringing ethnographic sources and process to the forefront. It is not Fleishman's own ethnography; therefore the methodological description does not represent his own methodology. The description is historiographical, and what it renders transparent is not the ethnology of Bleek and Lloyd but the epistemology of Fleishman's research into /Xam cultural history, an epistemology that can only promise scholarly bibliographic rigour, not empirical certainty about the history of the /Xam. Fleishman's expression, "We know these things", implies that we cannot know more than "these things" that the ethnography provides, and, perhaps, which the ethnography tells us how to know. This destabilises the epistemological foundation of the extinction thesis prior to describing the predicament of the /Xam. The description begins with a

contextualisation of the social situation of /Xam storytellers facing the judicial power of the colonial regime:

Most of these narrators had been brought to Cape Town as convicts to serve prison terms at the Breakwater Convict Station. Their crimes were various, ranging from stock-theft to murder. (Fleishman 106)

The epistemological indeterminacy of Fleishman's historiography sends the correctional authority of the colonial power before the critical gaze, at which point the extinction thesis appears:

Bleek recognised that the /Xam were destined to extinction. By 1840 the trekboers had occupied territory all the way up to the Orange River, stealing /Xam land and waterholes, murdering families and wiping out the game on which the /Xam depended for their survival. (Fleishman 106)

The extinction thesis connects the prose about imprisonment with the prose about colonial homicide and ecocide. This ethnological axiom sits uncomfortably between colonial legalism and colonial injustice, revealing colonial legalism to be nothing more than a mechanism within the whole calculus of genocide. The extinction thesis sits in-between as the teleological drive of this genocide. The unstable epistemology and historiographical relativity subjects the colonial rationale to an exposure of its hypocrisy and murderous rapacity. This very citation of the extinction thesis snuffs it out before it has had its way with the prose. The total effect of all this is that there is no reassurance in scholarly authority over /Xam cultural

history. Such an approach is necessary before asserting that “the Bleek and Lloyd Collection . . . in the library of the University of Cape Town . . . is without a doubt the most extensive, remarkable and important archive of San culture and history available anywhere” (Fleishman 106). Fleishman, in other words, sets up the enormous creative and historiographical value of the archive while dismantling any scholarly ideological towers that might defeat the very potential of the archive to contribute to postcolonial memory. This move cancels the ‘authority’ of ethnology while making a way to salvage the creativity that this authority might have frozen in primitivism and the extinction thesis.

Fleishman is then able to move more definitely into the post-extinction antithesis. This move is not polemical, for it launches from an appreciation for the archive’s achievement, which enables the postcolonial response of *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*. The explicit aim of the project is “to initiate a dialogue with the material in order to access and re-animate the creative and intellectual resonance of the stories, while at the same time making them available to a contemporary audience through performance” (Fleishman 107–108). Fleishman’s prose unravels the dialogue and the performance through a non-chronological thick description of dramaturgical layers, following the layering approach to the artistry of the performance itself:

Rain in a dead man’s footprints is made up of three different threads, three different stanzas, three different moods or moves that interweave over time. They do not follow one after the other in straight lines but fray, and fold into each other, and overlap and intervene and clash and converse the one with the other, running parallel, leaping over each other, struggling to predominate or

have the final say. In other words their relationship is one of syncopation rather than syntax. (Fleishman 108)

This dramaturgical arrangement has political, epistemological and aesthetic rationales. *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* is part of an exploratory process that took a few years and different theatrical productions within the context of Magnet Theatre's collaborations and developmental projects that engaged with the Bleek and Lloyd archive (107–108). *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* is a stage of research, and this stage implemented new discoveries from a previous production, *The Sun, the Moon, and the Knife* (1995) (113). This production portrayed the domestic situation of Bleek as he interviewed //Kabbo (117), and juxtaposed this situation with that of a contemporary character apprehending history in a library (118). The performance used familiar “conventions of Western drama”, including the rules of causality and chronology, the orchestration of a compact, climactic plot (119), as well as the psychological orientation of character development (118). Fleishman's final evaluation of the production is that, although it had an informative and illustrative approach to exploring the history and cosmology of the /Xam, the theatrical conventionality meant that ultimately “much about the social and cultural conditions of the source text – the ideas and ways of thinking and being of the /Xam – was excluded or concealed” (119). The threads of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* go in the opposite direction of outlining the narrative mode and temporal sense of the /Xam. The emphasis is on distributing time across centrifugal space rather than disciplining time within centripetal space, while narratives forfeit the causal economy of probable consequentiality and the separation of past from present (120). The significance of this is not that we need a new ethnological conclusion about the temporality of the /Xam, but rather that they have their own modes of coming to conclusions. The rhythm

of the performance favours the simultaneity of “time bands” (123) and narrative interruptions that are not instrumental to dramaturgical control (124). The aesthetic move is implicitly epistemological, re-framing how audiences can ‘know’ their subject, so that the thickness and complexity of reality within /Xam worldview restores the sense of the mysterious, refusing epistemological domination (123). Fleishman’s thick description and script citation follows this logic of the performance by presenting each of three dramaturgical layers as a distinct and ‘sovereign’ narrative with its own rhythm and bounds. In this way, the description provides a post-linear redistribution of time within prose. Since the extinction thesis is indeed linear in its teleological or historical formulations, the anti-linear redistribution of time in performance and prose dismantles the ontological infrastructure supporting the extinction thesis. Such a dismantling prepares the ground for the post-extinction antithesis.

The first dramatic thread reveals the post-extinction antithesis as a resistance against extinction. This resistance presumes extinction to be imminent and inevitable, but undesirable and beckoning the salvaging of what can survive the destruction of the /Xam society and cultural environment. The salvaging is simultaneous with the period of destruction; therefore it is the earliest spark of the postcolonial movement of the post-extinction antithesis. It skips past the anti-colonial polemical mediation of revolutionary hope and initiates an early rebuilding of what colonialism has not yet entirely destroyed. Such early rebuilding is precisely what is to ensure that the destruction will not be ‘entire’.

Fleishman calls the dramatic thread “nostalgic, melancholic . . . about the task at hand, the project of collecting and interpreting stories – of creating the corpus – of putting them into books for future generations” (108). Nostalgia moves into the past, whereas melancholy is apprehensive about the future because of the transpiring tragedy and the race against time in order to ensure the survival of a culture in its own present. Time becomes a problem to

negotiate with and manoeuvre around rather than an indomitable adversary to life and continuity. This formulation of time is uninhabitable for the extinction thesis, which itself begins to undergo an ontological annihilation, thus reversing the violence against the existential subjectivity of the /Xam community as beings who apprehended reality.

This reversal sustains the environment of the post-extinction antithesis, wherein *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* provides its unique poetics of indigeneity as a metaphysics of filiation, which comes in at the very beginning of the performance:

A woman stands on a writing desk in the open air. The desk stands on a large, triangular shaped, mud floor with rows of chairs along two sides. The woman sings:

I come from that place / I come here like this / When the sun was
burning / Riding on foot.

(Fleishman 108–109)²¹

The black performer is in the role of a San woman, though her costume – a simple arrangement of modern, fitting top and shorts – is not representative of the ‘traditional’ attire of a tribeswoman.²² With her youthful looks, athletic physique and dancer’s carriage, she represents the /Xam cultural body while being vigorously alive, strong and in blossom into the present rather than declining to the past. In these aspects, her stage presence and image open the show with a calm gracefulness that is also forcefully ‘existent’ (as the opposite of

²¹ Fleishman’s phenomenological description is a hybrid between script, verse and prose; thus the presentation in writing is dynamic. I have kept all the original formatting because it deconstructs the reading experience, in keeping with the deconstruction of theatrical knowledge throughout the performance and in Fleishman’s thesis.

²² For all my descriptions in addition to Fleishman’s, I have used his DVD recording of the performance.

‘extinct’), bringing in the post-extinction antithesis through the body. The earthy colours of her clothes and the surroundings of the set design – with its “open air” feeling and mud floor – bring the post-extinction antithesis into a theatrical rendering of the metaphysics of indigeneity. The earthy floor, as a visual backdrop for the earthy figure of the woman, constitutes the terrestrial origin and location for the indigenous subject, whose subjectivity substantiates itself as a formulation of body-progeny in existential dependence on the land-progenitor. The complete theatrical image suggests such relationship through the correspondence between the visual rendering of the woman and the visual rendering of the land. As I argue throughout my thesis, existential dependence is the essence of filiation, as a modality of being indigenous, and the centrality of origin in this scene brings this filiation into a focus on nativity, which is about the birthing of the progeny, and her expressive self-identification within the theme of birth.

The young woman’s song exemplifies this theme of birth and the metaphysics of filiation, through nativity, for a poetics of indigeneity. She sings without accompaniment, using a tune that has almost the melodic feel of a ‘Negro spiritual’, due to the pentatonic (five-note) scale that has been so important to African-American choral music traditions. This is a notable musical choice, because San cultures have their own choral music traditions that do not sound like this (like most southern African black choral and folk music traditions, they are more likely to use the Dorian scale, though this is by no means a strict rule). The song thus feels sonically naked and compositionally new in this cultural context, and such nakedness and newness signify birth. In her lyrics, the woman’s sense of identity has to do with her origin, which is place: “I come from that place”. She also uses this terrestrial identification to define her very sense of being, which is inseparable from her orientation in locality: “I come here like this”. In other words, it is precisely because she comes from this

place that she is “here” and “like this”, an almost tautological assertion that double-seals her existential covenant with her land-progenitor. The progeny then extends this relationship with the land to a relationship with the entire cosmos. “When the sun was burning” is the time and circumstance of her emergence. Such temporal location and climactic conditioning is one of the grounds for her to be “like this”, so that terrestrial place is cosmic place, and ecology is inseparable from astronomical cosmology. She renders herself a ‘universal’ subject, in the sense of being ‘of the universe’. Such a rendering thwarts ethnological particularisation, for her culture, her body and her selfhood are not to remain within the containment of concepts of otherness, but rather emanate to the fullness of being totally human, which means being of the earth and being of the universe. Paradoxically, it is her culturally unique cosmology that enables her to render herself within this universalising poetics; yet the paradox does not negate her poetics but rather constitutes it. The centrality of paradox gains additional emphasis in the next phrase: “Riding on foot”. Firstly, within the context of the whole stanza of the song about herself and the burning sun, it is not clear whether it is her or the sun that is riding on foot. It can easily be both. Secondly, riding and going on foot are two modes of transport, two different speeds, and two different conditions of corporeality; yet it seems that the two are one. Thirdly, the act of riding, by itself, and especially in colonial times when animals were central to transport, already involves two bodies, the human and the animal that does move on foot, its own feet becoming both for itself and for its rider. These poetic paradoxes with their obvious non-dualism place *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* within a different prose of the past, a non-linear, non-empirical and non-taxonomic rendering of historical reality. This initiates and correlates with the aesthetic move of centralising the /Xam modality of relationship to time and space, distributing relationships according to an ontology of monism – the assertion of the universal oneness of

all things. Such a theatrical prologue places the entire performance within a distinct reality, an indigenous reality, and therefore indigenises the aesthetic of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*. The main characteristic of this aesthetic indigenisation is the epistemological migration from a historical orientation to a cosmological one, not separating the two but changing the power relationship, so that cosmology brings subjectivity into history, rather than history objectifying cosmology. In *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, aesthetic indigenisation is inseparable from the representation of indigeneity through the poetics of filiation, which in this scene revolves around the terrestrial nativity of the cosmological subject.

The rest of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* sustains this theatrical ontology in all the dramaturgical layers of the performance, and the layers themselves blur within the immediacy of the performance, during which spectators would have neither the time nor the tools for the sort of close analysis that I have presented above. The point is not to argue that these depths of meaning are what spectators gain during the performance, but rather to explore what the performance does to history while the live speed and subtlety of the complex performance serves Fleishman's intention of removing the theatrical cosmology from epistemological entrapment and thwarting the spectator's unethical illusion of anthropological mastery over /Xam history and culture. Fleishman is emphatic about this; hence, in his work as director, he has taken further steps to disturb the seamless rhythm and flow of theatrical time and the continuity of textual readability. The method that Fleishman calls 'scrambling' uses sudden visual anachronisms to interrupt the semiotic continuity of the drama's apparent historical and cultural contextualisation (123–124). The dramaturgical linearities of time crumble, leaving only a centrifugal interconnectivity between multiple, haphazardly exchanging beginnings, rather than a flight from beginning to end (124). The

dramaturgical ruptures also imitate the narrative ruptures of /Xam storytelling, wherein sudden leaps of time and ontological space are unproblematic, as well as the rhythm of folkloric life, the order of which the trickster constantly threatens and disturbs (124). Fleishman sees this ontological turbulence as ideal for an epistemological sensibility that remains mindful of the textual turbulence of the ethnological work on /Xam history and culture, which entered scholarly archives through processes of translation, transcription and oral performance in interpersonally dynamic circumstances of poetic and intellectual negotiation (124). The ethnological and historical opacity notwithstanding, my aim is to show how *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* renders the logic of filiation and the poetics of indigeneity legible. I suggest that both opacity and legibility produce meaning as a paradoxical unit, even if 'legibility' does not permit 'transparency', for the metaphysics of filiation belongs to a wide and diverse scope of identity poetics, exceeding yet indispensable to indigeneity. I suggest that *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* moves in two simultaneous directions, bringing opacity into the encounter with the /Xam cosmos and society, while rendering the legibility of the poetics of filiation, with its emphasis on subjectivity. The spectator has no recourse to ethnological objectification as a modality for engaging with the Bushman characters, for the only feasible and available spectator-stance is the intersubjective. This move – the epistemological migration to subjectivity – is part of the post-extinction antithesis, in which the spectator can now participate, for the extinction thesis had crucially relied on the epistemological impulse of group objectification.

The deliberate scrambling of time, and the consequent cycle of beginnings throughout the performance, is not only important for Fleishman's ethical move toward ethnological opacity, but also significant on two other fronts. First is a historiographical argument about how *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* addresses indigeneity as itself a formulation of the

post-extinction antithesis. Second is the argument about the kind of subjectivity that spectators can engage with after the migration from the epistemology of objectification to the encounter with the subject. Regarding indigeneity, the cycle of perpetual beginnings sustains a cyclic nativity, suspending the onset of filiation by repeatedly returning to origins, that is, to the point where the progenitor is still giving birth or has recently given birth to the progeny. Colonial violence is the counterpoint to this cyclic nativity; thus there is a transitional tension between perpetual nativity and the developing conditions of orphanhood due to colonial violence. Such tension produces a 'liminal' subject, that is, a subject who is 'not' this and 'not-not' this (Schechner 123). This liminal subject is gradually becoming an orphan while still experiencing new rebirths as a child of the mother and father who are under the siege of a murderous colonial advancement into her territory. The historical reality of atrocity can thus have a stark and menacing presence without sending the entire performance into an extinction thesis, the 'delay' of which constitutes a post-extinction antithesis in *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*.

The set design subtly suggests the menacing presence of the outsider onslaught. The writing desk, representing colonial domesticity and the workplace of the ethnographer, is in the middle of the stage, standing on the earth surface that is the progenitor of the indigenous subject. The table is a different prop, suggesting a different space of storytelling, which is no longer by the fire in the Bushman social setting, but now in a settler's house, with a very different audience, and new conditions for negotiating performance, interpersonal relations and narrative. The chairs at the fringes of the main stage area also impose a Western sitting and listening custom, with its foreign props. The table and chairs, though not typically 'violent' objects, bring a geometrical rigidity that may feel visually 'oppressive', and indeed in modern times, the craft of carpentry became the source of material demand for a timber

industry that has had an extremely violent relationship with ecosystems. In this regard, it is significant that the set design includes wooden furniture but no trees or other vegetation on the barren earth. If nothing else, the modern furniture serves as metonymy of a completely different social and cultural world to that of the /Xam during the time of colonial advancement. The cosmological arrangement of the /Xam world, with its priorities and concepts of order and chaos, encounters a different regime and definition of orderliness with the colonial 'new world', that is, the world coming in, not the world that settlers have supposedly 'discovered'. With the new regime of world-ordering comes the notion of 'civilisation', which the furniture does indeed represent in a banal sense. With this notion come teleological Darwinism and the extinction thesis. It is not too much to say that the furniture visually clashes with the earthy ground and the cosmological set-up of the performance, but this set-up sustains a dynamic visual and spatial tension that is part of the complex and changing environment of the liminal subject. This complexity is part of a post-extinction antithesis. The /Xam world is violently changing, not 'dying', and the change is not about 'Westernisation' or even globalisation but rather about a radically transforming locality that will have the markers of cosmopolitan modernity within the space of tribal tradition. It is not simply a takeover or colonial settling in which the 'Western' culture remains intact. Colonial civilisation cannot simply install its complete order, the undoing of which is spatially palpable through the isolation of the desk in the middle of the earthy ground, the marginalisation of the chairs at the outskirts of the performance space, and the open air feeling due to an absence of architectural borders between the house and the wilderness. In the opening image, the indigenous subject asserts her ontological sovereignty over the entire space by standing on the settler's writing desk, a surely inappropriate station for the dusty bare feet of a native woman, who daily walks on the terrestrial surface of the

indigenous stories that the European ethnographer wants to inscribe. The indigenous subject must reassert her nativity against the modernist colonial meddling with her cosmological world-ordering regime. The colonial world-ordering process is extremely violent despite its polite suggestion in the markers of domestic civilisation masking the extinction thesis; thus the resistant tableau of the native subject standing defiantly on the table top is also a complex image, for although she overpowers the table, it separates her feet from contact with the ground that gave birth to her autochthony. Her nativity, which the cyclic dramaturgy has made perpetual, must perpetually contend with the violence of this separation from ground, a separation from mother-father earth, an orphanhood of the progeny. Her resulting liminal condition brings the legibility of her subjectivity into contact with the opacity of historical ethnology. From now on, her stories will only reach a postcolonial audience through the mediation and translation processes that transpired around the writing desk, which is the workspace of the modern ethnographer. In all these ways, the post-extinction antithesis uses spatial violence to expose the atrocity of colonial civilisation, which nevertheless contends with the indigenous subject's ontological sovereignty over theatrical space and dramaturgical cosmology.

It is within this dense theatrical ontology that the first dramatic thread of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* unravels the salvaging narrative. The figure of the altruistic European ethnographer must deal with a world that undoes her own, even as she fights to rescue the oral heritage of a people whose existence she perceives as undergoing annihilation. *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* theatrically renders the epistemology of the ethnographer powerless against the ontology of the /Xam world of life; thus while Fleishman acknowledges the immense contemporary value of the salvaging work (Fleishman 106), the theatrical cosmology also strips the ethnographic work of any heroism, which remains

complicit with the extinction thesis, though, as Skotnes observes, such heroism has far better intentions than the colonial enterprise (301). *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* has no psychologically systematic portrayals of 'character', but rather presents 'characterisations' of historical figures that also serve as social, cultural and ideological metonymy. In this context, the ethnographer appears as a sensitive humanitarian whose own mental state undergoes the disturbance due to the violence of her times. The performance communicates this disturbance not through banal psychological characterisation but through opaque spatial, corporeal and linguistic effects that have an emotive suggestion. These effects show the undoing of the European woman's world as she choreographically and verbally negotiates her way within the /Xam cosmos, and acutely feels the exigency of salvage work due to knowledge of the extreme violence around her.

The European woman first appears as a figure of social and cultural contrast after the song of the /Xam woman in the opening image of the performance:

A second woman (Lucy) dressed in a costume reminiscent of Victorian undergarments - a corset and hoop skirt - engages the moving bodies of a succession of men (/Kabbo; Dia!kwain)" (Fleishman 109).

Lucy's costume is historically thematic rather than historically illustrative. Its ghostly white and brown colour scheme gives a nostalgic but also dreary feel, perhaps also merging with the earth and wood theme of the set design, to emphasise a sense of dryness, 'woodenness' and desolation. It is an opaque illustration that makes historical and ethnological lucidity powerless against the dense cosmological order of the /Xam world. On the other hand, the exposure of undergarments suggests the theme of 'undoing', which is ideological,

psychological and cultural, changing the way in which the settler woman can engage with knowledge as she discovers that she cannot easily penetrate the world in which she finds herself. The ‘head’ knowledge of the ethnographer is useless to her as a point of departure, and consequently she must interact with the /Xam cosmos first through her corporeality; hence she “engages the moving bodies of a succession of men”. This is not a behaviourally realistic engagement but a choreographic stylisation of the inter-corporeality between races, sexes and classes, an inter-corporeality that refutes the prerogative to objectify the other in order to study him. Inter-corporeality thus becomes inter-subjectivity, thwarting anthropological objectification.

The beginning of Lucy’s story is as inscrutable onstage as it is in the script, and this is precisely the point:

She tries to ‘read’ off the bodies; struggles to interpret, to make sense of; writes what she reads and understands in books and on papers.

The woman (Lucy) reads out loud from a book:

I am afraid I am getting weaker and weaker, and that the sand of my life is running to an end. Yet I should much like to live on, there is so much which I think I might have done, so many things to be finished; [...] I trust that my wife’s sister, Lucy Catherine Lloyd, will kindly assist her in the work of publishing my posthumous papers etc.; and I hereby acknowledge the great help she has been to me in my literary labours. But particularly I request her to continue and work well out our joint Bushman studies, in which her quicker ear,

and great industry has been of so important service to science. I appeal to all friends of science to assist her in such ways as they can in her work of collecting, working out, and publishing the records of this dying out race, - the accurate knowledge of whose language and ways seems destined to solve some exceedingly important ethnological questions.

(Fleishman 109)

Lucy is grasping onto the literary mode in an attempt to gain epistemological security; yet she only discovers alienation from knowledge, even from herself. The monologue, which the performer delivers with a highly personalising passion, initially sounds like a description of Lucy's own condition, as if it is her own memoir and her own predicament of getting weaker, closer to death, while desiring to do more work. This context of dying is a stark contrast of the earlier presentation of the San woman, who asserted her nativity and embodied youth and liveliness as part of a post-extinction antithesis. The European woman, who came with a dominant new culture, is the one who speaks in the first person and with desperation about running out of time and giving in to death. When it becomes clear, on the page, that Lucy is so passionately reading someone else's words about her, the words become alienating and strangely objectifying. This effect is not quite the same for the live audience, who should realise that the character is reading the words of someone else, a person who has a "wife's sister"; yet there is no reason to assume that the "Lucy Catherine Lloyd" in question is actually the person currently on stage, reading comments about herself. For the spectator, the scene retains some dramatic tension of mystery. For my analysis, the monologue opens new layers of complexity and irony in how the performance renders subjectivity. The memoir

expresses Bleek's high regard for Lucy's aptitude in the "literary labours" of "Bushman studies", and her "quicker ear"; yet the theatrical text and spatial articulation has shown her epistemological undoing and her powerlessness to make sense of the /Xam cultural body. The performance text and the post-extinction antithesis have rendered questionable all talk of "important service to science", the notion of a "dying out race", and the however noble hope to "solve some exceedingly important ethnological questions". Fleishman is not against the humanitarian impulse of the salvaging effort, but nevertheless points a critical spotlight on the purely 'scientific' desire for ethnological lucidity, a goal that at the very least must pass through some ethical turbulence, which entails the realisation that ethnological lucidity is at best a futile hope.

Such a realisation burdens the work, which must nevertheless continue for the sake of altruism:

Five other women, copies of the first woman (Lucy) dance in the chairs at the edge of the mud floor: a dance of slow, burdened fatigue – gestures of exhaustion, of load, being weighed down, heaviness. Yet also determined; willing to push on – forward - with some task.

The replication of Lucy splits her mental and epistemological integration, sending pieces of her mind and sense of self to the periphery of the earth floor, since she cannot master the cosmos of this land where she has no autochthony, for she is not the child of this land. Her undoing leaves her both without centre and off the centre. She will not be able to order this /Xam cosmos according to her background prejudices. The music for this moment is a piano score that sounds like classical chamber music, but somehow its rough performance, as the

pianist slams the keys too enthusiastically, is a sterile and ungraceful misfit to the cosmological context. The musical delivery does not even represent the ‘refinement’ of Western culture. Such cultural defacement does not necessarily take vengeance on the Western subject, but rather symbolises the wearing out of Lucy’s cultural difference, so that this difference can no longer serve as an epistemological barrier to connecting in a raw way with other humans. In other words, the cultural undoing has an epistemological effect, stripping the ethnological impulse of its dangerous pretensions to scientific knowledge and leaving, for a basis and rationale, only the desire to create a memory of heritage that can preserve the dignity of a people with their role in history. The burden and exhaustion of the dancers, with their dreary serenade, now has to do with more than the ardour of the recording task. It is a burden because of the weight of the tragedy and the human gravity of the necessary salvaging work that Lucy wants to undertake.

The ethnological quest dies, and the altruistic venture begins, leading further than altruism, into human relationship with individuals who do not see themselves as a social problem for outsiders to solve but are aware of what they have to give to the world, and how precious their gift is. This is the journey that Lucy will begin to take with //Kabbo, one of the storytellers who gave to the Bleek and Lloyd archive:

The man (//Kabbo) requests thread to sew in place the buttons she (Lucy) has given him for his coat. He moves; she speaks off his body:

I thought that I would say to you, / I would come to ask my
mistress, you, / if you would not give me thread / to sew in
place the buttons / you gave me for my jacket. / Without this
they will fall off. / Without thread, they will get lost. / And I – I

keep on thinking of them, I think, not a little gently, of the
beauty / of these buttons that you gave me.

(Fleishman 109)

Lucy has given //Kabbo buttons for his coat, and it is //Kabbo who must sew the buttons, with Lucy's permission, and using the thread that she must give to him. In other words, she has tried to help him in her generosity as an ethnographer who desires knowledge and communication. The act of giving the buttons symbolises this generosity. While these buttons now belong to //Kabbo, they are originally Lucy's property, elements of herself, loose remains of her undoing, and //Kabbo has the ability to sew the buttons in place, on his own coat, wearing these elements of her subjectivity onto his own person. He knows and understands the cosmos that has been the place of her undoing; therefore by fastening elements of her subjectivity onto his own protective garment of cultural knowledge, he will ensure that she will no longer lose herself. He needs her permission to take on this healing role, and he also needs her to give him the threads of her own imagination, because his therapeutic work is through storytelling. Their subjectivities enmeshing, it is natural that the performer in the role of //Kabbo dances silently through his own speech while Lucy "speaks off his body" by saying his 'lines' for him, so that, for the second time so far, she refers to herself through another character's words in the first person. This time, the speech is not self-alienating but self-restoring, as Lucy calls herself "my mistress", asking herself for the healing thread, for "my jacket", so that the buttons do not get lost, and she does not forfeit "the beauty" of these buttons, which she has given back to herself by putting herself into //Kabbo's hands. It is a very tender reversal of roles, the rescuer discovering herself to be the one who needed rescuing.

This is no simple romantic exoticism, but it is a romance nonetheless, albeit a platonic one, which leads Lucy into a real adventure within the Bushman's social world. Her encounter with the society can no longer be a clinical and generalising ethnology of a people, and in this world of perpetual beginnings and cyclic rebirths of native subjectivity, there is also perpetual undoing, which requires perpetual healing. The whole community is there to challenge and elude the foreigner, but also to help in restoring her:

The woman (Lucy) fetches a jar full of buttons but as she brings it into the space it is knocked from her hands by the increasing number of moving bodies around her and the buttons are strewn across the mud floor. The woman (Lucy) and the small group of men whose bodies she has been attempting to 'read' make a desperate attempt to collect the buttons and to return them to the jar, while all around more and more bodies enter the space in a swirling, spinning, anarchic movement of disruption/interruption. Then in a moment, all are gone and the space is left bare, charged with the after-glow of what has been there only a moment before. (Fleishman 109–110)

Reality is still complex and full of vicissitudes, but Lucy is no longer alone. She struggles within the movement of the people, and she disappears within the disappearance of the people, for it is now clear that death has no discrimination. As history moves on, an entire generation must die, and she must die with it. The extinction thesis, with its pretensions of empirical objectivity, gives its users a false sense of exemption from mortality, which becomes a condition of 'them', not 'us'; yet every 'I' within the 'us' must die and disappear from the earth. The real Bleek and Lloyd, as historical persons, and the entire generational

tribe that historians call ‘the Victorians’, have all died with the /Xam peoples who lived in that time. The “after-glow” following collective generational disappearance is the glow of intimacy in death, which cares not for the artificial distinctions that human beings randomly draw between each other while alive. This is a hopeful message, for the reality of intimacy in death implies the real possibility of intimacy in life.

Intimacy, eschatology and frontiers of life and death are the themes of the final movement of the first dramatic thread of *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*. Rather than analyse it in much detail, I would like this movement to mostly speak opaquely and beautifully for itself as the conclusion to Lucy’s journey within the bigger story:

A figure on stilts wearing a mask made from an antelope skull with horns, enters the now quietly, emptied space. A figure of strangeness, reminiscent of the elongated, therianthropes in San rock art: part human, part animal. The man (/Kabbo) approaches and begins a pas de deux, a slow, tender, intimate engagement of bodies in silence – the only sound, the amplified breath of the two dancers. The strangeness is recognizable – the two estranged bodies connect in some way; make connection. Then the tall figure of strangeness turns suddenly, surprisingly, without expectation and leaves into the darkness. (Fleishman 110)

It is fitting that /Kabbo is the star in the conclusion to Lucy’s thread within the drama of *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*. /Kabbo now carries Lucy’s buttons, which he has sewn onto his own person with the thread of her imagination, for her healing and revival. He dances on her behalf, and on her behalf makes contact with the figure of strangeness from the

depths of the /Xam cosmological universe. Lucy would never have been able to dance this dance, to engage her full corporeal and psychological being, with the otherworldly figure. She went as far as she could, and the Bleek and Lloyd archive allows the contemporary reader to go no further, for the deepest mysteries belong to the /Xam.

I have been arguing that the first dramatic thread of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* resists extinction with the post-extinction antithesis; yet my argument has come to the point of contemplating the universality of death. The post-extinction antithesis by no means denies death. It denies the delusion of making death exotic, which is the inevitable effect of the extinction thesis. Death is absolutely personal, and impolite, violating every barrier that fearful intellects construct in an attempt to render death a statistical matter happening elsewhere than here, to someone other than me. The universality of death is a powerful theme for this drama from South Africa, and from a continent that has become a quintessential 'ghetto' of death in the neurotic imaginary of international interest in third world affairs. A credible existential confrontation with death is incompatible with the extinction thesis; in fact, real knowledge of death is possibly the strongest modality for ending the extinction thesis. It is only against the background of this knowledge that an otherwise cosmetic assertion of life becomes profoundly hopeful.

In the second dramatic thread of the performance, the post-extinction antithesis goes beyond resistance, to defeating extinction as a non-possibility for a postcolonial existential ontology of culture. The post-extinction antithesis begins to transform into an existential synthesis. The performance now fills the space of with a population of lively bodies, not in a disruptive and anarchic mode of movement like earlier, but in a passionate collective coordination that makes community palpable, not merely conceivable in desolate circumstances. The mood of this dramatic thread is "celebratory", replacing "the overall

nostalgic, melancholic mood of the beginning – the sparsely populated space, marked here and there by ones and twos” with “a much more celebratory feeling” (110). Spectacular theatrical lighting, image projection and South African musician Neo Muyanga’s township jazz music, energise the appearance of “larger choral groups, dancing, singing, clapping, stamping” (110). The anachronistic elements, including the dance ensemble’s adornments, which are stylish rehearsal rags rather than period costume or traditional Bushman attire, help to dispel the illusion of time-separation that helped to keep the extinction thesis in place. The choreography brings in vigorous movement and makes extravagant use of stage space as the ensemble soars and glides together, sometimes giving individuals a moment to excel in the spotlight. The whole attitude and atmosphere create “a different sense of ownership of space and material/text; a different claim/ing” (110). The entire cosmology of the drama belongs to the people and their knowledge; thus “there is also a different sense of place, an ‘other’ place in which the boundaries between things are different, a *Far-off Place*” (110). Lucy, taking the words of /Xam story into her mouth, makes the memory her own as she speaks into the dance, but she does not ‘master’ the story. In delivering the moment, the performer looks almost in shock at what she is saying as the story possesses her:

In that place, far-off, where //Kabbo once lived, / the sorcerers,
dancing, would fall into a trance. / Wanting us to believe that
they were no longer men, / our sorcerers would turn themselves
into birds - / and we really believed that they were those birds /
[...] We lived, then, in a world of men become birds.

(Fleishman 110)

There is no clarity as to who is speaking. It seems that //Kabbo, the storyteller, has become part of the story, perhaps as a biographical protagonist; yet this first-person account does not read like a biography, or even like the ethnographic report that was Lucy's mandate to compile. It could be the words of another /Xam storyteller; yet the epistemological stance is somewhat inconsistent for an account from any cultural insider. The speaker at one time seems sceptically distant from "the sorcerers", who while "dancing . . . into a trance" beckoned spectators "to believe that they were no longer men"; yet the speaker still acknowledges that these are not just sorcerers from anywhere, but "our sorcerers", who really "would turn themselves into birds". The speaker then admits that "we really believed that they were those birds", a self-examining statement that could read as self-critical in its retrospection, until the speaker claims to have actually "lived . . . in a world of men become birds". It has become impossible to sustain critical and empirical distances from the culture and cosmology in view, for the /Xam world is giving its own account of the past, not giving that prerogative away to ethnological historicism, the foundation of the extinction thesis.

The indeterminacy of the existential synthesis is where liminal subjectivities arise and articulate themselves most clearly and forcefully. What is jarring and remarkable is that these liminal subjectivities, transitioning between nativity and orphanhood in the context of colonial violence, do not present themselves as subjectivities of victimisation, but rather as subjectivities of creativity gathering itself within the destruction of the world. Creation and destruction are not antagonistic movements but rather a paradoxical, life-processing unit, which deserves expression through a "celebratory" dramaturgy wherein "choral singing is predominant . . . sung by many voices in concert" (110), suggesting anything but chaos and tragedy. As a womb for the conception and growth of liminal subjectivities, the life-processing unit is itself liminal, in-between things, such as text and sensation, or thinking and

feeling. Important in this process is the substantiation of corporeality, and the simultaneous entropy of language, an entropy that does not disqualify language or set language in opposition to the body, but rather brings language right back into its source, which is the body:

The singing has a way of breaking down language both because of the way words are used in the songs (in fragmentary ways) but also, and more importantly, in the way that the performance, the singing itself, renders the words fluid and sensuous, in the process unhinging them somewhat from their Sense, becoming less and less language and more voice. (Fleishman 110)

The aesthetic embodiment of ‘voice’ is political, for it is the people speaking for themselves, refusing the silencing of colonial ethnology and the extinction thesis, as well as the violence with which colonial knowledge has been complicit. This resistant speaking is about emotive effects within the community, for intimacy and uplifting fervour, rather than sending particular messages to any adversary of the people. The collective voice of the people creates “a call and response dynamic that builds a sense of community and togetherness but also a feeling of joyful, sustaining energy in the face of difficulty and adversity” (110–111). Such a dynamic means that the resistance liberates the people, not from a particular position of defeat or subservience under an adversary, but from the adversarial relationship in its entirety. The context becomes inaccessible to ethical – not ethnic – outsiders because of the forfeiting of an intelligible ‘message’ that would have kept ethical outsiders at the centre of attention as the endless great problem for indigenous peoples. The existential synthesis requires the collective being of an indigenous people to have sovereignty over rights of

participation in indigenous cultural communications. This sovereignty is achievable through the ownership of both voice and meaning, so that only the people who belong can have voice in their mouths and meaning in their ears. Sovereignty over performance means sovereignty over performance ontology; thus this hopeful assertion of the people erases the extinction thesis and makes the existential synthesis palpable.

None of this takes away the historical reality of genocide, and in fact, the existential synthesis, with its liminal subjectivities, leads into a direct confrontation with death, that is, real death as opposed to the exotic death within the imaginary of the extinction thesis. In the third dramatic thread of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, the narrative of filiation, within the theme of indigeneity, more fully develops its picture of liminal subjectivities between nativity and orphanhood due to colonial violence. This “biographical thread . . . increasingly political” (111), is fittingly the most personalising and confrontational in its treatment of historical tragedy. It focuses on “//Kabbo’s story and in particular his relationship to what has been left behind, to his wife, !Kwaba-an, in his homeplace, struggling alone without him, at a loss, not understanding where he is and why he is not returning” (111). //Kabbo’s wife is an indigenous progeny, and the relevant progenitor in this case is the consanguineous collective.

I have argued in Chapter 1 that the consanguineous collective is the entire social body of kinship, from the closest relationships of the nuclear family to the most extensive kinship of the larger tribe, language group or ethnic nation. The consanguineous collective is a huge and ancient progenitor for each indigenous individual, whose own life comes from it, although the consanguineous collective includes one’s spouse, children and other people who are not one’s personal progenitors or even elders. Marriage is an instance of new filiation, as each spouse gains a new family, and possibly new parents, in a fresh nativity. If both spouses belong to the same larger kinship body, for example the same tribe, the sense of a ‘new’

nativity remains profound as the eros of the marriage bonds two families into a new extended family, thus generating many new personal filiations for various new relatives by marriage. It is not too much to say that, for many people, marriage is a major modality for filial nativity, its life significance second only to one's physical birth, and furthermore, the importance of marriage in this regard is by no means an exclusively 'indigenous' thing. In many instances, the loss or estrangement of a spouse is a double trauma, for it may also rupture bonds between in-laws, and the divorcing or grieving spouses may not be the only family members forfeiting inter-familial bonds.

//Kabbo's wife, !Kwaba-an, is fearing being in such a position, her predicament an effect and condition of the general violence of colonialism against /Xam families. She is waiting for news about //Kabbo, while in all likelihood also wondering if she has become a widow, therefore an orphan. The uncertainty of the situation means that her subjectivity cannot conclude her widowhood and orphanhood, while her natural hope would keep her marital nativity in place in her mind. She is a liminal figure between nativity and orphanhood. In Schechner's famous formulation, taking after Turner's, liminality is a transitional negotiation between two negatives (Schechner 123). In !Kwaba-an's case, I would say two indeterminacies rather than two 'negatives', for negativity is certain about itself. !Kwaba-an's marital nativity and her orphanhood through widowhood are each uncertainties between which she endures a liminal tension. The double indeterminacy means that the 'transitional' part of liminality is not quite feasible for !Kwaba-an, since it is not definite for her that she is undergoing any change of marital status; yet she must still suffer the anxiety of a liminal tension due to the uncertainty. This is an extraordinary ontological violence against her mind. Her situation brings heartbreaking realities into the notion of the liminal, which I have explored above as richly creative and regenerative, but appears here as

also a place of harrowing suspension under the indeterminate threat of death, not a cause for phenomenological romanticism about liberating potentials. The theatrical environment, with its aesthetically liminal conditions, now menaces her, “alone in the performance space, a small figure dwarfed by the empty space around her” (111). The dramaturgy betrays her, keeping her separate from //Kabbo and ignorant of his whereabouts while allowing the theatrical audience to see //Kabbo, a perceptual privilege that !Kwaba-an needs the most. The closest that the spouses can get to seeing each other is to “talk to each other in a dream” (111). The dream is the emotional and ontological trauma of separation, which is all that they can now share. //Kabbo dreams:

She asked me for a smoke/I gave her my pipe but the tobacco
was all gone/When I awoke, the sun was up. I was no longer
dreaming. My wife and my son were gone.

(Fleishman 111)

Reality has become truly cruel as even the dream no longer allows the spouses the intimacy of sharing a smoke. The only alternative to such a cruel dream is an even harsher waking life in which the family have gone. Imagination is no escape from death, for the liminal condition has allowed a gateway between waking and dreaming life. The dramaturgy still does not give the extinction thesis and colonial narrative a way in to compromise the cosmological order of the /Xam world; yet this cosmos itself, ingesting the violence of the land, becomes an unbearable dwelling for the indigenous storyteller. Like Lucy earlier, //Kabbo is now in a place of his own undoing, but he experiences this undoing as a trauma of familial separation

that is identical to that of his wife; thus he is also in a non-transitional liminal tension between nativity and orphanhood as two indeterminacies.

I have shown earlier how *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* sustains a rendering of the //Xam society as in a liminal transition between nativity and orphanhood, but the case of //Kabbo and !Kwaba-an also shows that within the social transitional process, there are individual experiences that may involve a liminality of indefinite suspension rather than transition. The real historical //Kabbo was reportedly aware that his world was going into annihilation (107), which would mean that his liminality as a historical person was both conscious and (therefore) definitely transitional. In the more personal situation, the couple can only fear, not know, of any transition that they might be making from marriage to bereavement, both of which stages become indeterminate. The two forms of liminality, transition and suspension, both distressing, combine into a considerable force of pressure on each individual consciousness.

It is in this context that //Kabbo is beginning to lose, but has not fully lost, his fervour to communicate his culture to the ethnographer whose undoing he previously healed with his stories:

The relationship of //Kabbo and !Kwaba-an is set off against the //Kabbo-Lucy relationship which is starting to break down, becoming more difficult, discordant. Lucy speaks of struggling to hold on to //Kabbo, of having to find ways to keep him with her in order to finish the task at hand.

In my last Report concerning the Bushman Researches ... I mentioned that unless the inquiries made by me regarding the whereabouts of the wives of the two Bushmen then with me

proved successful, I feared that ere long the men would leave me. [...] In fact, it was only by the promise of a greatly longed for reward, that I could induce //Kabbo (whose services as an excellent narrator were most valuable) to make up his mind to remain on ... through the winter.

(Fleishman 111)

//Kabbo's discouragement is a serious problem not only for Lucy's work, but also for //Kabbo's own existential health, because the fervour to communicate orally is the modality of generating voice, which is the lifeblood of cultural and communal being. Discouragement, while a personal emotional problem, depletes the liveliness of the consanguineous body whose fertility and heritage //Kabbo embodies. The source of discouragement is the encroachment of death, which by trapping //Kabbo in its siege, has also affected the logistics of preserving his heritage by straining the relationship with the ethnographer who wants to record the stories. As a result of death's siege, //Kabbo has to make a terrible choice, between searching for his wife and staying with Lucy to help to fight cultural extinction. The situation also compromises Lucy's altruism, as she has had to use gifts to manipulate //Kabbo to stay and prioritize her intellectual project over his exigency to find his wife. Death disturbs all ethical and emotional centres for all the characters. These are practical and personal considerations, but they are inseparable from the broad metaphysical effect of death and its cousin, discouragement, as equally grave forces of depletion that suck the lifeblood of the society.

As colonial violence becomes menacingly real within the ontology of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, the post-extinction antithesis is not enough to effect ontological recovery;

thus the existential synthesis must make a stronger statement than it has so far. The existential synthesis must germinate itself right where death had buried the seed of possibility and imagination, so that death is not an inhuman horror to shy away from, or an inconvenience to dehumanise, but a necessary modality of life. To accept death in this way is not to accept human violence, but rather to strip human violence of its evil sovereignty to determine the meaning of death for the people. The existential synthesis must recover the dignity that belongs to the dying. This means facing death, contemplating its circumstances, and salvaging the life that can continue with its own particular modality. This is the remaining part of my journey with *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*:

And then in October 1873, //Kabbo leaves for Victoria West from there to make his way home: 'back to his belongings'.

The theme of returning to belongings is crucial to the rise of the existential synthesis, but not before exposing the atrocity that made such returning both necessary and profound:

Dialkwain arrives to take //Kabbo's place. He tells The Story of Ruyter:

Ruyter, brought up by white men – Ruyter died/ amidst white men at a place called Springkaan's Kolk./ He was bound to a wagon with straps from the oxen;/ they tied him face-down because of herding the sheep./ Then the Boer who was master, the Boer began beating/ him with the riem that they used for tying the beast./ He said Ruyter, the herder, had not herded well./ This happened, this beating that led to his death./ The

Boer hit him and hit him; the other Boers too./ When at last they unloosed him, Ruyter, he fainted./ Those who were there – they all must have known,/ they must have known then, when picking him up,/ that Ruyter, the herder, was near beaten to death.

(Fleishman 111–112)

The harrowing description recolours the entire ontology of the performance by replacing the magic of folkloric depiction and narration with “a different kind of story and a different register of telling” which is “angrier, harder, more breathless, as it tells of the herder ‘near beaten to death’” (112). Fleishman intends for audiences of the performance to encounter at this point a theatrical and rhetorical politicising that is “much more obvious, closer to the surface here” (112). In this way, Fleishman momentarily brings the opaque theatrical ethnography back into transparency at the very point where audiences cannot apprehend /Xam social reality without dealing with the atrocities of outsiders, a sociological politicising that by implication points a spotlight at the audience itself as a potential adversary. Such hard-hitting confrontation disallows the impulse to render both death and murder exotic. Audiences and readers, including myself and my reader in this chapter, cannot sit coolly and enjoy the theatrical and theoretical subversion of the extinction thesis without engaging with the atrocity that can no longer be exotic. We are “the Boer who was master”, who beat Ruyter to death. This might seem disagreeable for some; yet without this acknowledgement, the existential synthesis is impossible, for then we have pushed the harrowing part of the /Xam people’s reality away from us, therefore pushed the entire /Xam cosmos away from us, and since, without a contemporary ethnic community, the /Xam cosmos cannot go anywhere

other than yesteryear, we return to committing the atrocity of the extinction thesis. In short, we are subjunctive accomplices in either murder or genocide; in reality, there is no difference, and there is no third option if we are to engage ethically with the legacy of the /Xam. This blood on our own hands, the voice of light beckons each to repentance, accepting responsibility regardless of establishing culpability, and such acceptance of responsibility, if sincere, renders meaningless the very distinction between responsibility and culpability. Only in this position of repentance is it possible to become ethical spectators or ethical readers. Such a crowd cannot regard the metaphysics of indigenous authenticity as mere essentialist poetics, or the cry for justice as mere polemic that need not compel everyone. The existential synthesis must seek theoretical justice, not merely analysis at all costs, and therefore perceive the indigenous voice as a voice of truth, not therapy, for truth is whatever establishes its indispensability, not its infallibility. We no longer nitpick indifferently about whether this truth is 'provable', for it is necessary. This is important because while Fleishman has thoroughly dismantled the illusion of historical and ethnological lucidity, his point is not to indulge in futile and unethical exercises in philosophical relativism. Epistemological indeterminacies are indeed part of the politics of ethnology in *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, but the culmination of this politics is that the voice of the people can now articulate the truth, not 'their' truth (belonging to 'them', while we remain terribly objective, critical and above it all), but just truth:

(Spoken) The place has changed,

There is silence now where a song would ring

There is nothing now where it once sounded.

(Sung) Other people came, breaking the strings for me

This earth's not earth
This place has changed
This place has changed
(Spoken) And we were left there then
Our blood used up,
Exhausted.

(Fleishman 112)

The place has changed for the indigenous /Xam people, because the world of their nativity has revolted against life, its sickness originating in spiritual ailments from abroad. This place is the land from which the /Xam people arose long ago. This is the place that deserved a song in the opening scene of the entire performance, a land-progenitor that had birthed and defined the existential identity of progeny who “come from that place . . . come here like this” (109). Now that this “place has changed”, the progeny find “silence now where a song would ring . . . nothing now where it once sounded” (112). Since it was the progeny themselves who had been singing the now missing song, it is them who have taken the song away, taken their voice back into themselves, unable to sing. The fact that on stage the poem does use some melody in its delivery means that the problem is not so much the actual absence of music but rather that the people effectively cannot hear themselves sing; therefore, to them, there is no song. Their deafness to themselves expresses their severe estrangement from the land-progenitor, which used to be a provider and nurturer, and is now a death-trap because of the lust of the coloniser for the land. Our implication in the atrocity identifies us with the other people who “came, breaking the strings”. Our prying intellects tore the threads of imagination, scattering the buttons that //Kabbo had sewn on the coat of his identity to heal

Lucy's undoing, and since she is our representative, a fellow outsider and a fellow ethnographic spectator, we have done all this to ourselves. Atrocity dehumanises the perpetrators, not the person that we killed. The earth is unrecognisable as earth, that is, as grounding and life source, but its children are still "left there", as if the sentiment of terrestrial estrangement does not want to be conclusive in its own expression. This sentiment negates both nativity and orphanhood in relation to the progenitor-earth. The double negation produces liminal subjectivities of transition from the original filiation of nativity to a bereaving filiation of orphanhood. Such a distressing condition depletes the lifeblood of the people and causes existential exhaustion. Death closes in:

With these final words ringing in the air and the announcement of the presentation of 'a report concerning the progress of the Bushman Researches from 1875 to 1884' to the Secretary of Native Affairs in London on the 8th of May, 1889, a darkness descends on the space. It is as if a chapter has come to an end.

(Fleishman 112)

Indeed, my chapter has come to an end. My arguments have run their full course, from a critique of the extinction thesis, via the post-extinction antithesis, into the struggle of the existential synthesis. I have shown how *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* uses this dialectics to dismantle colonial knowledge and restore the ethics of ethnography. The dismantling works by making history opaque while subjectivities of indigeneity become legible – within the dense cultural cosmology of the /Xam – as terrestrial and familial progeny whom colonial atrocity suspends in liminal filiation between nativity and orphanhood. At this point, I could

only reprise my song like the monotonous cry of a ghost without the regeneration of lively new idea. My thought is at a point of its own death, and this at a very despairing moment, when hope is most exigent.

Fleishman has not yet finished his story, and neither have the characters of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*:

And yet, just as it seems that this is to be the end, a light flickers in the darkness, a flame erupts followed by a second and then a third, spinning in the air, partially illuminating the outlines of figures still alive and moving, however indistinctly, in the darkness. (Fleishman 112)

The existential synthesis has germinated in its own soil, and no longer requires my elucidations for its young life. It invokes for itself the appropriate emotions, and it describes in its own words the freshly emergent reality of a new cosmos for the characters of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*:

More and more figures enter the space in the darkness as the music builds, accompanied by clapping and stamping, until at last it all bursts forth in another celebration that goes on for nearly twenty minutes of intense and unrelenting dance and song – all speaking long since vanished/banished - which is both defiant and celebratory. Finally the whole stage space bursts into flame surrounding the moving bodies and then all fall silent again, exhausted - but a different kind of exhaustion. (Fleishman 112)

I dare not take up my analytical gun and threaten this sprouting new mnemonic life that may well have a bright future. It must live on its own. This is the existential synthesis. It is not about asserting a new thesis about the existence of the /Xam, or denying various assertions for the sake of critical detachment. It is about the politics of a will-to-say-something-about-someone. It is a challenge, not to censure, but to comprehend this will and then respond ethically.

We have gone beyond merely asserting the ‘validity’ of the /Xam worldview and aesthetics, or rationalising about the expediency of recycling such heritage in performance. Such conventional critical evaluation would still make us the gods who grant validity and check expediency. The ethics of the existential synthesis resists the diplomatic and the instrumental, bringing *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* into a direct, creative contrast with *African Footprint* and my arguments in Chapter 2. The temporality of the existential synthesis resists the liner, the conclusive, not only in dramaturgy, but also in the analysis of drama. Fleishman’s artistic and intellectual project aims at the very heart of dramaturgical epistemology and semiotics, because there is no notion of a critique that stands ‘above’ the performance, disciplining the readable text into conformity with the stylistics of the ‘complete’ essay. The proper end of my chapter is not to be ‘persuasive’; for persuasion implies closure: ‘Now I know. You have argued coherently and provided evidence. Now I believe you.’ *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints* resists this kind of knowledge, this authorisation by intellectual consensus, the very same mode by which the extinction thesis had closed the door to the /Xam. Fleishman provokes us, not to believe this or that about the /Xam in a ‘better’ ethnology, or to understand such-and-such about performance in an ‘adequate’ critical dramaturgy, but rather to imagine, to dream and to desire the restitution of the postcolony while comprehending only the inadequacy of our epistemologies, and the

ontological violence of the intellect that wills to capture and tame what it deems both knowable and necessary to know. In the aesthetics of the inscrutable, Fleishman has not exempted his own performance epistemology from the challenge of the existential synthesis. My own critical performance, my philosophical dance and my attempt at academic prowess, meet the same challenge. This cannot be a ‘satisfactory’ ending; in the ethics of *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*, satisfaction is death for the desire of the imagination, a desire to re/member the postcolony.

In the very final moments of the performance, a tender song enters the deep silence of the “different kind of exhaustion”, perhaps a song that the /Xam lost when the earth changed. The simple arrangement and careful performance of Muyanga’s vulnerable baritone and acoustic guitar express a sense of bareness, and within this is both desolation and possibility. The Afro-jazz ballad’s three-four rhythmic timing – a frequent compositional basis in European waltz music as well as contemporary Bushman folk chorus – feels appropriate at this inscrutable historical moment for the /Xam, and for us. It is not an invitation to theorise what this means for the /Xam, or for us. The cast sing the Bushman chorus, a gathering of voices in counterpoint with Muyanga’s message to the postcolony: “You can change the world, by dreaming the world”.

Chapter 4

Postcolonial Faces of the Orphan in Isango Ensemble's *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* (2005)

I have been exploring indigeneity as the metaphysics of filiation (Chapter 1), which narrates history by portraying the glorious evolution of heritage, as in Richard Loring's *African Footprint* (Chapter 2), but also by confronting colonial violence, as in Magnet Theatre's *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* (Chapter 3). Neither *African Footprint* nor *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* show post-apartheid conditions of social violence, which I discuss in this chapter through a dramaturgical reading of the cinematic version of Isango Ensemble's opera-film, *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* (2005), a Xhosa adaptation of French composer Georges Bizet's legendary *Carmen* (1875). Continuing my exploration of the narrative themes of nativity, orphanhood and adoption, I place the film between the latter two stages of filiation within the metaphysics of indigeneity. This is not a formulaic application of my theory onto such a familiar narrative; yet I illustrate that the transposition of the opera onto the South African context has uncannily made the metaphysics of filiation indispensable for getting the full tragic impact of the Carmen story itself. It is not merely that there are a few relevant scenes or that audiovisual elements alone characterise the 'indigeneity' of the cinematic text. I argue that the film 'indigenises' the very dramaturgy of the opera through the metaphysics of filiation, portraying its complex tragic heroine as an urban orphan pursuing adoption by seeking love and marriage for belonging and filiation within the indigenous social body despite a violent social context. This drama engages with postcolonial feminism by portraying Carmen as both resistant against sexual oppression and liable to sexual violence. The film is realistically hopeful as Carmen, facing the grim conditions of her social

environment, nevertheless commits to the exercise of courage not only to oppose injustice, but also to pursue love.

UCarmen eKhayelitsha is a ground-breaking reinterpretation of Bizet's tragic love story, which he based on his compatriot Prosper Mérimée's novella, *Carmen* (1845). The result of Mérimée's original inspiration from real events, the novella and the opera have roughly similar narratives, about a nineteenth-century Spanish Romani woman who deals with romance, social oppression and sexual violence, which is ultimately the cause of her death. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* uses the original musical score of Bizet's *Carmen*, and maintains the essential dramaturgical elements of his version of the story, but re-contextualises the European drama into the famous South African township of Khayelitsha, in Cape Town. Characters live in a culturally and socially realistic Khayelitsha community, singing Bizet's lyrics in isiXhosa, with the sound of a full, off-screen orchestra playing the score as part of the cinematic soundtrack.

UCarmen eKhayelitsha is a highlight of the oeuvre of Isango Ensemble, who have secured national and international renown since 2000 for their trademark experimental opera productions. The film won various international awards and achieved local honours, including a special screening for the South African parliament and acclaim therein as a 'national' success (Davies and Dovey 40). Critics and scholars have regarded *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* as a defining moment in South African opera, film and theatre history. The company's creative concept for the film involved disparate but not necessarily incompatible goals, including the celebration of an opera legacy (41) and the reflection on social realities in a major South African township (44). These are probably not the main characteristics that helped the film to tap into South African nationalism and appeal to the government. There is a very strong sense in which the film vibrantly celebrates the Xhosa language and culture as

indigenous to South Africa and also belonging to South Africa's second-largest ethnic group, with its dynamically cosmopolitan postcolonial dispensation of tradition and modernity.

Scholars have read *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* in terms of how it localises or indigenises the international opera, as well as how the South African film responds to international feminist perspectives on the legacy of Bizet's *Carmen*. James Davies and Lindiwe Dovey note that a "vast feminist literature . . . has accrued to the Carmen story, its more than 80 screen adaptations and Bizet's opera" (43). This literature includes Susan McClary's groundbreaking postcolonial feminist critique of Bizet's opera within the context of nineteenth-century French legacies of exoticism and sexism. McClary's critique challenges the general classicist notion that the opera is simply a great love story with music:

Bizet's *Carmen* has often been understood as a story of ill-fated love between two equal parties whose destinies happen to clash. But to read the opera in this fashion is to ignore the faultlines of social power that organize it, for while the story's subject matter may appear idiosyncratic to us, *Carmen* is actually only one of a large number of fantasies involving race, class and gender that circulated in nineteenth-century French culture. (McClary 29)

McClary proceeds to illustrate the emergence of Bizet's *Carmen* within a vast cultural and political context of Orientalism, in which Bizet openly participated as a conventional (despite 'bohemian') member of his class and generation, thus reproducing the frequent figure of the 'savage' woman. The main characteristics of this fantasy figure were a transgressive sexuality, criminal insubordination even to the point of violence, and a threatening racial otherness. She represented stereotypes of foreign women, in this case the Spanish Romani,

but also reflected stereotypes of the French underclass in Bizet's own vicinity during a time of bourgeois political anxieties and perverse fascinations about 'Gypsies' and Jews (34). McClary's substantial postcolonial feminist critique sets the tone for the comparative discussion on *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* as a reply to Bizet.

Davies and Dovey bring *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* into the postcolonial feminist theoretical context while noting that the film itself has a feminist and postcolonial artistic rationale. "British director, Mark Dornford-May, and South African singer-actress and librettist, Pauline Malefane . . . outline their primary motivation for making the film in ethical and feminist terms" (Davies and Dovey 43). Dornford-May explains in an interview with Dovey:

I think it's very important that art is not just about entertainment – it has to carry a message. For me it was important that [the film] commented on society. We wanted to comment about the position of women in society – that there's still a lot of violence against women, and I think where Pauline's Carmen differs from previous Carmens is that instead of just being a femme fatale there is a sense of a very strong independent woman resisting what men want her to be. Even at the last minute she says, 'I was born free, and I'm going to die free'. So even at that point in her life she's making a decision to stay herself, to stay independent. (Dornford-May in Davies and Dovey 43)

Davies and Dovey analyse the opening sequence of the film to show how the audiovisual text, in footage introducing the 'exotic' face of the South African Carmen and her locality, provides an "epistemological face-off" (43) that highlights the artistic challenge of "the very

difficulty of situating European opera in a context scarred by European colonialism and sexism” (44). This scarred context is post-apartheid South Africa; thus Davies and Dovey extend the postcolonial feminist critique of the *Carmen* legacy from the analysis of Orientalism, and Bizet’s participation therein, to the question of spectres of exoticism within a third world context of importing the opera. Davies and Dovey focus the bulk of their critique of the film on the theme of transculturation, its power dynamics and its opportunities for postcolonial agency. The analysis does not minimise feminist concerns but rather, like McClary’s critique, draws out the intricacies of material relations and politics that show hegemony and its insecurities at interfaces of gender, racism and cultural identity. Davies and Dovey argue that *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* exemplifies a politically and aesthetically dynamic transcultural linguistic, musical and visual confrontation with Eurocentric elitism in the international axiology of opera (46–7). They also firmly place this confrontation within a dialectical rather than polemical semiotics and praxis through which the film, in its time of novelty, engaged both its classical texts and its production contexts (47). The postcolonial transcultural agencies proliferated as the producers, creative team and performers collaborated in consciously “localizing, domesticating and diegeticizing this film opera and making it directly relevant to the lives of the people who starred in, made and viewed it” (50). The agency of this localisation is twofold, simultaneously domesticating the opera (49) and intervening in the international semiotics of representing South African locality (41).

Hilde Roos foregrounds the concept of ‘indigenisation’ as having to do with the whole development of ‘indigenous’ opera in South Africa (203). Roos places *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* in this context with other Isango Ensemble works, and keeps the concept of indigenisation dynamic and malleable while highlighting two aspects. First is the textual adaptation across the cultural territories of South Africa and Europe. In Isango Ensemble’s

productions, this textual adaptation involves boldly localising and ‘Africanising’ the works from overseas (4). Usually, the theatrical concept re-contextualises the story in a South African place, with South African characters, while the musical performance may draw on distinct South African traditional and modern practices. New musical arrangements may change parts of the score, instrumentation, and singing style. Visual concepts may draw on South African indigenous costume, popular fashion and spatial designs. Performers may use indigenous praxes of dance, acting and ritual. In all these ways, the live Isango Ensemble theatre productions are usually more overt and experimental than the cinematic work (Davies and Dovey 42). The second main aspect of indigenising opera is the post-apartheid context of structural transformation. One artistically significant feature of this transformation is the dismantling of racial hierarchy within arts institutions and the increase in black people’s participation in, as well as access to, opera (Roos 194, 196, 200). Roos observes that there is a constant interrelation between the textual and the structural aspects of indigenisation (3). This process is certainly complex (10); yet the complexity is precisely its power (12), beckoning pertinent questions about cultural authenticity (9, 154), or authentication (169, 170, 176). This links indigenisation to the issue of agency (101) and the problem of exoticism (209).

Indigenisation and localisation are different subtleties of the same inter-textual and inter-contextual dynamic. Susanna Viljoen explores this dynamic through a substantial comparative analysis of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* and Bizet’s *Carmen*. Viljoen’s analysis juxtaposes the two texts and also puts *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* into a genealogical context linking the film to the politics of Bizet and Mérimée, with their issues of exoticism. Viljoen, Roos, and Davies and Dovey have thoroughly elaborated the postcolonial critical possibilities and stakes of watching *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*. (Viljoen dedicates an entire doctoral thesis to

analysing the film, while Roos, also in a whole doctoral thesis, covers the oeuvre of Isango Ensemble and the genealogy of opera in South Africa.) These scholars collectively highlight questions of postcolonial feminist agency within the South African context and in the world of opera as the film engages diverse audiences and expectations. The film, as one particular instance of postcolonial and feminist agency, intervenes in ethnology, and such intervention, constituting a form of cultural criticism, must address the representation of a people group.

I use the above arguments as a theoretical foundation, focusing my exploration more intensely on the question of indigeneity as metaphysics of filiation. How does the film use this metaphysics as a modality for postcolonial feminist agency and its ethnological intervention? I suggest that the main strategy is dramaturgical humanism, which takes the character and story of Carmen beyond the sexist ethnocentrism of Bizet. This humanism universalises the self, which the heroine represents, thus taking the film beyond the theme of difference. My reading too must go beyond the issues of importing opera and exporting locality. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* not only shows the specificities of the local to a national and global audience, but also renders the metaphysics of indigeneity within a universalising dramaturgical humanism, the focus of my analysis.

So far, scholars have seen that the film's textual politics engages creatively and progressively with the issues of exoticism and sexual otherness, which have been crucial to the postcolonial feminist criticism of Bizet's *Carmen*. My contention is that humanism has a key role in this textual politics, so that the metaphysics of indigeneity renders not simply otherness but also humanness. The very words, 'humanism' and 'universalism', are tricky words to use these days in any critical treatise on culture. My readers do not need to accept humanism or universalism in order to consider my argument that the film itself uses such modalities for its particular dramaturgical purposes. What might bring us into contention is

the idea that this humanism and universalism could have anything to do with postcolonial feminist agency. I show that the film makes this work, but my conclusions about *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* are not generalisable, and my analysis is not for the purpose of generalisation. This single instance of dramaturgical universalism and humanism is important because it is part of how the film produces a post-ethnocentric rendering of Xhosa identity within South African urban modernity. In this way, the film makes a creative intervention into postcolonial ethnology, bringing the metaphysics of filiation into the portrait of a South African ethnic collective. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* does still celebrate Xhosa identity as an ethnic identity without losing the post-ethnocentric rendering of subjectivities.

All this is clear in the film, but the methodological question is: how can my reading fully draw out the humanist universalism of the film? The transcultural use of the international opera is certainly the most evident artistic strategy; yet Bizet's stereotyping is precisely the problem that the humanism of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* must solve. How does such a text as Bizet's Orientalising opera become useful to the humanistic rationale of a South African film with a postcolonial feminist significance? The key is the story itself, as an existential poetics distinct, though not apart, from the opera's ethnology and psychology. This poetics deals in a fundamental way with the themes of intimacy, power and violence as empirical and ontological problems for the self who is apprehending the world and construing its meaning within her experience. Specifically, the Aristotelian principles of tragedy, as in his *Poetics*, are key to understanding the 'existentialism' of the opera-film, and it is these principles that produce the humanism of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* and make this humanism legible for both local and global audiences.

One must tread carefully here. Firstly, Aristotelian dramaturgy is all about 'principles' of artistry; yet, in practice, no application of any dramaturgy is without a particular semiotic

context, and no drama makes its meaning through dramaturgy alone. The study of Aristotelian principles in *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* would not produce the same results as a study of Aristotelian principles in Bizet's *Carmen*; therefore not even my dramaturgical reading is transferable from the former text to the latter. Part of my purpose is precisely to show how *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* uses Aristotelian dramaturgy, integrally with other semiotic strategies, to provide an alternative characterisation from that of Bizet's Orientalist *Carmen*. Secondly, it is not the 'humanity' of the characters that the Aristotelian dramaturgy makes legible, but rather the 'humanism' of the film, in the sense of its aspiration to portray the characters in a particular, namely, humanistic, light. This is no banal aim for the film. I have just stated that the dramaturgical humanism is foundational to the film's postcolonial and feminist response to vast legacies of exoticism and sexism that originally brought Bizet's *Carmen* onto such treacherous territory. My analysis below illustrates that the metaphysics of indigeneity is part of the work of this humanism, as well as an indigenisation of Aristotelian dramaturgy. This indigenisation is not about domesticating the dramaturgy itself, but rather about using the dramaturgy as a modality for rendering the South African metaphysics of indigeneity within a semiotics that brings local identities onto a global canvass.

I show the effectiveness of the dramaturgical strategy rather than merely verify that the strategy is there; hence this chapter is not a genealogical work of theorising the influence of Aristotle's *Poetics* or ancient Greek theatre culture on *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*.

Deterministic inquiry is entirely otiose here since the film is a direct adaptation of a particular, very Aristotelian Western text, but let me go further and assert that a creative approach to cultural theory cannot be a hostage to historical determinism. I argue that the Aristotelian principles themselves are both evident in the film's dramaturgy and productive for the film's humanism. The principles are dramaturgically intuitive and logical – though by

no means the only conceivable approach that can be intuitive and logical – therefore I do not see these principles as one man’s ancient invention that became influential only through Western intellectual canonisations. Aristotle himself does not even advocate the principles as his personal philosophical property, but rather justifies his theories through extensive observations about the dramas of his day, and generously credits diverse playwrights whom he regards as dramaturgically adept. Aristotle certainly deserves his own credit for the clear expression of the principles and his highly original didactic with its particular axiology of dramaturgical praxis; therefore, and also to simplify matters, I use *Poetics* and refer to the dramaturgy itself as Aristotelian.

Lastly, I make no general critical case either for or against this dramaturgy and its prevalence. My analysis is specifically about the dramaturgy’s application and pertinence for the goals of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*; therefore I also do not digress to a scrutiny of Aristotle’s social ideology. This is no loss to the critique, for the film does its own work of bringing *Poetics* under the hand of postcolonial feminism, not through dismantling the dramaturgy but through co-opting it whole, as with the co-option of Bizet’s music and story, into a post-classicist cultural politics. One of my broader analytical aims is to open a dramaturgical space outside that of the interest in inter-textual and inter-contextual semiotics. My rationale for this methodological move is to bring the disciplinary perspective of drama more strongly and distinctly into the discussion, in order to supplement and provoke – not deny – the perspectives that have come from disciplines such as musicology, film studies and cultural studies.

Aristotle defines tragedy as a form of ‘poetry’ (poiesis), which is essentially about the mimesis of life (I).²³ The latter definition incorporates axiology into its ontology; thus “the objects of imitation are men in action, and . . . either of a higher or a lower type”, so that poetry, in its diversity, “must represent men either as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are” (II). Aristotle regards tragedy as the form of poetry that must represent the fictional characters as morally better than their real-life references. The fictional Carmen represents a real-life individual who would openly classify herself as a ‘dangerous woman’ or femme fatale. This classification is a familiar and very deliberate part of the characterisation of Bizet’s heroine. Linking *Carmen* to the domestic ethnological issues of nineteenth-century France, McClary explains:

... gypsies and Jews were regarded as dangerous, for while marked as alien, they lived on native soil. They were too real; they passed through the boundaries between European Self and Other that made classic Orientalism safe for the aesthetic gaze. And both groups were linguistically treacherous: they mastered the languages of their host countries so as to be able to "pass" as indigenous, while retaining fluency in their own archaic tongues – tongues that remained opaque to those around them. Carmen’s linguistic versatility is one of her greatest threats in Mérimée, and Bizet constructs her with a similar virtuosity with respect to musical discourses . . . (McClary 34)

²³ All subsequent citations of Aristotle’s *Poetics* are from S.H. Butcher’s translation (2011) in the public domain. I use Aristotle’s original chapter divisions to locate statements.

Since “groups classified as Oriental . . . occupying very different positions within that society . . . were often presented in cultural artifacts . . . as interchangeable” (34), the concept of dangerous peoples became a vivid ethnological depiction constructing their unity around an implicit moral argument. Part of being a dangerous people was the association with violent crime and sexual depravity (35), which coincided with the transgression of linguistic and cultural boundaries; thus French Orientalism saw the danger as multifarious. Morality, identity and authenticity were all simultaneously at risk, and this ostensible risk was part of the empirical ‘realness’ of dangerous peoples. This is significant considering Aristotle’s requirement of moral elevation above real-life references in creating tragic characters, for Bizet’s *Carmen* was not originally a tragedy but rather opéra-comique, which is “basically a comedy or tragic-comedy” (Duhamel in Lacombe 229). Aristotle’s classical contrast between tragedy and comedy associates the latter with “an imitation of characters of a lower type”, in other words, a lampooning of the ignoble (V). The strong sense of the tragic genre in *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* suggests that the aim of the film’s characterisation of Carmen is to ennoble her. Like Bizet’s heroine, the South African Carmen shows her propensities for criminality, violence, and the transgression of her society’s mores of good sexual reputation. She and all the cast of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* have scandalised viewers who see the film’s third world transcultural representation of opera as a compromise of South African black authenticity (Davies and Dovey 40). Khayelitsha’s Carmen is ‘too real’, thus a morally and ideologically risky character to identify with as the film’s heroine.

It is in this context that the film ennobles Carmen, by portraying her as a faithful and loyal lover who forgives offences but also confronts abuse and corruption around her or against her. In Aristotelian fashion (III), the drama communicates mainly through a character’s actions, and in this way, Carmen reveals her intent, which contradicts her own

song early in the film as she playfully warns men to beware of her. The self-labelling as ‘dangerous woman’ is an inscrutable contradiction, as it surely would be even for a real-life person who might make such claims about herself. If Aristotle is right in saying that poetry’s mimesis of reality gives human sensibilities the pleasure of identifying the familiar (IV), the portrayal of Carmen brings this pleasure into the critical feminist pleasure of seeing a film’s sensitive character portrait that contradicts sexual stereotypes. The fictional character of Carmen is familiar and realistic precisely in the sense that she does not fit into a stereotype, even one that she ironically associates herself with as she publicly entertains the idea of being a dangerous woman. She is by no means frivolous about love, in fact, her main struggle, at the prime of her life, is about discovering, protecting and recovering the integrity of love. This struggle is the sort of dramatic action that Aristotle recommends for tragedy, “an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude” (VI). The implication for my reading is this: *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* shows the magnitude of love and the seriousness of the stakes of love for one woman in South Africa. This is a profound dramaturgical humanism, and it powerfully brings *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* into the core of my reflection on the metaphysics of indigeneity through filiation.

In the preceding chapters, I have shown how love and intimacy within familial relationships creates the bonds of filiation that engender subjectivities of indigeneity as subjectivities of nativity within the consanguineous collective. I have already suggested that marriage is a key relationship context, wherein two spouses begin new filial relationships with each other’s families. I have also described the trauma of the loss of filial intimacy in nativity. Orphanhood involves filiation by mourning and a desire for filiation by adoption, which can come about through any means that are possible for the individual. In Chapter 2, I interpret the figure of the city woman during the scenes of urbanisation in *African Footprint*.

I describe how the appearance of this figure becomes a crucial moment for the pageant's poetics of indigeneity. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* entirely focuses on the city woman as the heroine of the drama, providing a more substantial dramaturgical rendering of her life and her engagement with the issues of indigeneity. In both *African Footprint* and *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, the city woman, in her complex characterisations, embodies a desiring orphanhood, which seeks to change into a filiation of adoption with the parent. This orphanhood has to do with alienation within the urban condition, while the quest for filiation by adoption has to do with the promise of intimacy through marriage and new belonging within the consanguineous collective of the spouse. Such belonging is 'filiation' because, as I have been arguing throughout the preceding chapters, the consanguineous collective is an intergenerational living body that the metaphysics of indigeneity renders as a progenitor of each individual progeny, and the filial relationship is precisely what it means to be 'indigenous' for South African subjectivities.

This metaphysics of filiation through belonging is part of the depth and profundity of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, but the seriousness and magnitude of love in the film involves more than the heroine's passion for intimacy, for the heroine herself embodies a social poetics and ethics of life-and-death import in South Africa. The main action of an Aristotelian tragedy – and it is a single action – must include events that inspire “pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions” (VI). Carmen fights for love, and she fights this battle relentlessly throughout the film, until her unjust and premature death through the violence of knife crime, a social scourge and cause of despair that is familiar to South Africans. The “purgation” of pity and fear should surely leave room for hope to grow, and Carmen herself refuses to be afraid. She epitomises the hopefulness and courage of a postcolonial nation that must still fight for love, facing violence and death directly, for the sake of human dignity and

freedom. It is not too much to say that *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* is a film about resistance, as an existential theme including but exceeding the feminist confrontation with oppression.

Carmen directs such a complete existential resistance against all the limitations of her life and the most severe threats against her hope.

The dramatic action of an Aristotelian tragedy must come naturally from, but also elucidates, the qualities and mindset of the character (VI). The action remains dramaturgically primary, despite the unity of action and character. It is through Carmen's resistance that her characterisation matures, showing a woman who dares to love and dream in a social environment that remains structurally violent after all the years since its very construction. Her ideology must also be one of resistance. Carmen is not a dangerous woman, but rather a resistant woman in a dangerous place; thus a kind of resistant irony characterises even her verbal self-description as sexually dangerous. This brings her postcolonial feminism into third world feminism, which engages the local, postcolonial brutality of her own dangerous place. Ranjoo Seodu Herr defines third world feminism in this way:

Third World feminism encompasses feminist perspectives on Third World women that (1) generate more reliable analyses of and recommendations for addressing Third World women's multidimensional and complex oppression through careful examinations of their local conditions in their historical specificity; and (2) respect the agency and voices of Third World women engaged in diverse forms of local activism. (Herr 6)

It would be misleading to label *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* a feminist film in this exact sense of social analysis and activism, but the drama certainly speaks clearly to the main concerns of third world feminism, namely, understanding the local, postcolonial specificities of gender oppression and women's resistance. The question is: how does the film represent this understanding dramaturgically? I suggest that the ethical and psychological resistance of claiming hope, love and faithfulness are central themes of the drama, thus integral to the social message.

The unifying action of an Aristotelian tragedy must be "complete, and whole", where wholeness means having "a beginning, a middle, and an end" (VII). Carmen's resistance is a whole that unifies the drama, her life and the lives of the hopeful people of Khayelitsha; thus Carmen herself symbolises the place and the people. "A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be" (VII). The beginning of Carmen's story is the beginning of her resistance, before which there was no story of her struggle for true love. During her first appearance, Carmen has already established her public image as the sexually 'dangerous' woman in the neighbourhood, an image that the chorus acknowledges in their song, warning every man to beware. Such an image means that her resistance, inseparable from her will to love, is either pending or not yet with such a passion as to be apparent to those who know her. At the beginning of her story in the film, Carmen is still acting according to the patterns of her environment. The police arrest her, knife in hand, during a brawl over an insult from her workmate at the cigarette factory. Carmen's first meeting with the policeman, Jongikhaya, is the catalytic event that propels her to pursue love forcefully; hence she rather boldly promises him future love and devotion, not merely sexual favours, to escape from his custody. She no longer has any interest in playing the role of a dangerous woman. She wants

true love. The proposal signifies the beginning of Carmen's dramaturgically unifying and sociologically symbolic character action of the resistance of hope.

This resistance also contains a poetics of identity through the struggle for filiation within the metaphysics of indigeneity. The film suggests Carmen's orphanhood in three ways. Firstly, the film does not show parts of Carmen's life before the drama of the tragedy. This omission is noticeable because the film does show the family backgrounds of other lead characters, namely, Jongikhaya and Carmen's second admirer, Lulamile Nkomo, who becomes part of Carmen's story later in the drama. Carmen appears in the film as an urban heroine without a story of nativity, the absence of which is precisely what I have defined in the preceding chapters as the condition of orphanhood. The narrative omission is not meaningful in this sense until one has watched and reflected on the entire film, but the first-time viewer can still notice the second, and stronger, suggestion of Carmen's orphanhood, in two crucial scenes that are also narrative turning points. Early in the film, shortly after Carmen proposes to Jongikhaya, escapes his custody and begins running from the police, Carmen hurriedly chooses a place to hide and enters the home of an ancestral traditional oracle. Much later, toward the film's conclusion, Carmen meets the oracle again in a South African localisation of Bizet's famous Gypsy fortune-telling scene for the prediction of Carmen's death. More than any other character in the film, the oracle, a mature man in his visually vibrant ritualistic setting, represents Xhosa cultural and spiritual heritage. I analyse the two scenes in much more detail later below, arguing that the oracle is a traditional father-figure, a literal embodiment of roots and a living cultural progenitor, with whom Carmen fails to affiliate as she disrespects him at first, then later accepts his parental authority only to receive news of her imminent death. These two scenes – one at the very onset of her struggle for love, another signalling the end – vividly, and with strong tragic effect, express Carmen's

severe, literally fatal, alienation from moral and psychological parentage by representatives of her society's cultural heritage. This alienation fixes the theme of Carmen's orphanhood as a crucial aspect of her characterisation and her dramaturgical journey in the film. In the analysis of the two scenes, I retain my general premise that orphanhood is still a form of filiation, a loss of intimacy rather than a loss of affinity. Carmen is an ambivalent orphan who expresses her alienation from roots while, throughout the film, desiring her matrimonial adoption into a family that has preserved its intimacy with roots.

The third suggestion of Carmen's orphanhood is the biography of Jongikhaya, who had a rural upbringing, but murdered his brother and became a family outcast, leaving his mother and homeland to go to Khayelitsha. Jongikhaya's own hand of violence completed his own transition from nativity to orphanhood, which I have described in the preceding chapters as filiation by mourning. Jongikhaya's brother left a widow, Nomakhaya, who has a minor role in the film as a link between Jongikhaya's rural past and his metropolitan present. She still mourns her husband, and also brings messages from home concerning Jongikhaya's dying mother, who at one point requests that Jongikhaya, according to tradition, marry his brother's widow. In Chapter 2, I noted how *African Footprint* included the theme of migration from the rural homeland to the urban metropolis as part of the narrative of orphanhood whereby the migrant man loses his intimacy with roots. I also noted the symbolic significance of the traditional woman who embodies roots and responsibility as she follows the migrant man into the city and troubles his conscience. Thirdly, I noted how the orphanhood of the rootless man links with the widowhood of the traditional woman who mourns after an ontological death of the traditional man. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* maintains this entire poetics in the biography of Jongikhaya, who consequently becomes a symbolic figure of Carmen's orphanhood as she starts her own story in the opera by initiating the

relationship with this rootless man. Violence is symptomatic of the condition of orphanhood for both characters, though they are not initially aware of all the forces drawing them together. Jongikhaya's profession certainly involves violence, but his capacity for illegal violence, specifically, domestic violence, is not yet apparent to Carmen.

The ensuing plot shows all the consequences of Carmen's love proposal. This elaboration of consequences is the 'middle' part of the dramatic action according to Aristotle's concept of dramatic unity. "A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it" (VII). Carmen's love proposal causes a lovesick Jongikhaya to ruin his police career and follow Carmen into a criminal lifestyle. Their marriage is tumultuous, and the suffering that Carmen endures herein becomes part of her condition of orphanhood and mourning. The relationship with Jongikhaya turns out to be a tragic miscalculation for Carmen, who is not seeking to sustain her condition of orphanhood but rather to resolve it through adoption and filiation by marriage. She does not know that Jongikhaya no longer has a family in which she could establish new intimacy with roots.

Carmen's hope in love resists diverse threats from the actions of three men. Her problems with the police lead to confrontations with the predatory Captain Gantana, whose violence Carmen endures after publicly rejecting his offer of police pardon in exchange for sex. Carmen continues the fight for her marriage despite a violent and controlling husband, on account of whom Carmen consults the oracle. Carmen also resists her own temptation while flirting with the gentlemanly and famous Lulamile, for whom Carmen will not hastily betray Jongikhaya before the marriage is surely over. The end of the marriage is not the end of the opera, for it is not the end of Carmen's struggle for love; thus she subsequently pursues the promise of new love by placing herself in the vicinity of Lulamile and his family.

Two crucial scenes show Carmen seeking a new opportunity for romance, adoption by marriage, and filiation. The first scene is when Carmen joins Lulamile's family for a traditional ceremony in honour of his father, whom the apartheid police murdered, resulting in Lulamile's childhood exile, overseas upbringing, and international fame as an opera singer. Lulamile is a figure of transformation from orphanhood to adoption as he returns to his home country, re-establishes intimacy with his family, and seeks reintegration with the community of his roots. His own successful journey of adoption allows him to clearly represent the potential for Carmen to experience her adoption through affinity with Lulamile's family. Violence is a constant threat against this potential new love and its promise of new bonds of filiation within the consanguineous collective. This is both dramaturgically and thematically fitting, because violence ended Jongikhaya's world of nativity, and violence was symptomatic of Carmen's orphanhood during her brawl shortly before the beginning of her quest for new love. In *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, violence is the main reason for which filiation loses nativity and becomes a trauma of orphanhood. The film shows, through Lulamile's childhood tragedy, that apartheid is part of the history of this violence, but the drama also shows, through Jongikhaya's background, that violence is a general social and existential problem though it manifests by the work of specific violent enemies like apartheid or misogynistic men. The violent threat means that when Lulamile slaughters a bull during the ceremony, this South African cultural rendering of the opera's famous bull-fighting scene is a dramatic foreshadowing of Carmen's death by the knife in a man's hand. This scene, which I analyse in depth later, is an important representation of the simultaneous hope for and violent threat against Carmen's filial adoption.

The second scene of Carmen's campaign for new love is the also the climax of violence, which completes her tragedy when she attends Lulamile's grand homecoming

concert in the community hall. Carmen's hope and courage do not waver on discovering that Jongikhaya is looking for her at the event. Her dramaturgically unifying fight for love ends when she dies by his hand. This is an Aristotelian ending, because Carmen's entire fight for love throughout the opera finishes with "that which itself follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it" (VII). The murder necessarily follows the drama of orphanhood by violence, a drama that the film suggests can only finish with the death of a woman, who represents the new South Africa. If she had not died, love would have had a second chance. This is the tragedy: the murder of the woman is also the murder of love. This message is profound and necessary because it means that South Africa as a nation cannot know freedom and love until women are free from a milieu of violence. Any idea to the contrary is akin to Jongikhaya's perverse rationale that he cannot let Carmen live without him, since they vowed to be together till death. Jongikhaya's character has something of the romantic in him, like the patriotic Lulamile, but also something of the predator, like the brutal Gantana, whose police uniform serves his image as an embodiment of the structural violence of post-apartheid South Africa. Jongikhaya embodies national contradictions, and also serves as a figure of time and death in Carmen's life. Her focal struggle for love begins and ends with him. Their relationship constitutes the full scope of Carmen's resistant fight for love, therefore the full scope of the tragedy.

The gender politics of the film, and the dramaturgical unity that I have described, come together as part of what I have referred to above as the magnitude of love. In an Aristotelian drama, "the proper magnitude is comprised within such limits, that the sequence of events, according to the law of probability or necessity, will admit of a change from bad fortune to good, or from good fortune to bad" (VII). Laws of probability and necessity are an aspect of realism, which is aesthetically important to the politics of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*. It

is not mainly the imagery and performance that politicise realism, but rather, Carmen's recognisable situation of injustice, and the resulting direction that her life takes, from the good fortune of being in love to the end of the tragedy. A realistic plot, which is one coherent action, is "either Simple or Complex" (X). In a Simple plot, "the change of fortune takes place without Reversal of the Situation and without Recognition". A Complex plot involves one or both of these. "Reversal of the Situation is a change by which the action veers round to its opposite", while "Recognition . . . is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune" (XI). Aristotle prefers the Complex plot, especially one in which Recognition coincides with Reversal of the Situation. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* has a Complex plot in this sense. The film has at least one scene showing the aftermath of an incident of domestic violence in Carmen's home. Carmen and Jongikhaya sit quietly on the bed, not facing each other. Carmen exits, and in a subsequent scene, she is with her friends, listening to them commenting on the hypocrisy of Jongikhaya, who had previously presented himself as a man of the Bible. These two brief and sensitive scenes express, firstly, the recognition that has revealed Jongikhaya's misogyny, and secondly, the simultaneous reversal of Carmen's romantic situation. This turning point is the change of her fortune from the escalation of romance to the escalation of hazardous enmity in subsequent scenes as Jongikhaya jealously pursues Carmen while she is with her friends. The violence that has already entered the marriage, and the increasingly explicit threat of homicide, are both reasons for pity and fear as Carmen endures both the pain of a husband's betrayal by violence and the stress of harassment. Her courageous resistance contains all the vicissitudes in one struggle, which expresses the magnitude of love.

The film's plot ends with an Aristotelian "Scene of Suffering", which induces pity and fear through "destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds

and the like” (XI). The murder scene shows a grave social injustice, and ultimately politicises the character of Carmen as metonym of South African women, but I would not construe from this that the film makes a generalising link between gender and violence. I would not even want the film to generalise in this way. The tragedy is powerful because of its dramaturgically sensitive fleshing out of individual characters, simultaneous with very careful social metonymy and symbolism. In the final scene, Jongikhaya finishes executing his dramatic purpose as a dangerous man who embodies the cruelty of the dangerous place in which Carmen, the resistant woman, lives and dies without losing her courage. There cannot be a dramaturgical choice between showing the reality of grave injustice, on the one hand, and on the other, sustaining a poetics of hope, courage and resistance. Neither of these two goals is optional for this realistic South African drama about one woman, her experience with violence, and her comprehension about the magnitude of love.

This hopeful realism is part of the arousal and purgation of pity and fear, since hope is the catharsis of despair, while “pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves” (XIII). *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* is Aristotelian in its framing of the heroine as the black South African ‘every woman’ from the iconic township. She is an ‘every woman’ because she represents the majority class (working class), speaks a major language (isiXhosa) and belongs to the demographic majority (black peoples) in South Africa. Aristotle also recommends a lead character “who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty” (XIII). Carmen is a morally and psychologically complex character, her motivations and actions not always neatly fitting into either mainstream or polemical moralisations on women. None of the violence she suffers is her own fault; yet none of it causes her to assume the role of a victim, for she asserts herself as an agent of freedom, even as she becomes fully

aware of the threat against her life and believes the foretelling of her death. Strikingly, she only speaks like a victim at one moment, when during their first date, Jongikhaya responds to his pager and decides to leave, a decision that Carmen takes as a slight, and which sends her into a wrathful state. Violence has no coercive power over Carmen, but rather constitutes the limit of her own sexual power as the main attraction of dangerous men.

The opera's emphasis on Carmen's attractiveness is also in keeping with the Aristotelian requirement of a "highly renowned and prosperous" (XIII) protagonist, whose fortune and subsequent misfortune can strongly contrast for tragic effect. Carmen enjoys great local popularity and advantage, which gives her access and freedom in the world of men, but it is precisely because of her sexual confidence that Carmen is also liable to hazardous enmities. There is potential here for a feminist politics; yet sexual enmity by itself is not what Aristotle would regard as the strongest context for inducing tragic pity and fear. Aristotelian dramaturgy ideally combines enmity with familiarity, so that "the tragic incident occurs between those who are near and dear to one another . . . for example, a brother kills, or intends to kill, a brother" (XIV). Such situations may involve knowledge or ignorance of kinship, and depending on whether and how the plot uses Recognition, the potential incident may or may not occur. The Aristotelian ideal is "when someone is about to do an irreparable deed through ignorance, and makes the discovery before it is done", then withdraws from doing it (XIV). The Recognition that exposes Jongikhaya's misogyny also reveals to Carmen that she has married her closest existential counterpart, who embodies and enacts her own condition of orphanhood and violence. In ignorance, Carmen was about to commit the irreparable deed of spending the rest of her life with Jongikhaya, who would probably have brutalised her to a condition worse than that in which she was at the beginning of their relationship. The Recognition causes her to withdraw from him, then he pursues her until he

finds opportunity to murder her, hence the Reversal of the Situation, for the marriage has caused the opposite of the effects that Carmen had intended, namely, the effects of adoption into family and an end to her postcolonial conditions of violence and orphanhood. She begins a second attempt to find love and belonging by getting close to Lulamile, whom I have described as representing the successful journey of adoption, but the tragic causality of the change of fortune does not allow Carmen to reach her goal. In Chapter 3, I showed how *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* dramatises liminal subjectivities between nativity and orphanhood. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* is the tragedy of a city woman who resists sexual violence, endures her condition of orphanhood and pursues the promise of intimacy through marriage, for adoption into a new family. Such is the magnitude of love.

All these observations on plot are foundational to analysing character according to Aristotle's four main criteria for character.²⁴ The first is virtue, which is evident through "any speech or action that manifests moral purpose . . . expressive of character . . . if the purpose is good" (XV). I have already noted the moral and ideological complexity of Carmen's characterisation; yet complexity does not disqualify the question of virtue. Carmen's most evident strengths are her courage and hope, for she boldly faces threats, consistently resists

²⁴ Aristotle's chapter on characterisation contains some statements about gender difference and social status that give away the prejudices and particulars of his era and culture. I spare readers an insensitive citation of the offensive content, which I also do not discuss because dramaturgically, Aristotle's principles of characterisation and believability are sustainable without his contextual examples. The requirements of character 'propriety' or realism can be useful to any contemporary playwright without accepting the ideas of Aristotle's society and generation regarding what was 'proper' to genders and class groups. I would not consider a feminist characterisation the end of propriety altogether, but rather the potential for, or actualisation of, new proprieties that might liberate people, even if what is 'proper' in a particular feminist context turns out to be some kind of resistant impropriety.

coercion, and optimistically perseveres in her search for love and belonging, which is her noble purpose. The second Aristotelian criterion is propriety, which has to do with ascribing appropriate qualities to characters in order to make their identities legible. The evident choice of qualities reveals what the dramatist regards as proper to an identity; thus the film renders courage and hope as qualities proper to the urban black South African every-woman whom Carmen represents. No drama anywhere can appeal to every conceivable feminist or postcolonial ethics of metonymy, but the image of the courageous black woman is surely indispensable to those women whom it uplifts. The third Aristotelian criterion for character is empirical believability, and Carmen's own capacity for violence and crime keeps her powerfully resistant character from being a caricature of non-violent feminist virtue. Carmen is only one of many possibilities for believable characterisation, not a generalising picture of women in her position. The film's characterisation does not suggest that all resistant women are or should be criminally violent, but the violent woman is indeed real, and she does have the capacity for resistance, which the film renders as a virtuous and proper action for her. This is important because it shows that the dramaturgy does not disqualify the violent woman from also being a credible resistant woman who can stand up to abusive men. The film's feminism is unconditional, protesting any gender violence against any woman regardless of her apparent moral status. It is also significant that although Carmen is violent, the film never shows her being violent toward men; thus there is no simplistic Hollywood-style rendering of the violent and resistant woman as a militant avenger against bad men. In its entirety, *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* does not betray social realism so much as it puts social realism to a definite ideological use, even though the complex characterisation also exceeds ideology. Carmen, as tragic heroine, powerfully inspires without 'winning' her battle at the end. The fourth criterion for creating character is consistency, and Aristotle insists on this even if the

fictional character must represent an inconsistent real reference, whom the drama should consequently portray as “consistently inconsistent” (XV). Carmen is a consistent ideological contradiction, capable of violence against another woman, yet resisting gender violence against herself as a woman, passionately pursuing belonging within a traditional family setting, yet constantly asserting her liberty. Her most notable virtue of courage is what unifies the characterisation, defining her propriety, believability and consistency.

These aspects of characterisation contribute toward the unity of the Aristotelian plot, which defines character, hence Aristotle’s admiration for plots in which the Recognition naturally results from the dramatic action rather than from significations that are not indispensable to the plot (XVI). Characterisation is not only a matter of writing, but rather a unity of appropriate writing and appropriate histrionics (XVII). The dramatic characterisation and performance of Jongikhaya are important to the tragedy’s movement from the Complication to the Unravelling. The Complication is everything before the change of fortune, while the Unravelling is everything after the change of fortune (XVIII). Jongikhaya is not a cartoon villain without any virtue of his own. He shares with Carmen the passionate hope for love, hence their initial bonding. This quality of passion contrasts Jongikhaya with Captain Gantana, who lacks romance and embodies only the pathology of abuse. The contrast makes Jongikhaya’s romantic nature proper to his manhood, since he is the film’s best candidate for an ‘every man’. His romantic nature makes him believable because he is not a caricature of an ‘abusive man’ but rather the characterisation of a man with abusive tendencies. Again, Jongikhaya does not literally represent every South African man, but is a believable representation of those who feel and act as he does. He is consistently inconsistent precisely because of the oscillation between the personalities of ‘romantic man’ and ‘dangerous man’. The actor, Andile Tshoni, uses sharply distinct expressions of emotional

vulnerability and animosity respectively, creating the sense of a ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ struggle throughout the drama. During the scenes showing Jongikhaya’s public threats, Tshoni commits entirely to showing the ‘Mr Hyde’ part of the character, with the musical and dramatic tension of the situation helping to frame him as quite menacing, but only for finite moments in the film. Such strong focus creates the sense of an unveiling of the mask. The face of the killer shows himself ever more fiercely at each turning point of the drama as Carmen’s death approaches, so that her consistent courage is all the more stirring to watch.

Jongikhaya’s gradual unmasking overturns the film’s general atmosphere, from musically celebratory, romantic and vibrant to dramatically ominous, even as the celebrations continue in unnerving tension with the atmosphere of danger. The chorus also have a role in shaping the mood, for they are “regarded as one of the actors . . . integral . . . in the action” (XVIII). The two scenes of Lulamile’s celebrations are the height of this dramatic craft of orchestrating tension. All these aspects of the Unravelling demonstrate the unity of plot, character and theme.

It is within such unity that Aristotle sees all the remaining elements of tragedy operating. The first element is ‘thought’, which includes the entire ontology, psychology and axiology of the drama. “Under Thought is included every effect which has to be produced by speech, the subdivisions being – proof and refutation; the excitation of the feelings, such as pity, fear, anger, and the like; the suggestion of importance or its opposite” (XIX). Aristotle is emphatic about the need for coherence between the effects of the dramatic action and the effects of speech; thus a good Aristotelian tragedy, like *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, should have no significant new themes left for the analysis of dialogue after the analysis of dramatic action. The second element is ‘diction’, which has to do with the craft of using language for poetic expression. The last two elements are song and spectacle, both of which Aristotle

regards as accessories or embellishments that serve the more crucial elements of tragedy (VI). I have no interest in debating the apparent hierarchy, as it well serves my purposes of approaching performances dramaturgically. The central argument of my thesis, and the respective methodologies of each chapter, are dramaturgical rather than phenomenological, the latter by no means insignificant, yet meaningless by itself as a way to understand the theatrical metaphysics of indigeneity, a metaphysics that employs memory and narrative. My approach is about exploring how the narrative manifests, and how the manifestations narrate, the narrative itself remaining the focus in order to elucidate the reasoning of the poetics of indigeneity. The remainder of my exploration with *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* here treats language, music and imagery as modalities for manifesting the dramatic action that I have explored above, as well as for reinforcing the thought, which itself is evident through the dramatic action.

Language has been an important focus, not only for the creative concept of the film, but also in scholarly engagement with the transcultural politics and aesthetics of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* as a cultural export. Such engagement deals with language as both aural text and oral performance. In Aristotelian terms, language also helps in the process of brewing the emotional substance of the film, which treats overseas audiences to a familiar drama in an unfamiliar, 'exotic' language. This linguistic exoticism reinforces itself through two main conditions for general exoticism of the world of the film. First is the encounter with a particular South African locality, in a film that most overseas audiences experience as a 'subtitle film' or 'foreign language film'. Second is the exoticism within the entire legacies of the Carmen narratives of Bizet and Mérimée. These two French men produced an influential image of 'Gypsy' characters with ostensibly larger-than-life, 'Spanish' experiences of passionate eroticism and passionate anger (McClary 32, 36). The film's publicity embraces

exoticism. One DVD cover design quotes a reviewer who lauded *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* for being “colourful, vivid and exotic”, a description that could easily fit even a conventional production of Bizet’s opera. All these conditions for exoticism, the latter’s association with eroticism, and opera’s enduring (if partial) association with emotionally lofty stories of passionate characters, mean that overseas audiences have ample encouragement to perceive isiXhosa, in *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, as a ‘romantic’ language in the way that languages like French and Spanish have a Hollywood branding as languages of love. Language in general and isiXhosa specifically becomes a crucial aid to the film’s dramaturgy on the magnitude of love. This dynamics is by no means only a possibility for overseas audiences that are unfamiliar with the language or the country. IsiXhosa-speaking viewers, even those from Khayelitsha, hear their own language and see familiar environments while following a story in an uncommon, loftier or at least ‘other’ situation. It is not simply musical stylisation, or even the genres of classical music and opera, that produce otherness, loftiness or uncommonness for South African audiences. It is the combination of operatic stylisation and profound Aristotelian drama that elevates reality above the commonplace, even while the film shows the familiar with hard-hitting realism. Such elevation encourages the romanticising of language even for local audiences. As long as language itself is romantic, it is also efficacious as one of the modes for rendering the magnitude of love.

Love is also crucial to the politics of ethnography in the film. This politics is generally most clear through the visual vibrancy of the film. The documentary style of filming contributes to social and environmental realism (Davies and Dovey 44) while the richness of the environment itself makes the film visually vibrant. This contributes to the film’s exoticism, even if not all aspects of Carmen’s world are palatable. The Aristotelian drama of love humanises the exotic, so that the film does not create two-dimensional idols of

difference or even insinuate a ‘different humanity’, but rather brings onto the international screen an unconditional humanness from South Africa. The dramaturgy makes evident the agency of unconditionally human beings that feel, act and, by their action, cause things to happen.

The creative tension between visual exoticism and dramaturgical humanism is important for exploring how the film celebrates the culturally rich world in which Carmen lives. I have shown how the dramaturgical humanism works for the film, but there is still more to say about the audiovisual aspect within this humanistic context. Firstly, Malefane’s performance in the role of Carmen emphasises her human ordinariness and her psychological complexity, doing away with the histrionic clichés that have become part of the opera’s legacy, whereby Carmen is mostly a sexual caricature (Viljoen 163, 198). The documentary style of filming involves real locations and very subtle use of lighting, make-up or sound effects. Most scenes take place in permanent domestic and public locations that normally serve the purposes that the film suggests. While the story revolves around Carmen, the numerous ensemble scenes portray a world in which diverse subjectivities experience their complex social environment. The Bizet score, with its full classical orchestration and vocal performance, is in constant textual contrast to the Xhosa language and the depiction of South African township life (Davies and Dovey 41), which features vestiges of tradition, a distinctly third world modernity, and a distinctly Southern African rendering of cosmopolitan culture (I will explore this shortly). The result is a gritty dramatic ethnography that is simultaneously a bold stylisation and a realistic depiction of the hybrid culture and dynamic modernity of Khayelitsha.

This visual language is particularly intelligible in the three scenes that I have earlier identified as turning points for the film’s narrative of Carmen’s filiation, namely, her two

encounters with the oracle, a father figure, and the scene of Lulamile's family gathering in honour of his father. These three scenes also provide the most vivid depiction of South African cultural uniqueness, each scene showing how elements of ancestral tradition are a normal part of life in urban, cosmopolitan Khayelitsha, which is representative of South African township life in general. This makes the three scenes exemplary of the visual exoticism of the entire film, and how this exoticism merges with the metaphysics of indigeneity.

I have earlier described the dramaturgical significance of Carmen's two encounters with the oracle, the earlier encounter taking place shortly after Carmen has escaped the custody of Jongikhaya and while she is still running from the police. The energetic chase seems to express the chaos and risk of Carmen's life in her condition of orphanhood as the camera dashes around the roads and alleys of one of Khayelitsha's high-density neighbourhoods. Carmen's need of a place to rest and hide is also telling of her emotional and existential condition. The oracle's home represents the traditional base of intimacy with roots, but Carmen only stays there until she has an opportunity to run again, foreshadowing the eventual impossibility of settling in a traditional home base away from the hectic life events that endanger her. The oracle's first appearance establishes him as a minor but thematically key character and his house as a symbolic place to which the story will return at one of its most crucial moments.

Much later in the film, Carmen returns to him for the consultation about her crumbling marriage and the violence in her home. The film does not show the consultation at the point in the narrative when it actually happens. The visit to the oracle appears much further in the film, as a memory, when Carmen, participating in some midnight drug smuggling activities at the seaside, gives in to the pressure of her colleagues to share what

the consultation revealed. It is during her recollection that the film shows Carmen learning that she will soon die. The scene of the first encounter with the oracle sets up the ritualistic environment as a special part of the world in which Carmen lives. This is where the roots and the ancestors are, and this is where Carmen will not be able to dwell as a progeny who can always enjoy her closeness to the progenitors. The second scene of the consultation focuses more on the ritualistic actions that take place within the ritualistic environment. The two scenes of meeting the oracle contribute different details toward the film's complete illustration of the oracular divination rite as an event that has its own appropriate environment of action. It is precisely through such action that Carmen receives final confirmation of her fatal and irrevocable alienation from the place of roots. I will return to these scenes; there is still more to say about the dramaturgical context in order to emphasise the centrality of the metaphysics of filiation in reading each scene.

I have already described the dramaturgical and thematic importance of the scene of Lulamile's family gathering, which happens shortly before the final scene of the homecoming concert, when Carmen dies. I have interpreted the scene in terms of Carmen's campaign for a new love and new belonging after her relationship with Jongikhaya has fallen apart due to violence. Carmen attends the ceremony as part of the group of women who prepare food and wait on the men who are performing formalities. The ceremony is a clear precursor of Carmen's destiny as she is soon to die by a man's knife, as does the bull during the ceremony.

In both the oracular divination and the family ceremony, death, spirituality and ritual are prominent, humanistic-existential themes; thus scenes render cultural specificities for visual exoticism while maintaining dramaturgical humanism in the existential confrontation with predicaments and possibilities of human life. Each scene also has a strategic placement

within the plot in order to help reveal important narrative and thematic functions regarding the poetics of indigeneity through filiation. Carmen's recollection of the prediction takes place after the film has revealed her marriage crisis and Jongikhaya's violence. The Recognition of Jongikhaya's misogyny was the precondition for bringing Carmen's condition of orphanhood sharply into focus as part of a crisis that will ultimately mean death for her. Lulamile's ceremony has an explicit visual dramaturgy on filiation and belonging; thus the scene makes Carmen's hopeful prospects clear, even while the slaughter of the bull symbolically foreshadows the defeat of her hopes due to the violence of Jongikhaya, who by that point in the film has completed his unmasking and made his threat most explicit. The two ritual scenes incorporate images of South African traditional praxis into the dramaturgical foreshadowing of the tragic outcome; thus visual exoticism and dramaturgical humanism perfectly conflate at such crucial moments of Carmen's story. Death enters her reality as the ultimate rite of passage that poses the most fundamental threat against love.

The first encounter with the oracle is not part of any customary occasion, but rather, initially seems a random and insignificant occurrence, the mystery and suspense of which nevertheless induces dramatic tension because of the interruption of the police chase. During her flight, Carmen seemingly chooses the door into the oracle's house without much thought. The house itself is a bright red and white box with corrugated iron walls and a thin steel door. The house stands out in its surroundings of similar but less colourful buildings. The design on the white door is a pattern of red spades that make the door look like a large playing card. There is clearly a strong symbolic, dramaturgical and transcultural function here. Viewers who are familiar with the Bizet narrative may remember that Bizet's Carmen finds out about her imminent death through a fortune-telling exercise with playing cards. The colour red is also highly symbolic in Bizet's opera, as a colour of desire and danger, hence part of the

visual legacy of the opera with its design idioms such as Carmen's famous red dress. In these ways, the design of the oracle's home hints, to the knowing viewer, layers of significance in the scene, especially when the oracle himself appears. For viewers without a background knowledge of Bizet's *Carmen*, the presence of the oracle and the stark visual theme of playing cards, which can still invoke ideas about chance and fate, may give a sense that Carmen's destiny is now at stake in the film, and this sense may inform the mood of subsequent events even though nothing dramatic appears to have happened during that first encounter.

The scene is also intriguingly incongruous in ways that make Carmen's subjectivity of orphanhood powerfully legible. When Carmen rushes into the house, the camera does not immediately follow her and show where she goes within the interior. The policeman just behind her catches a glimpse of the door closing and, suspicious, bursts in, at which point the camera enters the house. In a frenzy and fury, the policeman quickly scans the interior and rudely yanks a blanket covering a mysterious pile, but does not find Carmen. The policeman here is Captain Gantana, the sexual harasser who later propositions Carmen, and whom I earlier identified as the film's figure of structural gender violence, which in this scene disrupts the order of the traditional home base that oracle's abode represents. This violence has followed Carmen right into the place of hiding, a foreboding intimation that she will not be able to hide from the gender violence that is pursuing her. After Gantana's exit, Carmen appears from another room and sings to the oracle a reprise of her song about being a dangerous woman, as this scene is not long after the events at the cigarette factory, where she claimed that she reserves her attraction for the unattainable man. Rather enigmatically, she addresses the oracle:

I ignore all laws. Love's a stranger to me. If you don't want me then I'm yours, but if I want you, then be afraid. If you don't love me, then I'm yours, but if I love you, you'd best beware. (Dornford-May)

The words are dramaturgically appropriate because this scene is not long after her love proposal to Jongikhaya and the beginning of her drama of the magnitude of love, in which she will seek to remedy her condition of orphanhood, a symptom of which is her apparent estrangement from love. The dramaturgical appropriateness is in creative tension with the social impropriety of her address to the spiritual elder, an impropriety that emphasises her estrangement from the cultural roots that the man represents. The femme fatale's reprise now expresses Carmen's deep ambivalence toward the prospect of being the daughter of her culture. Such ambivalence is, indeed, psychologically plausible, for this resistant heroine's parent culture is generally patriarchal, and a man is currently embodying it. Carmen's 'warning' is her defensiveness against the very belonging that she wants. At this moment, her newly forming desire for love and belonging is causing turbulence within her previous resignation to the condition of orphanhood, which she will subsequently try to escape throughout the main plot of the film. Her second meeting with the oracle will be the occasion to learn that her quest for adoption is soon coming to an end. The present scene inaugurates this quest in response to the feelings that the proposal to Jongikhaya has stirred for Carmen. As soon as she leaves the oracle's house and closes his door behind her, the voice of a policeman yells in the distance and the chase resumes. The scene has completed its interruption of the chase and its thematic tensions will linger as the story continues. Later in the film, Carmen's recollection of what happened during her second meeting with the oracle more definitely renders the first encounter an important turn of fate.

The spatial semiotics of the scenery brings ethnographic realism into visual exoticism. The oracle's house stands among a cluster of box-like, corrugated iron and wood dwellings in a high-density neighbourhood with thin alleyways. The setting is residential rather than a business or community area as such, but the oracle's own home is also effectively a place of business and ceremonial occasion, and the interior of the building is where the spatial transformation happens. The house is simultaneously a private dwelling, a sacred place of divination and a public facility, albeit with certain definite restrictions to access, such as the need to make private appointments and a limit to the number of people that can be inside the house at any time. The interior design provides a strong visual indication that one is in a different space with a distinct purpose. Wooden shelves and counter tops on every side of the reception room carry various objects and utensils, including the most ordinary household goods and the paraphernalia of ritual. There are animal furs and hides. There are containers of clay, glass and plastic. There are kitchen cloths, cutlery, and dishes. There are various ornaments and crafts. The arrangement has no obvious separation between collections of implements for living and collections of implements for divination. Soft light pours through the opaque windows and provides a secretive mood. Near the door is a broad, circular straw mat occupying its own clear, central space, upon which the rituals would normally take place. The whole room and the central floor space – which conforms to the traditional convention of using circular spaces for rituals – are conducive to intense consultative and ritualistic intimacy. It is an uncommon place of uncanny things, and its strong imagery invites all sorts of expectations about traditional 'magic' and mystery.

The character performances, on the other hand, help to bring in a dramatic seriousness that sobers the visual exoticism of the scene. During his first appearance in the film, the oracle appears to be alone in the room except for the intruding policeman. The

oracle sits on a small stool at the periphery of the divination circle, in almost total stillness. He sits confidently, leaning his elbows on his knees, keeping his hands together, maintaining a good back posture and exuding the dignity of a holy man. His face shows both maturity and habitually hard concentration, while his figure has the familiar look of a South African traditional healer. His neat dreadlocks, a leopard-print vest and simple brown trousers make him look ordinary, while the colourful beads on his dreadlocks, necklace and bracelets signal his special vocation. Carmen, on the other hand, is still in her cigarette factory work clothes, including a tracksuit top, jeans and trainers, which are part of her ordinariness of appearance, while her bright red sweater around the waist and large circular earrings give her an extra boldness. When she enters to sing to him, she stands at the doorway, leaning slightly on the door frame, extending one arm to lean on the door handle, and maintaining a posture of proud defiance to contrast the oracle's commanding presence. The images of both characters contrast their personalities and their respective worlds, which entangle intimately in Khayelitsha culture. The spiritual, traditional world of the oracle meets the secular and dangerous world of Carmen. Each character belongs mainly to one world but cannot live entirely apart from the other. Carmen's exit is unceremonious, and the oracle does not speak throughout the entire scene, maintaining an inscrutable stare. Their affinity is complex and unintentional, a spiritual father and daughter who really cannot relate congruously; hence Carmen is fatherless. The visual exoticism and cultural realism of the scene are important to the film's poetics of indigeneity because orphanhood is the main problem for the metaphysics of filiation, and exoticism renders the oracle's world of traditional patriarchy strange not only to the foreign film viewer, but also to Carmen herself. This strangeness induces a sense of Carmen's estrangement from belonging, an estrangement that reaches a harrowing culmination the next time that Carmen meets the oracle.

The second meeting takes place at night, and follows the scene of Carmen leaving her home in the aftermath of domestic violence. I have mentioned, in different places above, two significances of dramaturgical timing for the scene. To recapitulate: the scene is significant, firstly in terms of when the meeting took place within Carmen's story, and secondly, in terms of when the film actually shows the incident through Carmen's memory. The meeting, as dramatic incident, is in the vicinity of the film's major Aristotelian Recognition of Jongikhaya's misogyny for Carmen's Reversal of the Situation. The later placement of the scene, as Carmen's memory, is at a crucial moment when the film is about to reach its tragic conclusion; therefore there are two simultaneous occasions in one scene. The first occasion is Carmen learning about her fate. The second occasion is Carmen remembering the first occasion. The dramaturgy separates the two occasions, so that the film viewer only understands Carmen's predicament after she herself has understood it and has been living within that understanding, continuing to resist death and campaign for love. This is important because it shows that Carmen did not lose her resolve to pursue love after receiving the dreadful news. She has resisted not only the social forces of sexist violence, and not only death's existential terrorism against life, but also the mysterious powers determining fate. She has totally repelled every force of coercion upon herself, even if she fears for her life, for her courage is not a denial of fear, but rather, as an Aristotelian virtue that he defines in his *Ethics*, the reasonable "mean" between cowardice and rashness (VII). The occasion of Carmen's remembrance shows her fear of death; yet by now the film has shown her courageous continuation of resistance subsequent to the meeting with the oracle. The remembrance also implies reflection as Carmen tells her friends the story of her visit to the oracle. She acts as if she does not take the predictions seriously, and at that point in the story, Jongikhaya has become bothersome, showing his anger and jealousy even in front of

Carmen's friends. Her apparent nonchalance during the remembrance contrasts with her distress during the meeting with the oracle, and this contrast, plus the fact that she is only now sharing her memory, suggests that she has had to gradually arrive at her resignation to death, for the memory itself leaves no doubt that she believes the prediction.

The visit to the oracle has a sense of ceremonial occasion, despite the circumstance under which Carmen seeks him, because she is there for a consultation, precisely about the domestic violence, rather than as a result of a seemingly accidental crossing of paths with the oracle. The sense of occasion is also culturally realistic, for it is indeed an occasion to enter the divination rite, hence the appropriate, special environment and all the protocols of behaviour. The two participants sit very close to each other, face to face, on the circular mat, with some other mats padding the rest of the floor space. The oracle crosses his legs, a traditionally masculine position, while Carmen sits with both legs to her side, leaning on one hand, a traditionally feminine position. Traditionally, such sitting positions communicate respect and propriety. Carmen's stance toward the oracle thus contrasts with her earlier, apparently casual attitude, reinforcing the seriousness of the occasion and suggesting that she is no longer ambivalent about the affinity with this figure of traditional patriarchy. The occasion is occurring during the midst of Carmen's most passionate fight for love, and her husband's recent violence has only pushed her to greater determination as she now demonstrates her desire for affinity and security within the tradition order, even asking for the traditional man's spiritual guidance into the daughter's fate. This scene explicates the unity of Carmen's two battles, the fight for love and the fight for intimacy with roots; therefore it is paramount to her fate that, while looking to solve her marital problems, she succeeds in establishing filiation with the oracle himself as a cultural father.

The scene intensifies the ethnographic realism and visual exoticism that are also crucial to the dramatic turning point. The oracle's divination performance involves the customary groaning in trance and swatting his shoulders with a white traditional fly whisk. Carmen removes the wedding ring from her finger and hands it to him. He wraps the ring together with the amathambo – a small collection of divination bones, carvings and shells, which are a crucial part of the ritual – in a cloth. Carmen blows on the cloth and the oracle holds the cloth up to the ceiling. He shakes it, groans again and throws the contents onto the mat. He points at the amathambo with the handle of the whisk as he reads the results. Carmen's voice-over in song explains the bad news while the characters on screen only communicate through eye contact. The oracle shakes his head in "pity . . . aroused by unmerited misfortune" (Aristotle, *Poetics*XIII), while Carmen reveals her shock and disbelief through facial expressions. The oracle then picks up a mirror and holds it toward Carmen's gaze. The two characters together maintain a tableau in their sitting positions for an extended period while the camera revolves slowly toward a closer look at Carmen's mirror image, which shows increasing distress on her face. The music rises to a dreadful crescendo while Carmen's melodic voice-over laments the result, insisting that the amathambo never lie:

I've been trying to change what the amathambo showed, but there is nothing that can help me. The signs never lie. If in the book above it says you're blessed, then throw them without fear. The signs will always spell out happiness; that's what Fate says. If it's time for you to die, then take your final breath. Then throw them twenty times. Amathambo won't change their meaning. If you have to die, throw them twenty times. Their meaning won't

change. They'll still predict your death. It's death. My death. It's always death. (Dornford-May)

Toward the end of this message, Carmen's mirror image fades into an eerie vision of her singing the words with a bleeding cut wound on her neck. The amathambo have finally said 'no' to Carmen's prospect of new life, love and intimacy with roots. The oracle is compassionate but powerless to save the orphan when she finally wants to bond with a new father. In this situation, their mutual stare contrasts the lack of dialogue; it is a 'contrast' because she can finally 'see' him as 'father', but since it is too late for filiation, she cannot address him as she sees him, hence the stifling of a 'dialogue' that could have constituted relationship. The two individuals retain their earlier mutual strangeness, which the semiotics of visual exoticism reinforces while the realism of the drama and its depiction makes the distress of Carmen's fatal orphanhood palpable. The oracle enacts the death of kinship as he holds up the mirror to show Carmen her own death.

The scene is an Aristotelian incitement to pity and fear for the tragic heroine, as well as a reminder of her violent urban condition of orphanhood as an estrangement from love, belonging and identity. The existential power of the scene, as film viewers have been following the whole character drama, magnifies the film's dramaturgical humanism, bringing the latter strongly into the scene's socially and culturally specific visual exoticism. There is no intention to do away with exoticism. The point is to ground this exoticism in a humanism of depicting 'another site', and other kinds of occasions, in which human beings from one South African ethnic group experience their unconditional humanness within their own cultural milieu. The existential confrontation with death is surely the most powerful universalism of human experience. Many viewers, even many black South Africans, would

not identify with the specific scenario of traditional oracular divination; yet no one is exempt from death, and no one with the standard cognitive capacities is unaware of both the futurity and the continually diminishing proximity of the moment of one's personal death. I will not venture into any death psychology here. My point is that the scene renders the consciousness of death, and death itself, as axioms of the film's important dramaturgical humanism. Bizet's *Carmen* has the same scene; yet the opera has been the target of a postcolonial feminist critique of Orientalism; therefore, it is not the scene itself and the theme of death that make humanism possible. The scene achieves its humanism within the context of an entire dramaturgical argument throughout the plot of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, an argument that necessarily works within its semiotic context, its postcolonial politics and aesthetics of opera.

This scene is in thematic contrast to the scene of Lulamile's ceremony, a joyous celebration of life, intimacy and belonging within his family, wherein Carmen hopes to fulfil her eroticism, experience filiation by adoption and provide her fertility as part of a new consanguineous collective. The family occasion is also a religious and cultural gathering that brings ancestors and elders to participate as progenitors in the praxis of filiation, which grounds the metaphysics of indigeneity. This is the best scene in the film for representing the general metaphysics of filiation as my thesis describes it, and it is significant here that the purpose of the entire ceremony is precisely Lulamile's reintegration after a period of exile following his childhood tragedy, which ended his intimacy in nativity and plunged him into orphanhood. Earlier scenes of Lulamile's recollections show that part of his childhood was rural, and his family moved into the urban area, where his parents died during a confrontation with the apartheid police; thus the rural-to-urban transition connects with the theme of the catastrophic change from nativity to orphanhood, as is the case in Jongikhaya's biography, and in the scenes of *African Footprint* that I explore in Chapter 2. In the first scene showing

the aftermath of Lulamile's tragedy, his grandfather hands Lulamile over to a white cleric, who takes the child by the hand and leads him away to safety. There is a promise of adoption here, but it will not be an adoption into the family of Lulamile's own genetic and cultural progenitors, one of whom is giving Lulamile away, but also gives him a necklace of traditional prosperity beads "as a reminder and confirmation of the lasting link with his origins" (Viljoen 174). The white cleric embodies a spiritual heritage that also promises adoption, namely, into the international Christian family with its own genealogies and diverse contexts of filiation; yet the adult Lulamile observes traditional religion seriously enough to return home and perform ancestral rites after having dreams about his father. In the scene of his bow as a successful opera singer abroad, Lulamile has the ancestral beads around his wrist. During the scene of the traditional ceremony, it becomes more explicit that, while growing up overseas, Lulamile has continued his filiation with the original progenitor, at least through memory. All this suggests that, even though his overseas upbringing was nurturing enough to help him to realise his dreams, the geopolitical exile was a period of orphanhood for Lulamile's subjectivity as he was far from the fatherland and the family. This distance and exile have reinforced his sense of orphanhood but not threatened his filial identity as the progeny of his progenitor. The ceremony itself is a celebration, affirmation and hope for the continuity of the bond that Lulamile has enjoyed with the benevolent spirit of his father.

The scene not only contrasts Carmen's orphanhood with Lulamile's adoption, but also intensifies ethnographic realism through the detail of performance and cultural illustration. The ceremony takes place near Bra Nkomo's, the shebeen that Lulamile's cousin owns, and which also features in several scenes of the film as the favourite haunt of Carmen and her peer group. A main attraction in a bustling part of the neighbourhood, the shebeen hosts some

of the film's major celebratory ensemble scenes, romantic encounters and dramatic confrontations. As a place of revelry and unforeseeable but always highly probable personal dramas, the shebeen undergoes a noticeable transformation as it becomes the site for women's kitchen activities to support a traditional spiritual ceremony and its cultural formalities.

This transformation does not involve a change in the general look of the place. It is the new order of activity that creates the sense of a different, more domestic, atmosphere; yet the venue for the main ceremonial proceedings is spatially distinct from the shebeen. Tall, thick shrubbery forms a circular, outdoor enclosure, which is like a kraal, concealing the gathering of men from the general public eye on the street, and separating the men's space from the women's space. The wire mesh fences around the shebeen emphasise this separation. The women's space, effectively a kitchen, has the tables and utensils. There is water, food and smoke as the crowd of women work and socialise, while the men's space has only a few inhabitants whose surroundings are shrubbery and earth. The women's space is the angular yard of the shebeen, while the men's ritualistic space is suggestively circular. Within the men's space is a small tree, a cow and a bull. In both spaces, the arrangement of persons is organic, and the men's blocking is only orderly enough to give a sense of formal occasion, with participants sitting on stools around the circumference of the circle. Different choreographies take place in each space, the busy activity and free movement of the women contrasting with the slow formality of the men.

When the women hear the sound of the slaughter, they erupt into song and dance, waving and clapping their hands, swaying their bodies and ululating as they gather toward the direction of the slaughter to salute Lulamile. As the celebration gathers energy, the women form a circle and Carmen is the first to dance vigorously in the middle, quivering her

whole body in a manner that is reminiscent of shamanistic dancing, but also reminiscent of the flamenco passion of the Spanish Carmen in the latter's conventional portrayal. Except for their dancing, the women do not appear to have any formality to their postures, but the men who stand to deliver speeches visibly restrain their bodies. As the moment for killing the bull approaches, the handing over of the spear to Lulamile has a gestural theatricality that is part of the feeling of occasion. Bra Nkomo stands with the spear in his hand, its head facing the sky, and stretches out his arm boldly. Lulamile receives the spear with a similarly bold arm. The two men pause before the spear changes hands, and Bra Nkomo declares his permission for Lulamile to use the spear and make the sacrifice, then, on releasing the spear, points theatrically at the bull. Lulamile expresses his gratitude in the tone of a recitation and moves in for the slaughter.

In the case of both men and women, there are no formal costumes for the event, though some of the men wear jackets and ethnic pattern shirts that indicate a sense of occasion. All the women wear their casual domestic work clothes, and some have aprons. Apart from the spear, there are not special props for the performance of the ceremony. The utensils of the kitchen are completely ordinary. The work that the women do includes chopping vegetables, most likely in preparation for cooking the beef from the animal sacrifice.

Like the oracular divination scene, the scene of Lulamile's family ceremony is conducive to visual exoticism, but arguably gives a much stronger sense of the 'ordinariness' of the rites for the practising community. This ordinariness does not diminish the sense of occasion, for the occasion itself is one of many kinds that are part of sustaining a rhythm of living within the culture. The scene also retains the sense of a dramatic foreboding for Carmen, whose very participation in the occasion is a profound source of tension, for the

heroine and for viewers, because her attendance signifies her penultimate resistance against the grim fate that she has already acknowledged. In this celebration of family bonds that she desires and will not experience, she shows that she has understood her fight for love as a fight to the death, and it is with this resistant passion that she dances to the slaughter of the bull. Cultural ordinariness and occasion alike reinforce the film's ethnographic realism, which serves to ground the dramaturgical humanism of the film, with its treatment of death, existential resistance, and the magnitude of love.

Lulamile's speech and prayer, both of which he delivers earlier in the ceremony after his Bra Nkomo's introduction, contextualise all the ceremonial activities and clarify the rationale for the ceremony:

As you have heard from my cousin here, my father has been in my dreams, again and again. Therefore I made the decision to come home and perform this ceremony . . . Jola, Ngwanya, Qengeba, MphaNkomo. Take this bull's hide to keep you warm. Please continue protecting this family. You protected me while I was overseas and granted me good fortune. By these words I ask you to grant me continuing luck. (Dornford-May)

Later, when the bull has fallen and the women are celebrating, one of the elders among the men addresses the ensemble:

Good afternoon, Mampondomise. As the family of kwaNxabane, Qengeba, I say to all of you here, today we are as one family. We say to you, all your ancestors are here with you today. They've heard you. (Dornford-May)

The words of the women's choral song, "Lulamile, we salute you", add to the messages of the speeches within the men's space. This encomiastic performance establishes the metaphysics of filiation and honour as the drive of the ceremony.

The ceremony establishes the unity of all who are present. In the spatial arrangement and different functional roles, which are also gender-specific, the cultural meanings of sexual difference become apparent; yet there is also a clear process of enacting belonging. Gender is not the only complementary duality that the ceremony enacts at the same time as the community shares a message of unity. The ceremony also brings elders and young adults together. In the case of both the women's ensemble and the men's ensemble, the ages of participants vary noticeably. The animals in the ceremony are not only a source of meat and hides but also life forms that represent and embody the life force of the community. This life force is not exclusive to the living, for the dead partake in it as members of the consanguineous social body, which not only has its own ancestral progenitors but also is itself an ancient progenitor, giving birth to every living progeny and continuing into past centuries. The sacrifice allows for an opening of the threshold between life and death, so that the gulf of intimacy between the living and the dead may close as ancestors and descendants share the same spiritual existence despite their temporal separation. Honour and gratitude are means of sustaining the ontological survival of the ancestors, whose benevolence has ensured the empirical and psychological survival of the progeny. This life-promise, this belonging, is just what Carmen has been fighting for throughout her pursuit of love, first with Jongikhaya, now with Lulamile. Her life-promise, in the midst of the ordinary occasion, tragically contrasts with her death-threat, and makes her invisible resistance an extraordinary magnitude of love.

It is clear that the featuring of traditional rites, while conducive to visual exoticism, brings the audiovisual language of these ritual scenes an even stronger grounding in third world realism. Each scene provides a realistic mimesis of specific cultural and spiritual practices that the Xhosa heritage shares with numerous other indigenous southern African heritages. This mimesis collates and displays behaviours and scenic arrangements that are already part of the real-life, ordinary practices of modern South Africans living in places like Khayelitsha. Such realism brings human ordinariness into cultural otherness as the film forfeits the semiotics of the exotically fantastical, for example in Orientalism, opting instead for an impression of a people's actual culture and cosmology.

This sense of ordinariness is possible even for overseas film viewers because of the cultural effects of globalisation. The film represents a township culture that is absolutely unique to Khayelitsha, inimitable even in South Africa, but this township culture cannot be totally dissimilar to all others in the global third world, which has its extensive archive of visual associations in the information age. The culture of Khayelitsha belongs to a community that has its own language, heritage, and social reality; yet this culture is boldly postmodern and cosmopolitan. The line between the local and the global is not consistently perceivable, whether in the real-life Khayelitsha or in the film's depiction of the place. The ritual scenes are excellent to show this complexity because they represent cultural idiosyncrasy in the form that is most conducive to exoticism and most liable to distortion in stereotypical formulations of racial and ethnic difference.

Ordinariness is crucial to the ethnographic value of the fictional story of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*. The fictional characters realistically perform cultural practices that are part of the personal backgrounds of most of the cast and the real Khayelitsha community of extras in the film. The metaphysics of filiation, as I have shown, ensures the credibility of the

characters' individual and collective motives for undertaking respective rites within indigenous tradition. Dramaturgical humanism universalises the characters while performers act as real representatives of a culture that is exotic to overseas film viewers; yet this universalism does not impede illustrative fidelity in the film's visual ethnography. In this way, *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* makes the interface between universalism and idiosyncrasy into a particularly dynamic means of cross-cultural edification on an international forum. There is no question of dispensing with exoticism. The issue is how to create cultural fascination in a way that beckons understanding in the perception of a vibrant people and their humanism.

Chapter 5

Contesting Inheritance through Contesting Filiations in Yael Farber's *Mies Julie* (2012)

I have explored three performances that variously show the metaphysics of filiation continuing within various historical and contemporary struggles, but not itself subject to contention, the focus of this chapter. I look at Yael Farber's post-naturalist play, *Mies Julie* (2012), which transplants August Strindberg's naturalist drama, *Miss Julie* (1888), from a Swedish Victorian-era manor to a post-apartheid South African farm. I argue that in *Mies Julie*, filiation is a crucial basis for inheritance and propriety as the two main characters, a black native son and a white daughter by adoption, compete for the love of one mother, for one identity, and for one ancestral land. Farber's deliberate allegory speaks to post-apartheid complexities about indigenous land rights, complexities that trouble the native-settler dualism pitting the claims of black communities against those of white families with multiple generations in South Africa. The play's political commentary uses the intimate and passionate drama of filiation as the characters wrestle through their difficult interdependency. In this struggle, the body of belonging – encompassing 'mother', 'land' and 'family' – is not a passive object to possess, but rather a living progenitor who responds rationally, even judicially, to the crisis and desires of the progeny. This makes the subjectivity of the mother central to the metaphysics of filiation in *Mies Julie*, a play that I argue does more than illustrate crisis, rendering an ethical, even spiritual, poetics about the possibilities of justice and humanism for citizens of the new South Africa.

Mies Julie is a full-length, two-act drama in one sitting, following the basic plot of Strindberg's psychologically complex story of illicit romance, class struggle and sexual politics between two lead characters, Julie, the daughter of a Swedish count, and Jean, the

count's valet. In Strindberg's version, Jean's fiancée, Christine, is the manor house's cook and a supporting character in the drama. Offstage characters include Julie's parents, members of high society and manor peasants. Farber's adaptation sets the story in the twenty-first century, and locates the farm in the Karoo, a semi-desert region of South Africa. Julie is a white Afrikaans-speaking farmer's daughter. Jean becomes John, a black farm labourer. Christine is John's mother, who also raised Julie and has served for many years as a domestic worker at the farmhouse. This is the most substantial and significant dramaturgical change from Strindberg's text to Farber's. Another noteworthy change is the addition of an ancestral figure, uKhokho, Christine's grandmother in the afterlife, who only appears to her granddaughter. Correlations to Strindberg's offstage characters include Julie's parents, the white Afrikaans-speaking farming society of the Karoo, and the black peasantry who live on the property, including the community of farm workers and a more recent settlement of squatters. The two dramas deal with many of the same psychological and sociological issues, but Farber's version, with an entirely new script, also uses the drama as an allegorical microcosm for exploring the politics of the new South Africa. Two of the South African play's focal issues, namely, the land contest and ancestral rights, are also concerns for post-apartheid arguments on indigeneity. Farber deals subtly with the familiar political debates by engaging with the metaphysics of filiation.

Strindberg's drama takes place on a midsummer's eve, when the count is away from the manor. The drama has only one theatrical setting, the kitchen of the manor house, though the entire story also involves offstage events that the characters report onstage. Julie and Jean play a sadistic psychological and political game with each other as they become lovers, enemies and accomplices in a perilous breach of social segregation and hierarchy. Julie initially seeks an outlet for her emotions after a former fiancé's rejection, which was

precisely because of Julie's sadistic tendencies. She uses both her domestic power and sexual seduction to trap Jean between his lust and the restraint that his profession and class inferiority impose. Jean is uncommonly ambitious, charming and literate, intensely pursuing upward class mobility. He congenially plays Julie's game, but gradually becomes an equal opponent, revealing his misogyny, hunger for power, and hatred for the upper class. In mutual cruelty and distrust, the two characters endanger each other's future. Christine quietly suffers her humiliation at the fringes of the drama, but later on rises into a position of moral authority as she judges Julie and Jean at the catastrophic culmination of their crisis.

Farber sticks with Strindberg's plot and characterisation, although the new setting changes various offstage subplots. There are also three important nuances in Farber's adherence to Strindberg. Firstly, John is not very ambitious, though he has his own politics of entitlement and cites the poetics of revolutionary populism, with its conviction that, on the basis of autochthony, the farmland belongs to the black people. Secondly, Julie's breakup has nothing to do with any sadistic acts on her part, and while she is cruel, her character is generally more pitiable as Farber makes it clear that Julie is herself both a casualty and an unconscious embodiment of colonial violence. Thirdly, the play explores issues of motherhood and surrogate parenthood through the change of Christine's relationship to the lead characters. I argue that this particular change is Farber's key move for bringing Strindberg's play into a South African metaphysics of indigeneity.

Mies Julie is surely not the most groundbreaking South African performance of its kind, merging physical theatre and a Western canonical drama to explore a local social and political context. This play is significant for my thesis because it has achieved exceptional visibility and is intriguingly articulate in its treatment of indigeneity, therefore a good case to compare with *African Footprint*, *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* and *uCarmen*

eKhayelitsha. The first production of *Mies Julie* had all the typical highlights of a hit show, including prestigious awards, critical acclaim and box office success in high profile South African and overseas venues. In its first year, the show had an impressive internet presence. In 2013, my Google search for the criteria, ‘Yael Farber Mies Julie’, produced more than nine thousand results. The search for the words ‘Mies Julie review’ produced well more than seven thousand results. In both cases, the results, including theatre reviews, remained closely relevant to the search criteria even after fast-forwarding to latter results pages. The substantial hype is not necessarily cause for surprise. *Mies Julie* was highly marketable, its risqué imagery emphasising the sexual confrontation between the black South African man and the white South African woman, sometimes with the additional, mysterious figures of John’s mother and ancestor. Reviewers often participated in the hype about the scenes of sexual confrontation in the play. Commercial hype can partly explain the play’s visibility, but this explanation does not disqualify topicality, since hype is precisely the modality for making the play topical and thus bringing its political and social issues into the headlines.

The production of topicality is a banal marketing function that applies to all the examples of performances in my thesis; yet this function is especially significant to the launch of *Mies Julie* because of the institutional background of the play. Cape Town’s high profile Baxter Theatre commissioned Farber to create *Mies Julie* as a celebration of the Baxter’s 1985 performance of Strindberg’s original play in a South African setting, featuring a black man and a white woman. The description on the Baxter Theatre’s website includes a claim that the apartheid-era production entailed the incendiary “first interracial kiss ever on a South African stage” (‘About Us’). Protest theatre legend, John Kani, played his lead role while suffering racist violence and intimidation (‘Bonisile John Kani’). Previous to performing in *Miss Julie*, Kani had co-authored, with Athol Fugard and Winston Ntshona,

the similarly controversial *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act* (1972), an intense protest play about the police persecution of two illicit lovers, a white woman and a biracial man. The *Statements* title, with its bureaucratic tone, finds an echo in the subtitle for Farber's *Mies Julie*, the script for which the graphic designer has labelled in block capitals:

RESTITUTIONS OF BODY AND SOIL. SINCE THE BANTU LAND ACT
NO. 27 OF 1913 & THE IMMORALITY ACT NO. 5 OF 1927 (Farber, *Mies
Julie*)

Such deliberate correlation with South African anti-apartheid theatre history is part of the political work of *Mies Julie*, which confronts some of the contradictions of a post-apartheid reconciliation era, including and especially the racial divide.

Reviewers, and a handful of scholars, have readily responded to this political topicality, though by only rephrasing the copywriting content of the play's publicity, but have also noted the aesthetic relevance of the play in its postcolonial dialogue with Strindberg. The publicity for *Mies Julie* does not emphasise an association with Strindberg; yet reviewers generally use Strindberg's text as a reference point for axiological responses to the performance. Some writers evaluate Farber's achievement as translator and renovator of Strindberg's drama. These writers treat the South African context as primarily a source of aesthetic and dramaturgical innovation, so that the chief merit of *Mies Julie* is that it has made Strindberg's drama sufficiently intriguing for contemporary theatregoers. Other reviewers, and their scholarly counterparts (Flockemann, Cornelius, and Phillips; Flockemann; Lewis; Sizemore-Barber), engage more with the post-apartheid politics of the play. This politics itself draws on Strindberg's social themes and characterisation; thus the

scholarly emphasis remains on Farber's work of making Strindberg relevant to contemporary society.

Farber transfers Strindberg's concerns with class, sex and power into a postcolonial engagement with the South African post-apartheid context and its questions of identity, history and belonging. Megan Lewis writes:

In Farber's play, John, Christine, and Julie – each representative of a constituency of South Africa's new democracy – all have ancestors buried on the farm and thus each have justifiable claims to the land. Yet for Farber, nothing is simple in a democracy after a regime like apartheid . . . In asking audiences to consider the consequences of John and Julie's combat and copulation within the private world of their kitchen, Farber opened up a larger conversation about the tense state of South African race relations, intercultural witnessing, and the seductive, yet blinding, sting of our narratives of belonging. (Lewis 56)

During the course of the play, each main character makes an explicit claim to terrestrial propriety on the basis of having ancestors whose graves are on the farm. John and Julie's argument highlights the relationship between propriety and precedence. Each character has attachments to the graves of forbears, but John's ancestors have much older graves, on the basis of which John dismisses Julie's defence of her own attachment to the land. The themes of precedence, autochthony and propriety bring *Mies Julie* into dialogue with the politics of indigenous peoples' restitution in South Africa.

Scholars and reviewers alike tend to ‘list’ – rather than make definite theoretical connections between – the themes of *Mies Julie*. Such connections are indeed obscure, even in the copyrighting for the play. The back cover of the paperback script, states:

South African born internationally acclaimed theatre artist, Yael Farber, sets her explosive new adaptation of Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* in the remote, bleak beauty of the Eastern Cape Karoo.

Transposed to a post-apartheid kitchen – a single night, both brutal and tender, unfolds between a black farm-labourer, the daughter of his master and the woman who has raised them both. The visceral struggles of contemporary South Africa are laid bare, as John and Mies Julie spiral in a deadly battle over power, sexuality, mothers and memory. Haunting and violent, intimate and epic, the characters struggle to address issues of reprisal and the reality of what can and cannot be recovered. (Farber, *Mies Julie*)

In the analysis below, I show that the major thematic connections become clearer through the dramaturgical focus on the metaphysics of filiation as part of the play’s engagement with indigeneity. Farber renders this metaphysics mainly through the relationship between human ancestral progenitors and their progeny, though the play also deals with the relationship to the land, which I have described in earlier chapters as a type of anthropomorphic progenitor and therefore one of the origins of selfhood for the progeny. *Mies Julie* does not provide such a poetics of terrestrial identification in as much depth as *African Footprint* and *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*; yet Farber’s drama puts the issue of land into an important context that I have not dealt with thus far.

The land contest brings the metaphysics of indigeneity into political stakes that are more structurally concrete and publicly topical than the diverse ideological, epistemological and ethical issues that I have already explored. In Farber's portrayal of post-apartheid South Africa, ancestral filiation is the precondition for inheritance, which guarantees propriety to the land. This guarantee is ideological, not legal; yet it does have legal and constitutional implications with economic ramifications. South Africa has already seen diverse post-apartheid indigenous peoples' land rights claims succeed on the basis of historical arguments for inheritance, propriety and postcolonial restitution, though always contingent on multiple judicial factors, including historical evidence and the rights of the contesting or defending stakeholders. All this makes filiation itself a high stake as well as an exclusive subjectivity that different parties might, conceivably, compete for. This is an unlikely but possible scenario, whereby two or more parties make mutually opposing claims to the same ancestry, so that whoever can prove to be the true descendant can be the heir. *Mies Julie* exaggerates this drama, but also shows the more likely scenario, namely, that of different parties maintaining their separate ancestries while competing for propriety, not on the basis of filial authenticity but rather on the basis of original ownership of the land. The first basis, filial authenticity, is about determining the true descendant and heir of an ancestor who has unquestionable original ownership. The second basis is about questioning original ownership itself ('who was the original owner?') or judging the ancient rights of multiple previous owners ('which of them has the exclusive ancient right to bequeath the land?'). John and Julie represent the two main (ethical, legal and political) stances in the South African land rights debate as John brings black autochthony and original ownership into a rationale for defending his own propriety, while Julie, lacking both leverages of autochthony and original ownership, nevertheless defends her propriety according to the more modern property rights

of her Afrikaner forbears and their heirs. The winner would be easy to determine if it was only a matter of original ownership, but Julie has an ethical leverage of her own because postcolonial justice must also consider the modern private property rights of white settlers that acquired their land legally within the colonial dispensation, and therefore are not directly culpable for colonial theft. If not this, postcolonial justice must still consider the modern private property rights of white families who inherited their land legally even within the postcolonial dispensation. It is not my task here to specifically debate all these issues, but rather to show the power of drama in intelligently communicating such important issues to a wider audience within and outside South Africa. I have laid out the basic arguments for the purposes of clarifying what is at stake for the characters in Farber's allegory, which itself serves as a sociological illustration rather than a particular campaign for the rights of one or another constituency.

Dramaturgically, the issue of original ownership is the simpler to portray, despite its legal complexities in the real world of politics. My reading below focuses on how Farber handles the more difficult scenario of competing filiations with a common progenitor. I have called this scenario unlikely for two reasons. Firstly, postcolonial indigenous land rights claims are only possible because the land is no longer under indigenous ownership according to any legal fidelity to original ownership. Secondly, South African tribal genealogies and migration histories are widely available. These two factors mean that contemporary land rights restitution movements mainly seek to bring about compliance to propriety according to original ownership. The route of looking at filial authenticity is unlikely because, in many cases, it is unnecessary, though it is not impossible that cases may arise in which such a route would become necessary. The question is: what kind of circumstance might make this route necessary in South Africa? The suggestion in *Mies Julie* is that, in a particularly difficult land

contest, the more insecure contestant, with a politically weaker argument for propriety through inheritance, may resort to making new moves within identity politics by claiming membership within the social body that has the stronger argument. Julie's case for inheritance is politically weaker than John's case, because of his autochthony. Her filiation with her own Afrikaner forbears is not compelling to John, who will not perceive the Afrikaner pioneers as anything other than colonial thieves that should have never taken the land in the first place. Julie's best chance for a stronger claim of inheritance would be a new filiation within John's own ancestry, of which Christine is an embodiment; hence the contest for propriety translates into the play's central emotional struggle, the "battle over . . . mothers and memory" (Farber, *Mies Julie*).

The script describes Christine as a "Xhosa woman, mother of John, a domestic worker on the farm who raised Julie, mid-60s" (9). Christine is simultaneously the guarantor of John's nativity, his intimacy with roots, and the facilitator of Julie's adoption into a subjunctive filiation, which is both literal and metaphorical, for Julie has been a literal orphan since childhood, when her biological mother, the madam of the farm, committed suicide. Christine has raised Julie as a daughter, thus allowing the white child a powerful claim of subjunctive filiation with the black mother despite the continuation of class difference, Christine's domestic subservience and Julie's internalisation of her white father's racism. The drama sustains the interpersonal tension between John's resentment of having had to share his mother, and Julie's sense of entitlement to Christine's motherhood. The resentment at sharing a mother encapsulates anti-colonial resentment at sharing ancestral land and country with descendants of settlers, while the sense of entitlement to another's mother encapsulates neo-colonial envy of another people's ancestral land. The drama of motherhood

is Farber's most powerful allegorical move to make the Strindberg story relevant to South Africa.

My analysis focuses on the figure of the black mother and her significance in the politics of *Mies Julie*. Who is this black mother, and why is she so important to Farber's drama on land and indigeneity? I argue that Christine has a dual significance in the metaphysics of indigeneity as my thesis has explained it. She is not only the progenitor with whom the progeny desire the intimacy of filiation, but also herself a progeny, with her own concept of being indigenous, and therefore her own, traumatic struggle to establish filial intimacy with her progenitor, the ancestral figure of uKhokho. Standing between the ancient one and the young ones, who cannot see uKhokho, Christine embodies genealogy and also represents the intergenerational consanguineous collective that is a social progenitor for John. Continuing her significance, in Strindberg, as a religious figure of social judgement that comes upon the two lead characters, Farber's Christine also embodies an ideology of tradition, with emphasis on ancestral and terrestrial ties, which are so important that she will not even entrust her subjectivity to the modern revolutionary black populism that appeals to her son. Christine's domestic subservience and political marginality become her moral and critical vantage-point as she judges the atrocities of both colonial and anti-colonial thought legacies that have hijacked the subjectivities of her two children. This puts Christine in league with the figure that I described in Chapter 2, namely, the rural black woman who sets herself apart from revolutionary politics, and instead voices a didactics on traditional responsibility while she herself becomes the single mother of the postcolonial nation. The loss of intimacy with the black mother is a loss of intimacy with roots; hence the rootless ones enter their brutal conditions of orphanhood, while the single mother herself has already been mourning through her own condition of widowhood in disconnecting herself from the

ideological husbandry of nationalism. In *Mies Julie*, the widow's final tragedy is childlessness; thus the progenitor and the progeny both suffer bereavement due to the violence against bonds of filiation. Farber shows all this through the literal domestic conflict that escalates to a tragic end for John and Julie. The progenitor's mourning is an 'ancestral curse', which harms the descendants, hence the imperative of spiritual restitutions of filial intimacy through rites and ritual. Christine and John do not practice their ancestral rites. The omission means the discontinuation of intergenerational intimacy; hence Christine suffers her own sorrow of orphanhood as she still sees but cannot reunite with uKhokho (I have earlier dealt with orphanhood as the continuing filiation precisely through mourning, rather than a loss of filiation). In these and more ways that I explore below, Christine is the most complex and emotive figure of indigeneity in Farber's play.

I follow Christine's four main appearances in the drama, slowly extracting the subtext of each important scene, which I cite in its entirety in order to allow Farber's allegorically precise and powerful writing to do its own work of substantiating my otherwise too abstract arguments. This is not to abandon the work of analysis; yet, it will become clear that Farber is also an astute and eloquent interpreter of indigeneity, not just a provider of text as raw material for the scholar. I interrupt some scenes with my commentary and leave others to run their full course before I delve into their thematic complexity one layer at a time. The first scene is at the beginning of the play, when Farber sets the story context and introduces Christine with the other three characters, John, Julie and uKhokho. This scene establishes Christine's complex subservience within the domestic setting. I explore how this subservience articulates both power and intimacy within interpersonal relationships. Christine's second and arguably most important appearance is her encounter with uKhokho in an ancestral vision. This scene reveals Christine's experience of orphanhood while

foreshadowing her childlessness, thus rendering her the central, intergenerational embodiment of the play's metaphysics of filiation. The first act ends with Julie and John becoming lovers. The event is a major turning point for the play's focal erotic narrative. Christine's subsequent appearances are instrumental in developing the crisis between Julie and John. Mother and son argue in Christine's third major appearance in the play. Emphasising their sharp ideological differences, the scene develops an important part of the political allegory of the play. The scene represents an ideological rift between traditionalism and populism within a modern black family that represents the politics of indigeneity. This rift noticeably contrasts the political allegory of *Mies Julie* with the historical teleology of *African Footprint*, wherein tradition, populism and modernism come together in a nationalistic ideological performance. In Christine's last substantial appearance, the rift has given birth to diverging trajectories, finally separating her from her juniors and propelling the narrative toward the closing tragedy. In this scene, the three characters not only profess different ideologies but also embody completely different realities. Indigenous tradition, which Christine embodies, promises to be the most hospitable and sustainable reality despite the tragic conclusion to the play.

Like *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*, *Mies Julie* has an Aristotelian dramaturgy. My argument in Chapter 4 was that *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* universalises the South African heroine through an internationally accessible dramaturgy, thus engendering a postcolonial humanism. I focused on Carmen as the main character who represents the central theme of the chapter, namely, the struggle for the intimacy of new filiation within the consanguineous collective, which promises adoption and the escape from conditions of orphanhood. In this chapter, I focus on Christine as the play's best representation of the subjectivity of indigeneity within relations of intergenerational bequeathing. Dramaturgically, Christine is not the main

character who undertakes the Aristotelian journey, though she does take part in the Aristotelian dramatic turning points of the ‘recognition’ and ‘reversal of the situation’ for John and Julie, Christine’s own fortune changing from good to bad as the tragedy pertains to the entire household. She has a clear function as the play’s chorus, giving a moral perspective on the focal drama and helping to incite pity and fear precisely through her harsh judgement against the lead characters, for they suffer the uprooting of their identities due to the heartbreaking alienation from their mother, who is all that they really had. The Aristotelian dramaturgy works for the play as a whole, and for Christine’s important role, but this chapter magnifies one angle of the drama and does not repeat my arguments about Aristotelian humanism.

Christine’s dramaturgical marginality, on which I expand substantially below, translates to topical marginality within the publicity of the play, and both marginalities are crucial to her significance. In one interview, Farber’s rationale suggests all the emotional complexity of Christine’s relationships; yet this rationale focuses on the spatial concept of the setting and the drama of the young couple as the main agents of the play:

What unfolds between a man and a woman, for me, was an exciting way to explore as a metaphor . . . what unfolds in our country and in this nation . . . over a single night in a kitchen, and I think kitchens are always a place of great truth; in South Africa they seem to encompass a kind of intimacy in which epics are possible . . . I’m hoping we’ve created the heat of a kitchen, which is the heat of the nation, and what’s simmering . . . the struggles for land and soil and soul and the restitutions that are pressing at the gates – what people have been waiting for . . . the sexual dynamic between Julie and John .

. . . becomes a very concentrated version of that power struggle . . . in a very visceral way . . . this is a tough country, but . . . a powerful country . . . with all that complexity, and . . . what we all share . . . which are these memories . . .

(Farber in interview with RUTV)

I have harshly edited a much longer statement, in which Farber says more about the psychological and ethical themes of the play while sustaining the emphasis on the metaphorical power of the kitchen and the relationship between Julie and John. Christine is noticeably absent from this statement; yet she is the character who normally spends the most time in this kitchen of the nation, feeling its heat and apprehending everything that simmers. Farber's emphasis on the lead characters does not diminish Christine's role but rather places this black mother as one of the invisible agencies that cook up the heat of the nation precisely in her stealth presence, a presence just like that of uKhokho, who is part of her granddaughter's own tense reality. Christine is the quiet warning that a day of reckoning is approaching, when South Africa will have to face certain realities of its history, prospects and dangers.

Part of Christine's role is to bring the play's themes and sentiments together, and to keep holding them together, within her whole being as the one character whose integrity withstands the domestic (and, allegorically, 'national') tumult. Christine stays alert and in control on behalf of the theatregoer while John and Julie lose their integrity and spoil their own testimony in perplexity and desperation. The play never falls into postmodern nihilism, whether politically, morally or in its semiotics. Farber delicately controls the dance between hope and despair, truth-telling and contradiction, structure and entropy. The story of *Mies Julie* is brutal, but Farber does not allow this to brutalise theatregoers. The whole staging,

narrative and performance praxis provides a careful guidance into, through and finally out of the themes of the play, with its unpredictable universe. Christine is the main guide on this journey as her consecutive appearances, with her motherly composure, punctuate an otherwise exhausting escalation of the play's focal conflict between the two youths.

My reading strategy in this chapter is to use Farber's impressive semiotics by which the play not only interprets a real social context but also provides its own interpretive framework for engaging with the drama. This is not to say that the playwright must dictate the reading; in fact, I go considerably further than her evident intentions as I show the importance of the metaphysics of indigeneity to the story of *Mies Julie* – but I go further 'into', rather than 'out of', the fiction, fleshing out the characterisation and subjectivity of Christine within the context of her politics, ethics and cosmology. I exercise both Socratic inquiry and subjunctive empathy; the latter is 'subjunctive' because Christine is a fictional character with whom to empathise in the safe space of dramaturgical exploration before attempting to understand the valid and crucial perspectives of real people that she represents. My goal is to render the most reasonable, ethical and emotive response to Christine; thus my concern is not mainly with the phenomenology of watching theatre. I respect Farber's script as a profound and skilful cultural work that is efficacious in its literary form, rather than a mere blueprint for a theatrical performance, which I nevertheless draw from for occasional emphasis on particular dramaturgical points. There is no need for a general philosophical defence of these methodological choices. They are not appropriate everywhere; they serve the goals of this chapter and my thesis.

Aesthetically, the play's interpretive guidance combines a kind of cinematic realism with stark symbolism for the allegorical narrative. As theatregoers enter the auditorium, the

set design immediately confronts the senses with an illustratively and evocatively ‘thick’ rendering of the dramatic setting. The script details the set design as follows:

The Kitchen is defined simply by an oxblood-coloured floor, which sits like an island in the centre of the endless plains of the Karoo’s bleak beauty.

Downstage right, the floor’s stone tiles are ruptured by a truncated tree stump and its surrounding roots – which protrude and have spread along the floor.

There is: a kitchen table and chairs; a stove on which a pot smoulders with steam; a small bench that John sits on to polish boots; a larger bench lined with rubber gumboots and rough farming implements (sickle, panga/machete, pitchfork, spade, sheering scissors). A birdcage hangs upstage right, just outside of the defined kitchen area. Its shape should resemble a small house. A large pair of lace-up leather boots stands alone. Their power is obvious.

A fan circles slowly, listlessly overhead.

UKHOKHO is always present on the periphery, watching. At times she enters the kitchen space when indicated. At other times, she returns to her observer stance – a discreet presence on the periphery. (Farber, *Mies Julie* 10)

The spatial arrangement immediately sets up two worlds, the inside of the kitchen and the outside, where uKhokho is, not a literal outside but rather a phenomenological outside, an experience of marginality and strangeness away from the social, economic and political busyness of the new South Africa. These are the two worlds that Christine must negotiate

within and between, herself a discreet presence and a marginal observer who, like uKkhokho, will soon confront her progeny but ultimately remain apart from their worldviews.

I attended the mid-2013 run of *Mies Julie* at Riverside Studios in London. In the production pamphlet, the director's note outlined the wider backdrop for the intimate setting within which the drama onstage was to take place. Through this note, Farber establishes, in four overlapping but distinct stages, a 'methodology' for watching the play. I suggest that this methodology provided the 2013 London theatregoer with an immediate guideline for reading the set design as a work of partial theatrical realism with symbolic potential.

Farber's account begins by describing the Karoo's civil and natural environment. The description is both illustrative and evocative, blending sociology with poetry, so that Farber is not only 'reporting', but also consciously 'responding' to the Karoo:

The Karoo is a semi-desert region in South Africa of bleak and deeply affecting beauty . . . With its dense dryness; sudden, rare, fragrant and violent storms; consistently devastating poverty of its black inhabitants; and "smallness" of social life eked out beneath vast, overwhelmingly beautiful skies, the Karoo remains – despite South Africa's 18 years of democracy – a bastion of enduring socio-political conservatism. It is a landscape that articulates the core dilemmas in a country struggling to redefine itself. (Farber, 'Director's Note')

Such description establishes that the play engages directly with the real issues while serving to evoke impressions and sentiments that take the imagination somewhere beyond realism.

The allegorical intention of the drama is also apparent, though Farber will make the allegory itself more explicit as the director's note continues.

The second stage of the note places *Mies Julie* within its cultural genealogy as part of the very message of the new drama:

Transposed from late 19th century Sweden to the vast, flat plains of 21st century South Africa, August Strindberg's original text of *Miss Julie* (once so shattering in its time) is reconceived and rewritten here to address the rising subtext of South Africa. *Mies Julie* is a text and theatre experience committed to articulating the fears, desires, resentments and possibilities of a country haunted by its past. (Farber, 'Director's Note')

The mention of the "shattering" impact of Strindberg's play clarifies the main artistic purposes of *Mies Julie*. Farber wants to shatter illusions about South Africa by digging up its historically unique "subtext". The mention of Victorian-era Sweden brings South Africa into the more general theme of "fears, desires, resentments and possibilities" that could apply to any "country haunted by its past". Farber is consciously dealing with South Africa the way Strindberg dealt with a European society in its own illusions of class order; thus *Mies Julie* is part of a theatrical legacy both politically and aesthetically as Farber's creativity brings its own historiography.

Farber then elucidates, almost pedagogically, how the play uses the Karoo as a metaphor for all the complex politics and historical dilemmas of post-apartheid South Africa:

Veenen Plaas ('Weeping Farm') is the fictitious homestead on which this story is told. Many of the farmsteads in the Karoo today still bear such poetically desolate original Old Dutch names. The land of these farmsteads continues to be worked by the descendants of the original dispossessed, and owned by the inheritors from those who first claimed these plains as their own. It is a landscape that struck me as the potent pressure-cooker within which to articulate what lives beneath our country. (Farber, 'Director's Note')

This description signals that the entire play has a metaphorical function, bringing attention to some of the complexities, twists and ironies of South Africa. The "potent pressure-cooker" concept resonates with the "heat of a kitchen . . . heat of the nation" comment in the interview that I cited above. Such concepts certainly have much to do with the set design, its sharp detail of oppressively orderly clutter and atmospheric elements signalling structure, severity and potential for struggle between inhabitants in intense propinquity.

Finally, the director's note specifies some of the major themes that the drama of *Mies Julie* deals with, so that the set design becomes potent with these particular themes.

We welcome you into the heart of Veenen Plaas's kitchen. We hope its truths might speak to you not only of South Africa's complexity – but also the unaddressed ghosts of any nations waiting to be acknowledged. Over a single night, a young woman and her father's servant strip away the layers that protected and kept them from each other until now. (Farber, 'Director's Note')

During the entrance into the auditorium, theatregoers cannot quickly know how the set design will respond to these issues. It is only through the course of the performance that the full message of the drama becomes accessible, but Farber's notes prepare the ground by making the theatrical arrangement itself legible.

I return to the set design later, where I illustrate how the drama that develops in the space 'activates' the symbolism, but even at the beginning of the play, its semiotic strategies are essential to the characterisation of Christine as she interacts with other characters:

*CHRISTINE is on all fours, scrubbing the stone floor. She is sweating profusely. She sings a circular phrase – a soft atonal moan from a church spiritual. She periodically scrapes an enamel bucket along the floor so that it remains by her side as she cleans. JULIE enters and walks circles – aching with boredom and loneliness. She sits at the table, her feet up. She rises and walks across the floor – leaving footprints. CHRISTINE follows behind and erases them without a change of expression. JULIE disappears into the night. JOHN stands at the door, watching his mother, who continues her work unawares. He has a large 'throw' about his neck and shoulders. (Farber, *Mies Julie* 11)*

The position in which Christine first appears in the play, "on all fours, scrubbing the stone floor", establishes her subservience in relation to both Julie and John, even before she begins to interact with them. She wears the familiar working clothes of South African women serving as domestic labourers. Her loose, ample body garments and headscarf look plain and old, but also clean, indicating that she works hard in these clothes but does not 'live' in them.

The image of Christine helps in reading her behaviour in order to establish her profession and relationship role as the subservient one among the characters who are about to enter the stage. Christine's behaviour of cleaning the floor, "sweating profusely" and singing a "circular . . . church spiritual" establishes her as the iconic figure of a humble, virtuous and spiritual working class woman who dignifies her own labour with the vigour, purposefulness and melodic cheerfulness of her activity. A professional who has mastered her environment, she works systematically, interacting confidently with the space and props such as the bucket, which she keeps near her in order to preserve the intensity of her concentration. Such behaviour contrasts sharply with that of Julie, who enters the stage "aching with boredom and loneliness", paces around and sits with her feet on the table before exiting the scene, leaving footprints on the floor that Christine is busy cleaning. Christine's response of simply cleaning after Julie "without a change of expression" shows efficiency, familiarity with Julie, and motherly tolerance, but also a domestic worker's subservience that allows Julie to get away with more inconsiderateness than any black child of Christine probably could. In this regard, John's behaviour also provides a contrast to that of Julie. He stands at the door and watches his mother but does not impose himself onto the space the way Julie has. John's behaviour suggests a greater considerateness toward Christine, thus more awareness of her, and more respect for her work. While Christine is the theatrical focus of the moment, the interaction with Julie shows Christine's marginality within the social world of the play.

The scene also establishes Christine's role of reasonable mediator as John reacts to Julie's behaviour after her exit:

JOHN: (*Watching where she left.*) She's mad again tonight, ma. Bewitched.

Looking out across the night sky.

It's a dark night. Where's this moon? Supposed to be full.

CHRISTINE: The swallows are flying low. We'll have rain after midnight –
when this heat breaks.

JOHN: (*To himself.*) Ja²⁵ . . . Dangerous. Coming to our party like that.
(Farber, *Mies Julie* 11)

From the outset of his entry into the drama of the night, John is restless due to his preoccupation with Julie, while Christine does not seem to react to any aspect of Julie's behaviour. This opening dialogue places Christine in an observer role. Although both Julie and John are part of Christine's reality, she expresses a certain distance from the complex, covert passion between the two juniors. The stakes of John and Julie's relationship seem beyond Christine, and at the same time, she represents a perspective that is beyond the focal relationship of the play. Christine is more mature not only in years but also in mind, having a better understanding of the world in which she lives, even while also playing a subservient role within that world. This maturity allows her to be more empathic than John in responding to Julie's situation.

In the next exchange between mother and son, Christine shows that her empathy does not take sides:

²⁵ Yes (*Afrikaans*) – All footnotes for translations of words in the script are the original footnotes in the script.

My numbering is not consistent with the numbering in the script.

CHRISTINE: Poor baby. She's been wild since Baas²⁶ Jan broke off the engagement.

CHRISTINE goes to the stove and brings JOHN a plate of food. They bow their heads and pray.

JOHN: Salt?

CHRISTINE: Hayi kaloku!²⁷ Taste first.

He tastes and indicates for the salt. She hands it to him with playful annoyance. He adds generously. She snatches it away. He moves to his bench, and sits. He eats.

Indicating a chair at the kitchen table.

You can sit to eat. Meneer²⁸ is away.

He glances about – then moves to the table, sits and eats.

²⁶ boss (Afrikaans; a term not always specific to an employer but indicates subservience on the speaker's part.)

²⁷ Taste first! (isiXhosa)

²⁸ Mister (Afrikaans; a title indicating subservience towards the subject on the part of the speaker.)

CHRISTINE is peeling potatoes now.

JOHN: (*Looking towards the stove.*) What's that stink?

CHRISTINE: It's for Julie's dog, Diana.

JOHN: You have to cook for her dog now too?

CHRISTINE: She's pregnant. Miesie²⁹ wants me to take care of it. The bitch was in heat last month and all the pedigree dogs from around here wanted her.

JOHN: I heard them howling. I thought it was just the moon.

CHRISTINE: But our Swartkop got her. Klein Mies³⁰ was furious. She says the dog betrayed her. (*Stirring the foul fluid.*) She asked me to prepare something that will kill the puppies in the womb.

JOHN: (*To himself.*) Mies Julie . . . She's dancing wild out there with our boys – but she won't let her bitch touch ours. She's like all white women. Too proud. But not proud enough. Maybe she'll blow her brains out – like her mama.

²⁹ Miss (*Afrikaans; a term of respect that indicates subservience on the speaker's part.*)

³⁰ little miss (*Afrikaans; a term of address used by black South African employees when referring to the children of their white employers*)

CHRISTINE: Haai!³¹ I don't want such talk in my kitchen. I want you to go get her and bring her back here.

JOHN: I'm still eating, ma.

CHRISTINE folds her arms and stares at her son. (Farber, *Mies Julie* 11–13)

Here, the dialogue reveals Christine's maternal relationship to both John and Julie. She treats her own son and her boss's daughter as equals. Christine does not entertain John's callous comments about Julie's tragic situation, even if this callousness expresses, in part, a son's protective indignation about the fact that his mother has to perform what John clearly sees as degrading and absurd pet-keeping tasks.

Christine not only disapproves of John's insensitive attitude toward Julie, but also takes the opportunity to care for her son in a way that helps to affirm his own dignity as an adult and as a man. She prepares and serves his food, acquiescing to his request for more salt and letting him sit and eat while she remains busy around him. In these actions, Christine acts as both mother and domestic worker. As mother, she indulges her son with the maternal subservience of her caring. As domestic worker, she attends to all the kitchen work, which is not part of John's role at the farm. This labour division certainly correlates with traditional gender roles – the woman labouring within the domestic space, especially the kitchen, serving and feeding the man, who labours and profits in the more 'public' space – yet

³¹ Hey! (*vernacular*)

Christine also maintains her parental dignity in their playful exchange of a son's demand for salt and a mother's monitoring and control of the child's consumption.

The familial, professional and gender dynamics are contingencies of Christine's physical ritual of 'equalising' her children. She offers John a seat at the kitchen table because "Meneer is away". The very fact that Meneer's absence is the precondition for John to sit at the kitchen table is a brutal blow to John's dignity, for a moment ago Julie had her feet up on this same table, which John cannot normally use even in the polite and hygienic manner. The fact that John only takes the opportunity to sit at the table after Christine's instruction might be due, in part, to John's own subservience to Meneer, but also due to the respect between mother and son, since the kitchen is Christine's domain of responsibility. Christine uses her current domestic authority to lift her son's status, even if temporarily, from that of an inferior who eats away from the table to that of an equal who eats at the table. In this moment, Christine makes sure to balance her economically functional subservience to Julie with her totally voluntary uplifting of John through the application of both parental authority and maternal subservience.

This equalising gesture establishes Christine as a 'judicial' character in the play, throughout which she will have to maintain, for the benefit of Julie and John, both her practical marginality – as subservient worker, woman, and mother – and her moral imposition as guardian and progenitor. This is not a simple role, as John's refusal of the instruction to go and fetch Julie indicates. This small refusal prefigures the more serious rebellion that Christine will later deal with when both her juniors breach protocols on which everyone's survival depends and then leave Christine with a mess to clean up. In the current scene, differences of opinion between Christine and John are already apparent, as is Christine's relationship to the dispensation of rights and entitlements on the farm:

JOHN: The new boys were asking how come you can cook for me in here – and they're out there with no electricity or water.

CHRISTINE: This is *my* kitchen. They will never understand how things work around here. They come to Veenen Plaas³² and want to take what we've been working for all our lives.

JOHN: When winter comes – our children will freeze. Meneer refuses to turn the heat and water back on until we chase the squatters away. It's a brutal way. Punishing *us* to get them off the land.

CHRISTINE: They must build their shacks somewhere else. Meneer doesn't want them living here.

JOHN: He's a hard boer.³³ By law they have the right to live here – if their parents did. A storm is coming to this farm. The workers are celebrating freedom tonight, but there is anger on the wind out there.

CHRISTINE: This is Meneer's land. He decides. Finished and klaar.³⁴ (Farber, *Mies Julie* 13–14)

³² The Weeping Farm (*Old Dutch; the name of the farm*)

³³ farmer (*Afrikaans*)

³⁴ finished (*Afrikaans; 'finished and klaar' is a South African expression, connoting 'end of discussion'*)

In this exchange, Christine makes her awareness of her own domestic authority explicit. She participates in the discussion as an apparent mouthpiece for Meneer's stance against the squatters; yet her recent action of disregarding the kitchen table protocol prevents an assumption that she is merely mimicking the master's thinking. Christine's argument is consistent with her judicial role in the play. She defends Meneer's entitlement as the owner of private property, but also claims the kitchen as her dominion and asserts the distinct rights of her family, which has worked on the farm for more years than the squatters whose demands she regards as baseless. Her values centre on notions of rewarding work ethic rather than on political arguments.

In this way, Christine represents one side of the ideological divide that her son navigates, a divide between a kind of individualistic economic pragmatism and the populist politics of restitution that John seems to be learning from other workers and the squatters. Christine herself is between, on the one hand, Meneer's uncompromising position of maintaining old hierarchies and John's position of impatience for economic change, however that change may come about. Christine chooses not to oppose or make demands from the hierarchy, but rather to work diligently and patiently for small changes within the system while essentially helping to maintain the functionality and beneficial orderliness of the system. The current scene foreshadows the much clearer expression of such dialogue in Christine's later scenes.

Meneer's absence means that Julie has the role of being his representative, but it is already apparent that she is not really capable of fulfilling this role:

JULIE enters the kitchen. JOHN stands immediately – caught in the forbidden act of sitting at the family table. But JULIE paces, preoccupied. JOHN finishes eating on his feet, and then goes to his bench to polish the Meneer's boots. CHRISTINE stirs the concoction at the stove. Mother and son surreptitiously watch JULIE, who is unaware of their gaze.

CHRISTINE: Rain coming tonight Miesie. I can smell it. The ants are moving faster. The clouds gathering low.

JULIE doesn't respond. She lies back, full length, on the kitchen table.

I'll go give this to Diana.

It won't be easy on her. The pregnancy's too far already.

But I'll do my best.

She strokes JULIE's hair then goes out, looking for the dog. (Farber, Mies Julie 14)

John's reaction to Julie's entrance shows that he associates her strongly with her father's authority and expects serious consequences for allowing her to see him doing anything that Meneer would dislike. Julie has a whole internal world that possesses and oppresses her. The power that she has on the farm is simply a fact of her life rather than something that she currently bothers to assert. The behaviour of subservient people around Julie is what makes

this power palpable. John behaves as if he has heard the voice of Meneer telling him to go away from the table, eat standing (perhaps as punishment for having been at the table) and resume the work of polishing boots. John projects such considerable authority onto Julie despite the fact that Julie is in a neurotic state and far from being an attentive supervisor of the farm. It is Julie's own behaviour that makes it obvious that she is incapable of consciously playing the role of an imposing farm supervisor. She not only fails to address John's transgression of the table protocol, but also "lies back, full length" on the table. John's fearful reaction to her, even while she is so eccentric and casual about her father's house rules, shows that Julie's power-by-association is considerable, and needs no specific reinforcing behaviour on her own part. In fact, the more inappropriately Julie behaves as she commands reverence that she did not ask for, the more forcefully her power-by-association asserts itself.

This power is not absolute, for unlike John, Christine does not react to Julie's entrance. It is possible that Christine sees John's reaction as a sufficient 'apology' to Julie. It is more likely that Christine, being wiser than John, simply does not feel Meneer's power through Julie's mere presence. The later scenes of the play confirm this. Christine knows the family that employs her, and has been a surrogate mother and homemaker. She has seen this family's tragedies, provided a pillar of stability, and watched over Julie's life. Christine's judicial and maternal role with regard to Julie's life prevents a simple relationship of subservience. In order to be an adequate caregiver for Julie, Christine has to exceed the duties and social subservience that her profession entails. Christine must also volunteer a lot of her maternal subservience, which necessarily comes with parental authority. In this context, it makes sense that her behaviour at the end of the scene remains natural. When she talks about the weather and the dog, she is simply doing her part to restore a sense of

domestic normalcy amidst the tension, which John can barely endure even though he helps Julie to create it. Christine's tension-relieving response is a motherly kindness rather than an expression of nervousness in the presence of the boss's daughter. It is in this motherly kindness that Christine strokes Julie's hair and gently warns that the pending abortion of the dog's pregnancy may be hard on the dog (presumably life-threatening for the animal). It is clear that Julie is not even listening and may not be capable of having a rational discussion at this point. Christine's actions reveal a nurturing attitude that is part of her maternal compassion. She is well aware of her role as a source of sanity in the home and a support for Julie, whose vulnerability and detachment from reality are potentially hazardous.

The offstage figure of the pregnant dog is symbolic in two respects. Firstly, the dog represents Julie, whom John sees as a 'bitch'. Julie sees herself in the same way, hence punishing the animal for breeding with the farm workers' dogs. The punishment expresses Julie's self-loathing for the socially taboo sexual desires that she cannot expel despite her racism. In the second respect, the dog represents the social position of Christine, who was on all fours in the opening scene and has had a lifetime of living with structural racism that regards her as akin to an animal. The abortion prefigures Christine's own devastating loss of her two children later in the play; thus Christine's warning is both ironic and a source of later poignancy at the culmination of the tragedy. Like the poisonous concoction that Christine has made for the dog, concoctions of ideological confusion and traumatic memories will be the ruin of Julie and John as they lose their intimacy with their mother, who embodies important roots of selfhood.

Christine is not only ignorant of this future, but also short of complete awareness of all the current dynamics between Julie and John that will lead to disaster, for the children are crafty enough to keep some things covert. It is only in Christine's absence that Julie freely

expresses her manipulative and daring tendencies, which John had already intuited. As the two briefly have their first private confrontation – Julie simultaneously seducing and humiliating John in his thralldom – it becomes clear that Christine has had a very partial understanding of Julie.

Christine is also not without her own vulnerabilities. In her next major appearance, these vulnerabilities dramatically complicate the earlier character portrait of a reasonable mediator:

The kitchen stands empty. A low electronic hum begins, as UKHOKHO rises from where she has been watching. Softly playing her harmonica, she walks the periphery of the kitchen. CHRISTINE, humming to herself, returns with the empty dog plate. She moves into the kitchen and immediately senses the presence of her ancestor. She drops the plate with a clatter. She is frozen – staring trance-like. (Farber, Mies Julie 16)

The emptiness of the kitchen gives the electronic sound an invisible spatial presence that sets a theatrical ontology for the spirit of uKhokho to become visible to Christine. UKhokho's harmonica and pacing correspond with Christine's humming and walking back to the kitchen, the empty plate showing that the dog has consumed the poison for the abortion; thus the foetuses are soon to perish, as Christine's own children will soon perish. UKhokho, who sees the significance of the moment, marks it by causing Christine to drop the plate. The ancestor is not only Christine's genetic and cultural predecessor, but also her existential predecessor in the condition of childlessness and mourning. The ancestor's very presence disturbs the communication and ontological agreement between Christine and John.

The mother-son exchange here is Christine's most crucial moment because it reveals the depths of her metaphysics of indigeneity. Among the performances that my thesis explores, *Mies Julie* has the most provocative response to, and clearest suggestion of, the complexities of 'the new South Africa', complexities that I have so far only lightly suggested (specifically, in my discussion on post-apartheid violence in Chapter 4). Christine's entrancement is one of the most symbolically rich and theatrically intense moments in which the play responds to the ideological concept of the new South Africa. It is a metaphorical response, rendering the existential thickness of Christine's awareness of the continuities between personal and historical temporalities. This rendering prepares the ground for a more direct political commentary from Christine later in the play.

Farber's message here is so lucid that it makes an 'analysis' as such redundant. I will watch the scene and then provide a 'savouring commentary' to get the full flavour of the metaphysics of indigeneity:

JOHN enters and moves swiftly to his mother.

JOHN: Ma, you alright?

CHRISTINE: Ndiyamva.³⁵ She is here again, son.

JOHN: Who, ma?

CHRISTINE: When she's restless, I can smell her.

³⁵ She is here again, son (*isiXhosa*)

I can smell the damp.

JOHN is silent with grave concern, watching his mother.

I've told her: Ndimxelele Ukhokho!³⁶ You must rest now. Eat soil and be quiet. Meneer will throw me off Veenen Plaas if I break the floor again. Don't disturb my head. She just laughs and shows me where the roots of the tree are cracking through these stones.

JOHN: Did you faint again, ma?

On her knees, her hands running over the tree's roots.

CHRISTINE: I used to play in this tree when I was a girl. Before this farmhouse was built. When there was nothing here but open veldt.

JOHN: That wasn't you, ma. That was your grandmother. Remember? When you were born – this house was already here.

CHRISTINE: Khuthe thabalala.³⁷ And this tree belonged only to the wind.

³⁶ Rest, ancestor! (*isiXhosa*)

³⁷ Just open land. (*isiXhosa*)

JOHN: Ma –

On her knees, patting the kitchen floor.

CHRISTINE: our ancestors are all buried in this field. But when the Meyers built this house, they cut the tree down and laid a kitchen over the graves.

JOHN: Don't talk about this in front of Meneer, ma.

CHRISTINE: After the madam died, they tore up the kitchen floor. The roots were still alive in the concrete. Fat and wet and full of the earth's blood under those old tiles.

JOHN: Ma, sukuthetha ngezizinto.³⁸

CHRISTINE: That tree was here before any of us. We planted it over your great grandmother's grave. And under the roots, lies Ukhokho. This tree saps from her bones. Your great grandmother won't let me sleep until I free them from beneath.

She grabs a large garden fork nearby and attempts to attack the stones with the fork.

³⁸ Ma, better not talk of such things. (*isiXhosa*)

JOHN wrestles the implement from her hands.

JOHN: Don't break the floor again, mama! I'm still paying for damages.

CHRISTINE: They can cover what they've done but the roots keep breaking through. These roots will never go away. Never. Never. Go away.

She is weeping. JOHN helps her to the bench. UKHOKHO slowly withdraws.

CHRISTINE cannot tear her eyes from the apparition. JOHN brings her water, which she gulps. (Farber, Mies Julie 16–18)

This is certainly a literal 'haunting' in Farber's allegorical portrayal of "a country haunted by its past", with uKhokho representing "the unaddressed ghosts . . . waiting to be acknowledged" (Farber, 'Director's Note'). Unfortunately, this is not the most cosmologically sensitive conceptualisation, but that is precisely where the indigenous context can help. I suggest that this scene represents ukuthwasa, the 'ancestral calling',³⁹ which is familiar in several Nguni⁴⁰ ancestral religions, including the religion of Christine's Xhosa heritage. The calling compels the addressee to become a traditional medium, healer or

³⁹ Keeping in mind the perils of scholarly anthropological 'authority' on dynamic spiritual traditions, Hammond-Tooke provides a summary of ukuthwasa (278, 288) in a skilful study of the diverse and complex practices of Nguni peoples (see footnote 40).

⁴⁰ Nguni is a division of the large Bantu-language multiethnic collective including the Xhosa people.

diviner.⁴¹ The main signal is a period of physical and mental illness; there may also be ‘psychic’ experiences such as visions, clairvoyance and paranormal incidents. The illness ends with either acceptance or refusal of the calling. Refusal means the risk of a worse catastrophe, possibly death; thus the calling is less an invitation than a diktat from supernatural authorities.

The metaphysics of filiation is crucial, not only for transposing the spiritual context of ukuthwasa onto Farber’s poetics of history, but also for grounding the scene through sensitivity to the indigenous cultural and cosmological context. UKhokho is a mourning, childless ancestor as well as an elderly judge at the margins of her granddaughter’s reality. In these aspects – marginality, judicial authority and parental compassion – uKhokho is not unlike her granddaughter, who is herself under parental authority. The dramaturgical purpose of uKhokho’s ancestral authority is to judge not only her progeny, but also history in its entirety. Christine’s calling is to learn this judgement. We have already seen her parental authority and moral reasoning over domestic issues, but soon she will have to execute the greater, ancestral judgement, which she must first suffer herself as uKhokho’s progeny under her own generational curse. I am not arguing, anthropologically, that this is the purpose of ukuthwasa in its actual social and cultural contexts, though it is certainly the case that addressees’ vocational destinies involve the duty of executing ancestral judgments, as the cultural realism of *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* illustrates. I am only arguing, dramaturgically, that the ‘call to judgment’ is the significance of the ancestral encounter in *Mies Julie*.

UKhokho’s judgement addresses the historical rupture of bonds of ancestral filiation. Here is an impression of her phenomenology of history. The atrocity of colonisation had

⁴¹ These are not strictly separate professions, or clinically separate concepts, though a practitioner with all the skills can still specialise in an area like medicine or counselling.

spiritual consequences, disturbing the relationship between ancestors and descendants that were not able to protect their own natural and cultural heritage from the ravages of a rapacious capitalism from overseas. The colonising process destroyed worlds in order to set up new institutions as the early European colonial settlers disregarded the entire human and natural ecology of pre-colonial societies. The result was a massive violation of all boundaries that had defined what was sacrosanct to the prior inhabitants of the land. Such violation in turn caused disturbances in human relationships as well as defacements, and sometimes whole losses, of customary worlds that had served the purposes of preserving continuities of identity and cultural praxis, continuities that would have ensured the harmonious intimacy of ancestral connections. There was no perfect harmony in any pre-colonial society, and no traditional narratives would have omitted accounts of the vicissitudes of life that make human beings insecure. This insecurity is precisely the natural condition of human life to which cosmology must respond, not by denying discontinuity and disorder, but rather by conferring disorder its proper place within a universe that comprises both order and disorder. This metaphysics is necessary only according to human perception, not to any objective concept of the universe, which is precisely why cosmology matters, for it grounds subjectivity. No ancestral tradition anywhere could have perfectly preserved the continuity of its heritage, but perfect preservation is not even the point of the metaphysics of filiation. The point is to keep reprising the call for rites of spiritual restitution in order to recover intimacies between progeny and their progenitors, bringing orphans into new adoptions wherever history has wounded the intergenerational body of the consanguineous collective. If the progeny do not answer the call to restitution, there is expectation of divine wrath, causing physical and spiritual afflictions.

Christine's social affliction is her generation's suffering under apartheid, and her personal affliction is her emotional breakdown due to the distressing ancestral vision. UKhokho's nonverbal judgement is effective through the guilt of the descendant rather than through any obvious performance of the judge. This nonverbal judgement has a similar power to that which Julie earlier had over John in his showing a habitual fearfulness of Meneer's daughter before she had addressed him in any way. Christine has inherited generational guilt because of the loss of land and heritage, as well as the failure to observe ancestral religion, for she is a Christian. She did not cause all her life circumstances, but rather lives the life into which her birth placed her, the life of an economic casualty of the history of modernisation in South Africa. If this history had not happened, or if Christine's place in it had been different, the land on which she lives and works might have been hers, and a different upbringing or different life choices might have meant that as an adult she observed ancestral religion. None of this is the case, and while in the physical life the settler receives much anti-colonial blame, the ancestors cannot afflict the settler's child, who has no genealogical attachment to them. They can only bring affliction upon their own descendants.

Christine's breakdown is calamitous, threatening her very sanity and her ability to continue enduring the already tough circumstances of her life; such a threat is also a problem for the dramaturgy of the play. The opening scene had established Christine as a pillar of strength and an agent of reasonableness in the household. Her stability contrasted with the vulnerability and rashness of her children. Her calamity is very disturbing because, during these moments, it seems as if the playwright might dispense with the sanity of the one character that has been sanity's last hope in the play.

During the scene, John pauses his own angst in order to attend to being a good son, keeping his mother from hurting herself or damaging the floor, but he is otherwise helpless

because of his ignorance of the deeper spiritual realities affecting Christine. John's weak attempt at providing a rational voice, which only manages to articulate the most banal concerns and factual observations, shows that he has no idea what is really going on, what his mother can see with her own eyes. The moment beckons John to be as strong and supportive as he can, but his own advancing breakdown makes him a poor source of reassurance. If Christine falls into psychosis, the whole play will become nihilistic, choking the breathing life of the drama in excessive despair. This dramaturgical threat, which Farber imposes for a brief time, serves to engender the formidable force of uKhokho as a passive judge of history; hence Farber gives the ancestral spirit such serious agency in the play without resorting to the kind of magical realism that explicitly disregards physical laws.

The scene is also a significant moment at which to activate the symbolism of the set design. The performers interact noticeably with, thus bring attention to, the "oxblood-coloured floor" (Farber, *Mies Julie* 10) as Christine crawls around it, and eventually attempts to dig into it. The narrative about the floor, the earth and the tree brings attention to the "stone tiles . . . ruptured by a truncated tree stump and its surrounding roots – which protrude and have spread along the floor" (Farber, *Mies Julie* 10). These features of the kitchen starkly illustrate the symbolic content of Christine's imaginary as she speaks words that simultaneously describe mental images and literal correlations thereof within her immediate environment.

The features of the environment now testify in a loud silence. The tree stump speaks of the colonial violence that severed the trunk and disposed of certain branches of South Africa's destinies, which no one will ever know about, a complete erasure. The roots speak of the far-reaching genealogical links between ancestors and descendants, links that bring both the good and the bad of the past into the present. The blood that Christine sees under the

floor speaks of legacies of atrocity that history has concealed under the shiny surface of postcolonial liberalism. This surface comprises tiles of an oxblood colour; thus the bloody theme refuses to vanish from sight, regardless of Christine's rigorous regular cleaning of the floor. The rupture of the tiles around the roots represents the perpetual threat of historical legacies, which crack up the ideology of the present and open a way to the underground of South Africa's national consciousness. Under the roots are the bones of the dead, who no longer have a voice in the new system, for the new house of South Africa has crushed these bones underneath its own foundation. The nation has settled into a post-apartheid identity that can only sustain itself through the epistemological violence of national narratives that silence the indignation of the ungrateful dead. These wrathful ancestors have no other option besides afflicting their dearest progeny. There is no postcolonial political space for the ancestral voice, only a religious space. Apart from spirituality, the only other result of reverence for the ancestors is the polite culture of mainstream traditionalism. The ancestors themselves do not have a say in shaping a national ethos; after all, post-apartheid South Africa is a secular liberal democracy that tolerates different worldviews but cannot politically represent the interests of any of them.

This poetics of *Mies Julie* is the opposite of a performance like *African Footprint*, but Farber's take on the new South Africa is not necessarily about unmasking or dismissing prevailing ideologies in favour of a particular new idea. What the scene of Christine's breakdown shows is the depth and thickness of South Africa's 'realness'. This realness is not a 'reality' that some new political or sociological ontology has to assert, but rather Christine's individual sensibility about the immediacy and consequentiality of a specific transactional point wherein many realities of South Africa emerge, converge and diverge.

The encounter with uKhokho is the most important scene for establishing Christine as the main figure of the metaphysics of indigeneity in the play; the scene also brings this metaphysics into the complexities of the new South Africa. The poetic language and references to history all help to lift the realism of the play into a register that can allow the allegory to begin to be more apparent in the dramaturgy. The play has established Christine's complex subservience as well as her ancestral bonds, which are extremely real to her but invisible to her own son, who is one of the two main protagonists of the play. The themes of marginality and genealogy, which are important to ethnologies of indigeneity in South Africa, become crucial to the total character portrait of Christine, who embodies marginality in relation to other characters. John represents the new black political aspirations in post-apartheid South Africa – that is, the aspirations of the black man in *African Footprint*, which structural social and gender violence have thwarted in *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* – while Julie represents the generational continuation of white economic power, which transitional diplomatic agreements before 1994 allowed to remain in place. The encounter with uKhokho establishes Christine as representing the part of black society that has a genealogical identity as well as a rich cultural and spiritual heritage, but also a political memory that involves deep historical legacies of trauma.

Mies Julie shows what happened to *African Footprint*'s traditional woman, who became a widow during apartheid and mothered the post-apartheid nation. She has remained the vulnerable, marginal voice of conscience, while her black son and white daughter – a young multicultural nation – have plunged into a new era of postcolonial power contests. The widow is herself a child of an older mother, uKhokho, who is also a judge at the margins of her offspring's consciousness. The ancestral mother lost almost everything to colonisation; that marginal voice of judgement is the only thing that she has left to bequeath. It is by

inheriting this voice that Christine answers her difficult ancestral calling to be the gentle moral power of the postcolonial society. She will either change this society or watch it disintegrate. There is no middle ground. This is the crossroads of Farber's "tough country" (RUTV).

The play continues with the focal intimate struggle between Julie and John developing substantially, initially while Christine is asleep in the room and then further while she is offstage. Her dramaturgical marginality reinforces her allegorical marginality as one politically symbolic figure among others. Such marginality helps to sustain Christine's judicial role, which becomes key during and after her next appearance. At the play's main plot turning point, when Julie and John become lovers, there is a dreamlike moment during which Christine and uKhokho emerge together, amidst smoke and uKhokho's hypnotic traditional singing. The two elders, both carrying farming implements, stand near the young couple and passively watch the erotic intimacy in an inscrutable tableau. The partnership with uKhokho in this way theatrically consolidates Christine's own symbolic role as a figure of autochthony as well as an ancestor watching over her progeny. UKhokho's presence is ominous because of her earlier role as the figure of relationship rupture and ancestral wrath. This anticipates the following crisis between Christine and John. After Julie and John wake up and begin to comprehend their new relationship situation, Christine walks in to find them in a compromising position. In a brief dialogue, Christine subtly shows her disapproval, mainly through body language. After her exit, John has an emotionally violent reaction of shame, which instantly kills his eroticism and initiates the decline of his relationship with Julie. The lovers suddenly plunge into a series of violent arguments and repetitive reconciliatory attempts that bring out both mutual animosity and ambivalent desperation for each other in a painfully futile dramatic loop. The moments of animosity involve the worst

racist and sexist slurs. Julie uses the threat of lynching against John, who slanderously claims to have achieved a sexual and political conquest of Julie. The two also gradually undo the previous, meticulous orderliness of the kitchen as they binge on wine, misuse furniture and carelessly displace objects from their various places; through such gestures, Farber's allegory symbolises the looting and vandalising of the country. This part is difficult to 'see' in the script (not for lack of stage directions), but in watching the performance, the set design quite spectacularly goes to 'ruin' during the course of the drama, which escalates to a literal spilling of Julie's blood – as well as the blood of the animal abortion – on stage. This traumatic outburst represents the bitter struggle between black and white powers in South Africa. Christine's indigenous subaltern perspective has no affiliation with either of these.

Christine's next dialogue centres on the difference between her politics and John's politics. This dialogue is an important indication of the subtlety of the play's politics, because here Christine's metaphysics of indigeneity distances itself from John's ideology of black populism. The rift is not simply about opposing modalities of social construction. There is a rich engagement with the complexities of South African political identities revealing diverse postcolonial realities:

JULIE exits. JOHN sits with his head in his hands. CHRISTINE enters. She is immaculately dressed in her Church uniform. She holds a bible in her left hand, and JOHN's suit on a hanger in her right. She lays the suit flat on the table.

CHRISTINE: Get ready for Church.

JOHN: I'm tired.

CHRISTINE: Too tired for God?

Look at me.

LOOK AT ME!

She suddenly slaps him brutally in the face.

What have you done? We have nothing. Nowhere else to go!

JOHN: Mama, there is more! More to life than slave wages and scrubbing a floor!

CHRISTINE: Is that so?

JOHN: Why just accept?

Why accept scrubbing that floor for the rest of your life? Freedom is not worth shit! As long as we must pay honour to ancestors that bind us to this dead land where nothing grows!

She holds up her hand in front of him – palm and fingertips facing towards him. She is silent.

What is it, ma?

CHRISTINE: No fingerprints.

JOHN: What?

CHRISTINE: When I went to vote for the first time – 18 years ago – they needed fingerprints for identification. But they're gone. I lost them. Rubbed them smooth, cleaning this floor! These walls! That child!

JOHN: Ma –

CHRISTINE: They told me they would make a plan for me. Said there were other maids with the same problem. No identity. But I never went back. What's gone is gone, and can never be reclaimed.

JOHN is silent. He covers his face with his hands. He feels like he may weep and it will never end.

Now get dressed for church. And when we come back – there is work to be done.

JOHN: I want more, ma. I want what belongs to us.

CHRISTINE: Our jobs belong to us. It's more than most people have. Do the boots. Be grateful. Get dressed. Go to church on Sundays.

As long as those bones lie beneath this floor – that's how we get to stay near our ancestors on this land.

I'm waiting outside. (Farber, *Mies Julie* 49–51)

In this scene, the wide gap of understanding between Christine and John becomes much more apparent than it has been. The most striking difference between them is not their respective political choices, but rather their respective attitudes toward politics. Christine sees politics as secondary, while John has begun, in his own disastrous way, to treat politics as primary. Christine's main immediate goal is to get John to church, a spiritual base, and restore the rhythm of life at work and at home. John and Julie's controversial relationship has upset the social rhythm, endangering Christine and John's livelihoods, their exclusive worker privileges on the farm, and the opportunity to stay on the land of the ancestors. More seriously, John has given up his spiritual base, which is in the Christianity that Christine taught him. In Biblical terms, John has sinned against his progenitors, his counterpart and himself in a treacherous act of fornication with the foreign woman. Biblical parallels are certainly clear in the dramaturgy. The children have eaten the forbidden fruit, and their progenitor, who earlier caught them in their shameful nakedness, has come to judge. The play is neither a moral didactic nor a parody of Biblical morality. The Biblical parallel is profound because of its function in rendering the political subjectivities of the characters within their own theological context (all having exposure to the same major religion), which

is part of their metaphysics of indigeneity, and centrally part of Christine's worldview. John's spiritual predicament has everything to do with his political predicament. Precisely through his separation from his spiritual base, he has forsaken the very politics that he clings to, a politics that he understands poorly. He has drunk his poison from the cup of envy for the colonial master's things. John has also cancelled the occasion for love by treating Julie as another master's thing to seize, exploit and abuse. John does not understand why Christine has always chosen to wait, to settle, to get by, rather than fight and reclaim what belongs to black people; therefore he chooses radical politics. Continuing to serve within the system, Christine has dignified her own life through spirituality, an ethics of hard work, and commitment to traditional values of social harmony. John finds it contradictory that Christine would willingly endure all social injustices for the sake of being close to the precious ancestral land; yet she would not risk all for the sake of reclaiming this land. John cannot grasp the underlying principle, namely, that the redress of terrestrial sovereignty is secondary to closeness with the motherland, for this closeness is the progeny's identity. John's emphasis on ownership objectifies the land. Such objectification has alienated him from the metaphysics of filiation and intimacy with the land as progenitor. In this moment, the metaphysics of indigeneity no longer has a simple relationship with a materialistic politics of restitution, which now threatens the prospect for an urgent spiritual and existential restitution of intimacy with roots. Only this kind of restitution will end the wrath of the ancestors.

Christine desires a harmonious intimacy with all her respective progenitors through a single relationship of filiation. She cannot achieve peace with the ancestors apart from closeness to the motherland, their burial place; thus proximity to the land is worth preserving even at the expense of all hopes of owning the land. It is because of her clarity in these matters that Christine does not invest any of her trust in political bureaucracy. Years of

servitude and self-sacrifice have resulted in her loss of fingerprints, but she has retained her ancestral identity and her intimacy with roots, so that John's land ownership campaign has little to offer her except an unacceptable gamble that puts her very sovereignty of dignity risk. Her claim to having no identity is ironic because the demand for her fingerprints shows that the deficit is in a political bureaucracy lacking the resources to recognise Christine's complex identity, and this is really why she never went back to vote. The political system is legalistic. It can redistribute land, confer rights and facilitate economic productivity, but such achievements cannot guarantee fulfilment and belonging, which are up to the people themselves, and which do not depend on ownership of the land. Christine has parted with the politics of propriety, not necessarily to disqualify it on principle, but rather to attend to the most pressing need, namely, the restoration of the self. Such restoration is not a political objective but rather a spiritual undertaking, which has its own ultimate rationale and deals with things beyond material reality. It is appropriate that Christine is the only one in the house who can see and sense uKhokho. The experience of the ancestral call to judgement was painful for Christine, but not ultimately detrimental, since she answered it. The purpose of Christine's spirituality now is to judge, and also extend a spiritual calling to, her son while maintaining communication with ancestors who may not necessarily be happy but do require an audience for their unhappy voice; on the other hand, John has shown that he is a casualty of the historical defacement of the ability to relate in such terms. He cannot find satisfaction in a political freedom that does not involve an immediate practical solution to the servitude that he resents. He does not want to "pay honour to ancestors" while living on "this dead land where nothing grows". He does not understand that the land is not 'dead', because what grows is the indigenous self, which sculpts its selfhood through relationship with the Creator and the ancestors. This is the existential restitution of the self. Spiritual praxis provides the

context and manner in which to address this existential concern, and neurosis is the symptom of failure to recover the indigenous self, psychosis being the most dangerous consequence of such failure. The confusion and anguish that is apparent in John's behaviour and speech indicates to Christine that her son's state of self-loss is dire. Her child is on the verge of becoming an orphan, not only through his alienation from ancestral progenitors, from the Creator and from the parenthood of the motherland, but also through the onset of estrangement between Christine and John. Christine immediately attempts an urgent spiritual rescue by exercising her parental authority and insisting that it is time to go to church. Her harshness toward her son is disciplinary rather than adversarial, a tough love rather than a rupture away from love.

Christine is now fighting for the bonds of filiation to remain strong in spite of all imminent social tumults. She has fought this battle before, and she knows how to approach it. She will repel every apparent threat against her bond with John. She now identifies Julie as one such threat, a foreign influence and a seductive power that has disturbed the harmony of the black family. Christine's final dialogue with Julie is not a motherly administration of tough love, but rather a brutal judgement and severing of the nanny-child bond:

CHRISTINE enters – Bible in hand.

JULIE: Hold me, Christine. Like when I was small.

CHRISTINE: (*Cradling her.*) Sssh. The storm is breaking. There will be rain coming soon.

JULIE: We must run away before my father gets home.

CHRISTINE: I cleaned the blood off these walls myself. The madam sat in this chair. Sunday morning. Put the master's rifle under her chin. You found her here in this kitchen.

Came running to get me from the veldt. You kept asking me what you had done wrong. I said: 'Nothing, little one. It's not your fault. It's not your fault'.

JULIE: Christine. Me and John are going away to open a hotel. Will you come with us, ma?

CHRISTINE looks at JOHN stunned.

CHRISTINE: I'm going nowhere. Except to church. And then home to clean this house.

JULIE: Christine – we could be a family.

CHRISTINE: *A family?* You *believe* that, mies?

JULIE: I don't know, Christine. I don't know what I believe anymore.

JOHN: Ma, I was never going to leave you.

CHRISTINE: You were going to do what?

JOHN: Take back what belongs to us.

CHRISTINE: You disgrace your ancestors.

JOHN: (*A cry from his soul.*) Mama, I'm tired of waiting!

CHRISTINE: What do you know about waiting? You were born ten minutes ago.

JOHN: (*Brutally.*) You are going to keep scrubbing that floor until you die.

CHRISTINE: I will wait. Until this house turns to dust. Until this floor turns to sand. Until the waters rise and it all floats away. I can't break it open and set them free. I have tried. So I wait. These roots are my hands. And beneath these stones – my blood is warm.

JOHN: We take it back ourselves. Or we leave.

CHRISTINE: Get ready for church.

JOHN: They took our land and handed us the Bible.

I'm not going to Church. Ever again.

He grabs her Bible and throws it brutally. Christine drops to her knees, broken. She holds the Bible. She rises and tries to compose herself.

CHRISTINE: I will meet you there when you are finished with this mess.

I trust you, my boy.

CHRISTINE leaves. JOHN is sitting on the floor, devastated. (Farber, Mies Julie 52–54)

In this scene, the gulf between the elder and the two youths is now quite clear. Julie has sunk to the depths of her psychosis, and she no longer knows what is real in her life and current situation. John is in a complete muddle and can only manage to perform a few violent outbursts. He attempts a revolutionary poetics by quoting Archbishop Emeritus Tutu's famous joke about the colonial exchange of Bible for land, but John cannot go all the way to the original conclusion of the joke, which warned that the Bible itself, full of revolution and calls to justice, was to be the colonialist's undoing. In his confusion, John can only displace rather than uphold the political philosophy of the anti-apartheid movement. Christine is much stronger than both her juniors, for she has had many years of experience with the brutal reality of apartheid. She has been the one to clean blood off the walls of the colonial kitchen. She has been the maternal rescue for Julie, who is an orphan and a casualty of colonial

violence. Christine has suffered her own pain quietly, for there was no one to attend to this widow's trauma in the way that she attended to the trauma of others. Her juniors have not developed tough enough mentalities with which to withstand the extraordinary pressure of postcolonial trauma.

John's childhood (as he describes in his monologues) involved humiliating experiences in a racist society; yet his generation has no experience of living in the notorious system of apartheid when this racism had a highly visible institutional form that incited nationwide and global outrage. John's clinging to populist sentiment suggests desperation to feel that his own lonely suffering is collective rather than individual. The residual racism, on islands of colonial power within a postcolonial country, has turned out to be more psychologically corrosive than the systemic colonial oppression that provoked multitudes to rally together in movements for Black Consciousness and Black Nationalist pride. It seems that John's generation has no adequate cultivation of a mass political consciousness relevant to the times. John must endure sufferings that he is not even in a position to fully comprehend.

Julie's childhood involved an early loss of innocence as she witnessed the harrowing scene of her mother's gory suicide. It was a terrible discovery, during which Julie learned that part of her reality was this implosive violence against the white family. The violence is 'implosive' because it resulted from dysfunctional relations within the white family itself; yet such implosive violence is still a form of 'colonial' violence because violence is politically indiscriminate, despite the colonialist's illusions of being able to control it. Colonial violence is an untameable monster, obedient up to a point – when its rapacity overcomes its patience – then turning back to devour its master's children in the house while the master himself is away, doing his peacetime commerce from spoils of war. Like John, Julie is a casualty of a

history that she has no intellectual resources to understand, and no spiritual resources to endure.

Christine yields no favourable result from her strategy of banishing Julie out of the indigenous family. The problem was never Julie, but rather the cruelty of history. The two youths have no hope of survival in their new South Africa, for it is more dangerous than the old one. John can only sink with his generational counterpart. Holding onto a final, resistant hope, Christine resolves to leave the door open for her son's return while the mother maintains an identity of intimacy with roots, for him and for herself. She surely knows that the crisis is likely to end in tragedy, for she prepares to resume her stabilising routines and continue her role as the one who cleans up after the casualties, which will soon include her own son. She will endure whatever life throws at her. Her exit from the scene is the tipping point for John and Julie, whose conflict escalates to Julie's violent abortion and suicide. John abandons the farm. He has become an orphan like Julie, losing the intimacy in nativity, which for John was entirely through his relationship with his mother, for she was his only link to his ancestors and his best encouragement to maintain filiation with the Creator. These roots were necessarily part of the relationship with the land, from which John is now an exile because he had sought to own a terrestrial surface rather than submit himself into the depth of intimacy and belonging with the old black mothers and the motherland. The youths were not fit to continue in the new South Africa, which has chosen its suitable subject, namely, the elder who kept her roots:

CHRISTINE is alone, on her knees, cleaning the blood off the floor.

UKHOKHO sings and plays her traditional Xhosa bow.

Lights fade – until nothing but the tree stump and roots remain. (Farber, Mies Julie 57)

I have shown that Christine's domestic subservience articulates as political marginality within the allegorical drama of *Mies Julie*. I have also shown that Christine's parental authority nuances this marginality. Christine turns out to be the one character that can retain her own dignity and at the same time comprehend the conditions threatening the dignity of other characters. Some of these conditions are material, or political, but some threats to personal dignity are ethical and spiritual; thus mistaken ideas and actions become corrosive to personal dignity. Christine has learned this through years of waiting out and cleaning up after colonial and postcolonial systems of violence. She demonstrates the gentle moral power of the marginal stance in the new South Africa. She is the patient one, who serves, teaches and nurtures in a nation that made its transition from the colonial to the postcolonial, but did not fundamentally rise above the ethos of 'claiming and taking', an ethos that catastrophically tries to make itself central to law and rights, which consequently serve power rather than justice. Christine is the meek one, the characterisation of whom gives voice to Farber's hope for a national ethos of "love and humility" (RUTV). Such an ethos must encourage South Africans to endure the vulnerability that love and humility impose in order to discover the deepest strengths of the people. *Mies Julie* converses with the postcolonial idealism of *African Footprint*, the ethical dialectics of *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*, and the resistance of hope in *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*. The metaphysics of filiation is central to all these dramas because the fight for intimacy with roots is also the fight for bonds of belonging and identity in South Africa. It is from this base of the poetics of

belonging that *Mies Julie* enters the South African theatrics of indigeneity with an ideological challenge as well as a call to restorations of the soul.

Conclusion

Filiation as Key Concept for Understanding South African Subjectivities of Indigeneity

I have explored indigeneity's metaphysics through dramaturgies that variously address identity, belonging and other themes of South African cultural poetics; in this Conclusion, I return to discuss the broader epistemological relevance of my thesis for pan-Africanist ethnology. I argue that the focus on the metaphysics of filiation serves to engage creatively with ethnology, not only analysing indigeneity and its cultural poetics but also appreciating its profound subjectivity.

My thesis began by noting the significance of indigeneity in pan-Africanist ethnology as the global indigenous peoples' movement has consolidated its various contributions, with their historical milestones and intellectual controversies including those about the new decolonisation rationale in postcolonial, sovereign countries of the African Union. I moved from this context, noting its philosophically limiting conflation of ethnology and metaphysics, into a more intense focus on subjectivity by drawing out the distinctiveness of an ontological scope past plain empiricism. This move is only to make breathing room for a substantial Socratic exploration of indigeneity and performance, but there is ultimately no practical separation between ethnology and metaphysics, though the latter motivates culture easily without the use of historically and genealogically accurate anthropological knowledge. My broad arguments and performance studies have shown why it is necessary to speak of the metaphysics of indigeneity in the South African cultural and social milieu, which theatre represents. What remains for this final commentary is to work toward some theoretical and methodological suggestions that may take this kind of discussion forward, for my thesis is by no means an exhaustive exploration of the metaphysics of filiation in South African theatre.

I have studied four powerful works from mainstream genres of South African theatre. *African Footprint* suits the model of big-budget, West End and Broadway blockbusters, which also have mileage in South Africa. *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints* is a high-profile avant-garde performance, aesthetically reminiscent of international avant-garde and experimental theatre, though by no means merely a South African localisation of any specific overseas model. *UCarmen eKhayelitsha* speaks directly to the international world of intercultural adaptations of the classical opera. *Mies Julie* enters the international market as a work of post-naturalist physical theatre using a canonical European dramatic text. These works all belong to a diverse local and global market for representing South Africa through theatre.

None of the works serves as a tool for the advocacy of indigenous peoples' rights, or even for countercultural experiments in theatrical 'agency'. I have selected works that variously place the question of agency 'within' the fictional dramatic frame, as part of character development; hence, each work provides its own analysis of agency, rather than simply produce a live theatrical agency that my thesis has to analyse. I want to know what culture itself can say about agency, not as a separate theoretical problem, but rather as a condition of the 'interiority' of subjectivity. In these dramas, the agency is precisely this: the progeny have fought for the dignity of their filiation with their progenitors. This does not make my selection of performances 'better' than, or even thematically 'different' from, more apparently 'activist' performances. My selection does represent a very mainstream message about South Africa, and about the agency of indigenous peoples. My thesis shows that this mainstream message is ideologically diverse, by no means a simple hegemonic monologue that waits for its deconstruction by something else from the margins. The message can be as

central to nationalism as *African Footprint*, as centrifugal as *Mies Julie*, as centripetal as *uCarmen eKhayelitsha* and as off the ideological ‘radar’ as *Rain in a Dead Man’s Footprints*.

It is worth noting here that my selection only includes works by ‘white’ directors; there is an important critical rationale for this. South African ethnologies generally regard ‘white’ people as outsiders to indigeneity, but I have been arguing that indigeneity itself is more than ethnology. Indigeneity is also, indispensably, a metaphysics that grounds subjectivity in a very personal way, as each drama in my study profoundly illustrates. I have also argued that the metaphysics is the far more significant context in which subjectivity and affinity become attainable, though this by no means disables the power of ethnology to restrict membership and define ethnic or racial insiders as well as outsiders. I am not anxious about this political regulation of belonging; there is no modality of belonging anywhere that permits everyone to be an insider, or that is without its resulting political and ethical turbulences. What is more important, philosophically, is to understand how indigeneity is a complex admixture of ethnology and metaphysics. This complexity is precisely why indigeneity is interesting and profound, both politically dangerous and potentially progressive. I am aiming for the most sensitive philosophical understanding possible, rather than to repeat the critical judgments that have previously overwhelmed intellectual engagement, especially within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. It would be unhelpful to revisit the arguments here, since they have already dominated critical anthropology at the regrettable expense of other kinds of inquiries;⁴² for expediency, I would argue that the number one problem for critical anthropology is the notion ‘authenticity’, not because scholars disagree on what is authentic, but rather because there is an overwhelming

⁴² Gausset, Kenrick, and Gibb, whose article I criticised in footnote 3 for philosophical shortcomings, nevertheless provide one of the best summaries of the debate in critical anthropology.

post-structural and empirical consensus that indigenous identities are not 'authentic' as such. What scholars wrestle with is how to maintain their skeptical premise and still respond positively, if at all, to any legitimate humanitarian or political concerns of the indigenous peoples' movement. This dilemma, which I outlined in Chapter 1 as a primarily ethological problem, touches the very core of scholarly ethics and responsibility, but ultimately, the entire debate has failed to become something more than an intellectual naval-gaze about what scholars should do, when cultural agents by no means wait for an academic answer. I am not asking what I should do with indigeneity. I know what to do, namely, to thoroughly understand what indigeneity itself has already done for those people that found in it myriad possibilities for subjectivity and creativity.

White directors, as persons subject to ethnological classification, are 'outsiders' to racial and ethnic indigeneity, but variously 'insiders' to aspects of social belonging, ideology and national memory. Loring and Dornford-May came from Britain and settled and married in South Africa, while Farber and Fleishman are South Africans by upbringing. I do not intend to divert to disrespectful evaluations about the artists' personal lives, but rather to point out the most obvious fact that these four individuals are variously South African geopolitical insiders while remaining outsiders to indigeneity in an ethnological sense. In Chapter 1, I cited the observation, by sociologists, that citizenship and indigeneity have an elusive but unmistakably real overlap, the most unfortunate result of which is the jingoistic ideological reduction of citizenship to South African blackness; however, my thesis has revealed another, contrary aspect, whereby the overlap itself is an entry point for affinities beyond racial and ethnic bounds. White South Africans, by being unquestionable insiders to citizenship or permanent residence, therefore cannot, even if they wanted to, exclude themselves from the affinity with South African collective memory, which indeed theatre

helps to create, in part by drawing on indigenous roots of performance and identity. Indigeneity, as ethnology, excludes along racial, ethnic and national lines, but this exclusion does not limit the metaphysics of identity from embracing outsiders; for, as I have been arguing, identity itself requires more than ethnology. This ‘more than’ element can implicate white South Africans into the metaphysics of indigeneity. My four examples of white South African directors, as cultural agents, have gone even further than being passive subjects of implication. They commit themselves, diversely, to different aspects of an indigenous ‘ethos’, namely, the ethos of Southern African filial humanism, which is malleable to hegemonic and non-hegemonic agendas alike. These directors are like the familiar ‘white sangomas’, who gain acceptance as traditional healers after claiming ancestral callings, not necessarily with an accompanying claim of genealogical ties but more commonly with a purely spiritual argument and an adequate cultural performance. White directors, being racial outsiders according to ethnology yet insiders to patriotic sentiments, affinity and responsibility, are thus particularly interesting artistic commentators on indigeneity.⁴³

The commentary of white directors is also most fit for my philosophical purposes; for I have shown the ethical, affective and ideological force of the metaphysics of indigeneity beyond its own ethnology, and that this metaphysics is ontologically distinct becomes undeniable when we see how abundantly attainable it has been for directors whom ethnology

⁴³ I have previously written a short monograph about the radical and controversial work of Brett Bailey, who took this concept of the white director as white sangoma quite literally as he put himself in a shamanistic role with his actors and real sangomas on stage, combining actual ancestral ritual with postmodern avant-garde theatre. Bailey deliberately provoked many questions about cultural propriety, which I also dealt with, arguing that Bailey’s work exposed a covert, if often inadvertent, racism that continues even in the astute postcolonial critical vigilance against cultural appropriation and exploitation. I am quite confident that the works in my study are not exploitative; my entire thesis has drawn out the depth of their humanism.

has excluded from indigeneity. If the metaphysics and the ethnology were mutually indistinct, or if there was only the ethnology and no metaphysics as I have described it, white directors would not have been able to engage as powerfully as they have with indigeneity. I could not have made this point as forcefully by studying the works of black directors, even if the latter were foreign nationals, because of a certain kind of ‘poetic tolerance’ that allows even black peoples overseas, not to claim indigeneity but nevertheless to characterize themselves as distant ‘brethren’ of black citizens of African Union countries. My explorations with the works of white directors bring sharper insight that can henceforth strengthen even the critical engagement with the works of black directors, who surely also recognize the richness of this metaphysics of filiation as quite distinct from ethnology. The dynamic medium of theatre and the conditions of postmodern culture destabilize the very dichotomy of indigenous versus non-indigenous; yet this destabilization does not necessarily beckon a predictable postmodern critical conclusion that all definitions have fallen into entropy. Indigeneity does still matter in South Africa. It is politically efficacious, empirically complex and aesthetically fecund to produce exciting ethics and poetics on the life of the human being.

This brief reflection on the white theatre director as target of ethnology is as far as the contextual commonality goes between the four performances. I have not placed these aesthetics and their ideologies in an axiological comparison (to prefer or endorse one over another), or tried to curate them into a particular genre, genealogy or deterministic cultural history. They all contribute to intercultural drama of the first decade of twenty-first century, post-apartheid South Africa. This category could mean anything in a country with such a rich, radically incongruous national theatre culture that Hauptfleisch’s book calls a ‘fractured mirror’, and of which my particular selection of dramas are mismatching shards. Each work

contributes to the post-academic ‘visual histories’ that Rassool (whom I mentioned in Chapter 2) sees as competing with scholarly narratives in the very epistemology of history. The only characteristic that my thesis needed these dramas to have in common is indigeneity, which I have shown as a metaphysics that contextualises itself with its own historical narratives and dramaturgies, engaging with multiple ideologies that become apparent precisely through their divergent narrations and dramatisations of history.

It should be clear that the aim of my thesis has not been to get theatre to ‘deconstruct’ indigeneity, but on the contrary, to resist the dismemberment of this ontology and bring it into something more ‘healing’, even if – and precisely because – it can confront some hard realities about human life in third world contexts. I have argued for a concept of indigeneity, through the metaphysics of filiation, as a highly creative axiom of South African theatrical ethnology. My thesis is about exploring what this axiom can achieve for theatre and cultural knowledge in South Africa. It is still possible to ask one important synoptic question, despite eschewing the misleading issue of textually or contextually categorising the selection of performances: what ‘lesson’ do they collectively ‘teach’ about indigeneity, and human life, in South Africa and particularly in third world contexts?

I suggest that the four dramas all represent the subjectivity of indigeneity primarily as a modality of relationship. In each case, the characters deal with pragmatic realities like power, corporeality and so on in the context of relating as constitutive of subjectivity, relating as knowing oneself and making an exemplary humanity of oneself. Each drama effectively portrays the third world subject as a relater, a contingent human being that seeks self-expansion into affinities of likeness or interdependence, rather than self-containment into a lonesome individuality. This relational orientation is not a polemic against but rather overlays and outweighs individuality and independence. Carmen was the most stark example

in this regard as she undertook an effectively (not ideologically) liberal feminist struggle while pursuing her filiation within traditional patriarchy; the film resists an interpretation of this ethical imbrication simply in terms of a ‘contradiction’ of her feminism. In all the four dramas, the characters understand themselves by understanding their world, which in each narrative is not just as a milieu of phenomena and beings, but rather an endless play of unifications and segregations that either bequeath or bereave love at one moment or another. These characters are subjects whose relating is not simply the doings of the human being but rather the very actuality of being, so that each protagonist, while fighting for her or his own life, experiences and comprehends herself or himself as a perpetual relater, always in the midst of relating, whether or not there is currently someone physically present with whom to interact, for (in the context of these dramas, not as a general assertion) interaction is one thing, and relationship another, the two things neither a polarity nor a conflation. The four dramas variously deal with issues like community, conflict or communication (for example) as inseparable from the question of love or the lack of love. I am not about to defend any new general philosophies here; rather, the above is what the dramas themselves, as very different works of (a very multifarious) South African theatrical humanism, have provoked me to engage with as I meditated on theatre, indigeneity and human life.

In entering my analysis, the dramas have had an uneasy relationship with a conventional scholarly stylistics of ‘clinical’ description, which primarily takes an interest in social, political and cultural ‘processes’ in order to deal with the question of ‘people’. I call it ‘clinical’ for lack of a better denotation of ‘intellectual style’ – including rhetoric and the academic attitude to knowledge – but not to criticise any particular scholarly approach other than my own, since I am the one who has presumed to know how to analyse these dramas in my particular thematic context. If my clinical description is problematic, this does not

necessarily mean that a complete recourse to the poetic or the emotive would be better, though these should certainly have their place sometimes, and I have applied them. The dramas called for a kind of epistemological populism that is at liberty to employ what stylistics are available and appropriate for a particular interpretive task. This epistemological populism – which I am not claiming to have sufficiently provided – is not about advocating a special ‘indigenous’ knowledge on the polemical grounds of a cultural politics of equal opportunity to interpret the world. I have been suggesting the goal of maximal sensitivity to the ways in which subjectivity desires to render itself in its own account of what it is and how it is real. My clinical description has aimed at ‘theorising’ expressions of subjectivity. This treatment is not necessarily insensitive to subjectivity; yet I have privileged my own critical and empirical epistemologies, and therefore used my own vocabulary, which is likely to be incomprehensible, indeed unimpressive, to some of the people whose subjectivities I have put under a subjunctive microscope – ‘subjunctive’ because I was analysing fictional dramas that portray real South African subjectivities. My clinical description reflects my particular form of education, within institutions that are surely epistemologically hegemonic, and I participate in this hegemony through my very pursuit of ostensibly neutral academic standards, with their necessary axiology of knowledge excellence. My current reflexion by no means constitutes a ‘transcendence’ of any limitations that my hegemonic epistemology might have imposed on cultural knowledge. The limitation is its own cue to inquire into it.

I have written as an analyst of ‘performance’; the very word sounds more ‘technical’ than many other terms that cultural agents may use (whether alongside or in preference to ‘performance’) to specify the nature of various activities, like ‘crying’, ‘honouring’ or ‘celebrating’. ‘Performance’ sounds more precise as a behavioural denotation; yet the concept behind the term has ironically become quite elusive due to the vast contestation, and

the resulting postmodern pluralism, of definitions and theories of performance. This is all a wonderfully constructive, and important, knowledge game, of which my own work is a part, though I have not specifically analysed performance theory but rather looked at the contextually contingent – yet unconditionally human – subjectivities that drama can portray. The dramas themselves have provoked my imagination to contemplate possibilities for new philosophical inquiries into subjectivity and its relationship to this thing we call ‘performance’. The provocation calls for greater ethical vigilance toward clinical description in my dealings with social and cultural reality. My challenge is to work toward the most sensitive ethnological epistemology possible when putting human beings at the centre, even if dealing with fictional narratives. Being part of an arts discipline is a great methodological advantage for answering to this challenge.

My thesis is a small step forward through the exploration of the metaphysics of filiation and my approach of drawing out the subjectivity of dramaturgical engagements. I have attempted to characterise South African third world subjectivities as modalities of relating. I have described characters that are not only embodiments of impersonal variables such as cognition, power and so on, but also embodiments of the internalisation of affinities with persons and personifications that may variously give and receive, or forfeit and withhold, love. I have not tried to take on the themes of love and affinity in theoretical isolation from teasing out the metaphysics of filiation as precisely the metaphysics of a love specifically between the progenitor and the progeny. My single task has been to sustain Socratic attention to the voice of indigeneity – a voice than can indeed say something reasonable about love – at the moment of indigeneity’s ‘return’ to pan-Africanist ethnology. My thesis is not an objective analysis of the return itself, but rather a contribution to the return, and even part of the pan-Africanist intellectual context into which indigeneity returns.

It is significant that the exploration of indigeneity is the context in which these dramas challenge my clinical description, which is an ‘official language’, and therefore a cultural capital, of global technocratic privilege. In the intellectual exploration of indigeneity, ‘Western’, ‘first world’ and ‘white’ intellectuals especially operate on a minefield of potential accusations of colonial gazing, while pan-Africanist ‘black’ intellectuals wielding highbrow theories risk dismissal for their ostensible ‘Westernisation’. The extraordinary ideological diversity and high stakes within indigeneity makes it impossible for any scholar not to make any enemy somewhere, but there is one particular point that exacerbates the precariousness, namely, a self-other dichotomy between ‘the West and the rest’. This dichotomy keeps itself in the spotlight precisely through countless postmodern and postcolonial deconstructions that must keep citing the dichotomy in order to deconstruct it. I have responded to this problem by shifting the emphasis from the cross-cultural to the domestic, thus from a phenomenology of ‘foreign others’ to a phenomenology of ‘mothers, brothers and others’. I have replaced the crisis of insiders-versus-outsiders (that is, indigenous insiders versus non-indigenous outsiders, or alternatively, academic insiders versus non-academic outsiders) with an interest in progenitors-and-progeny. This filial interface is yet another binary, the existential deconstruction of which is precisely the beginning of profound intimacies that take affinity into ontology, rendering subjectivity as an agony and ecstasy of the progeny exerting back toward a subjunctive original oneness with the birthing body of the progenitor. The point is not for me to say something new about indigeneity but rather the opposite: I have shown that mainstream South African theatre has been saying all these things. My response has utilised only a miniscule portion of the fallow ground for South African theatre and performance studies, let alone African studies and postcolonial cultural studies.

Here is the central implication of the four dramas for indigeneity: ethnology must not only concern itself with the technicalities of ‘peoples and their problems’, but also be sensitively attentive to the affinities between ‘persons and their dearest’. Such a crucial epistemological move requires no unethical prying into privacies. Theatre and other artistic media for public, intercultural forums, and often incorporating fiction into their poetics, help to communicate real subjectivity while protecting the creative agents from ethnological voyeurism. The study of artistic products not only solves many strictly ethical problems for ethnology but also helps to improve the very epistemology of ethnology. In these dramas, the poetics of affinity is where ‘subjectivity’ – again, such a technical term – blossoms into ‘humanity’. Making this the focus does not mean abandoning empiricism; in fact, such focus is more empirical than the technical, which cannot reach the personhood beyond data and theories. ‘Reaching’ is not ‘revealing’; I cannot have special phenomenological access to subjectivities other than my own; yet what is most at stake is not phenomenological plausibility but rather existential fidelity, which involves properly depicting the self-placement of subjectivities according to their own ontological priorities that precede my research interests. Such existential fidelity is by no means easy in any research discipline, but the people’s genuine ontological priorities are surely more ascertainable through the study of creative expressions that have entered culture before the researcher’s arrival onto the scene. There are no simple answers to all epistemological problems here. It is a process of continuous learning.

I mention in Chapter 1 that pan-Africanist anthropological and sociological debates on indigeneity have tended to focus heavily on developmental, humanitarian and governmental issues. These are real issues that do demand the ongoing responsible intellectual engagement that has shaped a critical pan-Africanist prose on indigeneity.

Indigenous groups and postcolonial populations are indeed active in the processes of rescuing or improving the prospects of human life in third world and fourth world contexts especially; yet human beings must also continue to ‘live’ this life while nurturing it. The ‘living’ part surely involves more than survival. In the dramas that we have looked at, human living – within human life – includes love, and much more that my thesis cannot touch upon because intellectual thought cannot circumscribe all prospects of subjectivity and human life.

The dramas put love right into the midst of their dealings with social and environmental conditions as well as interpersonal engagements. The narratives portray the South African third world subject as a person with sensitivities and depths, some of which are unreachable to the ethnological gaze. In *Mies Julie*, such sensitivities and depths are what the characters themselves must negotiate in their ‘relationships’, which consequently involve more than problematic transactions of power. This is not to negate the significance of power, which, as we have seen, structures the *Mies Julie* household and its emotional cosmos, with Christine as the marginal one while her juniors compete for dominance. Power affects Christine’s subjectivity, not only with regard to prospects of agency, but also regarding exploitation and objectification, which threaten the wellbeing and dignity of each of the three main characters in the play. Farber’s realism certainly involves empirical knowledge about the drama’s social context as a context of power; yet the rich subtext of *Mies Julie* suggests that even empiricism by itself is not nearly empirical enough to apprehend human life in South African third world contexts. Farber’s characters show that they are capable of apprehending humanism and comprehending power on their own terms as inscrutable subjects pursuing, among other concerns, the prospect of love.

The question of love is anthropologically elucidating precisely because it is inscrutable due to the unfathomable interiority and total idiosyncrasy of the loving person,

whose self-expression is ultimately only a suggestion of subjectivity, albeit the best suggestion available. It is also important to avoid invading the actual poetics of love with assumptions and prejudices about love from the researcher's own experience or education, for the point of epistemological populism is not to deconstruct and debate what love is but rather to appreciate that love is a concern for subjectivities in the world, and to honour their concern for themselves with that which they determine as worthy of their concern. This is the theoretical justice to which epistemological populism aspires. Love is only one, excellent example of abstract actualities that can have such an interesting relationship to empiricism.

It is now possible to see why the study of creativity is not a luxury but a necessity for the sensitisation of pan-Africanist ethnology. We know about the instrumentality of the arts and arts training, as well as the value of arts disciplines to liberal education, but I am also confident that pan-Africanist ethnology, for the reasons that I have stated above, cannot succeed without the study of the arts and cultural creativity. There is great potential here for the advocacy of arts disciplines and the campaign for university resources, but also an important direction for new, ever more sensitive ethnologies of third world peoples especially. Such work would help South African arts disciplines themselves to establish forums for rich, groundbreaking knowledge that influences pan-Africanist ethnology in other disciplines.

This is especially important within the multidisciplinary field of postcolonial cultural studies, which has such a foundational interest in challenging misrepresentations of peoples in former colonies. Arts criticism can play a key role in pursuing new ethnologies for in-depth elaboration on the morphology of subjectivity. Artistic creativity is not simply the production of suitable objects for ethnological scrutiny. The arts, recruiting philosophy, must also teach us how to scrutinise ethnology, not only for our own continuing sensitisation to

subjectivities, but also for the analysis of the distribution of sensitivities within the third world milieu of processes of sensitisation. These distributions of sensitivity, especially through humanitarian campaigns, are not mere ideological indoctrinations, though the imperfect institutional processes of humanitarian work will always have to bear the risk of ‘becoming what they fight’ with their good but corruptible intentions. Humanitarian work is important, not only for its own goals, but also in its perpetuation of the necessary semiotics and its generation of the necessary affectivities that are part of resisting oppression and addressing negligence in postcolonial states. Postcolonial cultural studies can fruitfully explore such affective distributions by looking at the uniqueness and value of indigenous creativities and sensitivities with actualities such as love in clear focus, notwithstanding their inscrutability, which is in fact, and paradoxically, indispensable.

In all this, the critique of political ideology is still important. My thesis has shown that the metaphysics of filiation itself takes its identity poetics and politics beyond the crudest forms of ideology, especially jingoism. I have demonstrated that the move to become fully sensitive to this metaphysics does not necessarily lead to jingoism, but on the contrary, opens up depths of subtext and subjectivity that can still maintain patriotism within a reasonable humanism. This patriotic humanism was central to my reading of *African Footprint*, which shows that in rejecting jingoism, we need not sink the entire ship of populist identity poetics. Populism can be the very means by which the people seek out commonalities that may indeed include, but can also exceed or even contradict, those of national identity. Such contradiction was one of the issues of *Mies Julie*, where I observed Christine defining her own marginal populism – within indigeneity, tradition and spirituality – precisely by breaking away from post-apartheid nationalism. It is everywhere apparent that the metaphysics of indigeneity has long settled into lending its identity poetics to the production

of populisms, and this does mean the risk of jingoism; nevertheless, the latter is not an inevitable result of commitments to filiation and patriotism, which, as I have shown, can engender unique creativities that contribute fruitfully toward the distribution of humanistic sensitivities in culture. In short, I do not conflate filial hope with jingoism, even if the latter can abuse the former, the separation of which helps to sensitise indigeneity itself and can also make it available to a poetics of postcolonial justice, as is most stunningly the case in *Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints*.

I have aimed to render the metaphysics of filiation as both ontologically and ideologically distinct, and this is important for two reasons. Firstly, as I have argued in Chapter 1, anti-colonial essentialism tends to speak within the very frame of filiation, becoming defensive about indigenous knowledge and values, thus reducing ethnology too much to cultural apologetics, and at worst turning ethnology into ethnocentrism. Some of the intentions may be good, but ethnocentrism is disastrous for the uplifting of pan-Africanist thought. I have also defended the contingent validity of an ontologically distinct, ideologically indeterminate yet politically malleable poetics of filiation. I noted at the outset how, as an intellectual response to indigeneity, hypercritical dismissals can only end the conversation rather than solve any problems. The aim of my thesis has been to build the conversation, mainly by asserting the legitimacy of filiation as a mode in which respective persons make sense of themselves, a mode that is quite basic to human survival. I hope to get pan-Africanist ethnologies of indigeneity to continue this conversation on identity through filiation; for my meditation, with its priorities and approaches, cannot predict all potential discussions among intellectuals.

This unpredictable conversation is at least imaginable due to several epistemological prospects that have become clear. Critical pan-Africanist ethnology can now flesh out the

metaphysics of identity as distinct from empirical histories, cultural materiality and social norms. This ethnology will still be more materialistic, thus more anthropologically promising, than my philosophical work has been. Pan-Africanist cultural apologetics – which still has its value – can move beyond ‘reciting’, to articulately explaining, the poetics of filiation within particular rhetorical and practical contexts. Critical materialism can embrace pan-Africanist metaphysics, the advocacy of which can exploit my arguments about the metaphysics of filiation for the pedagogy on traditional cosmologies. More ostensibly ‘Western’ postcolonial critiques can still bring onto the table an approach to ‘metaphysics’ using overseas philosophical canons. They can all contend with me, or do better at my own approach, so that we make this inquiry into the metaphysics of filiation reflective of the wonderful diversity and dynamism of pan-Africanist thought.

The fields of theatre studies and performance studies have much to offer in this move because of what performance itself can do for knowledge. I have argued above that the study of creativity is helpful to the methodology of the ethnological encounter with subjectivity. What performance does here is also crucial for the encounter between different epistemologies that have something to gain from each other. Materiality and metaphysics are equally fundamental to performance, which also needs axiology. Performance epistemology itself raises many questions and possibilities for the relationship between the critical and the axiological. This by itself is another, big topic for another time. Performance ceaselessly demonstrates the prospects of subjectivity and creativity in many localities around the globe. The sort of pan-Africanist ethnology of creativity that I have advocated can fruitfully emphasise performance in the engagement between ethnology and indigenous cultural studies.

Some impetus for this kind of ethnology is precisely what my thesis has attempted through the philosophical description of how the metaphysics of filiation articulates itself as an ontologically distinct and crucial variable of indigeneity's performance. This variable explains why some performances, including the ones that I have discussed, can invite a strong intuitive association with the theme of 'indigeneity' even though they do not provide specific ethnological arguments in their rhetoric, and their creative rationales do not always revolve around a populist politics of indigeneity. This intuitive association might be partly due to semiotic hints such as the imaging of tradition and locality, but I would contend that such associations by themselves can only be markers of cultural and geopolitical difference from 'outsiders'. Indigenous populisms may indeed cherish this difference; yet we must see indigeneity as more than difference if intellectual engagement is to get the most out of the performance of indigeneity. I have put subjectivity at the centre, which meant that my semiotics had to make room for a perspective that focuses on the depths of affinity.

Thinking about indigeneity in this way frees the intellect to critically evaluate the prospects of identity while also being able to enjoy the aesthetics of belonging and even partake of the emotive substance of performances. This discovery has been my ecstasy, and the search for it my agony, for there is no impersonal rationalism that can sustain a humanitarian ethics in this area. Theatre speaks to the 'heart', and it is the heart that must answer, even if the rational mind must mediate the communication through theoretical reflexion. My heart now comprehends that the metaphysics of filiation communicates its humanity in the same way, ever kindling hope for profound encounters with mothers, brothers and others.

Bibliography

- ‘About Us.’ Gaia Foundation, 2015. Web. 25 Mar. 2015.
- ‘About Us.’ *Baxter Theatre Centre at the University of Cape Town*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- ACHPR, and IWGIA. *Report of the African Commission’s Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Populations/Communities*. Copenhagen: Transaction Publishers, 2005. Print.
- ‘African Footprint - Show Highlights.’ N.p., 2010. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- ‘Amps Full-on for This Folkloric.’ *Sunday Mail* 1 June 2003: 95. Print.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. ‘Cosmopolitan Patriots.’ *Critical Inquiry* 23.3 (1997): 617–639. Print.
- Aristotle. *Ethics*. Ed. Jim Manis. Trans. J.A. Smith. Electronic Classics Series, 2012. Kindle ebook.
- . *Poetics*. Trans. S.H. Butcher. Witch Books, 2011. Print.
- AU. *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance*. Khartoum: African Union, 2006. Print.
- Bailey, Brett. *The Plays of Miracle and Wonder: Bewitching Visions and Primal High- Jinx from the South African Stage*. Cape Town: Double Storey, 2003. Print.
- Bambalele, Patience. ‘Dazzling Show Back for World Cup.’ *Sowetan* 3 Mar. 2010: n. pag. Print.
- Barnard, Alan. ‘Coat of Arms and the Body Politic: Khoisan Imagery and South African National Identity.’ *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 69.1 (2004): 5–22. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
- . *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Print.

- Barnes, R. H. 'Scheffler, Harold W. Filiation and Affiliation (Book Review).' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10.1 (2004): 186–187. Print.
- Bennett, Susan. 'Theatre/Tourism.' *Theatre Journal* 57.3 (2005): 407–428. Print.
- Bharucha, Rustom. *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Biblica, trans. *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan House, 1984. Print.
- Biko, Steve. *I Write What I like: A Selection of His Writing*. Ed. A Stubbs. 2004th ed. Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 1978. Print.
- Bleek, Dorothea F. 'Bushman Folklore.' *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 2.3 (1929): 302–313. Print.
- Bonham Carter, John. *Richard Loring's African Footprint*. DPTV Media, 2007. Film.
- 'Bonisile John Kani.' *South African History Online*. N.p., 2015. Web. 2 Feb. 2016.
- Broadhurst, Susan. *Liminal Acts: A Critical Overview of Contemporary Performance and Theory*. London: Cassell, 1999. Print.
- Brody, Hugh. *Tracks Across Sand*. Canada: Comic Relief, Open Channels, University of the Fraser Valley, 2012. Film.
- Brörmann-Thoma, Magdalena. *San Cultures and Preconceptions*. N.p., 2009. Print.
- Brown, Duncan, ed. *Oral Literature and Performance in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1999. Print.
- Brown, Michael F. 'Heritage Trouble: Recent Work on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Property.' *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12 (2005): 40–61. Print.
- Butchart, Alexander. *The Anatomy of Power: European Constructions of the African Body*. London: Zed, 1998. Print.

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd ed. New York: Doubleday, 1995. Print.
- Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. *Ethnicity, Inc*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.
- Confucius. 'XiaoJing.' Clarendon Press, 1899. Web. 19 Feb. 2015.
- Coplan, David. *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985. Print.
- Cornelissen, Scarlett. 'Producing and Imaging "Place" and "People": The Political Economy of South African International Tourist Representation'. *Review of International Political Economy* 12.4 (2005): 674–699. Print.
- Cornelissen, Scarlett, and Kamilla Swart. 'The 2010 Football World Cup as a Political Construct : The Challenge of Making Good on an African Promise.' *The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review* (2006): 108–123. Print.
- Crawhall, Nigel. 'Going to a Better Life: Perspectives on the Future of Language in Education for San and Khoe South Africans.' *International Journal of Educational Development* 19 (1999): 323–335. Print.
- . *Indigenous Peoples of South Africa: Current Trends*. Geneva: N.p., 1999. Print.
- Csordas, Thomas J. 'Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology.' *Ethos* 18.1 (1990): 5–47. Print.
- Dabkowski, Colin. 'We Are African: Dance Troupe's "Celebration of Life" Follows South Africa's Long Journey to Victory over Apartheid'. *Buffalo News* 20 Feb. 2008: C1. Print.
- Davies, James, and Lindiwe Dovey. 'Bizet in Khayelitsha: U-Carmen eKhayelitsha as

- Audio-Visual Transculturation.’ *Journal of African Media Studies* 2.1 (2010): 39–53. Print.
- Dornford-May, Mark. *uCarmen eKhayelitsha*. South Africa: Tartan Video, 2006. Film.
- Du Bois, William. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Penguin, 1989. Print.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1967th ed. New York: Grove Press, 1952. Print.
- Farber, Yael. ‘Director’s Note.’ 2013: 1. Print.
- . *Mies Julie - Restitutions of Body and Soil. Since the Bantu Land Act No. 27 of 1913 and the Immorality Act No. 5 of 1927*. London: Oberon Books, 2012. Print.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*. Ed. & trans. by Daniel Breazeale. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988. Print.
- Fleishman, Mark. ‘Remembering in the Postcolony: Refiguring the Past with Theatre.’ University of Cape Town, 2012. Print.
- Flockemann, Miki. ‘Repeating and Disrupting Embodied Histories through Performance: Exhibit A, Mies Julie and Itsoseng.’ *Critical Arts* 27.4 (2013): 403–417. Print.
- Flockemann, Miki, Jerome Cornelius, and Jolyn Phillips. ‘Grahamstown 2012: Theatres of Belonging, Longing and Counting the Bullets.’ *South African Theatre Journal* 26.2 (2012): 218–226. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane, 1977. Print.
- . *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Allen Lane, 1979. Print.
- Gade, Christian B. N. ‘The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu.’ *South African Journal of Philosophy* 30.3 (2011): 303–329. Print.
- . ‘What Is Ubuntu? Different Interpretations among South Africans of African Descent.’ *South African Journal of Philosophy* 31.3 (2012): 484–503. Print.

- 'Gaia: Stories of Origin.' Gaia Foundation, 2015. Web. 25 Mar. 2015.
- Gausset, Quentin, Justin Kenrick, and Robert Gibb. 'Indigeneity and Autochthony: A Couple of False Twins?' *Social Anthropology* 19.2 (2011): 135–142. Print.
- Gianan, Nicolito A. 'Delving into the Ethical Dimension of Ubuntu Philosophy.' *Cultura. International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology* 8.1 (2011): 63–82. Print.
- Gilbert, Helen. 'Indigeneity and Performance.' *Interventions* 15.2 (2013): 173–180. Web. 4 Sept. 2014.
- Gilbert, Helen, and Jacqueline Lo. *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australia*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- Gilbert, Helen, and Joanne Tompkins. *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Hammond-Tooke, W. D. 'The Uniqueness of Nguni Mediumistic Divination in Southern Africa.' *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 72.2 (2002): 277–292. Print.
- Hauptfleisch, Temple. *Theatre and Society in South Africa: Reflections in a Fractured Mirror*. Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik, 1997. Print.
- . 'Tipping Points in the History of Academic Theatre and Performance Studies in South Africa.' *Theatre Research International* 35.3 (2010): 275–287. Print.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Phenomenology of Mind*. Trans. J.B. Baillie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931. Print.
- Herr, Ranjoo Seodu. 'Reclaiming Third World Feminism: Or Why Transnational Feminism Needs Third World Feminism.' *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 12.1 (2014): 1–30. Print.
- Hoch, Paul. *White Hero, Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity*. London:

- Pluto Press, 1979. Print.
- Hodgson, Dorothy L. 'Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on the Indigenous Rights Movement in Africa and the Americas.' *American Anthropologist* 104.4 (2002): 1037–1049. Print.
- Iaccarino, Clara. 'Proud Soles Carry a Nation.' *The Sun Herald* 6 July 2003: 4. Print.
- Ilo, Stan Chu. 'Africa's Place in World Christianity: Towards a Theology of Intercultural Friendship.' *Toronto Journal of Theology* 29.1 (2013): 125–142. Print.
- Ingold, Tim. *The Perception of the Environment*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Jahoda, Gustav. *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Jamal, Ashraf. 'Faith in a Practical Epistemology: On Collective Creativity in Theatre.' *South African Theatre Journal* 17 (2003): 37–64. Print.
- Johnson, David. 'Representing the Cape "Hottentots," from the French Enlightenment to Post-Apartheid South Africa.' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40.4 (2007): 525–552. Print.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Print.
- Krog, Antjie. *Die Sterre Sê, 'tsau': //Xam-Gedigte van Diä!kwain, Kweiten-Ta-//ken, /A!kúnta, /Han''kass'o En //Kabbo Gekies En Versorg Deur Antjie Krog*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2004. Print.
- Kruger, Loren. *The Drama of South Africa: Plays, Pageants and Publics since 1910*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- . *The National Stage: Theatre and Cultural Legitimation in England, France, and America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Print.

- Kumar, Malreddy Pavan. '(An)other Way of Being Human: "indigenous" Alternative(s) to Postcolonial Humanism'. *Third World Quarterly* 32.9 (2011): 1557–1572. Print.
- Kuper, Adam. 'The Return of the Native.' *Current Anthropology* 44.3 (2003): 389–402. Print.
- Kurin, Richard. 'Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: A Critical Appraisal.' *Museum International* 56.1-2 (2004): 66–77. Print.
- Lacombe, H. *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Print.
- Larham, Peter. *Black Theater, Dance, and Ritual in South Africa*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985. Print.
- Levi, Jerome M, and Biorn Maybury-Lewis. 'Becoming Indigenous : Identity and Heterogeneity in a Global Movement.' *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Development*. World bank, 2010. 73–117. Print.
- Lewis, Megan. 'Power Plays in the Cradle of Humankind.' *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 35.3 (2013): 55–60. Print.
- Lewis-Williams, J. D. 'From Illustration to Social Intervention: Three Nineteenth-Century | Xam Myths and Their Implications for Understanding San Rock Art.' *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 23.2 (2013): 241–62. Print.
- Marschke, Melissa, David Szablowski, and Peter Vandergeest. 'Engaging Indigeneity in Development Policy.' *Development Policy Review* 26.4 (2008): 483–500. Print.
- Martin, Julia. 'Springbok , Farmers , Places and Shards: Reading and Writing the Bleek-Lloyd Archive.' *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 19.1 (2007): 137–152. Print.
- Mbembe, Achille. 'African Modes of Self-Writing.' *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 239–273.

- Print.
- . *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Print.
- McClary, Susan. *Georges Bizet: Carmen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Print.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. C. Smith. London: Routledge, 1976. Print.
- Meskell, Lynn, and Colette Scheermeyer. 'Heritage as Therapy: Set Pieces from the New South Africa.' *Journal of Material Culture* 13.2 (2008): 153–173. Print.
- Morrell, Robert. *Changing Men in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001. Print.
- Moyo, Arifani. *Deconstructing the Native/Imagining the Post-Native: Race, Culture and Postmodern Conditions in Brett Bailey's 'plays of Miracle and Wonder'*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010. Print.
- Mudimbe, Valentin Y. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988. Print.
- Mueller, Gustav E. 'The Hegel Legend of "Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis".' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19.3 (1958): 411–414. Print.
- Mukundi, G Wachira. *South Africa: Constitutional, Legislative and Administrative Provisions Concerning Indigenous Peoples*. Geneva: N.p., 2009. Print.
- Neocosmos, Michael. *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners': Explaining Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), 2006. Print.

- . 'The Politics of Fear and the Fear of Politics: Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa.' *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 43.6 (2008): 586–594. Print.
- OAU. *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*. Banjul: Organization of African Unity, 1986. Print.
- Orkin, Martin. *Drama and the South African State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991. Print.
- Ortiz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint*. Trans. Harriet de Onís. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.
- Pelican, Michaela. 'Complexities of Indigeneity and Autochthony: An African Example.' *American Ethnologist* 36.1 (2009): 52–65. Print.
- Pope Paul II, John. 'Dominum Et Vivificantem: On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World.' *Encyclicals*. Vatican Publishing House, 18 May 1986. Web. 2 Feb. 2016.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 'Transculturation and Autoethnography: Peru, 1615/1980.' *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*. Ed. F. Barker, P. Hulme, and M. Iversen. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994. Print.
- Rassool, Ciraj. 'The Rise of Heritage and the Reconstitution of History in South Africa.' *Kronos* 26 (2000): 1–21. Print.
- Rassool, Ciraj, and Leslie Witz. 'South Africa: A World in One Country.' *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 36.143 (1996): 335–371. Print.
- 'Richard Loring - African Footprint.' N.p., 2009. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- 'Richard Loring - History.' N.p., 2009. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Ritter, Harry. *Dictionary of Concepts in History*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986. Print.
- Roos, Hilde. 'Opera Production in the Western Cape: Strategies in Search of Indigenization.'

- Stellenbosch University, 2010. Print.
- Ross, Robert. 'Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples by Alan Barnard; The Bushman Myth : The Making of a Namibian Underclass by Robert J. Gordon.' *African Affairs* 92.368 (1993): 468–470. Print.
- RUTV. 'Mies Julie.' *RUTV Journalism Rhodes University*. N.p., 4 July 2012. Television.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin, 1995. Print.
- . *The Word, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983. Print.
- Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985. Print.
- Scheffler, Harold W. 'Filiation and Affiliation.' *Man* 20.1 (1985): 1–21. Print.
- . 'The Descent of Rights and the Descent of Persons.' *American Anthropologist* 88.2 (1986): 339–350. Print.
- Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Sichel, Adrienne. 'Footprints into the Future.' *Pretoria News* 25 May 2010: 4. Print.
- Sizemore-Barber, April. 'South Africa's National Arts Festival (review).' *Theatre Journal* 65.2 (2013): 261–264. Print.
- Skotnes, Pippa. "'Civilised Off the Face of the Earth": Museum Display and the Silencing of the /Xam'. *Poetics Today* 22.2 (2001): 299–321. Print.
- Solomon, Anne. 'Broken Strings: Interdisciplinarity and /Xam Oral Literature.' *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* 23.1 (2009): 26–41. Print.
- . 'Writing San Histories: The /Xam and "Shamanism" Revisited'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37.1 (2011): 99–117. Print.
- Stachelin, Irene. 'The San Culture and Education Centre !Khwa Ttu: A Process of Heritage

- Restitution.’ *Senri Ethnological Studies* 70 (2006): 163–169. Print.
- Sucato, Steve. “‘Footprint’ Has Its High Points’. *Buffalo News* 27 Feb. 2008: C7. Print.
- Sylvain, Renée. “‘Land, Water, and Truth’: San Identity and Global Indigenism’. *American Anthropologist* 104.4 (2002): 1074–1085. Print.
- Tauli-Corpuz, Victoria. ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Self-Determined Development: Challenges and Trajectories.’ *Toward and Alternative Development Paradigm: Indigenous People’s Self-Determined Development*. Ed. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Leah Enkiwe-Abayao, and Raymond de Chavez. Baguio City: Tebtebba Foundation, 2010. 1–78. Print.
- UN. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. N.p., 2007. Print.
- UNESCO. *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Paris: N.p., 2003. Print.
- . ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage Domains.’ : n. pag. Print.
- UNPFII. ‘Who Are Indigenous Peoples? (fact Sheet).’ : n. pag. Print.
- Urry, John. *Globalising the Tourist Gaze*. Lancaster, United Kingdom: Department of Sociology at Lancaster University, 2003. Print.
- . *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publications, 1990. Print.
- van Coller, HP, and BJ Odendaal. ‘Antjie Krog’s Role as Translator: A Case Study of Strategic Positioning in the Current South African Literary Poly-System.’ *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 19.2 (2007): 94–122. Print.
- van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- van Vuuren, Helize. ‘Antjie Krog: Towards a Syncretic Identity.’ *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 21.1-2 (2009): 218–237. Print.
- . ‘Enlarging the Stature of the /Xam.’ *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern*

- Africa* 8.1 (2003): 78–79. Print.
- Viljoen, Susanna Isobella. ‘The Articulation of Context and Identity in U-Carmen eKhayelitsha.’ North-West University Potchefstroom, 2012. Print.
- Wadley, Lyn, Bonny Williamson, and Marlize Lombard. ‘Ochre in Hafting in Middle Stone Age Southern Africa: A Practical Role.’ *Method* (2003): 661–675. Print.
- Walker, Susan. ‘African Footprint: A Multidisciplinary Touring Show from South Africa Is Backed by a Powerful Message of Unity: That Culture Is a Weapon of Change.’ *The Toronto Star* 7 Feb. 2008: E01. Print.
- Weedon, Chris. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1987. Print.
- ‘Welcome to African Footprint.’ N.p., 2010. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Wessels, Michael. ‘A Story of a /Xam Bushman Narrative.’ *Journal of Literary Studies* 29.3 (2013): 1–22. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
- . ‘Antjie Krog, Stephen Watson and the Metaphysics of Presence.’ *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 19.2 (2007): 24–48. Print.
- . ‘New Directions in /Xam Studies: Some of the Implications of Andrew Bank’s Bushmen in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman Folklore.’ *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* 22.1 (2008): 69–82. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
- . ‘Religion and the Interpretation of the /Xam Narratives.’ *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa* 20.2 (2008): 44–66. Print.
- Witz, Leslie, Ciraj Rassool, and Gary Minkley. ‘Repackaging the Past for South African Tourism.’ *Daedalus* 130.1 (2012): 277–296. Print.
- Wylie, Dan. ‘//Kabbo’s Challenge: Transculturation and the Question of a South African

- Ecocriticism.' *Journal of Literary Studies* 23.3 (2007): 252–270. Print.
- Xing, Guang. 'Early Buddhist and Confucian Concepts of Filial Piety: A Comparative Study.' *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 4 (2013): 8–46. Print.
- Young, Robert. J. C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Zwar, Adam. 'Blazing an African Trail.' *Sunday Herald Sun* 4 May 2003: 107. Print.