

Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl Ann Michael

Re-imagining South African Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies has emerged in the last few decades as a key contender in the cultural field. South African-based critic Robert Thornton defines Cultural Studies as, amongst other things, the study of areas of culture largely ignored by other disciplines, with a frequent focus on transient rather than transcendental form. For other theorists, like Simon During, Cultural Studies is an academic site for marginal or minority discourses and offers a new emphasis on 'everyday life'.¹ In South Africa Cultural Studies has emerged largely under the rubric of 'inclusiveness', reflecting an agenda to incorporate that which has been marginalised. Debates have frequently been fuelled by a desire to rethink the canon, its boundaries and functions – particularly in a context where the cultural production of the majority paradoxically constituted 'the marginalised'. Underpinning this shift was the introduction of the options system at the end of the 1970s in some university departments.² At this point, film studies, for example, and the increasing use of local texts, began to appear in the syllabi of literature and other Humanities departments. Cultural Studies seemed to further enable interdisciplinary studies in which scholars were increasingly engaging.

Debates about the efficacy of Cultural Studies have been vociferous, in South Africa as elsewhere. An added edge to these debates has come from a wariness about 'culturalist' paradigms so effectively employed by the apartheid state, and the potentially debilitating split, at least in the 1980s, between the impetus towards 'democratising culture' and the racial exclusivity of South Africa's universities.³ In the 1996 publication, *Transgressing Boundaries: New Directions in the Study of Culture in Africa*, Brenda Cooper, one of the editors, argues for a reconstituted Marxism, and a rejection of identity politics, 'precariously positioned within the postmodern labyrinth of innate difference'.⁴ The book reveals a concern with institutional uncertainties, with whose domain culture really is and a reticence to name what an 'African cultural studies' might be. Others have questioned the 'critical literacy' which Cultural Studies offers, citing an indifference to questions of aesthetics and a growing disregard for history as amongst its failings.⁵ Many argue, though, that Cultural Studies enables students to develop distinct critical approaches to cultural texts while taking up mobile posts between the disciplines.⁶ For David Coplan, one of the most skilled practitioners of a contemporary Cultural Studies, it is precisely what he sees as an 'instability' at the heart of Cultural Studies which makes it so productive – which enables him to ask questions which would oth-

erwise remain hidden.⁷ Others, again, such as Jane Starfield and Michael Gardiner at the Vista Soweto Cultural Studies Project, have focussed on the non-university, non-textual dimensions of Cultural Studies, placing emphasis less on interdisciplinarity and more on collaboration with those working in a range of public spheres. The latter use a Cultural Studies perspective to open up a discourse about publics and new intellectual spaces.

The move in South African universities towards programmes-based education (also known as outcomes-based education) and away from an immersion in single disciplines has provided a new visibility for Cultural Studies. This form of education system is seen to be evolving in response to new forms of knowledge and the tailoring of learning skills to the demands of the job market.⁸ As a subdiscipline which has never been an archive of the kind that allows disciplinary closure, Cultural Studies seems to lend itself to the opening up of traditional disciplines which programmes-based education depends on. By extension of this, it is also seen to accommodate a more skills based approach – courses in heritage or museum studies, or in publishing skills. The attendant danger for a fledgling South African Cultural Studies is that such courses might become virtually emptied of intellectual content.

If the turn to Cultural Studies has related in part to new pedagogies of learning, it has also emerged alongside wider transformations of public intellectual life. A new dispersal of intellectual resources, and a fluidity between what used to be distinct spheres of intellectual activity has emerged following the transition to democracy in the 1990s. One example is the increasingly fluid space between the print media and the university classroom. Journalism has broadened its base beyond investigative reporting into a more fluid space of cultural commentary.⁹ In the work of Mark Gevisser, for instance, the weekly profile was used as a genre which could capture a complexity of access to identity, a more acute psychological profile than the genre of investigative journalism affords. Gevisser's journalism, significantly, subsequently appeared in the form of a book, *Portraits of Power*, in the introduction to which Gevisser writes that the craft of producing these portraits has to do with a form of writing beyond a form of commentary 'where nothing is left to percolate the imagination'.¹⁰

There has been an emerging call, too, for the safeguarding and development of public intellectual discussion from a reformulated academic institutional base. The idea is that not only those engaged with an emergent Cultural Studies but with a transforming Social Sciences and Humanities in general, contribute to the building of a culture of democracy in the new nation. Carolyn Hamilton, Director of the Wits Graduate School for the Humanities, launching amongst others a new programme in 'Culture Studies', has noted the need for just such a public function, given a country in which 'terms masquerading as analytic categories frequently serve as racially charged labels and in which caricatures and categorisations in cultural debate lead to a defensive retreat from public intel-

lectual engagement'.¹¹ Ran Greenstein has commented on the 'NGOisation' of intellectual activity and practice, arguing that in the late 1980s, NGOs (non-government organisations) began to offer a different perspective on research, seeing their task as filling the gap that was created by 'the inability of academics to conduct empirical research attuned to current popular and political concerns'. In the 1990s, he argues, funds in the NGO sector were redirected from analysis to implementation, and a brain drain of activists and researchers into government and private sector consultancies began.¹² These intellectual and institutional shifts, though they carry specific South African inflections, relate, too, to worldwide challenges to Enlightenment-based forms of knowledge production. In South Africa, the emergence of Internet culture as a major new public intellectual space has coincided with the political transition to democracy. Arjun Appadurai has recently commented on the impact of new technologies on everyday social life and on the imagination itself.¹³ He shows that research is a practice of the imagination and that we need to rethink the meaning of research styles and networks appropriate to this new mobility.¹⁴ His work invites an investigation of the cultural indices that shape our sense of the 'idea'.

This, then, is the intellectual context in which Cultural Studies has emerged in South Africa. It is clear that while Cultural Studies has indeed opened up new areas of study in the South African academy – a focus on marginalised cultural identities and on everyday life – it has done so within certain theoretical constraints. At least three major assumptions have dominated: the over-determination of the political, the inflation of resistance and the inflections given to race as a determinant of identity. We examine these in more detail here, and then move to suggest ways in which contemporary Cultural Studies can open itself to new directions.

Cultural theorists of the last few decades in South Africa have imagined culture-making as a form of 'cultural work' which has had an explicit moral and political agenda and was intimately concerned with the struggle against apartheid. Cultural workers were to replace the notion of the individual artist, which was treated, in a context of perceived social crisis, with suspicion. The work of liberation was seen as something to be taken up by communities and their representatives. These were political and often racialised communities. Culture making, despite its variety and its complexity, became largely instrumentalist and based predominantly on a moral economy. Cultural production was imagined, then, according to ascriptions of community, or a sense of solidarity, or a search for 'wholeness' in the face of 'fracture'. Emphasis was given to shared, or representative, experience.¹⁵ Echoing Habermas, the 'I' became an 'I' only among a 'we' in a community of speech and action.¹⁶ Thus the idea of an individual self came to be read narrowly as alienation from community.¹⁷

Readings confined to the paradigm of politics tended to rely on the *inflation of resistance*. Resistance, as Barber notes of elsewhere in Africa, has been tied

to a concept of 'the people' which has been used as a moral political category, or even more, as the ultimate site of agency and authorship, and has shaped the space of the 'popular'.¹⁸ Ndebele used the notion of 'the ordinary' to argue that the greater part of popular urban experience has been lost to written expression between a political monopoly of writing at the one extreme and the instrumentalisation of reading on the other. His calls for valorisations of popular knowledge had affinities with the 'history from below' project, both relying on a paradigm of resistance. Minckley and Rassool, in a paper which tries to unravel constructions of resistance at the core of South African historiography, argue that social history, or 'history from below' relied on a notion of individual memory, sourced through 'resistance voices', recollected 'the memory of a people' and implied an unstated collective memory of resistance.¹⁹ An important element of the resistance paradigm in cultural study across a range of disciplines in the 1980s and 1990s, then, was the use of the surrogate voice. While we may see this as a ventriloquism of speaking for the other, such authors/editors/scribes have seen themselves as offering enabling points of access for marginalised voices to be heard. The latter have attempted to play down their presence, reflecting a romance of authenticity in which intellectuals begin to consider any intervention or mediation a betrayal of the subaltern consciousness or voice. This became a feature of the powerful tradition on collaborative autobiography in South Africa. 'Pleasure', a category largely laid aside in cultural theorising in the 1980s, is seen to be recuperable, in the 1990s, only when read as a form of resistance: a point which we return below.

The third key feature of these ways of imagining to which we want to draw attention is the privileging of race as the central determinant of identity – and the particular inflections that have been given to it. While no-one could deny the overwhelming presence of race as the master signifier of the South African apartheid experience, it is also true that particular repertoires have dominated the way in which race has been thought about. If 'race' itself is a genetic fallacy, how does it continue to dominate imaginings of identity? Because of an over-reductive political discourse, cultural theorising has seldom been sufficiently able to disentangle the different strands of this master signifier, to find the inflections which begin to offer unique answers from the South African context about *how race works*. This is in part because the emphasis has been on racism more than on race: and racism, correctly, is tied to condemnation. But where race is equated with racism, and treated as a leveling mechanism for political agency, it forecloses a complex theorising. It is significant, too, that there has been a tendency to think of racism in terms of its consequences for the victim, while much less analysis has been done on the effect of racist inflection on the perpetrator. A serious intellectual effort to understand how whiteness in South Africa has been imagined and practiced is also needed.

Although a great deal of work has eloquently denounced racism's material and political forms, then, there has been far less work attempting to explain the

psychoanalysis of race: approached as an essentially historical construction, the complicated relationship between subjects and their symbolic structures has been undertheorised.²⁰ Moreover, while race has been a vector of segregation, especially in terms of macro spatial arrangements and judicial dispositions, it is also clear that in everyday life there have been spaces – some public, others private, domestic – in which, if not intimacy, a close proximity of ‘oppressor’ and ‘oppressed’ developed: this was true not only of the house, but of the prison, for instance – as chapters in our forthcoming book show.²¹ The ambiguities of ‘being together’ and the rituals of interaction, the shared epistemologies that developed, have hardly yet been opened to critical scrutiny in South Africa.

Finally, the study of class and culture has taken on particular inflections in South Africa, inflections which relate in various ways to each of the categories discussed above. Emphasis has been oriented towards the working class, with much fewer studies on peasant and rural culture, and the ways in which local logics have survived and even domesticated certain parameters of capitalist domination.²² One could see this emphasis in part as a result of a borrowed and Anglocentric paradigm, relying on the work of E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams.²³ The result of this borrowing has been that class analyses have seldom been able to adequately deal with phenomena such as witchcraft, traditional authority (and the place given to it in the new South African government structures) and even the ethnic nationalism of a movement like Inkatha.²⁴ Moreover, class analysis has tended to be tied to market rationalities, the constraints of which we can see not only when we look at work done on ‘real economies’ elsewhere in Africa, but for cultural analysis in general.²⁵ Thus while class remains one important register of analysis in cultural analysis, constraining theoretical orthodoxies need to be overturned and contemporary usages re-imagined.

Above we have mapped out some of the major prevailing assumptions behind cultural theorising. In pointing to the limitations of particular paradigms of community, resistance and race, we argue less for erasure than for a re-imagining.²⁶ What kinds of re-imaginings, then, *are* open to a reformulated and contemporary Cultural Studies? We suggest some of these below.

Unfixing identity

South African culture has frequently and understandably been analysed in relation to the ideology of segregation. It has frequently been analysed, that is, according to figurations of apartness, isolation and separation. This was particularly true of the 1980s, although many of these figurations continue in cultural studies done in the 1990s. Nevertheless the 1990s has also been a period of decompression in which a greater range of voices have emerged. Connectivities, which tended to be end-stopped by invocations of segregation, have found new expression. If we see these connectivities, hybridities, intima-

cies – imbrications of identities formerly seen and lived as separate – emerging, however, we see, also, that complex configurations, at least at the level of identity, *were always there*. Despite apartheid, we can now see, a great many forms of continuity and intimacy managed, if not to flourish, then at least to exist and develop. Robert Shell, in his 1994 book *Children of Bondage*, a history of slave society at the Cape, argues that it is time to examine these ‘intimacies’. Shell writes:

Slave ancestors injected diversity and challenge into an oppressive settler culture, bending and finally changing it, creolising into a new culture. But it is toward this amalgam of human relationships, however difficult it may seem, that the historian must force readers to focus their thoughts. Another generation might find the trace elements, no matter how small, of a single domestic creole culture, within the other wise starkly stratified and bifurcated slave society of early Africa.²⁷

Shell goes on to argue that if we are to start writing this history of ‘creolisation’, a move will have to be made away from thinking in terms of frontiers and into the realm of the intimate. Whereas most studies – and there have been few – which have focused on slavery and the social world of the seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Cape colony have ‘begun at the frontier and stayed there’, Cape Slavery, he shows, has another legacy: ‘Slavery brought different people together, not across the sights of a gun, as on the frontier, but in the setting of a home. Each slave was exposed to each owner and each settler to each slave on a very intimate footing. There was, in fact, a common reciprocal legacy...’²⁸ Post-colonial readings of culture have tended to focus on difference – but more complex studies of affinities and how they are made are now needed, particularly in South Africa.

The theoretical possibilities of the term creolisation need to be drawn on not in a sense of erasure – an erasing of difference – but to underwrite a complex process of making connections. While it may be useful and important to read difference and resistance into a set of cultural configurations, it is equally important to read the resonances of something that is beyond either of these. Cultural Studies, with its focus on popular culture and on the everyday can provide key work in this area. In our forthcoming book *Openings* (Oxford University Press, 2000), Denis-Constant Martin discusses how the body adorned and performed in carnival has signified a ‘mestiza modernity’ quite contrary to the ‘modernity’ which the apartheid nation-state attempted to generate.²⁹ Zimitri Erasmus writes about the cultural practices of hairstyling, looking at ways in which black hair in particular has become entangled in debates about naturalness, authenticity and aspiration.³⁰ She suggests that black hairstyling might offer more complex readings if read as acts of creolisation. Her work invites us to begin reading hair cultures in registers other than race; the globalisation of hairstyles and their local interpretations compel, too, new readings of how cultural meanings are made.

Reclaiming the sub-cultural

In terms of the dominant analytical focus on segregation, separation and difference outlined above, it has followed that cultural forms which might have been seen as creole or hybridised have frequently been understood in other terms or categories, such as the 'subcultural'. In other words, where cultural forms have given expression to identities inconsistent with dominant political interests, they have tended to be relegated to the margins of what is designated as mainstream South African culture. A reading of a popular cultural form such as kwaito music (forthcoming in a chapter by Simon Stephens in *Openings*³¹), which uses a bricolage of the local and the global and works beyond categories of race and resistance, for example, is frequently designated as subcultural rather as a creolised form. This is facilitated by relegating it to 'youth culture', itself seen as marginal and transient. Two sets of constraints have been at work, then, in maintaining hardline divisions between 'subcultural' and 'mainstream' cultural forms: an engagement with a version of identity politics, both in the 1980s and in the 1990s, in which affirming an identity veers dangerously towards a kind of fixing; and the problem of thinking oppositionally – as if, somewhere, despite the adoption of a language of fluidity, divisions, based on an authentic difference, remain. More work is now needed on cultural production which upsets cultural hierarchies, relations between cultural margins and cultural centres, and fixed notions of contemporary South African identity.

Reading pleasure

In a context of intellectual work so strongly shaped by the apartheid period and the dominant readings to which it gave rise, 'pleasure', as we saw above, is a category that has been largely laid aside in South African cultural theorising until now. For the most part, 'pleasure' has been ignored in favour of critical work on racial oppression, and tied to morally charged debates about racial privilege. Where there has begun to be a focus on pleasure, it has been closely linked to politics: pleasure is frequently read as 'resistance'. In Cultural Studies, pleasure tends to be read if not as resistance then as escape – which is recuperated as resistance. Perhaps this is because resistance is seen as offering the possibility of theorising. Pleasure as an end in itself is seldom seen as theorisable. Why this might be so and how we could think about pleasure in excess of resistance is a question for cultural Studies.

To take one example, the city has been under-theorised in studies of South African culture. Urban spaces have been particularly traumatic for black people – though there have always been those parts which could be claimed. In film, for instance, only very selective readings of the city have been offered: it is only in post-apartheid South Africa that the city is seen to have anything to offer black people that is not oppressive. Space in the South African city has tended to be seen in terms of segregation, yet it can also be seen as a space of

creolisation. New work which disturbs readings of South African cities as places solely of surveillance and closure is beginning to emerge and in *Openings*, we build on this, opening the city to new and further areas of enquiry. One chapter, by Abdoumalig Simone, looks at the elliptical courses of immigrant cultures in the South African city, where the need to survive and the need to imagine shape the spaces of the city in new ways.³² Such work begins to open the possibilities of reading cities like Durban and Johannesburg, with their involuted arcades and surprising recesses, in terms of creolised practises and imaginations. These cities, which have always been regional metropoli, become vivid examples of open, rather than closed, spaces; of places which produce, and have always produced, pleasure as well as trauma.

Rewriting citizenship

Work is now required on new discourses of citizenship in South Africa. The work of Jane Starfield and Michael Gardiner (forthcoming in *Openings*)³³, which we referred to above, analyses residents' responses to local government practices in Soweto. Starfield and Gardiner argue for the significance of the local, given the way in which apartheid was an incursion into peoples' daily lives, at a local level. Cultures of specific services (water, electricity and others) and of officialdom are examined in a context in which Soweto residents, previously having developed strong structures of resistance and self-reliance during the struggle against apartheid – to the point of 'ungovernability' – are now being asked to participate in local government. What is interesting about such work is that it marks the difficulty of the shift from a culture of resistance to a culture of ownership, a culture built at the margins to one that is now at the centre, and from a paradigm of opposition to one of construction of what is now one's own. Significantly, everyday practices of being a citizen in Soweto are split off from the national identity – a larger, more metaphoric notion of identity. Thus the possibility emerges of supporting national government while resisting local government. Critical analyses often do not make a distinction between notions of nationhood and citizenship: citizenship is read as a unifying category, embodying a belonging to a national space, framed within the state, with a set of attendant duties and responsibilities. The work of the Vista Soweto Cultural Studies project begins to show, however, the need to theorise citizenship in multiple registers: where it may involve notions of belonging to a nation, it may also be about contesting the modalities through which the nation operates. The repertoires of citizenship may be plural, operating across a multiplicity of spheres, we begin to see, and nor is there necessarily a coherence between these different spheres – they may contradict each other. Cultural Studies work can now build on these fledgling studies, as a way of beginning to profile emergent discourses on citizenship in South Africa.

Globalisation

Critics like Robert Thornton have argued that Cultural Studies privileges the transient, drawing on the popular cultural archives that it does, rather than the transcendental.³⁴ Thus oppositional focus, though, may now need to be rethought. Thornton suggests that while the data of cultural studies is often transient and highly local, its perception of the hidden relations of power are often more generally illuminating of global modernity. But is global culture and our understanding of it, all about the transient – or is it about commodified universals? Isn't it rather the case that even the transient is offered as universal? This is only one of a series of questions which Cultural Studies must now scrutinise. A second set of questions, related to the above, emerges when we look at the rise of Internet culture in South Africa. The digital world takes us into a space which may offer a new politics, a new public sphere – or may be a remapping of old divisions. It is a space where the idea of the border comes under interrogation – or does it? Digital technology would also seem to *invite* borders, as *display*: cultural diversity is staged; to speak to the world is already to represent oneself as South African. Appadurai argues that the dual impact of the internet and of increased migration globally have transformed imaginative possibilities. He sees a productive new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities and the creation of diasporic public spheres. This 'instability', though, might lead to conservative readings and makings of identity which serve to foreclose the new imaginaries that are offered in the global sphere.³⁵

Post-apartheid culture and globalisation intersect in other potentially interesting ways. In work forthcoming in *Openings*, Oren Kaplan considers what it means to live at the periphery of powerful and encroaching centres.³⁶ In a study of the work of performance artists Samson Mudzungu, he argues that tradition is not used so much to emphasise cultural difference and separation from the metropole but rather a deep connectedness of place. Instead of focussing on disconnectedness and comparison, cultural study, Kaplan argues, needs to think through questions of connectedness and intimacy. In the philosophical reorientation he urges, assumptions underlying relativism must be queried and it is the mutual intelligibility of cultural forms rather than irreducible difference that needs to be researched in a post-apartheid, increasingly global 'art world'.

We have now to build on the insights above. What are the new kinds of material realities and imaginative configurations to which the global is giving rise? How do new configurations in the world of trade, new mobilities on a range of levels, new access to other worlds, affect the ways in which people produce cultural artefacts? To what contemporary fantasies is the global giving rise? What are the consequences for cultural production of the dispersal of the archive, once a vital part of national patrimonies? What is the nature of the new instability that is a consequence of the connection between global media, large scale

movements of people and the contestation of interests and identities on a local scale? This is work that has barely begun.

Conclusion

Above we have considered some of the theoretical assumptions which have shaped South African Cultural Studies – and at some of the possibilities which seem to us to be open to it now. In so doing, we leave open the question of whether Cultural Studies is indeed a useful ongoing intellectual frame for the study of contemporary culture. There is much about it that would seem useful, yet it may not find the internal coherence to meet theoretical and institutional which it faces. ‘Interdisciplinarity’ is neither a simple matter nor a special claim of Cultural Studies any longer.³⁷ Where Cultural Studies can offer a destabilisation of older knowledges – such as those we have tried to open up to scrutiny above – a destabilisation married to institutional responsibility and theoretical coherence; where it can offer a focus on disciplinary histories and ethnographies; and where it can offer a productive dialogic relationship and new engagement with public intellectual life – it would seem to have a long term role in the South African academy. But can it? What is needed, and what we have tried to begin to generate in our forthcoming study, is to exit a set of narrow readings of South African culture. We need to think about intimacies and connectivities, everyday life and conceptualisations of the human in ways that suggest a more open theorising. It is significant that such terms have already begun to re-enter cultural vocabularies in South Africa.³⁸ Rather than being spoken of in terms of universals, these terms have been invigorated by a focus on the contingent, the local – in addition to their links to the global. To read South Africa as an open space is to engage with multiple lines of connection, the intricacies of which require new work. The very notion of creolisation which we have invoked here relies on a conception of intimacy and connectedness. What is demanded, then, is a far more intricate reading of culture, and this intricacy requires that we be vigilant about the conceptual frameworks which we adopt.

Notes

1. See Simon During, ‘Introduction’, *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Routledge, London and New York, 1993.
2. Interview with Lesley Marx, UCT, July 99. The options system allows students to choose from a range of courses which reflect the widely divergent research interests of staff.
3. See Matthew Shum, ‘Culture and the Institution’, *Scrutiny* 2, vol.2, no.1, 1997.
4. *Transgressing Boundaries: New Directions in the Study of Culture in Africa*, B. Cooper and A. Steyn, eds., University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town, 1996, p.165.
5. See Tony Parr, ‘Saving Literature’, *Scrutiny* 2, vol.1, no.1/2, 1996.

6. See Margaret Daymond, 'Contexts for 'Literature': On 'Literary' and 'Cultural' Studies in an English Department Syllabus', *Scrutiny* 2, vol.1, no. 1/2, 1996.
7. David Coplan, *In the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994. In the preface to his book, Coplan writes: 'Gone are the empiricist (mis) representations of sociology, the unwarranted authority of synthesizing positivist anthropology. I don't make it easy for readers with a particular disciplinary interest to pick out what they think they're looking for. I don't tell you where I'm going or where I've been'. (p.xix).
8. See W. Kilfoil, 'The Comfort Zone Stops Here: OBE, THE NQF and Higher Education' *Scrutiny* 2, vol.4, no.1, 1999, pp.3 ff
9. Examples are John Matshikiza and Mark Gevisser (*Mail and Guardian*); and Darryl Accone (*Sunday Independent*).
10. M.Gevisser, *Portraits of Power: Profiles in a Changing South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1996, p. xvi.
11. C. Hamilton, 'Safeguarding and Developing a Space for Reasoned Debate', *Sunday Times*, July 26, 1998.
12. R. Greenstein, 'The Function of Knowledge: Social Research and Political Transformation in South Africa', International Symposium on Globalisation and Social Sciences in Africa, 14-18 September, University of the Witwatersrand, 1998.
13. A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996.
14. A. Appadurai, 'Globalisation and the Research Imagination', International Symposium on Globalisation and Social Sciences in Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 14-18 September 1998.
15. Thus Coplan, in his excellent and otherwise nuanced study *In the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants*, states his focus to be on 'the shared experiences, perceptions, representations and behaviors of these performers and audiences...' and insists: 'If culture were not by practice as well as definition shared, there would be nothing of value to say about it, except to discuss why people think, speak and act as if it were something they make together'. In feminist studies of women writers, ascriptions of wholeness are often made, even where the texts speak differently, and an outdated idea of oral literature as 'communal', implying an unchanging quality has persisted. Isabel Hofmeyr in particular has read the latter in different registers.
16. J. Habermas, 'Moral Development and Ego Identity', in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, transl. and introd. T. McCarthy, Beacon, Boston, 1979, pp. 93 ff.
17. See S.Nuttall and C. Michael 'Autobiographical Acts', forthcoming in *Openings*, S. Nuttall and C. Michael, eds. Oxford University Press, 2000 for a fuller discussion.
18. K Barber, ed., *Readings in African Popular Culture*, James Currey, Oxford, 1997.
19. G. Minckley and C. Rassool, 'Orality, Memory, and Social History in South Africa' in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, eds. S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1998, p.92.

20. For an earlier discussion, see Wulf Sachs, *Black Hamlet*, introduced by Saul Dubow and Jacqueline Rose, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 1996. For contemporary debates, though not specifically in the South African context, see *The Psychoanalysis of Race*, C. Lane, ed., Columbia University Press, New York, 1998.
21. *Openings*, S. Nuttall and C. Michael, eds, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 2000.
22. Although a great deal of work has been done on rural societies by South African scholars like Charles van Onselen and Belinda Bozzoli, such studies have tended to focus on capitalist encroachment into rural societies and on how capitalism has destroyed earlier forms of production and consciousness. For more wide ranging studies of peasant cultures, see T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe*, James Currey, Oxford, 1985; and P. Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Post-Colonial Africa*, Virginia University Press, Charlottesville, 1997.
23. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968 and R. Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961.
24. For work on witchcraft in South Africa, see I. Niehaus, 'Witch-hunting and political legitimacy: continuity and change in Green Valley, Lebowa, 1930-1991' in *Africa*, vol.63, no.4, 1993.
25. See S. Berry, *No Condition Is Permanent*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1993 and J. Guyer, *An African Niche Economy*, International African Institute, London, 1998.
26. For example, Tony Morphet, in an essay on two architects called 'Personal Traits: The Work of Eaton and Biermann in Durban', argues that although they are resisting the conditions of their time, their works carry a resonance beyond a context-bound resistance, speaking of new forms of the human identity. Thus Morphet rewrites ideas of cultural resistance.
27. Robert Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 1994, p.415.
28. Ibid.
29. Denis-Constant Martin, 'Cape Town's Coon Carnival' (forthcoming).
30. Zimitri Erasmus, 'Undoing the Locks: Hair Politics' (forthcoming).
31. Simon Stephens, 'Kwaito' (forthcoming).
32. Abdoumalik Simone, 'Going South: African Immigrants in Johannesburg' (forthcoming).
33. Jane Starfield and Michael Gardiner, 'Citizenship and Modernity in Soweto' (forthcoming).
34. Robert Thornton, 'Finding Culture' (forthcoming).
35. See Martin Hall, 'Digital South Africa', forthcoming in *Openings*.
36. Oren Kaplan, 'Art Worlds: The Performances of Samson Mudzunga' (forthcoming).

37. Belinda Bozzoli, in a paper tracking the history of Sociology and particularly its relationship to the more interdisciplinary African Studies in South Africa, argues that a call for interdisciplinarity will not work because it will block the transformation of Sociology from within: 'insofar as 'African Studies' is already interdisciplinary, such a call will probably reinforce such segregation, because it will inherently reproduce one side of the equation without challenging the other'. ('Sociology and African Studies: A Discussion on Two Segregated Worlds of Knowledge').
38. See for example Tony Morphet's work on architecture in Durban, in which he unblocks earlier readings to rewrite spatial configurations ('Personal traits: The Work of Eaton and Biermann in Durban'); Rob Nixon's *Dreambirds: The Natural History of a Fantasy*, in which he writes of the 'one-mistake' towns of his youth in South Africa, which are seamed through with connectivity – places in this book, and especially South African places, are diasporic spaces where diverse stories are always imminent, even though they may be silenced; Ann Harries' *Manly Pursuits*, which uses elusive registers such as sound to disturb the rigid narratives of colonial history; Carolyn Hamilton's *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*, in which she points to an 'interweaving' which makes it impossible to draw clear distinctions between the versions of the colonised and the colonisers, or even between those subjects of the Zulu king and non-subjects. Her work reveals a blurring of the lines of alterity usually drawn crisply by scholars of the creation of tribalism; and John Noyes, 'The Place of the Human', which focuses on the place of the human in cultural theory, forthcoming in *Openings*.

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Sarah Nuttall
Department of English
University of Stellenbosch
Stellenbosch 7600
South Africa

Cheryl Ann Michael
Department of English
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535
South Africa