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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dilemmas of audience and alienation in the fiction of Olive Schreiner

Dennis, Jane A.

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Name:

Jane A. Dennis

Vol I

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May
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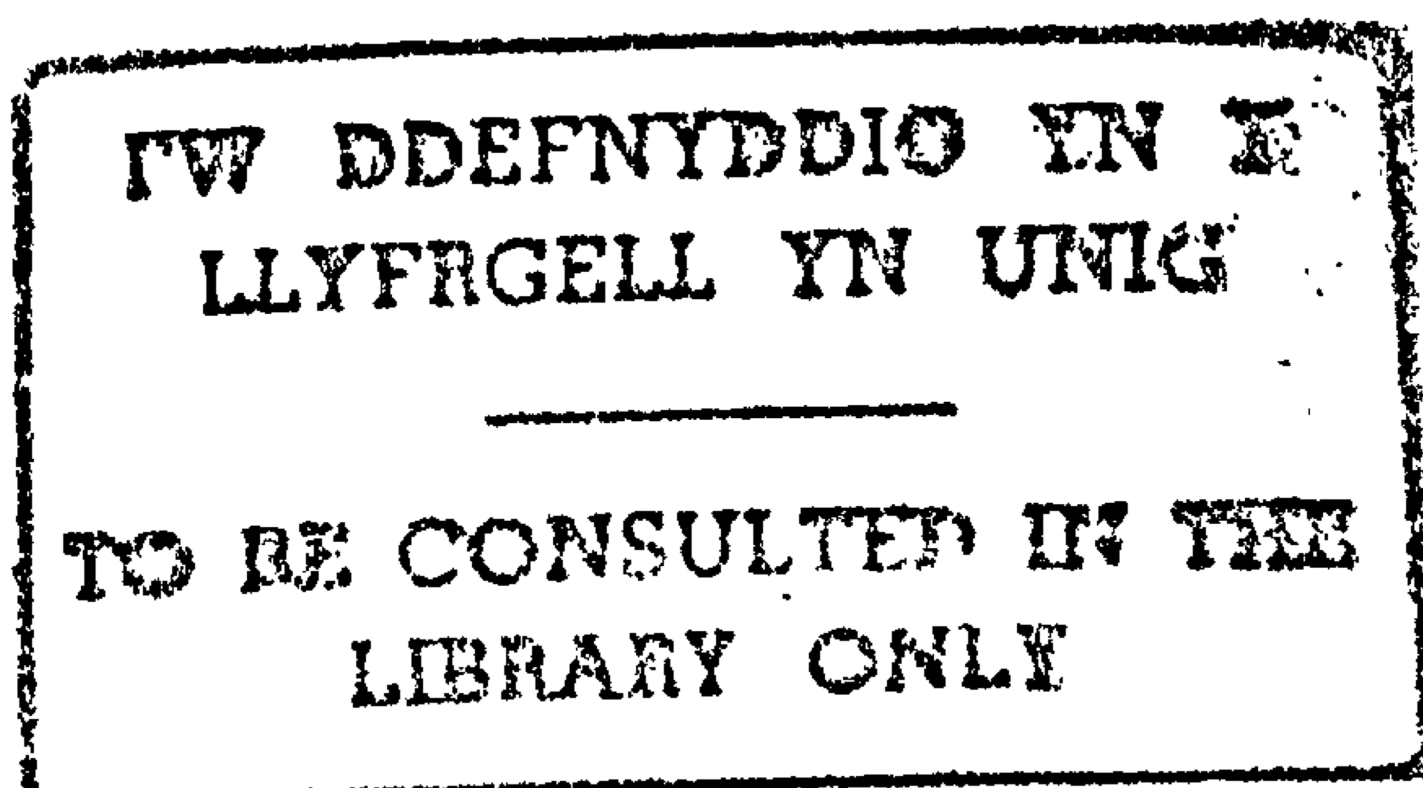
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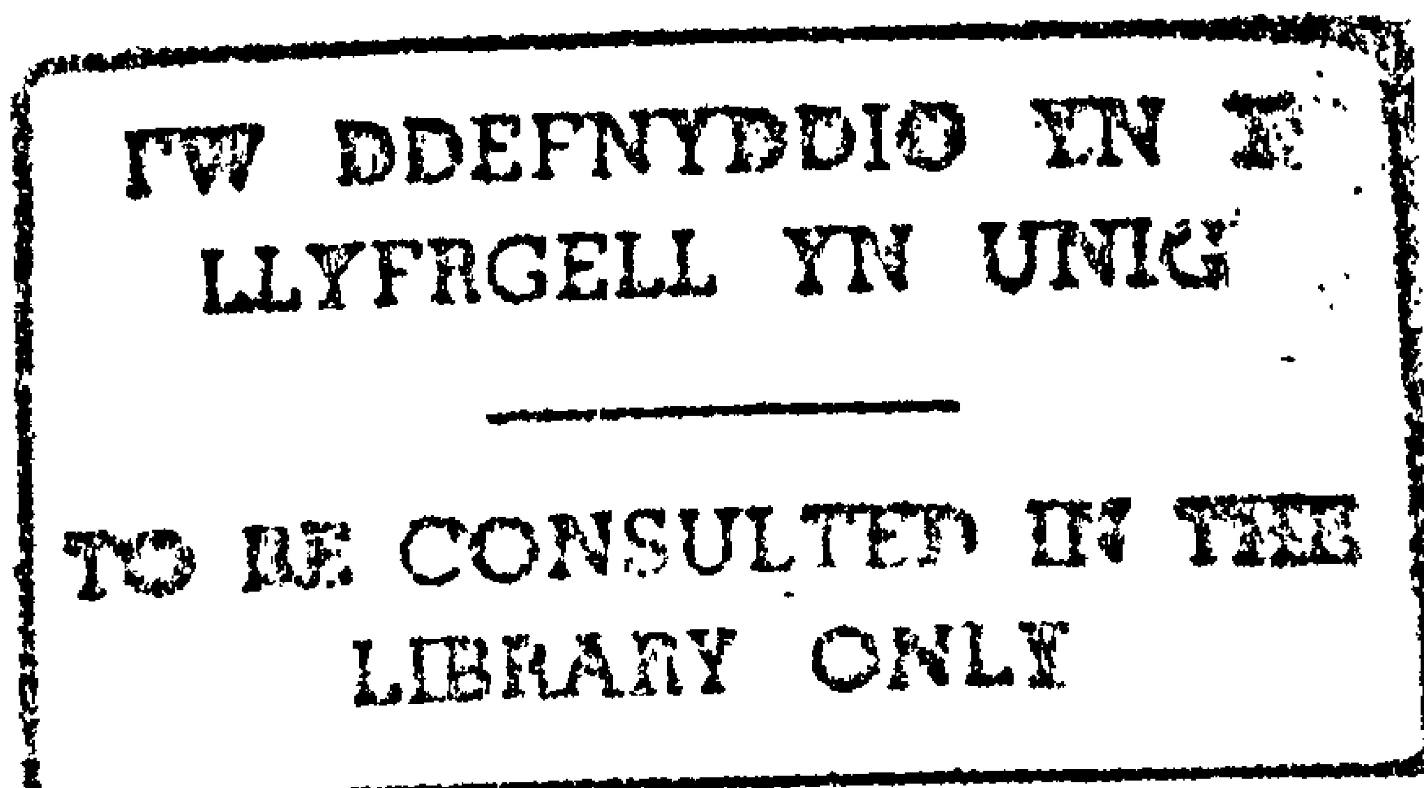

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Works Consulted......

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Hefyd er cof am Will Tyddyn Mawr.
"Fe fydd haul a'r fryn."

Buffel's Kop

(Olive Schreiner's Grave)

In after times when strength or courage fail
May I recall this lonely hour: the gloom
Moving one way: all heaven in the pale
Roaring: and high above the insulted tomb
An eagle anchored on full spread of sail
That from its wings let fall a silver plume.

Roy Campbell

INTRODUCTION

I don't think I shall ever return to this country unless my health gives way again.
Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 5 January 1881, Leliekloof, near Cradock, eastern Cape Colony [1]

I have spent since I came to England the happiest time of my life...
Schreiner to Mrs. C. C. Stanley, 7 May 1881, Eastbourne, England[2]

I have been now almost three years in England but I long always for that old life [in the Karoo].
Schreiner to Havelock Ellis, 16 March 1884, St. Leonards-on-Sea, England[3]

I left Africa without a tear, my real life is here, and if I leave England, though I live for fifty years, still I am dead.
Schreiner to Ellis, 17 November 1884, St. Leonard's-on-Sea[4]

Isn't it strange, I never feel any wish to live in London again... England is dead for me.
Schreiner to Ellis, 5 April 1890, Matjesfontein, Western Cape[5]

If ever I should finish it [From Man to Man] perhaps I'll bring it home to England...
Schreiner to Edward Carpenter, January 31 1911[6]

Goodbye, dear; I wonder if I shall go to England. It will be a ghost revisiting the earth where it once lived.
Schreiner to Ellis, May 20, 1913, De Aar, Eastern Cape[7]

Sometimes I don't seem to be alive at all, but only creeping about in a ghastly dream. No one wants me. I'm [in] no relation with the life or thought in England or Africa or anywhere else.
Schreiner to Cronwright-Schreiner, November, 1914, London[8]

Observations concerning Schreiner's restlessness appear regularly in examinations of both her life and her fiction. Yet it remains necessary to call attention to both her phenomenal quantity of addresses and the sense of displacement they suggest, as well as her ambivalent, ever-changing attitudes toward South Africa, her colonial homeland, and England, the

country which was to adopt (conditionally) both the author and her books. In doing so one need not, as Joseph Bristow complains,

> attribute a sense of incompleteness and abandonment to her life -- a life that made the journey of six thousand miles between continents no less than five times -- ... [and thus cast] a remarkably long and misleading shadow over her large body of work.[9]

A "life" that needed to make the journey five times need not be seen as incomplete, abandoned or abandoning -- yet the need must be examined, particularly given the paradox that Schreiner's greatest novel remains the only one in which the journey is not undertaken. The questions Lyndall and Waldo ask are answered, or stay unanswerable, in one remote area of the Karoo. The conclusion one draws from the novel (negatively expressed, as it is in much of Schreiner's fiction thereafter) is that one need not travel anywhere at all to feel completely alone.

Olive Schreiner's life (1855-1920) spanned the crucial periods of the South African War and the First World War, as well as the less finite, but equally significant opening battles of the women's movement. These conflicts produced responses which often determined or constrained her travels and her writing; physical illness and lack of funds also took a toll. To read the exhaustive catalogue of illnesses in her correspondence, to witness her anguish and difficulty in satisfying herself about her work (when she could bring herself to work at all) and to trace her frenetic movements between lodgings throughout her life, is to be impressed with an enormous sense of displacement which has caused one biographer to remark that "a condition of exile with her was temperamental rather than geographical."[10] Considering her "temperament" and her frequent bouts of ill health, Dan Jacobson has surveyed Schreiner's complaints (verbal and physical) thus:

> . . . fever, burning, asthma, bleeding to death, her veins on fire, delirium, swellings, suffocations, madness and anguish, a terrible headache that never goes, agony in the stomach, periodic pains, biting at her hands and knocking her head . . . and she diagnoses her own complaints with a cry that rings out

> . . . of the pages of her Collected Letters : "Oh, it isn't my chest, it isn't my legs, it's me, myself. What shall I do? Where shall I go?"[11]

During the times in which Schreiner proved herself more the mistress than the victim of her circumstances, she wrote. She wrote novels, short stories, "dreams," allegories, speeches, pamphlets, and a strange mixture of all in Trooper Peter Halket, a book which breaks almost as many rules as The Story of an African Farm had fifteen years previously.[12] The preface to the latter book, written for its second edition, coolly spelled out the conscious nature of Schreiner's formal iconoclasm and put the Cape Colony on the map as more than a romantic, adventure-holiday resort for the imagination of British readers. Yet the most radical implications of this preface, which can be regarded in many ways as a modernist manifesto, were not adhered to by Schreiner in all her works, chiefly, I argue, because of her experiences in England in the latter half of the 1880s. Returning then (and for the first half of the 1890s) almost exclusively to the modes of dream and allegory, she was to commit herself to positions which were in many respects more conservative visions of both art and life than might have been predicted from the author of African Farm.

Discussions about the "development" of a writer throughout his or her career are common to survey-type Introductions; it is perhaps best to state now that "development" is a concept rarely, if ever, applicable in Schreiner's case. Generalising roughly, it may be said that Schreiner's fictional templates were forged in the 1870s, her "scientific" feminism in the 1880s, her anti-imperialist political ones in the 1890s. There is more to evince this than Ellis' observation that she never "really developed in all the forty years I knew her";[13] for she herself wrote to W. T. Stead in Feb. 1894: "Neither on the subject of Christianity nor of sex have I gone from the standpoint of An African Farm, as people will understand if ever I publish one of my larger books" -- and there is almost nothing in Woman and Labour (published in 1911) which she had not already said to Pearson before 1888.[14] She chose in her last work ("The Dawn of Civilisation") to emphasise the unchanging nature of the influence of her youthful ideals on her politics even in old age, referring to her childhood

experiences at greater length even than to the sufferings she experienced and witnessed in the Boer War.[15]

The last twenty years of her life saw not so much a flowering of creativity following accumulated experience, as a shocked silence, broken by a few occasional political pieces and a rehashing of 1880s sexual politics in Woman and Labour. Perhaps this explains why the writer whose preface had been so very much before her time had the strange appearance of being curiously old-fashioned so soon, exemplified by Rebecca West's 1912 claim that she was already "less a woman than a geographical fact" implying by the description an organic identification with the land of her birth[16] (ironic in the context of her recent [1911] resignation from the Cape Women's Enfranchisement League, as well as other political wrangles) and imputing also a certain unwieldy, monolithic moral seriousness. The former fallacy, certainly, had long been in play. Sir Charles Dilke, a great admirer of The Story of an African Farm, had written in 1890 that it was "impossible to believe that . . . the colonies will not fulfil the promise that is given by such a work of genius."[17] Shortly after, J. G. Swift MacNeil, a British member of parliament, wrote a glowing tribute to Schreiner in which he quoted an unnamed "writer [who] has recently designated South Africa as "The Country of Olive Schreiner."[18] Buchanan-Gould paraphrases the sentiments of the "Hon. J. W. Mushet", who argued that Olive Schreiner became the measure of South Africa; and remained so, in intellectual circles, for the rest of her life."[19] Any amount of such contemporary examples may be quoted --chiefly the work of British admirers, it must be said. If indeed she was such a favoured daughter of the colony, someone perhaps should have told the other colonials: in 1890 she wrote to Ellis that she was completely cut off from South African society,[20] and within a decade she was considered a traitor by many English South Africans for her Republicanism. For those on her side, however, her speeches had an unprecedented and ironical power to stir (reportedly) to the point of violence.[21]

Her sense of alienation in her native society is well-documented, particularly on her last return to South Africa where she sided with the "African women's civil disobedience

campaign against passes.. in the Orange Free State," collected money for the trial of a Cape ANC worker, and wrote in great distress that "I have not met one human being who feels at all on the native question as I do."[22] To some extent, a disjointedness with Schreiner's British contemporaries may have arisen because (just as her modernist period came a little early) so did her "Great War," in the form of the South African War, the appalling character of which in many ways made it a practice run for the 1914-18 conflict. It will be argued in Chapter 3 that Schreiner's fin-de-siècle period, the output of which looks so earnest and therefore out-of-place in the 1890s, looks that way not just because of her sex (it was very hard to be a true decadent if you were a woman) but because the political betrayal, civil war, house arrest, and atrocities she witnessed made for a rather different end to the decade experienced elsewhere as "the gay nineties." Her experience of the war meant that she felt, when she went back in England in 1913, just in time for World War I, a terrible sense of déjà vu. Yet "The Dawn of Civilisation" (1920) is an affirmation that her meliorist vision had not faded, and that her ideals were still in place.

Schreiner's writing has been labelled a forerunner of modernism but her life and reputation more accurately could be termed prematurely post-modern: compromised by her status as not-English, not-German, not-Dutch; not-man (but not a conventional woman) not-working class (but possessing neither the wealth nor the education of the middle classes) she could be seen as a fragmented self trying on a multiplicity of voices to suit a multiplicity of roles and audiences. Yet this view could make her dilemmas seem more like choices than she experienced them: it makes the burden of wanting to love and be loved, wanting parents, comradeship, and home (all thoroughly unfashionable concepts in post-modernism, as is the passionate commitment with which she sought their fulfilment) look lighter than it was, in view of her early courage in rejecting the comforts of traditional religion and conventional notions of love and belonging. That she is ruthless in her philosophy of the inevitability of loneliness is clear from the failure of communication even

between the soul-mates Waldo and Lyndall in African Farm. Of an exchange between them the narrator comments:

> When your life is most real, to me you are mad; when your agony is blackest I look at you in wonder. Friendship is good, a strong stick; but when the hour comes to lean hard, it gives. In the day of their bitterest need all souls are alone. (African Farm, p. 102)

This bleak outlook coexisted with and is not falsified by another, equally important unifying strand of Schreiner's thought, detectable from Undine and its metaphors of drowning and salvation through to "The Dawn of Civilization." In the latter work, Schreiner expresses her hope in this way:

> I have tried to look nakedly in the face those facts which make most against hope -- and yet, in the darkest hour, the consciousness which I carried back with me... has never wholly deserted me; even as a man who clings with one hand to a rock, though the waves pass over his head, yet knows what his hand touches.[23]

To cope with her sense of alienation, she had long since transferred not just her desire for perfect love, understanding and acceptance to the future, but also her concept of the perfect audience: "a small girl-child, who may live to grasp somewhat of that which for us is yet sight, not touch." Though anonymous, this evocative dedication to Dreams is suggestive of still-unimaginable female potential and power.[24]

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 5 January 1881. See Cronwright-Schreiner, ed., The Letters of Olive Schreiner, 1876-1920 (London: Unwin, 1924), p. 9. This volume will henceforth be referred to as Cronwright-Schreiner's Letters as a short title.

[2] Schreiner to Mrs. C. C. Stanley, 7 May 1881 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 9).

[3] Schreiner to Ellis, 16 March 1884, (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 13).

[4] Schreiner to Ellis, 17 November 1884, (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 45).

[5] Schreiner to Ellis, 5 April 1890. See Richard Rive, ed., Olive Schreiner Letters: Volume 1: 1871 - 99 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1987; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 168. This volume will henceforth be referred to as Rive's Letters as a short title.

[6] Schreiner to Edward Carpenter, January 31 1911 (Carpenter MSS, Sheffield City Libraries Archives Divisions).

[7] Schreiner to Ellis, May 20, 1913 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 325).

[8] Schreiner to Cronwright-Schreiner, November 1914 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 343).

[9] Joseph Bristow (ed.), Introd. The Story of an African Farm, by Olive Schreiner (Oxford: OUP World Classics, 1992), p. xxv. For the rest of this work the edition referred to will be The Story of an African Farm (1883; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970) with an introduction by Dan Jacobson. Hereafter the short title African Farm will be used, and page references will appear in the text.

[10] Daisy Hobman, Olive Schreiner: Her Friends and Times (London: Watts & Co., 1955), p. 47.

[11] Jacobson, Introduction, p. 13.

[12] Olive Schreiner, Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland, new edition (1897; Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1974). For brevity this edition will henceforth be referred to as Trooper Peter Halket, and page references will appear in the text.

[13] Phyllis Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis: A Biography (1980; rpt. London: Quartet Books, 1981), p. 315.

[14] Schreiner to W.T. Stead, February 1894 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 213).

[15] Olive Schreiner, "The Dawn of Civilization", Nation and Athenaeum, no. 4743, 26 March, 1921, pp. 912 - 914.

[16] Rebecca West, "So Simple," The Freewoman, 12 October 1912, rptd. in The Young Rebecca West: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-1917, ed. Jane Marcus (London: Macmillan, 1982) p. 73.

[17] Charles Dilke, "Colonial Democracy," in Problems of Greater Britain (2 vols., 1890) vol. 2, p. 253, quoted by First and Scott, p. 121.

[18] MacNeil's article, "Olive Schreiner at Home" appeared in the Westminster Budget, October 22 1891 (page number unreadable from photocopy: source: Jagger Collection, U. Cape Town).

[19] Vera Buchanan-Gould, Not Without Honour: The Life and Writings of Olive Schreiner (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1948). p. 70 (Buchanan-Gould interviewed Mushet's wife, who had "known Schreiner intimately").

[20] Schreiner to Ellis, 23 November 1889 "The people in South Africa are three hundred years behind the times;" on 27 November 1889 she wrote: "It's curious how life repeats itself. Just the old feeling of utter separation from all the people about me, so good, so kind, so nice -- and yet not a common bond between us." On 16 March 1890 she continued in the same vein: "More lonely even than when I was a girl" and on 15 April 1890 she wrote: "Harry, you don't know what Philistines the people in Africa are." (Rive, Letters, pp. 162-3, p. 166, and p. 168).

[21] Ruth First and Ann Scott, Olive Schreiner (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), pp. 246.

[22] First and Scott, p. 323.

[23] Schreiner, "The Dawn of Civilization" p. 914.

[24] Olive Schreiner, Dreams (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1890).

Chapter 1

You Can't Get There From Here

> Bertie had finished all her packing. . . . The world was so large, so large, why was there no place for her?
>
> From Man to Man, p. 335[1]

i. "Olive's Loss": Some African Farms and Their Economies

The search for a "place" in the world is an important theme in all of Schreiner's novels, whether it is explored as feminist metaphor or represented by means of actual journeys between South Africa and England. Both kinds of quests were necessary for Schreiner herself because of her early alienation within, followed by separation from, both family and local society. Partly due to financial circumstance, partly to her iconoclastic beliefs, Schreiner spent half her life before coming to England

> ... living on the charity of relatives and strangers, passed along from one to the other... working in great intellectual and emotional isolation on remote farms, earning a meagre salary, totally dependent on others for her livelihood, constantly plagued by poor health and depression, insecure... and with no prospect of ever escaping from her limited existence.[2]

Insecurity in Schreiner's life inclined her to become anxious about the reactions of those who might read her fiction, and likewise to become thematically preoccupied in the fiction itself with issues of self-definition, self-support, and belonging. Almost by way of compensation, two of her earliest heroines (Undine and Lyndall) are characters of such strength that they can at least sometimes subdue their opponents, make themselves heard and understood, and control their environment. In context of the evidence, this suggests not so much autobiography as wish-fulfilment, the obverse of which can be found in the character of Bertie, who lacks any power whatsoever. Whatever their character or eventual

fate, and whether by force of circumstance or as casualties of desire, the first work of each of Schreiner's alienated heroines is to leave an African farm. This is analogous to their creator's experience, for Schreiner had had to leave several.

Undine, the eponymous heroine of Schreiner's first novel, is taken from "an old Dutch farmhouse," whereon her irreligious attitudes cause others to shun her and label her "inhuman," to go to an England where her oddity is yet more marked and still less approved.[3] Wearied by the comforts her mercenary marriage affords her, she takes advantage of her husband's death to return to South Africa in search of freedom. Ultimately she dies not on a farm or even in the countryside she loves, but among the densely populated tents and gravel heaps of the New Rush diamond fields, whose character is less that of a frontier settlement than a slum.[4] Lyndall in African Farm leaves her farm for a soul-destroying "finishing school" in the Colony and returns to it as a stopping place on her way, she imagines, to a future in England as an actress. In fact she leaves it only to die on a plain which is beautiful, yet so bleak it is compared to a Biblical wilderness.[5] Bertie in From Man to Man is forced from her parents' farm, Thorn Kloof, not so much because of her seduction by her tutor as because of the rumours that follow it. She finally flees to England in despair, returning to die from a "loathsome" disease contracted either at the "brothel in Soho" where Rebekah last hears of her, or else at Simon's Town.[6] Both are urban sites, and her deathbed is not at her rural birthplace but at Rebekah and Frank's house in a Cape Town suburb, Rondebosch. It is significant that both Lyndall's and Undine's children die: nothing remains to mark the passage of these heroines through their worlds save impressions left in the hearts of a very few individuals (the most important of whom, Albert Blair and Waldo, also die within the span of the respective narratives). Bertie's legacy is even more meagre: her only "children" are the kittens her first patron "the Jew" gives her in London. She dresses and feeds them like babies and carries them at her breast; the first information she is given after "the Jew" abandons her is that he has killed them all (From Man to Man, p. 397).

Rebekah, the only heroine seen to survive the action of the novel in which she appears, is the only heroine to bear children who survive infancy, and also the only heroine who neither wishes to go to England nor is forced there. Originally, she leaves her parents' farm Thorn Kloof, seduced more by her own maternal urges than by Frank, her fiancé. Disillusioned later by his callousness, she escapes her suburban life in Rondebosch into a tiny study she creates for herself wherein she performs scientific experiments and writes philosophical essays. During her marriage, she buys a "fruit and vine farm" near Matjesfontein and eventually supports herself and her children entirely on its produce. In the book's projected conclusion she lives there "educating the children and rearing Sartje [her husband's child by a black servant girl] as her own" (From Man to Man, p. 482). Rebekah's physical fruitfulness is suggested as much by the farm where she labours, planting and grafting trees, as by her numerous children. However, both kinds of fecundity are seen as devaluing Rebekah in society and are penalised accordingly by others. Rebekah's philandering husband Frank muses brutally that "When a woman has borne four children and had several miscarriages, she's not just what she was when you married her" (From Man to Man, p. 309); while his erstwhile mistress, the "parasite" Mrs. Drummond, finds Rebekah's gardening and farm work embarrassingly unfeminine (From Man to Man, p. 157).

Rebekah's African farm becomes a female utopia, the nearest thing in Schreiner's fiction to a "place" for women, where maternity and labour are valorised. Moers, Schoeman, and Berkman have argued that only in Schreiner's Karoo is there a "female landscape" of freedom;[7] but as such it is in fact always a temporary escape, not a home, and for Lyndall and Jannita (the heroine of "Dream Life and Real Life") it becomes a place in which to die alone.[8] Since we must consider the novel completed in 1877 (Saints and Sinners) as lost to us and From Man to Man as an entirely different book, there are difficulties in discussing Rebekah's farm as an idyllic vision in this chapter. It is unknown if the section was planned before 1881 (and, as much of From Man to Man shows the

influence of Edward Carpenter and Karl Pearson, it may also have been a product of revisions undertaken while Schreiner was in England or afterwards). It is noted here only for its implication that the very notion of "an African farm" in Schreiner's fiction was to change from a site of oppression and ignorance in Undine and African Farm (as well as the story "Dream Life and Real Life," written in the same period as the two novels) to one of freedom in From Man to Man.[9]

Excluding Waldo, all of Schreiner's protagonists are South African women of English extraction who go in search of sanctuary, independence, or both, and they are all, on the whole, disappointed. Neither lovers, husbands, society nor the labour market afford Undine, Lyndall, Bertie and Rebekah a place or purpose in which to live with dignity or love. Each heroine betrays her own integrity in an unhappy liaison and each mistakes duty, the desire to please, maternal urges, or sexual curiosity for the bases of fulfilling relationships. The consequences of such self-betrayal are catastrophic; all the practical and social disadvantages of female sexual experience, from jealous or malicious gossip to pregnancy, miscarriage and death, disadvantages that outweigh the meagre pleasures the heroines experience. Even Rebekah's pastoral escape does not mean she can permit herself the companionship of her soul-mate, the only "New Man" in Schreiner's oeuvre, Mr. Drummond. Unable to obtain a divorce from Frank, Rebekah forswears Drummond's company; his subsequent death means she will always remain isolated.

Schreiner describes an inflexible society that tolerates sexual mistakes in men, not women, engendering powerfully compelling reasons for flight by women. Flight has its own difficulties, of course. Undine finds it backbreaking work to eke out a living for herself, the more so because other women are ready to ignore or exploit her because of her status as a single woman. Bertie's fate is to be forced to make a career out of her original sin, having nothing but her body to sell. From Undine on, wherein the heroine's second betrothal occurs on what is described as "the night of the bargain" in a chapter titled "Sold Her Love", Schreiner compares marriage without love to prostitution (Undine, pp. 176-180). In

African Farm such a comparison is a part of Lyndall's feminist rhetoric; in From Man to Man it constitutes the plot itself.

As a man, Waldo's mistakes, and fate, are different. Josephine Dodd has noted that:

> Graham Pechey...[argues] that it is through entering the world of mercantile capital that Lyndall and Waldo are redefined as woman and wage-slave. He adds that it is one of the novel's ironies that when Gregory Rose leaves the farm it is "to become in one person both a woman and a worker -- the two roles in which bourgeois society had cast Lyndall and Waldo, and against which Rose had up to then established his own fragile identity."[10]

Before Waldo leaves the farm, Lyndall accuses him of accusing her of making "a fuss" when complaining of her lot. She presents to him a hypothetical picture of their separate futures if she were to do as he suggests:

> We stand here at this gate this morning, both poor, both young, both friendless; there is not much to choose between us. Let us turn away just as we are, to make our way in life. This evening you will come to a farmer's house. The farmer, albeit you come alone and on foot, will give you a pipe of tobacco and a cup of coffee and a bed. If he has no dam to build and no child to teach, tomorrow you can go on your way with a friendly greeting ... I, if I come to the same place tonight, will have strange questions asked me, strange glances cast on me. The Boer-wife will shake her head and give me food to eat with the Kaffirs, and a light to sleep with the dogs. That would be the first step in our progress-- a very little one, but every step to the end would repeat it. (African Farm, p. 190)

Schreiner describes a sexual economy in which a buyer's market operates, and women alone are treated by men and "respectable" women alike as objects of pity, suspicion, or exploitation. Motherhood within marriage is in fact the only "respectable" career in sexual labour, but this, Schreiner suggests in From Man to Man, has nothing to do with the fulfilment of a woman's sexual desires, most especially if one's husband believes motherhood and desire mutually exclusive. Frank's anecdotes about his decision to woo Rebekah concern his observations of her performance of nurturing tasks, while other girls had merely flirted with him (From Man to Man, pp. 229-30). Rebekah's subsequent fecundity means she is "not quite the same as when you married her" (for which reason he

clearly feels justified in seeking sexual partners elsewhere, including a married neighbour, a white schoolgirl, and a teenaged black servant). Rebekah's desire for a divorce that both she and her husband might marry again shocks Frank even more than her objections to his infidelities. What is clear is that he chose a wife precisely because her lack of flirtatious behaviour signalled to him a lack of sexual desire. His feels cheated in his bargain:

> She, whom he had always looked upon as the type of all that was pure and womanly, to talk of giving herself to another man! .... NO, there would be no divorce. It was impure, ... unclean for her even to talk of such a thing. It was enough to kill all a man's faith in women! (From Man to Man, p. 309)

Lyndall's lover, her "Stranger," quite aware of her sexual desires, reminds her that their fulfilment has devalued her in the marriage market and that his willingness to take her away and marry her is the purest magnanimity. By her sexual activity she has "lost the right of meeting [him]... on equal terms" (African Farm, p. 238). In the grip of such market forces, it is no wonder that Lyndall tells Waldo that conformity to sex roles is safest: "A woman must go with her regiment. In the end she must be trodden down or go with it; and if she is wise she goes" (African Farm, p. 189). Furthermore, as Lyndall's choice of metaphor suggests, Schreiner believes it is likely that women will be the first to tread down others of their sex who fail to conform.

The biographical background to these conclusions about social relations and pressures affecting young women who (for whatever reason) are uprooted from family and place of origin, can be found in Schreiner's own bitter experiences which came about directly through her forays into the labour market. From the time her family broke up in 1867, Schoeman comments, it would seem that "nobody knew how to deal with this rather unmanageable girl, neither child nor adult, and that she was therefore farmed out as circumstances permitted."[11] From the age of sixteen, she worked in a variety of places in the eastern Cape, from the bleak mountain village of Dordrecht to the frontier town of Colesberg some seventy miles further upcountry, to the farms Klein Gannahoek, Ratelhoek, Katkop, Gannahoek, and Leliekloof, all in the Cradock and Tarka districts. Her movements

from one job to another were not always through her own choice, any more than her family's movements and dissolution had been her choice. Her status at the home of her cousin Lillie Orpen at Avoca in 1870-1871, where she was neither teacher nor merely a guest, was embarrassing; at the Robinson home in Dordrecht, it is again difficult to see if she was a simply the daughter of a family friend or an employee. When once of age, she was not, as her mother remarked, "one to take advice" and therefore went out to work even against her parents' wishes.[12] Schreiner told her sister Kate in 1875: "I made up my mind when I was quite a little child that as soon as I was able I would support myself for I see no reason why a woman should be dependent on her friends any more than a man should."[13] Her independent attitude hardened during her adolescense, when she grew ashamed of the ramshackle progress of her siblings and herself around the Cape. In 1872, unable to find a position after the death of a child she taught at Dordrecht, she had written to Kate:

> I am not needed here and would give anything to be able to leave but where to go I don't just see at present. I hope something will turn up in time but I feel so anxious, miserable and distracted . . . I am thoroughly sick of this life always having to move on and never knowing where to move on to.[14]

The newspapers of the time were full of young women offering or being offered the work of providing "a thoroughly English education" and it was as such that Olive Schreiner was employed, despite her own inadequate education and the fact that she was unwilling to teach religion.[15] Berkman's comment that being a governess was a "respectable alternative to marriage" may be based on mores in Britain or America, and may not have been entirely appropriate to Schreiner's situation.[16] In the Cape in the 1870s, governesses were especially sought on remote farms from which it was impossible to send children to schools (of which few existed in any case, especially for girls). Positions were not well-paid, and as First and Scott note, governesses had "no redress against their employer's demands to help out in whatever way he asked."[17] The dangers to a young woman in Schreiner's position can be guessed at from her remark to her husband in later years: "I was the only girl I ever heard of as living five years as governess among the Boers without getting into some sort of

sexual trouble," and by this comment she referred simply to damage to reputation rather than actual dalliance.[18] It is true that at least the status of a governess in South Africa was higher than that of her male counterpart, as Schoeman comments. Itinerant male teachers, meesters, were often deserters or ne'er-do-wells, not unlike Bonaparte Blenkins, who begins as a schoolmaster in African Farm. Such as these had the reputation of being illiterate, alcoholic, or both.[19]

Yet, for all its hard work, low pay, emotional stress and frequent periods of isolation, the six years Schreiner spent almost exclusively at Boer farms (1875-1881) had its advantages. She found time to read widely and she wrote the greater parts of three novels, as well as several stories. In addition to maintaining this level of literary productivity, Schreiner also succeeded in remaining popular among the people of the Boer farms (which had not been the case in Dordrecht or Colesberg) and she was often free to roam alone in the countryside she loved. Despite the reputation Mrs. Fouché has as the model for Tant' Sannie, she liked Schreiner and employed her twice (at Klein Gannahoek and at Leliekloof, the farm to which the Fouchés subsequently moved). Mrs. Fouché made Schreiner a godmother to one of her children, and would have been happy enough had Schreiner become even more closely attached to the family and never left the area again. The story goes that her son by a previous marriage, Adriaan Muller, was in love with "die kleine schoolmisses," and when he was refused, the portion of the farm Gannahoek he received when he did marry was ever after jocularly referred to by locals as "Olive's Loss."[20]

When Schreiner left South Africa in March 1881, full of hopes for becoming a doctor as well as an author, she never envisaged feeling a sense of "loss" in connection with South Africa. Indeed, she wrote to everyone she knew to declare that she was happy to be going "home" at last and that she did not plan to return to the Cape again. Seven years later and more famous than she wanted to be, a much-disillusioned Schreiner wrote to her old friend Erilda Cawood to inquire:

> Who lives at Lelie Kloof? I'm going to buy it when I've made my fortune and Willie [Cawood's son] must come and look after it for me . . . I should love to come and rest with you . . . and tell stories to... the new little ones, and look at your face.[21]

Several ironies are immediately apparent from this letter. The Story of an African Farm made Schreiner famous, but it never made her fortune, and the loneliness this letter shows was never cured. England, the country Schreiner's mother taught her to call "home," never lived up to this name. Perhaps strangest of all is the fact that Schreiner would never write so much fiction in such a span of time as she did while she was a governess in the years 1872-1881. Moreover, for one who declared herself weary of constantly moving throughout the Cape, Schreiner's subsequent movements throughout England and continental Europe make her five Cape addresses in seven years look positively stay-at-home.

ii. The Roots of Rootlessness

The pathogeny of Schreiner's inability to settle down later in her life may be traced in what Piaget has described as the ecology of childhood and also in the circumstances of her early working life.[1] These are subjects which still require quite detailed discussion, whatever some scholars may think to the contrary. Berkman, for example, omits from her study The Healing Imagination a "traditional linear birth-to-death account of her [Schreiner's] life," remarking complacently that this is "a service Ruth First and Ann Scott perform admirably in their full-scale biography."[2] Yet a glance at Schoeman's biographies or even Beeton's Facets shows that there is ample biographical information yet to be considered, and Cherry Clayton's essay "Life into Fiction" has questioned the ideological strictures with which First and Scott replaced some of their predecessors' naive partisanship.[3] In any case the brief run-through Berkman condescends to include to cover Schreiner's first twenty-six years in South Africa contains substantial errors. For example, Schreiner spent two, not five years in Cradock with her brother Theo and sister Ettie.

Schreiner did not begin Undine in 1867 but in 1873 (this mistake may account for Berkman's comparative neglect of the novel). Most importantly, the Cawoods, for whom Schreiner worked at Gannahoek for a brief period in 1879, had long been family friends, not merely employers, and they were emphatically not "Boers." This error makes nonsense of much Berkman has to say about Schreiner's relationship to and writings about Afrikaners, not just in the 1870s but in the 1890s.[4]

Because, at times, First and Scott provide more ideology than evidence, because Beeton provides evidence he is incapable of analysing, because Berkman thinks the whole matter taken care of, because Karel Schoeman's work about Schreiner's life in South Africa is not well-known, and because Schreiner's relationship with Pearson and its effect on her writing has (until this study) never been fully addressed, it remains necessary to establish a biographical and historical context for Schreiner's writings from the start, in a form well beyond that of a meagre time-line. One immediate critical advantage a detailed approach affords is that in returning to Schreiner's youth in South Africa it is possible to establish at least some of Schreiner's literary influences. If it is unwise to make assumptions that the Karoo was barren of books or people with ideas (as was once done to support a view of Schreiner as a wilderness genius) it is equally unwise to second-guess at a convenient nineteenth-century "intertextuality" in order to account for Schreiner's feminist theories (as Liz Stanley does in an access of wish-fulfilment) or to assume, as does Christopher Heywood in the service of his theories, that Schreiner must consciously have employed a myriad of Comtean and Arnoldian motifs in African Farm.[5] The question of just what books Schreiner read during her early life in South Africa has been answered in detail by Schoeman, who took the reasonable step of perusing Schreiner's journals in conjunction with the library catalogues and bookshop advertisements of the 1870s in the towns nearest to where she lived. He has read closely some of the novels which Schreiner herself recorded reading (Dickens' Dombey and Son, Ouida's Tricotrin, and Goethe's Wilhelm Meister in particular) and compared them with Schreiner's early fiction, with interesting

results.[6] Many critics have been content to discuss the influence of Spencer, Emerson and Mill on Schreiner's fiction, neglecting the influence of Dickens' melodrama or Ouida's (and possibly Braddon's) racier narratives. Religious literature also played a large part in Schreiner's early life and it will be argued in Chapter 3 that Puritan works by Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, and the eighteenth-century American Calvinist Jonathan Edwards conditioned not just Schreiner's imagination but her entire attitude toward the act and the purpose of writing itself.

A second restorative a biographical approach can provide is that it allows one to emphasise something of which even Cronwright-Schreiner saw the importance -- that is, the striking nature and variety of the achievements of the Schreiner family as a whole. While Freudian speculations on Schreiner's traumatic relationship with her mother continue as they have done since the work of Friedmann and Meintjes, mention of Schreiner's brothers and sisters has sadly faded from critical accounts of her work in what has become a general de-contextualising of Schreiner as a South African and a member of a powerful South African family.

The factors which forged both Schreiner's creative consciousness and her apparently wilful restlessness, which were to separate her from her fellows in the Colony and later in England, grew out of a series of journeys, and sometimes forced marches, undertaken by her family. The first journey of significance for Schreiner was made by her parents, Gottlob Schreiner (1814 - 1876) and Rebecca Lyndall Schreiner (1818 - 1903) in 1838. Gottlob Schreiner, born in the small town of Fellbach in Württemberg, had arrived in London for further training under the auspices of an Anglican mission society after four years' study in Basel. He and Rebecca Lyndall met, married, and emigrated to South Africa as a result of a recruitment drive organised by Dr. John Philip of the London Missionary Society. Rebecca Schreiner's career in disillusionment started in the vestry where the couple signed their names after their wedding, when Reverend Campbell, officiating, "tore the dainty wreath of flowers from her bonnet with the stern remark that 'such frippery was not for the bride of a

missionary.' And Rebecca, whose pretty face had been drained of colour, had her first brief glimpse of the grim shape of things to come."[7]

As First and Scott remark, Dr. Philip saw missionaries as more than just spiritually important to the consciences of Christian Britons and their heathen brethren:

> ... when mission stations were established several hundreds of miles inland along the Orange River and then beyond those boundaries of the colony, Philip himself became an advocate of colonial expansion. The mission station was to serve as the natural ally of government in pacifying the extending frontier. He argued the importance of having "belts of civilized natives" between the colonists and their less civilised neighbours, for the mission stations could be the cheapest and best military posts that wise government could employ to defend its frontier against the predatory incursion of tribes.[8]

While the Schreiners certainly wished more to preach the gospel than to form an ideological buffer zone, it is important to note their superior's secular agenda.

Life in the colony was to prove arduous and disappointing, especially for Rebecca Schreiner, whose education had been in music, French, Italian, and drawing rather than keeping house for fifty and more on mission stations. Her evangelical faith was an early casualty of her married life. Appropriately enough, when the couple arrived in the Cape after a journey of sixty-nine days they landed at Port Elizabeth, known colloquially as "Little Hell."[9] Stress associated with the journey caused Rebecca Schreiner to give birth to her first child, Kate, prematurely. As the family increased in number, life remained insecure. Poverty, lack of medical care, and local tribal border clashes had to be endured. The family moved several times, leaving Umpukane after a horrific raid in 1850 carried out by the Sotho chief Moletsane on the amaMfengu tribe, during which twelve-year-old Kate Schreiner was narrowly missed by a stray bullet. The attack nearly unhinged Rebecca.[10] The neighbouring Wesleyan station, Lishuani, to which the family repaired, was scarcely safer: Theo was to write "for months we were expecting death any day" because of Moletsane's quarrel with the Barolong of Thaba Nchu. In 1852 the Schreiners moved to Winberg, and then to Bloemfontein, and finally to the Wittebergen mission station in late

1854 or early 1855, where Olive, the ninth of twelve children, was born. Here the family stayed for an unprecedented period -- six years.

In Healdtown, Gottlob Schreiner ran an industrial school for "natives" and attempted to supplement his meagre pay as a minister by illegal trading. As he was incompetent both in the trade itself and in concealing it from his clerical superiors, he was defrocked in 1865. After a removal to Balfour and further bankruptcy, the family was forced to separate in 1868, as Schoeman demonstrates, and not in 1867, as Cronwright and others report.[11] Thirteen-year-old Olive was sent to live with her eldest brother Theo, a headmaster in the town of Cradock. She later seems to have remembered her age at the time of the move as eleven, as when she wrote poignantly to Ellis in 1889 that she had "never had a home... never had anyone to take care of me like other girls have. I was thrown out into the world when I was eleven."[12] (This two-year gap in her autobiographical reminiscences would remain).

At this point the surviving Schreiner children numbered six. Kate and Alice were married, Fred had gone to England (before Olive Schreiner was born); the remaining two (Will and Ettie) joined her at Theo's. All the Schreiner children had, at young ages, witnessed the deaths of brothers or sisters and experienced poverty, danger, and heavy responsibilities. Kate had been put in charge of younger siblings at ten and had been lent out to another family as a worker at the same age; Alice was teaching at Healdtown at the age of fifteen. When First and Scott note that on one occasion "Rebecca complained of being overworked, and wrote to Kate: 'Olive and I will have plenty to do' " her biographers comment dryly: "Olive was then six years old."[13]

Hard work was a tenet, a religious duty, and a means by which Olive Schreiner sought love. She carried this into her later life, admitting to Ellis later that she undertook punishing tasks without complaint to gain the love of an employer, Mrs. Weakley (an attempt mirrored in the "Shabby Woman" experience in Undine). Yet she was also inclined

to wax nostalgic over the years when she "was half-starved and had to work so hard. If anyone could know how beautiful it was!"[14]

All the Schreiner children were encouraged to look upon themselves as privileged even in privation because of their exalted status as young missionary workers: Kate's aunt Elizabeth Rolland wrote to her in 1847 that "our dear Saviour who is so much wiser than we are never put us into this world to please and amuse ourselves,"[15] and her grandmother likewise wrote to tell her "How infinitely preferable, my dear child, is your life of hallowed usefulness to the clumsy, listless half-awake manner in which so many young ladies drag through the best part of their earthly existence...."[16]

"Lord, let me not live to be useless," wrote John Wesley, and the Schreiners paid attention. When Rebecca Schreiner commented with pleasure that her daughter Olive was "still rather self-willed and impetuous" but that it was "pleasing to see the effort the dear little thing makes to conquer herself," she added, "She often asks 'Mama have I been a little better today?'" This earnest propensity for self-improvement was noted by her mother when Olive Schreiner was "not yet three years old."[17]

Gottlob Schreiner recited the sermons of the seventeenth-century theologian Jeremy Taylor to his children nightly. Schreiner gives a flavour of the experience in the section "Times and Seasons" in African Farm, wherein is described a terrified child's sense of the precariousness of life and of the repercussions of the least transgression. As "Wesley's hymn" has it, "A moment's time, a narrow space / Divides me from that heavenly place / Or shuts me up in hell." Taylor and Wesley both cause the narrator to "shudder in the sunlight" (African Farm, p. 140-1).

A similar precocious sense of self-examination, sin, and the mission to be "better today" was joined in Schreiner's case with an early ontological curiosity that marked her off from her siblings. Reverend Zadok Robinson, meeting Olive Schreiner at the age of six

> ... described how she addressed him, without any preliminaries, as he was saying goodbye. Olive: "But you can't go away." Robinson: "Why can't I

> go away?" "You haven't got your hat and you can't go without a hat." "But I can get it." "But you can't get it." "Why can't I get it?" "Because I've hidden it." "Well, I can find it." "But you don't know where it is." "I can get the others to find it for me." To this the child replied: "But they don't know where it is, and if I forget my personal identity, I shan't know where it is, and shan't be able to tell them, and you won't be able to find your hat."[18]

At Healdtown (where this episode occurred) Schreiner also claimed to have clashed with her mother following her joyful discovery of the Sermon on the Mount. Cronwright-Schreiner opined:

> Here, so to say, was her creed formulated. So obsessed with her idea as to be quite oblivious of all else, she put the book before her mother with her finger on the passages in great excitement and said: "Look what I've found! Look what I've found! It's what I've known all along. Now we can live like this!" Her mother tried to put her off... It was only after some time and cold words of reproof that the amazed child was silenced. But she never forgot it, and knew then for the first time that people did not want to live like that, although it was God's command which they professed to accept. She said she never got over the shock.[19]

Rebecca Schreiner's rigid social creed leaked into her religious one. Perhaps under the stress of trying to live up to a mission she now considered "claptrap and nonsense," feeling stranded in an alien environment, she could only maintain her own identity by emphasising difference from others.[20] She retained a vocabulary of division, exclusion, and categorisation common to a Calvinist outlook. Olive Schreiner's joyful feeling that her soul was in harmony with the merciful and inclusive doctrines of Matthew 5, with its cautions against judging others and its emphasis on universal Divine care, was too all-embracing for her mother's taste; not surprisingly, as Schoeman remarks of Schreiner's religious difference from her parents, "all this led to growing alienation and anxiety."[21] Rebecca Schreiner worked hard to encourage her children to see themselves as different from others, and "others" included virtually everyone, be they "natives," "Dutch" or just members of other Christian sects.

Inevitably, Olive Schreiner's early and traumatic loss of orthodox faith was to set her further apart from the family group, without giving her membership of any other. By

the time Schreiner went to live at her brother's house in Cradock in 1868, she had been a freethinker for more than two years. Barash's opinion on the significance of Ellie Schreiner's death in August 1865 (which catalysed Olive Schreiner's loss of faith) is that it heralded a proto-lesbian "othering" of women.[22] What makes this unconvincing is the context in which Schreiner's devotion to her sister occurred and the context in which the grief of the whole family was expressed. One need only read family correspondence at the time to see that the child's death affected all members of this extremely emotional, anachronistically baby-loving family very deeply indeed. Gottlob Schreiner (now aged fifty-one and having lost three sons already) wrote that "God has seen fit to lay his hand heavily upon us, having taken the apple of our eye. I cannot tell what we all feel..."; Ettie Schreiner, whose grief was "painful beyond description to witness" was called home from school in Cape Town to be a comfort to her mother; Rebecca Schreiner wrote eleven years later that she still missed Ellie.[23] The family was seen as unusual by others on the frontier in their attitude to children (at a time and place where infant mortality was high) and this must later have made Alice Hemming's and Kate Findlay's total loss of twenty children (out of the twenty-seven they produced) especially hard for the family later on. It also makes Olive Schreiner's grief slightly less of an extraordinary reaction.

The four siblings (the strongest personalities in the family) who tried to live under one roof in Cradock three years after Ellie's death were painfully ill-suited. Olive Schreiner's freethinking caused years of conflict with the devout and dogmatic Theo and Ettie, the latter of whom was a Sabbatarian literalist. Even Fred, no slacker in matters of doctrine himself, commented that Theo and Ettie "are not persons, they are embodiments of certain ideas, feelings, maxims... associated with dictatorial autocracy and assertion of infallibility."[24] Theo's opinions on fiction were scarcely more liberal than those on religion: as a teenager, he was horrified to find Kate Schreiner had been lent two girls' books (Susan Warner's Queechy and Elizabeth Wetherell's The Wide, Wide World [the latter is mentioned among the "Shabby Woman" 's reading in Undine]). He was to "brand Miss

Cumming [the lender] and another Bloemfontein friend... his sister's 'enemies'; he commended to Katie a passage in John Todd's The Student's Guide:

> If you have an enemy whose soul you would visit with a heavy vengeance and into whose heart you would place living vipers which will live and cramp and torment him through his life, you have only to place one of these destroyers [a novel] into his hands.[25]

This attitude puts speculation about whether Theo and Ettie Schreiner could afford to pay for their sister to subscribe to Cradock Public Library (a moot point among biographers) in second place after the question of whether they would have if they could.

Schreiner's other brothers, Fred and Will, were to encourage and support her in England whilst she prepared African Farm for publication, perhaps compensating for Theo and Ettie's influence. But Schreiner not infrequently disparaged the novel form herself in later years, and she was to claim to have read only four novels in her life before writing her first.[26] Poetry was another matter, and at home with her parents she reportedly had been allowed to learn and encouraged to recite works by Milton, Coleridge and Tennyson. She also was familiar with an abundance of edifying religious texts from the 1650s onward, about which many Schreiner children and their cousins corresponded earnestly.[27] Her formal education, however, was scant, and she probably acquired all she had in Cradock while living with Theo and Ettie.

Theo Schreiner's comparatively secure position in Cradock did not come by accident. He and Fred both went to Wesleyan College in Taunton and then gained degrees at University College, London; Will ended up in England on a scholarship to Cambridge. There were good financial reasons for their schooling abroad (English mission schools were cheaper than those in the colonies) but more was at stake. As males, their education was considered more important than that of their sisters (however much the young Olive might resent this, for she was to begin work as a governess at the age of sixteen with scarcely any formal education herself). While a minister's sons might legitimately aspire to middle-class employment, marriage was the career foreseen for and taken up at early ages by the two

eldest Schreiner daughters Kate and Alice (who, with three years' formal schooling at Cape Town, was the best-educated of them all).

Although Gottlob Schreiner was German by birth, it was Rebecca Lyndall's English tongue which, in every sense, ruled the family hearth. Both parents felt "it would be very much better to get [the children] altogether beyond the reach of native influence", in particular "gross and sensual heathens"; Rebecca especially bemoaned the "difficulty of keeping my children separate from the swarthy demon in the house." The phrase "native influence" hints at the vast, pervasive, and unquestioned premises of contemporary English colonial society, many of which reflected sexual unease.[28] Furthermore, while both their Christian and economic aims would not permit the British to consider assimilating any features of black African culture, "Boer" culture was equally out of bounds. For Rebecca Schreiner, the pernicious "native influence" included not only contact with Africans but with Afrikaners. Vividly described in numerous biographies and critical works is the beating Olive Schreiner received at the age of six for the crime of a single Cape Dutch word. "Ach, how nice it is outside," she said one morning, for which her mother gave her fifty strokes with a bunch of bound quince-rods.[29]

It is impossible to overestimate Rebecca's strength either in the family or simply as a type of the time: as Schoeman shows, the English values she represented were to attain ascendancy throughout all white South African society -- but only for a time, and at a price. The English, as Schoeman points out,

> ... had much to experience, much to discard, and even more to learn. It would take time before they and their descendants finally learned, over many generations, to trust the new land and to surrender themselves to it with any degree of confidence. Surrounded by a Dutch population who were at best indifferent to them and in some cases patently hostile, a minority among natives whose traditional tribal life had barely been touched by westernisation, in a country where San and wild animals were still being hunted... the English immigrants clung all the more doggedly to the outward symbols with which they sought to assert their vaunted superiority: the crinolines and the top-hats, books and drawing-room ballads, the English

> language and above all, their status as... English ladies and gentlemen. Their ....superiority was largely wishful thinking. ... the bulk of the immigrants were rather simple people from the lower strata of English society... with no special refinement or education, a lack that showed up repeatedly behind the facade of libraries and cultural performances they raised. The Cradock library, for example, was never very well supported, and the behaviour of audiences at concerts frequently drew complaints.[30]

Public heavy drinking was common when Schreiner was a child. Ordinary Cradock life featured "violent outbursts" and "senseless rowdiness" which were as much a part of the social scene as the shops which tried "despite an unavoidable time lag to follow London and Parisian fashions."[31] The scene in contemporary provincial England might not seem to have been very different; but communities there were not simultaneously surrounded by "a Dutch population" and "natives." The former were looked down on, and the latter were perversely cast into a double-bind situation: the only thing the prudish English found harder to bear than a naked "native" was one who presumed to ape English manners.[32]

At the same time, for solid historical reasons (and via considerable Promethean cultural myth-making following the Great Trek of 1837) the proto-Afrikaners of Schreiner's generation regarded English motives and behaviour in South African colonies with suspicion. As Schoeman remarks, they held themselves "aloof from political issues," and saw "the government -- whether the arrogant and corrupt Dutch East India Company or the British with their unintelligible language and unpalatable liberal leanings -- as an alien power...."[33] Dogmatically self-sufficient, the Boers despised those British settlers who constantly looked back to England for standards, inspiration, culture and, not coincidentally, guns. An earthy (or rather, briny) Cape Dutch epithet reserved for such was the word "soutpiel" (salt-penis) to indicate a man with one foot in Britain, one in Africa, and his manhood somewhere out at sea. Schreiner must have been familiar with the term, for in African Farm she uses "Salt reim" (a misspelling of soutriem, "salt-thong") as a "Dutchman" 's comparatively euphemistic term for Lyndall's Stranger when he pays over the odds for an ox-wagon (African Farm, p. 265).[34]

In those English schools that were established in the Colony, little was taught concerning the country in which the pupils lived. Many colonial sons and daughters were sent "home" for education and polish, in order, it was hoped, to return to their birthplaces and reinfuse the colonies with yet more Englishness. It is obvious, from Schreiner's caricatures of insufferable English "Africanders" returning to Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in Undine, that she felt that this practice could have ridiculous results. Such portraits may well have been inspired by Schreiner's sea journey between those ports in 1874.[35] Yet the plot of Undine itself (with its unconvincing English scenery) still works on the premise that a narrative must involve England in order to be worth narrating, and thus shows that she was still herself imaginatively in thrall to Britain. African Farm would begin to break such chains, not just for Schreiner but for other Southern African writers writing in English.

Nonetheless, all of Schreiner's early fiction shows Boers (the women especially) in as unflattering a light as Schreiner's mother might have wished. At an early age, Schreiner had known to let a sweet given her by a Boer child "drop" because eating "sugar that had been in the hand of a Boer child would have been impossible," and she refused to sleep in a bed a Dutch minister had spent a single night in because the sheets had not been changed.[36] Yet, from the ages of twenty to twenty-six she managed to live in Boer households, at twenty-three she seems to have fallen in love with an educated Boer, and whilst teaching Boer children she remarked in her letters and diary that they were "not at all as stupid" as some English children.[37] Given her parents' work, she must have been aware of the schisms taking place in the Dutch Reformed Church because of the influence of the "liberal" notions of the notorious trio of ministers Kotze, Burgers and Naudé in the 1850s and 1860s; their lives touched on hers in many ways.[38] Taken together these facts make her portrayal of the "Dutch" in her early work somewhat strange.

Perhaps, in contrast to her affection for men like Martin or Naudé, Schreiner also became familiar in her youth with the habits of the "Dopper" Dutch (the fact that her brother Theo certainly made free with the term during the 1890s does not help to establish

when she came to know of it)[39] The etymology of the term has been described (by Rian Malan) thus:

> ...when rumors of the enlightenment penetrated their wilderness, the Afrikaners considered them, consulted their Bibles and preachers, and finally reached a consensus: These new ideas presented a threat to their survival, and should be suppressed-- not only in the world at large, but in their own hearts. Soon, many Afrikaners were calling themselves Doppers, after the little metal caps with which they snuffed out candles. They... were deliberately and consciously extinguishing the light of the Enlightenment, so that they could do what they had to do in darkness.[40]

He continues: "There are many truths about Afrikaners, but none so powerful and reverberant as this wilful self-blinding. It was the essential act of our history, or so it seems to me." In the second paragraph of her first novel, Schreiner made a metaphor of light and dark that seems to reflect her awareness of such "self-blinding". Describing the Karoo landscape, she wrote "there is a strange weird beauty, a beauty which the veriest sheep-souled Boer that ever smoked pipe or wore vel-skoen, might feel if he had but one ray of light left in him" (Undine, p. 2).

But in the 1870s (in which she dedicated herself overwhelmingly to realist narratives, rather than the allegories or essays mentioned above) Schreiner was most conscious of her difference from any element of Boer culture, and all of her heroines are drawn in sharp, aristocratic relief from it. Here Schreiner resembled earlier foreign-born observers of the South African scene who used the Boer as local colour only. (An edifying example of such usage is cited by Schoeman, who refers to the "sordid Dutchman" of Thomas Forester's 1851 work Everard Tunstall: a Tale of the Kafir Wars. Forester's novel rejoices in such specimens of dialogue as "Slapperloot!... it shall never be said that Diedrich Graaywinkel deserted a friend in adversity!")[41] Nor is there any indication in Schreiner's novels of the 1870s that a perceived gap between English and Afrikaner society was distressing enough to make her wish to bridge it as she would seek to do in the 1890s. Even so, despite the more grotesque aspects of the character of Tant' Sannie (modelled

possibly on Mrs. Fouché -- Mrs. Fouché very much feared so, at any rate) there are more than occasional glances of admiration at the sheer stubborn vitality of a culture Schreiner saw as backward, but which she was later to exalt because of its simplicity, cohesion, courage and -- surprisingly -- tolerance.[42]

During Schreiner's itinerant formative years, in which it was impressed upon her repeatedly how little she belonged within various social and ethnic groups of contemporary South African society, she began to become conscious of ways in which other people, Boers in particular, had come to be so supremely confident that they did belong. If she caricatured aspects of their culture, she never questioned their identity. Schoeman defends Schreiner's heavy-handed mockery of backward nineteenth-century "proto-Afrikaners," but also adds that

> ...it should be remembered that while venturing into the unknown with their wagons and flocks they [the Afrikaners] had identified themselves with the land, boldly and unconditionally: while clinging doggedly to their Reformationist faith and their Dutch Bible, they were nonetheless prepared in other ways to adapt their inherited customs and their language to the new country.[43]

From the evidence available, there is no indication that English Africanders of Rebecca Schreiner's stamp had any intention of adapting their language or themselves to anything except the will of God, if they were missionaries, and slightly out-of-date copies of London fashion magazines if they were not, and this was true of people whose families had been in the Colony for several generations. Schoeman writes of this type:

> Later arrivals-- in particular the English speakers, and specifically the townsmen -- were the ones who could not shake off their memories of Europe, who persisted, in an almost comical defiance of realities, in their attempts to uphold their imported standards and keep Africa -- the hostile alien -- at bay....[44]

It is thus scarcely an exaggeration to suggest that Schreiner had to create a new language to cope with the facts of her surroundings because, as rootless as she was in her personal life, much of the English-speaking portion of white society in which she grew up was

determined not to cultivate any African roots at all, if it could help it. Yet those whites whose self-given name "Afrikaner" proclaimed roots, had (at the time Schreiner began to write) no literary tradition of their own. The only common ground the two white communities had in Schreiner's experience was fiercely held variants of Protestant Christianity and a more or less common interest in exploiting black labour. If she had been interested in unity between the communities, Christianity was the last argument she, a freethinker, would have used; and concern for South Africa's non-white population was decades away in her political development.

The literary repercussions of the attitudes to South Africa held by its two major white populations by the time of Schreiner's first attempts at writing were modified by quite different factors. In the case of the English-speakers, poetry had a long and respectable history, especially in the southeastern Cape Colony; the poems of Thomas Pringle had earned the respect of Coleridge. Real efforts had been made in that medium to incorporate existing names for Cape flora, fauna and landscape and thus replace the vocabulary of "glen," "dale," "knoll" and the like, which has been employed at the start of the British occupation of the Colony. Themes other than nostalgia for a European home began to appear as generation succeeded generation in the Colony.[45]

The South African novel in English was a later, more commercial and more mongrel form. Its history began in 1834 with Makanna, or The Land of the Savage and continued with a string of efforts in which adventures were occasioned by a series of bloody frontier wars, or romances in which "the foreground" was "British, often with aristocratic or semi-aristocratic elements" predominated.[46] As Schoeman notes, plots rode on the coat-tails of the popularity of frontier literature like that of James Fenimore Cooper. Makanna had the advantage of describing contemporary (or nearly contemporary) events wherein "the portrayal of the exotic on the doorstep of a remote English-speaking enclave was designed to grip... by blending the familiar and the alien in acceptable proportions."[47] Similar works, some written by authors who had never visited the Colony, followed.

1876 saw the publication of a novel (John Robinson's George Linton, or The First Years of an English Colony) which Schoeman remarks "may be described as the first convincingly South African novel among...early works" by virtue of its accurate and unsensationalised depiction of the contemporary milieu; however, one must still "be prepared to ignore literary criteria" in judging it.[48] But Robinson may well not have aspired to literary greatness anyway: he introduced the book's purpose as that of a semi-documentary, one that would give his British readers "a fairly faithful idea of what the sons and daughters of Great Britain have done, and are doing, in distant places of the earth."[49] The dry, almost arch quality of Schreiner's preface to the second edition of African Farm indicates not only that she was aware of the stereotyped "history of 'wild adventure'" that a "kind critic" suggested he would have preferred in place of the novel that is African Farm; but also something else. In no part of the preface or novel does she purpose to give an edifying view of what specifically British "sons and daughters" are getting up to "in distant places of the earth" unless it is in the case of the Rose family, who have spent their time in the Colony making money and rewriting their family tree into one they feel is commensurate with their assumed social status (African Farm, p. 175).

Literature in Cape Dutch, or Afrikaans as it was coming to be known, was even less suitable as a model for Schreiner than literature in English. In a comparatively favourable review of the new weekly paper Die Afrikaanse Patriot (begun in 1875) a largely English-language newspaper offered this view:

> We do not doubt for a moment that Afrikaans will be used for many years to come, but that it will ever become a language in which we shall write books, in which ministers will preach the Gospel, or in which judges will administer justice, we can hardly believe.[50]

The editorial was wrong, of course, but it is true that Afrikaans culture was slow to appreciate the novel as a form: nothing approaching one would be written until 1898.[51]

The dilemma of South African literature, then, was that those prepared to adapt to their country (the Boers) were unable or unwilling to express this in what are usually called

literary modes; those who aspired to literature (usually the English-speakers and, until Schreiner's own period, invariably born abroad) often remained locked in the vocabularies of "glens" and "dales" and "knolls" or the styles of youth literature (keen, clean-limbed youths subduing both "black Caffres" and drunken Dutchmen with the force of Christian example and British initiative). Schreiner's capacity to make the imaginative leap necessary for a colonial child to see her native land without an intervening screen of her mother's native land, to create a literature out of her first-hand perception, constitutes an achievement the enormity of which only began to be credited in the latter half of this century. In the past forty years it has become common for writers from southern Africa to write gratefully of Schreiner's achievement in depicting South Africa as recognisably "home" in her fiction. How ironical that the same writer who cried to Ellis "I never had a home"[52] and who signed letters to Pearson "The Wandering Jew" became the founder of a national literature.[53]

iii. Claws and Talons

The narrator of "Times and Seasons" (the chapter in Part Two of African Farm in which a soul's progress is described) warns that "When a soul breaks free from the arms of a superstition, bits of the claws and talons break themselves off in him" (African Farm, p. 150). Thus a soul, like the Hunter in the Hunter's Allegory in the same novel, is beleaguered not just from without (by philistine, superstitious, censorious neighbours) but by the insidious temptations of internalised desires, fears and inhibitions. "Times and Seasons" 's narrator also declares that "What a soul drinks in with its mother's milk will not leave it in a day" (African Farm, p. 150). This metaphor suggests graphically enough who it is who so often administers poison to a soul: Waldo's Stranger also says "We have proved the religion our mothers fed us on to be a delusion" (African Farm, p. 171). Later he adds "We of this generation are not destined to eat and be satisfied as our fathers were; we must be content to go hungry" (African Farm, pp. 172-3). Hunger and loneliness were always metaphors for

Schreiner's religious struggle, and all her life she remained deeply affected life by aspects of a religion she rejected at a very young age.

During the period of her Christian faith (which lasted until August 1865, when her infant sister Ellie died) Schreiner was apt to fall foul of conventional religious observance, both by becoming over-attached to the dangerously liberal Sermon on the Mount, and apparently by informing her father "at the age of eight" that going to church for her "would be a waste of time."[1] The repercussions of such experiences may have bred both wariness and a search for lone, almost martyred figures as role models: it is unsurprising that in section three of "Times and Seasons" (which recounts the time when "We" are "seven years old" and eagerly read the Bible) the Sermon on the Mount episode is reproduced. Prior to that section, the narrator also declares that "best of all we like the story of Elijah in his cave at Horeb, and the still small voice" (African Farm, p. 139). That story (1 Kings 19) shows Elijah reminding the Lord repeatedly that "the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant...; and I, even I only, am left." There is evidence in Schreiner's diary from the years at Balfour that her precocious iconoclasm had caused her consciously to valorise silence, solitude and martyrdom. At the age of nine she wrote:

> Moses learned trouths of [ ] from the time when he wandered in the lonely wilderniss of sinea to the days when Martin Luther weep & preid in the con[v]ent cells & closters of Aubse down to this nineteenth century all great trouths have ferst seen the light [and?] the foundation [?] of all great works been laid in hours of soluted [solitude] & silence whether it were in the hear[t] of great cities or the solitude of everlast mountains all the greates trouth & works the world has know have ferst been laid or had their power laid in hours of solude & quiet.[2]

Yet, however lonely the place in which "great trouths" "ferst" see "the light," their profession is a social act and has social repercussions: Elijah's had meant that his hearers were to "seek my life, to take it away." Schreiner was to become not only isolated but also a victim: the trials of Elijah in the face of renegade Israelites and the lone fight of Jesus in the temple against the moneylenders are recalled when the "we" of "Times and Seasons"

find church-going impossible, surrounded as "we" are by people more interested in flirting and putting on a show than in worshipping God (African Farm, pp. 146-8). Early clashes with her parents indicate that Schreiner initially rejected church-going rather than Christianity itself. The latter rejection was to begin following an event in August 1865:

> It was her [Ellie's] death, when I was about nine, which first made me realise the falsity of what I had been taught and made a freethinker of me. She only lived eighteen months, but for that 18 my life was entirely in and through her, and I watched her die.[3]

Schreiner's disillusionment can be seen in section six of "Times and Seasons," wherein "life takes us by the neck and shows us a few other things--new-made graves with the red sand flying about them; eyes that we love with the worms eating them" (African Farm, p. 148). But initially, Schreiner's faith seems to have changed rather than disappeared at Ellie's death. It did not vanish altogether until her persecution at the hands of the ultra-orthodox Theo and Ettie in Cradock 1868 to 1870. Subsequently, with the help of Spencer's First Principles, given to her in 1871 by another cleric's child (Willie Bertram) who had turned to freethinking, Schreiner seems to have clawed her way out of a despairing "blank atheism" and back into a belief in a meaningful universe.[4]

At Ellie's death, a deeply grieved Gottlob Schreiner wrote to his son-in-law John Findlay: "Oh to be ready to depart and so be with Christ--We have to battle now." He exhorted Findlay and himself to eschew grief in the certain knowledge that Ellie was "safely housed above."[5] Olive Schreiner was unable to react as her father had, and was to describe her reaction later in this way:

> ... it was impossible for me then, as it is impossible for me now, to accept the ordinary doctrine that she was living on somewhere without a body. I felt then and I have always felt since when I have been brought face to face with death that it is in a larger doctrine than that, that joy and beauty must be sought.
>
> I used to love the birds and animals and inanimate nature better after she was dead; the whole of existence seemed to me more beautiful because it had brought forth and taken back to itself such a beautiful thing as she was to me.[6]

Ellie's death caused Schreiner, in other words, to turn away from her father's obedient faith, and the natural world provided (at least for a time) some relief and consolation, which after all only had to build on her pre-existing sense of "the perception of the unity of all things" which she claimed to have felt at an even younger age.[7]

Eventually, as Schoeman remarks, because she could not "find an acceptable alternative to Wesleyanism... her rejection of that denomination and its dogma amounted, in effect, to a rejection of Christianity as such."[8] Such an "all-or-nothing" state of mind did not continue consistent in Schreiner's mind, however, and "Times and Seasons" contains an analagous description of deceptive rekindling and abrupt drenching of remaining embers of faith which she endured. It was not until the winter of 1871, while on a visit to her aunt Elizabeth Rolland in Hermon, a remote corner of Basutoland, that she was able to ease her sense of spiritual isolation in company. Her meeting with Willie Bertram at her aunt and uncle's house was suitably dramatic (though Rive's transcription, witting or no, has made it appear more so):

> ... one stormy rainy night, there was a knock at the door, and they [her aunt and uncle] were afraid to go and open it, so I went. There was a Stranger like Waldo's Stranger exactly. There was no house within fifty miles so he slept there; the next morning he talked with me **for a little while and after that I saw him twice for** half an hour; and then I never saw him again. [Words in bold-face show those cut without ellipsis from Rive's edition of the Letters].[9]

As a matter of fact, Schreiner described Bertram's sister (whose deathbed she visited) as "a girl whom I knew slightly all my life," and Bertram was to live in Dordrecht for most of the time Schreiner did in 1870-1, so he was not a total "Stranger" to her at all.[10] The significance of this meeting lay not in the brevity or mystery of his appearance but rather, as she wrote to Ellis, that

> He lent me Spencer's First Principles. I always think that when Christianity burst on the dark Roman world it was what that book was to me. I was in such a complete blank atheism. I did not even believe in my own nature, in any right or wrong or certainty.[11]

The proper place to discuss Spencer's effect on Schreiner's thinking is in a discussion of Lyndall's thought in African Farm (1883) and in Woman and Labour (1911), where Spencer's regrettable haziness between phylogeny and ontogeny can be seen to have infected Schreiner's attempts at scientific thinking in ways which were old-fashioned in scientific circles even when she first read Spencer in 1871: in a discussion of her religious development, it need only be mentioned that Spencer, as First and Scott comment, "validated her doubts, but ... also provided her with an alternative to nihilism."[12] That is, he replaced theology with teleology, offering convenient labels -- e.g. "the Unknowable" and "the Persistence of Force"--to fill the gap left by God, and his theories provided a way for her to believe, as Spencer scholar James Kennedy puts it, "the absolute mystery about anything outside of experience should reconcile religion and science."[13] When Waldo's "Stranger" supplies him with a book Schreiner later told Ellis was meant to be a copy of Spencer's First Principles, the Stranger remarks "carelessly" that it "may be of some help to you... It was gospel to me when I first fell on it. You must not expect too much; but it may give you a centre round which to hang your ideas..." (African Farm, p. 172).[14]

First and Scott note that Schreiner's youth and gender make her somewhat unusual in a catalogue of contemporary British freethinkers (who tended to be males in their thirties or forties) and they point out that

> ... however painful the individual's crisis of faith in a country like England it could proceed with some sense of reference-point. Olive was entirely alone in the relatively advanced conclusions to which she had come.[15]

Berkman takes a similar position (indeed, paraphrases this without attribution).[16] But again, as painful as Schreiner's solitude may have been, it is always a mistake to neglect the vital importance of Schreiner's isolated status both to her self-image and to her writing. How precious her early isolation was to Schreiner in retrospect can be guessed from a letter written more than forty years after Ellie's death in which, following a description of her

childhood at Healdtown as "so very bitter and dark," she still declared "I cling to the memories of it and especially the places I lived at, they were so unutterably lovely and it was in nature I found all the joy and help I had in those lonely years."[17] Undine in England too looks back to her "tearful solitary childhood" which "with all its intense solitude, its tears and doubts and bitter prayers" had also held "hours when the heavens had seemed open and the angels of God had descended, and ascended from the earth." This reminiscence comes to her as she walks out one morning behind the house of her guardian, "Cousin Jonathan":

> ... the fresh clear air reminded her of the mornings in her old African home when she used to get up early and go to pray behind the little koppie. There it was so still and beautiful that it was easy to pray and believe in God's love. She wondered if the dew lying on the English grass were really as lovely as the great drops that used to stand trembling on the bushes and silvery ice-plants among the stones of the koppie. (Undine, pp. 90-1)

The lonely pain and the beauty are inextricably linked, as always, for Schreiner, and she almost always characterises their effect as strengthening (in stark contrast to the effect of society, which she characterises as draining). In 1892 she would write to Havelock Ellis that "the effect of this [Karoo] scenery is to make me so silent and strong and self-contained, and it is all so bare, the rocks and the bushes, each bush standing separate from the others, alone by itself."[18] Silence, strength, self-containment: what she admired in Elijah she would admire when Elijah was mere myth to her, and the landscape was the vehicle of her conversion. Much of the process of loss of faith suffered by Waldo and described in "Times and Seasons" was autobiographical, and yet the youth of the fictional character was frequently cited as a reason for critics to find this section either unbelievable or unhealthy. For example, in 1890 an anonymous critic described Schreiner's mind as "hopelessly diseased" and balked at "children of ambiguous age" being "haunted by doubts on deep problems of Divine providence..."[19] Ironically, it was a clerical reviewer, Canon MacColl, who defended African Farm against charges of blasphemy and immorality, recognising the

poignant, yearning spirituality it contained, and declaring it "evidently the product of a pure and pitying soul..."[20] First and Scott remark that MacColl alone practised anything like "doctrinal exegesis" on the novel,[21] and Schreiner herself wrote that he took "the book fairly, on the ground on which it must either be praised or condemned."[22] MacColl finds in Waldo's dilemma "probably a chapter of autobiography on the part of the authoress," and of the "two influences" he sees "apparent in the shaping of the writer's mind," one is Calvinism, which he terms "a hideous excrescence," asserting that:

> The truth is, this gifted woman has been driven from her religious and moral moorings -- first by the ghastly theology of Calvinism, and then by the difficulty which she finds in reconciling the facts of the world around her, and especially the injustice done to her own sex, with the doctrine of a God who is omnipotent, compassionate, and just....[23]

It remains curious that neither Schreiner nor any of her critics have taken MacColl to task for the nature of his extraordinary arguments and apologetics concerning the "second influence" on Schreiner, the South African landscape. MacColl solemnly informs the reader that Schreiner's native land is the wrong sort in which to grow up spiritually healthy:

> The tendency of ordinary mountain scenery is to raise the spirits, to quicken the imagination ... to point to heaven. The mountains of South Africa, on the other hand, have a depressing influence. They have none of the mystery, the sublimity, the poetry, the aspiration of ordinary mountains. They have no peaks. Their gross bulk, and flat tops, and brown sides are altogether of the earth, and seem to repel and to forbid man's yearning for something beyond the visible and the temporal.[24]

Thus, Schreiner's "hopeless pessimism" is somehow understandable, MacColl maintains, as he dismisses her beloved Karoo as "coarse grass and low scrub, lacking alike the grandeur of the Dark Continent". "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains, Whence cometh my aid," reads Psalm 121; not in South Africa, replies Canon MacColl. This portion of his article is no "doctrinal exegesis," but a peculiar imperial response to the shock of ideas proceeding from the African subcontinent and taking English orthodoxy by surprise. If MacColl was right, Rebecca Schreiner's efforts to protect her children from the "swarthy

demon in the house" were insufficient: if the dark people didn't get them, the mountains would. Yet, for Schreiner, the landscape of South Africa was spiritually nourishing: perhaps MacColl's anxiety at an "Agnosticism" he abhorred caused him either to misread her meaning, or stubbornly to ignore it.

As Schoeman documents, some rumblings of post-Darwinian doubt had reached South Africa and both at the Diamond Fields and later at Ratelhoek Schreiner would (in the persons of John Dugmore and the Reverend Naudé) come into contact with strands of freethinking and liberal theology. Nevertheless, there was by no means an easy way for a member of a frontier missionary family in which religious belief was the nominal reason for being in Africa at all to renounce Christianity. To point out that other clerics' children had done so, as Schoeman does in sketching the life of Willie Bertram, is not to create a context for Schreiner in any real sense, and if be taken so to do, then perhaps Bertram's suicide in August 1879 should be considered part of such a context, and an index of its cost.[25]

Liberal ideas did indeed reach the subcontinent from Leipzig and Paris (and some even originated in Africa, as in the work of "Sobantu" Bishop Colenso at Cape Town), even unto the resolutely backward Dutch Reformed Church. Yet most came too late or through channels largely inaccessible to Schreiner in her early years. When Undine returns to South Africa as an adult, she does so clutching a volume of First Principles, which she reads under the none-too-charitable gaze of a bigoted English Africander Mrs. Snappercaps (mother of young John Wesley Snappercaps), a foolish woman who abuses both Spencer and "the wicked Bishop Colso [sic] of Delagoa Bay" (Undine, p. 266). The creation of such a character shows that Schreiner grew to be aware of currents of change in the Colony. Yet, faithful to her own experience, she describes Undine's childhood religious crisis in Africa, like those of Waldo and Rebekah, as having to be endured alone, without any supportive agency, in human or book form. Instead, each protagonist is terrorised by the sound of a ticking clock or watch that seems to sound miniature death knells for millions of souls the child is helpless to save. As Joseph Bristow points out, Schreiner's use of a

timepiece refers back to the mechanistic theology of "one of the most influential tracts on 'revealed religion' in the early nineteenth century.... William Paley's Natural Theology (1802)."[26] Each protagonist inhabits a world without doctrinal alternatives to Paley and Jeremy Taylor, and when he or she breaks with conventional faith, all believe themselves wicked, utterly lost, and above all, alone.

Lyndall recoils from Waldo when his religious "agony is blackest", telling him, "You are mad!" (African Farm, p. 102). As for Undine, a young girl guiltily convinced that "the devil did not come to other people and make them think such thoughts as he made her," she is equally disappointed in her efforts to gain her brother Frank's understanding (Undine, p. 20). When he asks her, "Are bibles your great trouble?" she "unhesitatingly" replies "Yes" and goes on to "wonder if there are any people in the world who feel like I do and have such wicked thoughts." Frank replies complacently, "Of course there are, and much wickeder... there are people who don't believe the Bible is true, or anything else, and they write books too" (Undine, pp. 25-6). Frank has never actually read these books, he says, but he means to; later he is only half-joking when he intimates that such heresies are only for boys, not girls to read (the "overt" moral of Undine is that real girls prefer not to think if they can help it).[27] Thus isolated from books and brother alike, Undine lives through her agony of faith alone. To maintain any self-esteem at all in the bullying world of her childhood, she indulges in tantrums, telling her teacher "I know I'm wicked and I don't care what becomes of my soul, and I'm not afraid of anything" (Undine, p. 31).

Undine contains the widest variety of types of religious belief in Schreiner's corpus; after that novel she seems to have exhausted some of her interest in (or else sufficiently vented her spleen on) certain varieties of religious expression. One which does not reappear in her fiction is the "revival" meetings Undine is forced to attend in England, which were possibly inspired by those held in the Cape Colony in Schreiner's youth. The earnest desire to convert the black population of South Africa seems to have been, on a modest scale, as attractive as diamond-hunting; in addition to missionaries from Britain, France and

Germany, South Africa saw its share of Americans and one such, the Reverend William Taylor, reinvigorated the revivalist tradition among the Wesleyans of the Eastern Cape in ways even his supporters described as "exceptionable" and "startling."[28] Schreiner lived in the area of the Eastern Province towns where Taylor was "on tour" in the winter of 1866, but there may be a link between the Rev. Dugmore's nephew, John William Dugmore (with whom Schreiner became friends at New Rush diamond fields in 1873, and who provided the real-life model for Waldo), and Schreiner's experience of Taylor's ilk. The kinds of "large public gatherings" described by Schoeman where conversion was "often artificially inflamed... where even the more diffident were swept along on a wave of deliberately incited mass hysteria" are reflected in the dreadful scenes of hypocrisy, gullibility and peer pressure that Undine is made to witness at prayer meetings.[29] There, "the proceedings were opened by the singing of a hymn, in which the torments awaiting all mankind, except that infinitesimal portion who are believers in Christ, were set forth vividly..." to be followed by clerical antics of such vulgar bathos as to recall the work of Twain (Undine, p. 40). These episodes occur whilst Undine is herself still a believer in Jesus: "Through long years of ceaseless dreaming he had become to her no vague shadowy existence... but a present living reality, to whose influence were ascribed all her higher thoughts and better feeling" (Undine, p 59). Like Waldo (whose bitter secret is that he hates God but loves Jesus), Undine associates public manifestations of faith with at least tyranny if not hypocrisy, and keeps her feeling for Jesus, as First and Scott remark that Schreiner did herself, "intensely private."[30]

Missionaries like Gottlob Schreiner and his predecessor at the Healdtown Industrial School had the task of saving souls and, it was hoped, creating in the process a moderately-educated, docile black workforce. When the pupils at Healdtown were detected to be cultivating "secular concerns" (that is, material aspirations like those of their white masters), Gottlob Schreiner himself wrote that , "It has been deemed advisable not to give them such an education as will unfit them for, and be inconsistent with, their future positions in

life...."[31] Despite this "hidden agenda" to her father's missionary work, Schreiner exempted his kind of naive faith (seen in the figure of Otto in African Farm) from the general condemnation she levelled at the professions of the many complacent believers or strident proselytisers in her fiction, most particularly in the grotesque and hypocritical congregation of the village of Greenwood in Undine. Likewise, Schreiner treats with gentleness the motives of Undine, Waldo and Rebekah in their childhood reenactments of Old Testament altar sacrifices, because they approach them with a faith combined with a scientifically rigorous attitude of experimentation, and their literalism is but a stage all go through in their progress toward rationalism. Schreiner always values charity and self-sacrifice, however misguided, and differentiates between faiths based on these qualities and those attempting to serve self alone. Of this latter type, Mrs. Snappercaps of Undine is a vicious cartoon, while Mrs. Drummond of From Man to Man is a more subtle portrait. Schreiner apparently intended Bertie to die of venereal disease contracted during her career as a prostitute (a career forced on her by Mrs. Drummond's treachery) and on her deathbed, Bertie was meant to gasp at the last: "Let Mrs. Drummond pray. She is a Christian" (From Man to Man, p. 482).

The spiritual life of the female tyrant of African Farm, Tant' Sannie, is ruled by a set of absurd superstitions (about "spooks," premonitory dreams, etc.) as well as a literal interpretation of the Bible and a conviction that God's favoured ones are easily identified by their outward appearances. It is Bonaparte Blenkins' preaching in a suit (borrowed, unknown to her, from Otto) that first attracts her to him, for

> There was one thing on earth for which Tant' Sannie had a profound reverence, which exercised a subduing influence over her, which made her for a time a better woman -- that thing was new, shining black cloth... it made her think of heaven, where everything was so holy and respectable, and nobody wore tan-cord, and the littlest angel had a black tail-coat. She wished she hadn't called him a thief and a Roman Catholic. (African Farm, p. 69)

While Tant' Sannie's beliefs are mocked by the authorial voice, they are clearly shown to be empowering strategies for the invincible Boer woman. She is not just one of humanity's natural survivors but one of its great multipliers, and Schreiner displays a sneaking admiration for the way she outlives her husbands, breathtakingly secure in her "place" in a novel full of peripatetic scoundrels and Strangers and fey, existentialist children. Tant' Sannie is a woman who scorns doubt and inarguably belongs, with a faith that is frankly stupid, but curiously enabling. Her blessing to Em runs thus:

> "I'm glad you're going to get married," she said. "I hope you'll have as many children in five years as a cow has calves, and more too. I think I'll just go and have a look at your soap-pot before I start," she said, turning to Em. "Not that I believe in this new plan of putting soap in the pot. If the dear Father had meant soda to be put into soap, what would He have made milk-bushes for, and stuck them all over the "veld" as thick as lambs in lambing season?...."
>
> "You see if the sheep don't have scab this year.... It's with all these new inventions that the wrath of God must fall on us. What were the children of Israel punished for, if it wasn't for making a golden calf? I may have my sins, but I remember the tenth commandment: 'Honour thy father and mother that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee!' It's all very well to say we honour them, and then to be finding out things that they never knew, and doing things in a way that they never did them! My mother boiled soap with bushes, and I will boil soap with bushes. If the wrath of God is to fall upon this land," said Tant' Sannie, with the serenity of conscious virtue, "it shall not be through me. Let them make their steam-waggons and their fire-carriages; let them go on as though the dear Lord didn't know what he was about when He gave horses and oxen legs -- the destruction of the Lord will follow them. I don't know how such people read their Bibles." (African Farm, p. 294)[32]

For this Boer woman, children are easy to bear and plentiful as calves, and the land rewards and responds to the needs of the faithful. Her references to divine provision of milk-bushes is more than Schreiner's comic jab at the kind of literalism she had often enough witnessed at home (Cronwright-Schreiner wrote that Schreiner's elder sister Ettie "like the backveld Boer... saw the finger of God in even the veriest trifles.")[33] Tant' Sannie's untroubled elision from the Old Testament scriptures to her belief that the Lord created milk-bushes for

her foremothers and is concerned with their use stems from the different relationship the traditional Boer had to the very soil of South Africa, and from the Afrikaner self-image of a chosen people looked after by God (and destined, in their own minds at least, to rule over black Africans, the "sons of Ham"). Tant' Sannie interprets her religion as giving her the right to pronounce on the souls of others: she holds that her "Kaffir" servants "were descended from apes, and needed no salvation", though her "Hottentot" servants, arbitrarily as far as the text is concerned, are burdened with souls and thus required at prayers, as is the "old coloured woman" who basely mocks Otto.[34]

Other hidden agendas Schreiner detected underlying expressions of religious fervour included lust and social oneupmanship: the church community of Greenwood, Undine's English village, provides models of both sublimations. At an evening meeting Undine witnesses

> ... a little angular figure, dressed in a very fashionable and juvenile manner.... Frank said she had taken to attending revivals and staying to prayer-meetings since the arrival in their circuit of a young assistant preacher whose mother she was old enough to be. (Undine, p. 36).[35]

The women of Greenwood, headed by "Goodman, Mell, and Co." (Undine, p. 131), undertake to gossip, defame and ruin in the name of righteousness and charitable concern. Undine's guardian, "Cousin Jonathan" Barnacle, is a preacher whose lust for his ward distresses her. He appears like an angel when he preaches in chapel about "perfect purity," yet his rhetoric is marred by his "enormous mouth-- a mouth that seemed forever hungering after something.... always craving something" -- Undine herself, as it transpires (Undine, pp. 37-43). African Farm does not so crudely make sexual intrigue masked by piety part of its plot, but it makes that connection constitute part of what troubles the narrator of "Times and Seasons (African Farm, pp. 146-7).

Barnacles and Undine's stern, dogmatic grandfather apart (the latter possibly modelled on Schreiner's fierce grandfather Samuel Lyndall, whom she never met, a bitter ex-Wesleyan minister who came to call himself a Methodist Calvinist), the other

representations of the faithful in Undine are comical: only Brother Snappers is treated with vinegar.[36] He scolds sinners "rabidly" and urges all to repent before it is too late and they find themselves "in that place from which there would be no coming up forever. He did not say so, but he left one the impression that he would not have many tears to weep if such were the case" (Undine, p. 42). This sounds much like Theo Schreiner, who expressed himself in vengeful tones when he wrote to his freethinking sister Olive, after she had been severely ill, that "with her ideas on religion, he really couldn't hope for her recovery."[37]

The character of old Otto, the most favourably-drawn exponent of Christianity in Schreiner's fiction, is portrayed tenderly but also with an undertone of frustration: why, Schreiner asks (prefiguring Brecht) are the good so often feeble-minded? Otto grows irritated when the young Lyndall questions Bonaparte's Munchausian stories of adventures among titled Russians and ravenous bears; his response suggests the girl is an habitual skeptic and that he frequently chides her for this:

> "That is what I do hate!" he cried. "Know that it is true! How do you know that anything is true? Because you are told so. If we begin to question everything -- proof, proof, proof -- what will we have to believe left? How do we know the angel opened the prison door for Peter, except that Peter said so? How do you know that God talked to Moses, except that Moses wrote it? That is what I hate!" (African Farm, p. 62)

Even Aunt Margaret, the kindest woman in Undine, nicknamed "Golden Light" for her beauty and warmth, warns Undine early on that: "If once we listen to our own hearts and use our reason, we go away from God..." She adds "If some one whom I loved very much were to die not loving Christ, I think, I am sure, I should go mad, quite mad" (Undine, p. 39). Aunt Margaret does go mad, in fact, in the most pantomime fashion.

If utter credulity was as unacceptable to Schreiner as to Lyndall, perhaps a skepticism born of fashion or a desire to please was equally so. Poor Harry Blair, one of Undine's admirers, tries to impress her by affecting a rakish atheism:

> His ideas as to what her views might be were not very clear, but he had a vague notion that she believed in nothing; accordingly he had convinced

> himself that he also believed in nothing and he had not a little disgusted and very much astonished her by informing her, as he scraped up and down with his boots on the gravel, that he was an infidel, an atheist beside whom Hume was orthodox and Voltaire a credulous believer.
> "I am sorry to hear it," was Undine's brief reply.
> "Why should you be sorry that I resemble you?" he asked.
> "I was not aware that you did so," she answered. (Undine, pp. 113-4)

To this same unsuccessful suitor Undine remarks: "Religion is like love. It flourishes best in silence, and is to be felt, not spoken of" (Undine, p. 112). Her ideas on love being as unorthodox as on religion, her pronouncement speaks more of pragmatism than of romantic reserve. Undine has been shown musing while yet a child, "I was young, but I had learnt a little worldly wisdom-- enough to tell me that, if a man is unfortunate enough to have ideas of his own, he had best keep them to himself" (Undine, p. 35).

A wise silence on religious matters kept Schreiner in the employ of several orthodox farm families around Cradock between 1875 and 1881. The one exception to her self-imposed rule occurred at the Cawoods, where her status in the family was more than that of employee: Schreiner had been friends with Erilda Cawood since her days at Cradock with Theo and Ettie. But Schreiner's candour about her true beliefs resulted in Mrs. Cawood's breaking off the friendship in the winter of 1879. After Schreiner had gone to work for the Fouchés again, this time at Leliekloof, Cawood wrote:

> I no longer love you, and cannot act hypocritically.... God in His goodness and wisdom used you as a means to show me what an awful soul-destroying thing freethinking is....
> I must tell you that I am not alone in what I feel. Richard [her husband] and I have both, while pointing out to the children that they owe you gratitude, told them that you are God's enemy and that they cannot love God and you at the same time....
> You know, Olive, if I were a freethinker I should be a much prouder one than you are. I would never be able to accept hospitality and kindness from Christians, knowing,[38] that if they knew me as I really was, they would fly from me, affrighted.

Mrs. Cawood had been someone to whom Schreiner could speak of her writing and confide her hopes. After Theo and Ettie's persecution and a romantic rejection in 1872, and after

perhaps a lifetime of, like Undine, being "called queer and strange and odd" (Undine, p. 35), this blow must have been a terrible one. It was to reinforce Schreiner's sense of persecution, surely affording grounds for her niece's opinion nearly forty years later that:

> There was a bitterness in her freethinking, I thought, which was not known to my generation; her battle had been hard and lonely and long, one guessed... But there was no mistaking the fierce joy of the pioneer.[39]

The "bitterness" and the "fierce joy" describe again the character of one whose lone stance was a source of both pain and pride.

Paradoxically, Schreiner would later earn the title of "religious genius" even from eminent Christians.[40] The work that would accomplish this was The Story of an African Farm, specifically the section "Times and Seasons," which, in detailing the progress of a fervent Christian child's belief into disbelief, and then into a creed beyond either, maps out Waldo's early spiritual path. Such a path was, by Schreiner's own admission, close to her own. The seven stages in this process show movement from an infant's undifferentiated sensuous experience of nature to the awful discovery of "self," to an earnest Christian literalism marred by "doubts about the morality of Christian eschatology" (as First and Scott describe stage three, a common sticking-point for the Victorian faithful)[41] followed by self-hatred, rebellion, submission, and a glorious surrender into a sense of being forgiven. But doubts return, and the fifth stage describes a youth's sense of only "three courses possible -- to go mad, to die, to sleep. We take the latter course; or Nature takes it for us"; during this stage hypocrites and fools disturb "our" peace; senseless death and prosperous evildoers in stage six smash "our" faith utterly. Finally, in stage seven, "we" learn to integrate an awareness of evil and good in the world by substituting for old pieties a regard for nature which is scientific as well as aesthetic (African Farm, pp. 137-154).

Despite what Berkman demonstrates is a classical evangelical "conversion in reverse," Schreiner was later to use the word "God" frequently, especially in her dreams

and allegories. She was conscious that this was unsatisfactory; still she could not, as Berkman notes, reconcile herself to alternative terms like Emerson's "Over-Soul" or Spencer's "The Unknowable" to describe what "Times and Seasons" leaves as the conviction that "this thing we call existence... [is] not a chance jumble" but "a living thing, a One" (African Farm, p. 153).[42] From the point where this realisation is made, in stage seven, learning for its own sake takes the place of religion. For it is in discerning patterns, finding a "Truth" characterised as both highly particularised (in the veins of a leaf, the ventricles of a bird's heart) and as an overarching "One," that the "we" of "Times and Seasons" comes to terms with a new way of living, free from religious torment. The influence of Emerson is as clear as that of Spencer, in phrases like "Every day the karroo shows us a new wonder sleeping in its teeming bosom" (African Farm, p. 152) which echoes one of Schreiner's reportedly favourite Emerson phrases "Embosomed in wonder and beauty as we are."[43]

The first and greatest gift Emerson may have supplied Schreiner with is that of voice; "Times and Seasons", with its constant use of "we," is obviously not even disguised as Waldo's experience alone. The use of the first person plural is a bold assumption that Schreiner's experience would be common to many; it could not have been written before Schreiner had read enough at least to hope for such an audience. Emerson, whose totalising use of "we" is appropriated by Schreiner with at least an appearance of similar confidence, had been recommended to her by Willie Bertram in 1871. She finally obtained a copy of his Essays in Cape Town in the summer of 1874, and his work not only supported and guided her developing philosophy, but appears to have empowered her in other ways. The diary entry that records her first "writing out" of A Queer Little Child (later titled Undine--although "A Queer Little Child" remained the title of the novel's first chapter) includes the following in the same passage: "I don't hate myself quite so much as I used to.... I am reading Emerson and it is giving me more strength than anything has ever done."[44]

So to Schreiner's Spencerian desire to see structural connections within and between all things was added intellectual support for her long-maintained valorisation of the lone and unpopular pioneer of truth via essays like "Self-Reliance." That essay's power was such that, having begun it at the bottom of a flight of stairs, Schreiner was compelled to sit in the middle of the flight and finish it at once; parts of it must have been déjà vu to the author of "Most great trouths..."[45] "Trust thyself," Emerson wrote; and he sets forth an exhortation that must have seemed like the answer to an insecure autodidact's prayer:[46]

> A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side.[47]

Thus it was with a self-assurance that can only be called Emersonian that Schreiner wrote to Ellis in 1885 that Emerson's value is "that of stimulation. He brings no new thought -- when he does it is worthless -- but he makes all thoughts live and throb, which is the work of true genius."[48]

Arthur Symons recorded that as a writer Emerson did not express all of what Schreiner felt, but that there was "nothing... not a half sentence" that she did not "absolutely agree with," feeling "This is what I think."[49] She expressed a desire that Emerson's Essays be buried with her, a fact which, together with her claim to Ellis in 1884 that Emerson was "just like a bible to me", reinforces the impression (given that Schreiner's relationship to the Bible had been unusually strong and she was not one to make of it a casual metaphor) that Emerson replaced Christianity for her (even if there were aspects of Transcendentalist philosophy with which she never agreed).[50] Moreover, since Christianity was never for any of the Schreiners a mere matter of Faith without Works she could not but put her new theories into practice.

In his essay "The Poet", Emerson had reassured Schreiner that the poet "uses forms according to the life, and not according to the form. This is true science."[51] Though this essay was of great value to her, she was not content to see herself as having merely the power of Emerson's "Namer, or Language-Maker": part of her philosophy and indeed her aesthetics required her to know the material world viscerally, empirically. As Berkman notes, one of the snares Waldo must avoid is the "Transcendentalist's high answer" after Lyndall's death, which asks him "What have you to do with the flesh, the gross and miserable garment in which the spirit hides itself?" He rejects the answer, wanting Lyndall as she was, "a little woman full of sin" (African Farm, p. 287-8).[52] Schreiner repudiated the Emersonian concept of immortality, "as much for ...[its] derision of matter as for... lack of scientific credibility."[53] Yet she admits its seductive strength: the bird with which the truth-seeking Hunter of Waldo's Stranger's allegory finds it most difficult to part is a "dark-plumed" one which cries "Immortality!" When the Hunter is forced to release it he says "It may be happen that in Truth's song one note is like to yours; but I shall never hear it" (African Farm, p. 163).

In the years after Schreiner travelled to England, she was to return to Emerson's essays and poetry repeatedly, particularly when under stress. Time and again she would reiterate the principles of "Self-Reliance," encouraging herself in her diary and always advocating that others should stand alone for the sake of Truth.[54] In contrast, by 1884 she could write to Ellis of Spencer thus: "If one has a broken leg and a doctor sets it, when once it is set one may be said to have no more need of the doctor." She added, though, that "Nevertheless one always walks on his leg."[55]

In the immediate "post-Pearson" period of Schreiner's life in which she concentrated on writing dreams and allegories (1886-1892) Emerson's essay again had relevance to Schreiner's life, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. It need only be remarked at this point that "A Dream of Wild Bees" contains an unacknowledged borrowing from Emerson's essay "The Poet", which makes explicit the exact form of compensation Schreiner decided

made up for her loss, not just of the idea of God, but of worldly goods and of romantic love.[56]

In "A Dream of Wild Bees", the mother of an unborn "ninth child" (Olive Schreiner was the ninth-born in her family) of the "Dream" chooses a bleak life for her baby, rejecting health, wealth and love for it in return for an awesome Stranger's promise to the child that "Thy reward shall be this: that the ideal shall be real to thee" (Dreams, p. 90 and 96). Emerson's "The Poet" contains this line: "And this is thy reward: that the ideal shall be real to thee..."[57] But, crucially, where Emerson goes on to promise the Poet mastery of the earth, sea and air, Schreiner, typically, emphasises in her allegory what the "ninth child" will have to sacrifice. Thus, even from Emerson's bounteous promise that "there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee" she distilled a directive of renunciation -- however gloriously recompensed. Emerson, who was "like a bible" to her, could only communicate to her, in different words, what her parents' version of the Bible had prepared her for.

Ultimately, Berkman may be correct in locating at the heart of Schreiner's spirituality an "integrationist philosophy," one which, although it "abounded in ambiguities" and "fluctuated from a modified idealism to a neutral monism, from a vague interrelationship of transcendent and mundane reality to a pantheistic blending of the two,"[58] still qualifies Schreiner as the "religious genius" Lloyd and others saw her as being. Certainly, Berkman argues persuasively (and compendiously) for the scope of mystic spirituality in Schreiner's thought. But the practical upshot of such thought on spiritual matters remained individual struggle. The mystic vision promised by the Stranger of "A Dream of Wild Bees" may well answer the "ninth child"'s mother's query "Is it real?" with a cryptic counter-question "What is real?" but the future pains and privations he promises the gifted foetus include solitude and failure; ever must it "travel alone" (Dreams, p. 95). Berkman appears almost puzzled that J. S. Mill, Schreiner's "most important moral mentor" never inspired her to articulate "his modified utilitarian logic in her own writings." Berkman writes

> ... the levers of pleasure and pain, the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number were phrases that never entered her vocabulary. What she absorbed from Mill appeared mostly to be his moral commitment to empirical and logical reasoning.[59]

Berkman's puzzlement is itself puzzling: there is very little evidence that Schreiner ever had much to say (except in wartime) about the "greatest number" and least of all would she have done so with regard to the spiritual matters which concerned her more. For her Mill's effect had been explicitly, "directly spiritual":

> Modern Political Economists, such as Karl Marx, have gone much further than Mill in the analysis of economic fact, and as far as mere technical knowledge of logic goes other writers will now reproduce for you all Mill stated, but the spirit, the pure soul searching after the Truth which is God; seeking to know nothing, to seek nothing, to discover nothing but Truth, that, just that you will find nowhere else as in following and watching the mind of Mill work! ...Spencer has helped me, but less than Mill. When I was sixteen and doubted everything his First Principles showed me the unity of existence; but it was an intellectual aid, which I myself had to transmute into spiritual bread. Mill's aid was directly spiritual.[60]

All her life Schreiner preferred to advocate the salutary effect of hard, bitter and preferably lonely struggle (as undertaken, for example, by the solitary women workers and visionaries of Woman and Labour); likewise she was to tell F. W. Pethick-Lawrence and Mrs. Francis Smith (Adela Villiers) that women's struggle for suffrage was of as much value as the vote itself.[61] Admirable in some instances, this attitude of valorising Work[s] over Faith, even (sometimes preferably) at the expense of Results, would become almost self-parodying in From Man to Man, when Drummond tells Rebekah (with whom Schreiner explicitly identified herself) that he knows which path in life she would always choose: "Whichever gave you most pain or least pleasure. You would always think that was the right one" (From Man to Man, p. 479).

The evidence suggests that both the faith in which Schreiner was raised and the punishment she received for deviating from it permanently conditioned the ways in which she reacted to the people and books with whom and which she came into contact afterwards. Hence she found it impossible to distill anything other than support for a

martyred heroism from "moral mentors" like Emerson or Mill, even when they offered something else. As First and Scott record, Schreiner was to return in her writing "continually" to that childhood in which such a solitary compulsion was forged, to "its context of parental, certainly maternal severity; to the brooding sense of a wrathful God watching over children with a sense of original sin..."[62]

Yet as isolating and painful as she found freeing herself from its "claws and talons," Schreiner's early religious training had provided her with several important gifts. Together with a formidable sense of duty, she had been granted a hardy belief in her right to speak as an individual, and a creed which believed in the need to work out one's own salvation. Ideologically, Wesleyanism (like Emerson) took account of an individual's capacity for wisdom regardless of orthodox training -- as Berkman notes, Wesley himself had "summoned individuals to spurn theological and intellectual understanding and conformity and, instead, engage in 'heart-work'."[63] Perhaps, too, Schreiner's painful propensity for self-examination (encouraged by Wesleyanism) assisted her in examining character when she came to write; certainly her knowledge of the Bible, together with a facility with stories and allegories which grew out of her Biblical knowledge, did. In all of Schreiner's work (but particularly in the allegories and dreams) can be seen the figure of the solitary woman, child, or "soul" who dreams, strives, tells stories, and strenuously aspires to be "better;" the change the years brought was for Schreiner to dramatically intensify the isolation of her protagonists as her own sense of isolation grew.

iv. Hadn't We Better Kill the Baby?

> It used to be said... that there were three great factors in the Cape Colony -- the Afrikander Bond, the South African Party, and the Schreiners.[1]

Cronwright-Schreiner noticed that "the Schreiner children, when grown up, often scared their mother with the strength of their convictions, and, some of them, by their explosive intensity," and he compared the formidable Rebecca Schreiner with "a hen that has hatched a strange brood of ducklings and one swan."[2] This metaphor says as much about Cronwright-Schreiner as his mother-in-law, since a crucial part of his myth of Olive Schreiner as a "wild, untutored genius" (here "a swan") relied on his tendency to see people as victims or beneficiaries of inborn "Character." An alternative view, looking at nurture rather than nature, can suggest that commitment and intensity were necessary coping mechanisms the Schreiner children employed in order to feel in control when confronted with their extremely insecure childhood circumstances. The powerful personalities thus created did not always coexist happily; and likewise in Schreiner's fiction siblings are as apt to disappoint (or to disappear from the narrative altogether) as parental figures are.

Nina Auerbach has written evocatively of the prevalence of "the symbol of the orphan, male and female by turns" in nineteenth-century fiction, which functions as "a reminder that culture takes inspiration from its outcasts."[3] Schreiner certainly manipulated this symbol in ways that fit within the Romantic tradition Auerbach identifies (and Schreiner's early reading of Dickens, Ouida and Goethe may well have encouraged her to do so). Nevertheless she was primarily, as has been and will be demonstrated, an autobiographical author who continually returned to themes of childhood, and the woman who wrote of herself in 1889, "I"ve never had a home... I"ve borne now for four and thirty years alone" meant it.[4] If one considers that statement to be mitigated by Schreiner's emotional state in 1889, then one need only look at that she made in cooler blood four years later: "My mother has never been a mother to me; I have had no mother."[5] These comments

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Cronwright-Schreiner noticed that "the Schreiner children, when grown up, often scared their mother with the strength of their convictions, and, some of them, by their explosive intensity," and he compared the formidable Rebecca Schreiner with "a hen that has hatched a strange brood of ducklings and one swan."[2] This metaphor says as much about Cronwright-Schreiner as his mother-in-law, since a crucial part of his myth of Olive Schreiner as a "wild, untutored genius" (here "a swan") relied on his tendency to see people as victims or beneficiaries of inborn "Character." An alternative view, looking at nurture rather than nature, can suggest that commitment and intensity were necessary coping mechanisms the Schreiner children employed in order to feel in control when confronted with their extremely insecure childhood circumstances. The powerful personalities thus created did not always coexist happily; and likewise in Schreiner's fiction siblings are as apt to disappoint (or to disappear from the narrative altogether) as parental figures are.

Nina Auerbach has written evocatively of the prevalence of "the symbol of the orphan, male and female by turns" in nineteenth-century fiction, which functions as "a reminder that culture takes inspiration from its outcasts."[3] Schreiner certainly manipulated this symbol in ways that fit within the Romantic tradition Auerbach identifies (and Schreiner's early reading of Dickens, Ouida and Goethe may well have encouraged her to do so). Nevertheless she was primarily, as has been and will be demonstrated, an autobiographical author who continually returned to themes of childhood, and the woman who wrote of herself in 1889, "I"ve never had a home... I"ve borne now for four and thirty years alone" meant it.[4] If one considers that statement to be mitigated by Schreiner's emotional state in 1889, then one need only look at that she made in cooler blood four years later: "My mother has never been a mother to me; I have had no mother."[5] These comments

are traditionally acknowledged by Schreiner scholars when examining the absence or inadequacy of parental figures in her fiction; but in light of the strong personalities and dramatic lives of Schreiner's numerous brothers and sisters and the fact that she lived with several of her siblings for prolonged periods, their absence or disappearance in the novels and stories is also remarkable. A child in Schreiner's fiction, in short, is as likely to be an only child as an orphan. The one narrative of which this is not true is From Man to Man, which permits a pair of sisters, Rebekah and Bertie, to grow up together. The key to why this book is different is to be found in its dedication, which is to Schreiner's dead sister Ellie (accompanied by a quote from Emerson's "Each and All," naturally).[6] Of Ellie, Schreiner wrote to Pearson:

> From the moment of her birth to her death there was nothing in our relations that was not absolutely ideal, i.e., so sweet and perfect that I cannot imagine its being better.[7]

It would seem that siblings who lived longer than seventeen months were comparatively disappointing.

Perhaps Undine should be the one to introduce Schreiner's family as Schreiner saw it before leaving for England, since Undine is a work which probably remained unchanged after 1879. Here, William Brown, a man Undine is nursing at New Rush, asks her:

> "....Tell me how it is that I am quite contented to lie here and be fed and nursed by you, and don't feel as though I ought even to thank you, when I would die sooner than take a broken sixpence from my own flesh and blood? How is it? I"m too weak to think."
> "You must be weak if you can't think that out," she said, twisting one arm about the tent-post... "Don't you know there are things we have to be more grateful for than being nursed and fed? ... as for getting help from our relations... they are just the last people to go to unless one likes getting a pain in one's pride bones. One has a lurking suspicion they are doing it from principle or necessity or something equally disagreeable; and that's why their money hurts." (Undine, p. 338)

At this point in the narrative (and at most others) Undine has no relations at all, her father having died before the narrative begins, her mother by the second chapter and her brother

by the fifth. Undine's grandmother is dead by the twelfth chapter, and Undine's baby and husband succumb not long after. Undine is never presented as dependent on family for money, at least not after she marries a rich man at the age of seventeen. Hence this speech in the "diamond fields" makes no sense in terms of the circumstances of Undine's life, but it does in her creator's.

The background to Undine's opinion may be this: after Cradock, Schreiner lived at various addresses (Avoca, Hermon, Dordrecht and Hertzog) for a period of just over two years before living again with Theo and Ettie for a period of nearly a year in the "diamond fields" of New Rush, 1872-3. Immediately afterward, she lived in Fraserburg with her sister, Alice Hemming, for three months, and then travelled with her to Cape Town, from which (against her parents' wishes) she travelled to stay with them instead of returning (with Alice) back to live with Theo and Ettie.

If, as has been suggested before, Theo and Ettie are indeed to be found in the evangelical set of Greenwood in Undine, and if, as it is suggested below, Mrs. Snappercaps of the same novel has something to do with Alice Hemming, there is plenty of reason for Schreiner not to wish to live again with any of the three. Instead, she chose to embark on a career as a governess, starting with the Weakley family in Colesberg in May of that year. This was not her first appointment as governess (she had already worked as one on semi-formal terms in the houses of her cousin and a family friend) but it was the first among strangers, the first gesture of independence. She continued to be determined to save money in order to fulfil her dream of travel to America or England to undertake medical training, characteristically asserting her independence by rejecting offers of money from Kate's husband, John Findlay, the following year. Perhaps this refusal was rooted in an episode Cronwright-Schreiner mentions concerning Schreiner having told Ellis "that her sisters refused to help her in money matters because she was a freethinker" (it is not clear to what date, or to which sisters, Schreiner referred).[8] In any case, the anecdote makes some sense of Undine's distaste for help proffered through "principle or necessity or something equally

disagreeable." Among the Schreiner children, the ideals of independence, determination, and duty were a matter of pride.

One can view the Schreiner upbringing, with its emphasis on the primacy of duty and near-fanatical faith, as inclined to impress an ambitious sense of mission. From another perspective, one can view their upbringing as having dealt psychological wounds that demanded spectacular compensatory behaviours. In any case, it certainly produced strong-willed personalities in whom a didactic strain was in the ascendant. Fred and Theo became headmasters, Ettie became famous as a Temperance worker and a political speaker, Will became Prime Minister, and Schreiner became the founder of the national literature. Clearly an extraordinary drive had been instilled. Schreiner also believed that the Schreiner men were particularly distinguished by their unselfishness, following their father's example.[9]

Fred, the eldest of the sons, rose to be a headmaster, Justice of the Peace, and Freemason, in Eastbourne, England. Schreiner would live with him for some months when she first arrived in England; he supported her financially on and off until she married. He is distinguished in Cronwright-Schreiner's Life by his "hearty kind of tempestuous good nature"; he was apparently more a "man of the world" than any other member of the family.[10] Cronwright-Schreiner relates a family story which he claims prefigured Fred's adult creed of expedience. In 1850, whilst Rebecca sheltered with several of her children under a river bank from the same murderous raid by the Bataung tribe on the amaMfengu which nearly saw Katie killed, she cautioned that unless all the children were silent, the family might be murdered. "A little while passed and then little Fred... pulling her face down to his, whispered very softly: "Mamma, hadn't we better kill the baby?"[11] His religious pragmatism Olive Schreiner would later find repulsive: apparently he had argued that although

> ... one could not say whether there was any truth in the [Christian] dogmas, for instance, of a future life, or of heaven or hell... there might be; it was therefore safest to believe them: if it were not true, it did no harm; if they were true, it was well to have believed them.[12]

Despite his un-Schreiner-like lack of religious idealism, he had charisma. Cronwright-Schreiner remarks, "it was said of him in his prime that the temperature went up ten degrees when he entered the room."[13]

Ettie, the baby who escaped young Fred's pragmatism, survived to cultivate an evangelical Christianity and a fervent devotion to the cause of Temperance. She became a revered philanthropist of such celebrity that ten thousand attended her funeral.[14] Her enthusiasm was unfeigned: she would embrace the most disgusting unfortunate in rags on the street if she thought she could preach him away from his bottle. Her commitment to England made her a passionate supporter of the British cause during the South African War and she (with Theo) deeply wounded Schreiner, not least by involving their mother in bitter sibling wrangles during and after the War.[15]

Theo Schreiner's varied career included a degree from the University of London, two spells as a headmaster, two as a diamondhunter (in which he finally succeeded with a find of 230 carats), a stint as a hawker of produce, a Temperance campaigner, and senator. Unlike Fred, Theo was often thought "a little cold, a little hard", for "in him the blood of his old Puritan ancestors worked mightily."[16] His grandnephew, Will Stuart, said: "Theo never argued 'this is unadvisable' -- but only 'this is wrong' or 'this is right'.... He wore the whole armour of God...."[17] Theo Schreiner was a fierce supporter of the British side in the South African War; in that cause, as he once had with Schreiner's youthful apostasy, he "went so far as to make a personal matter" of the differences between his views and those of Olive Schreiner, Cronwright-Schreiner remembered, saying things in public speeches that were not only "untrue" but "execrable in taste", for he "had not the faculty of seeing things impersonally."[18]

Will, the youngest surviving Schreiner, had a brilliant career at the new South African College in Cape Town, and then at Cambridge, where he earned the title of "The Star of South Africa", coming first in the Law Tripos and winning the Chancellor's medal in 1881.[19] He returned to Cape Town after being called to the Bar at the Inner Temple, and

rose rapidly to be both a Q.C. and Attorney-General in Rhodes" second ministry in 1893; an appointment he swiftly resigned, then took up again in 1894. He (among very few) was not "bought" by Rhodes' Mafia-style politics of favours, flattery and calling in of accounts; his "affectionate heart," however, was vulnerable, and the treachery of the Jameson Raid (see Chapter 3) "nearly killed him."[20] He was Prime Minister of the Colony from 1898 to 1900, and, while he was never a "jingo" like Theo and Ettie, neither was he against the war; there was however at least one attempt to assassinate him (probably made by a "Jingo"). He became "a free-thinker in religion" as his sister Olive wrote proudly, "... but he always takes the lawyer's view even of that."[21] At the turn of the century he underwent what he compared to a religious "conversion" on the "native question" and subsequently fought the Act of Union because he believed that through it the interests of non-white South Africans were betrayed. This indeed was a change from the smug "Beaconsfield young man" ("conservative, strongly imperialist and anti-native") who had returned to South Africa in the 1880s.[22]

Alice's and Kate's "careers" in marriage required enormous physical strength, if nothing else. Cronwright-Schreiner remarks that Alice Hemming bore sixteen children (other records list fifteen); she died "while her sun was yet high, of that subtle heart-disease which had its mysterious hold upon her family."[23] The notion that a heart disease would have to be subtle to carry off a small woman (she measured less than five feet tall) who had given birth to at least fifteen children before the age of thirty-eight and watched twelve die in infancy may suggest more about what was expected of a colonial woman in the middle of the nineteenth century than about what was expected of a Schreiner per se. But perhaps not -- as Theo's harsh denunciation of his mother's religious conversion (below) would demonstrate.

Kate Schreiner Findlay (mother of twelve, who lost only four in early childhood) was to suffer from mental illness caused, it is thought, by puerperal fever and/or stress caused by the rumour of an attack by the Korana in the late 1860s; certainly after that time

she suffered from bouts of dementia.[24] In the early stages she is merely described as unaccountably "suspicious" by nature; the evidence points to schizophrenia with substantial paranoid tendencies (her letters sometimes dwell on imagined attempts by her husband to murder her) and she later seems to have been obsessed with the sexual activity (real or imagined) of those around her.[25] Ominously, Alice Hemming, too, had been said to suffer from a "suspicious" temperament.[26]

Rebecca Schreiner's training had its gifts, already discerned in the legacy of the religion which emphasised hard work in the service of a very personalised Saviour for a very personal salvation. Ironically, of all the family she was the only one to reject the creed in which she brought up her children in favour of one which allowed and even required reliance on the help and mediation of others, rather than stern and solitary self-examination. Hence Theo, with the utmost dismay, could write in 1880 that "Mamma" was now

> a Roman Catholic.... Years ago I told Hettie [Ettie] that if ever Mamma were exposed to the fascinating cajoleries of the popish system, she would succumb to them. She has always wanted some human being to take responsibility off her, even in minor matters, and in the greatest of all concerns this same shrinking from personal facing of the problems between God and soul has led her into the only Church that sets up humanity in the place of God...[27]

Significantly, what disgusted Theo so is the notion of Rebecca's shirking, her weakness in wanting relief from responsibility (Schreiner's comment that Theo was "of the stuff of which martyrs and inquisitors are made" comes irresistibly to mind).[28] Yet, although Schreiner could describe her own "funny nature" as one God made "without an epidermis," her sensitivity did not preclude an iron sense of duty and responsibility which resembled, if it did not surpass, Theo's.[29] Schreiner once wrote of him sadly, reminiscing about the "little allegories... about me" he had made for her when she was small, how he had loved her "very much" and then "turned away so utterly when I began to think."[30]

The break-up of the home Theo provided in Cradock occurred when he departed for New Rush in October of 1870, hoping to make a fortune to use in the service of

evangelism and Temperance activities. Ettie meanwhile set up an "advanced school for young ladies" in Cradock, and Olive (or Emily as she was then known) was too young to be a teacher, and was consequently in the way.[31] In any case, she had been extremely unhappy living with her brothers and sister, her relationship with Ettie in particular having become "very tense."[32] Various plans were suggested; eventually she was sent to her cousin Elise (Lillie) Orpen at the farm Avoca, situated near the town of Barkley East, a remote spot which required several days" journey through mountain passes. In this way was Schreiner, as Schoeman says,

> ... forced to resume her wanderings. For the next four years she would be a guest in the houses of virtually unknown relatives and friends, acquaintances and strangers, passed from hand to hand, from Basutoland to the Diamond Fields, from Fraserburg to Cape Town, before she could return briefly to her parents.[33]

One of her first reactions to this move away from her immediate family seems to have been an attempt to establish her own identity by asking to be called by her first name "Olive" rather than Em, Empie, Emilie, Emmie, or Milly, as she had been known. Rebecca disapproved, as one senses from a letter she wrote to Kate: "I heard yesterday from dear Emily or rather Olive (Oh that name)."[34] But Rebecca's reign of control over her youngest child was over. She registered shame as well as gratitude that the Orpens and Rollands could provide a home for her child when she "had none to give her";[35] a few years later, when she wanted to keep her daughter with her in Hertzog it would be too late.

Between Avoca in 1870 and Hertzog in 1874, in the years of "wanderings" Schoeman sketches above, Schreiner had experienced relationships that she may well have found impossible to discuss with her family. Rebecca and Gottlob Schreiner had reacted badly to the engagement of their eldest daughter, Kate, in 1859, forbidding her "any intercourse" with her younger siblings lest she "pollute" them, and vilifying her and her fiancée following an episode in which they were seen exchanging winks in church. Even after the marriage, Gottlob "excommunicated" Kate from taking the sacrament.[36] If

something as innocuous as winking, or as honourable as marriage, got Kate into this kind of trouble, then Schreiner's year at Dordrecht was hardly the stuff of which confidences were likely to be made.

v. The Dordrecht Salon, Early Reading, and Three Propositions

In addition to Schreiner's involvement with Julius Gau in Dordrecht, in which, as Berkman notes, so many scholars locate "the key to Schreiner's adult sexuality,"[1] Schreiner had at least two other romantic propositions to deal with at the same time which had repercussions on her fiction. Whatever scholars read into the sexual experience she may or may not have had in Dordrecht, the year she spent there must be considered to be of importance to her development as a writer. An author who was possessed of very few plots indeed, Schreiner demonstrably gathered material for all of the erotic complications in Undine and African Farm and half of those in From Man to Man at this time; in addition Dordrecht (not Fraserburg, as Cronwright thought) was probably the site of "The Woman's Rose," that story of one young woman's erotic power and of her tenuous bonding with another woman (Dream Life and Real Life, pp. 51-66).[2] Equally, this period saw the beginning of Schreiner's distrust of other women: this is strongly suggested both in the letters that followed her time in Dordrecht as well as that most misogynist of her novels, Undine. Finally, the year at Dordrecht (August 1871- August 1872) remained a standard for intellectual effort and expansion for Schreiner all her life. One example of evidence for this among four or five that stand out is her letter to Ellis of January 1886, in which she told him, "Yes, I have developed faster than ever in my life before, except that year at Dordrecht."[3] For all these reasons this period requires examination.

Schreiner went to Dordrecht in August 1871. The bare facts of the year, discernible as far as possible given that parts of her journal are ripped out (by Schreiner or her husband -- it is impossible to know), are as follows. She lived at the home of the Reverend Zadok Robinson, a man of thirty-six, who was married to twenty-two year-old Susanna Fincham

Robinson, and she looked after their small daughters. Robinson was an old friend of Schreiner's parents and she had already stayed with him and his wife twice at Queenstown.[4] As her Dordrecht visit became an extended one, she made sure to formalise it by securing £30 a year for the work of a governess. "They wished me to live with them just as one of the family, but I preferred coming to some definite arrangement. I think it is always best," she wrote to Katie in October, as if she were a woman of world, used to finance.[5] This arrangement may have kept her from the difficulty of feeling, as she must have at the Orpens' and at the Rollands', that she was something of a charity case. But by early April 1872 she was eager to leave their house after one of the Robinson children died. She felt unneeded, though she wrote that the "Rs" wanted her to stay, and she reported herself "anxious, miserable and distracted,"[6] even though she had blossomed socially in the small town, as Robinson reported half a century later:

> At that time there was in Dordrecht... a fair number of fairly intelligent, well read and respectable young people. Among them were Mr. and Miss Gau, with whom Olive became very intimate. These young people met often in an evening in a most informal and friendly way at our Wesleyan Manse and the entertainment consisted of conversation of the freest kind, with music and coffee at the close. There is no doubt that Olive was a strong attraction.[7]

The Dordrecht group must have constituted almost an intellectual salon in Schreiner's experience, and she later referred to the time she spent in it as one of extraordinary mental growth. She was free to use Robinson's library and could discuss Spencer with him. Her friendship with the Gaus flourished to such an extent that when Miss Gau fell ill with typhoid during the winter of 1872 Schreiner went to live at their comparatively luxurious house to nurse her.[8] Here she was under some strain: she wrote years later to Ellis of an episode in which she scandalised the good people of Dordrecht by ripping in half an expensive fur cloak Gau's sister had given her and throwing it down an outside lavatory in view of many observers.[9] This peculiar behaviour, combined with her freethinking and

perhaps her rejection of the suit of one George Fincham, a feeble yet beautiful young man, seem to have made her highly unpopular with the women of Dordrecht.[10]

When Miss Gau recovered, Robinson reports that "Olive left Dordrecht to join her mother. Miss Gau's brother went with her, for the journey was very long, over 100 miles, and very toilsome."[11] That this journey probably occured on 6 August is supported by the weather conditions Schreiner described in an undated letter to Katie the day after her arrival in Hertzog, which tally with those in the newspaper of that date; strangely, this letter says nothing of Gau.[12] A fortnight later Schreiner wrote cryptically to her sister of her engagement to Gau; then never referred to it again:

> I can't say just yet when we shall be married: it may be very soon, that is four or five months, or it may not be for at least a year to come. I will be able to tell you more definitely next week. We shall not stay long in the Colony under any circumstances... I will likely never see any of you again.... if we are not married in January we will not be for another year and before that there is no knowing what may not have taken place....[13]

Schreiner closes with a plea that her sister "not mention my engagement to anyone.... it would be very unpleasant to us to have it talked about just yet." It is clear that there is room to believe, as many scholars do, that Schreiner and her fiancé feared she was pregnant (certainly she later referred to a "time my periods stayed away") and that she was relieved rather than otherwise that her siblings would be unlikely to see her before January.[14] Bertie's seduction (which occurs when she is fifteen, the age Schreiner often used to refer to her year in Dordrecht, although in fact she was older) is often also cited as support for the idea that Schreiner and Gau had sexual relations.

Whatever the case, Gau wrote to her the following month, and the engagement was ended. Such journal entries as survive reveal her to have been near suicidal in the months that followed, confiding to her journal that she felt "... it is all dark, no hope, none, wish for nothing, the only bright spot is my foolish dream. I go to sleep with it every night but the waking in the morning is hell."[15]

How had all this come to pass?

If we look at Schreiner's status as the 'strong attraction" Robinson described her to be in Dordrecht, it will be seen this lay in a combination of personal magnetism and unusual intellectual development, despite her lack of formal schooling. Robinson wrote: 'she had everything which makes for charm.... she seemed fitted to dominate any social circle... [yet] there was never anything frivolous or shallow. You could tell she had read and she had thought."[16] It is perhaps as well to briefly sum up what "read" and "thought" might have meant so far.

"Books meant so much to me in my solitary girlhood," Schreiner wrote many years later, but which books it is not always easy to say.[17] Schoeman shows it likely that, like Rebekah of From Man to Man, Schreiner bought herself 'science primers and school books" at Healdtown when she was about nine.[18] By her own report, Milton, Coleridge, and Tennyson had been familiar to her by the age of ten (Robinson heard her recite poems by the latter two). She tried some Wordsworth too, although she later remarked "I did not like him at all when I was young."[19] While Bancroft's History of the United States is the only book she recorded reading whilst living with Theo and Ettie in Cradock, she may well have been exposed to a wider range of literature there. In the late 1860s Cradock was far ahead of neighbouring towns (even those of superior size) in the prominence it allowed books in its newspaper; they were becoming more cheaply and widely available at many outlets. Titles ranged from scandalous romances of the Mary Braddon ilk (Lady Audley's Secret and John Marchmont's Legacy) to standard editions of Pope and Shakespeare. Schreiner must have come into contact, at least by reputation, with lighter fiction such as that of the popular author Ouida, whose Tricotrin she enjoyed two years later, as well as the non-fiction which would remain her preferred reading all her life. The acquisitions list of the Cradock library in the first year such records were kept shows titles by Darwin, Mill, Lecky, and Muller.[20]

Zadok Robinson, when asked, could only recall Schreiner's having read the sermons of F. W. Robertson at Dordrecht, but her own testimony bespeaks a wider range, including Carl Vogt's Lectures on Man, David Page's The Past and Present Life of the Globe, Robert Chambers' Vestiges of Creation, J. R. Seeley's Ecce Homo, Mill's Principles of Political Economy, and several history books, including ones on Peru, Rome, Mexico, and the Spanish conquest of the Americas. The confusion enhanced by Rive's misquoting of Schreiner's account of meeting Bertram and Schreiner's own confusion about reading Spencer at Hermon or Dordrecht (both mentioned above) makes the more interesting the question of whether she borrowed anything from Bertram in Dordrecht. When he left the town in 1874, he donated a collection to the Dordrecht library which included titles by Pepys, Evelyn, Ranke, Goldsmith, Scott, Pope, Byron, Dante, Wordsworth, Shelley and Longfellow, and still managed to die with a hundred volumes in his room five years later.[21]

The people with whom Schreiner could discuss books tended to be men. One was George Fincham (whom Cronwright-Schreiner did not mention in his Life, but in a letter to Ellis identified as "the original of Gregory Rose");[22] in Beeton's words Fincham cherished an "unreturned love" for Schreiner.[23] Fincham was the brother of Robinson's wife, Susanna, and though he studied for the ministry he ended up becoming a farmer instead. Years later Schreiner was surely referring to him (and not to Gau, as Rive claims) when she wrote "when I was just 15 a young man of about 21 was very much in love with me & asked me to marry him. I wasn't the smallest bit attracted to him & didn't treat him very sympathetically."[24] Fincham was twenty-one; Gau was twenty-six; but this is the least of the evidence against Rive's claim. It is quite impossible to believe that Schreiner "wasn't the smallest bit attracted" to Gau, and her letter's recipient (Ellis) knew this better than anybody -- although he may have known little of Fincham until Cronwright-Schreiner wrote to him after Schreiner's death. The relevance to the fiction of this point is to stress (here as in many places) Schreiner's facility for using autobiographical incidents in her fiction, down to slightest details. It is demonstrable that Fincham appears not just in the figure of

Gregory Rose, as Cronwright-Schreiner remarks, but also as Harry Blair in Undine (physically they are both described as having womanish, sensitive features, and their mouths and hair are particularly similar).

Both biographical fact and fictional design indicate that the loves Rose and Harry Blair bear Lyndall and Undine respectively are genuine, and this makes the reading Joseph Bristow and Cherry Clayton have of these incidents particularly bizarre. Bristow believes that when Lyndall mocks Gregory Rose by saying, "How happy he would be sewing frills into his little girl's frocks, and pretty he would look sitting in a parlour, with a rough man making love to him!" (African Farm, p. 197) Schreiner is essaying

> ... more than a hint of homosexuality in this daring description. With the passing in Britain of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Bill two years after the appearance of African Farm, acts of "gross indecency" between males were prohibited. This law was promptly exported to the colonies. Schreiner's fiction, then, shows an exceptional responsiveness to changing perceptions of late Victorian masculinity. Although the novel does not take the truly scandalous risk of allowing Gregory Rose to fall in love with another man, it permits a near equivalent. For during Lyndall's final and pitiful illness, he tends his beloved in the disguise of a female nurse.[25]

Bristow rather gets himself into trouble by claiming Schreiner could have responded to "changing perceptions" brought about by an Amendment which happened after her book came out, but his difficulties do not end there. In fact, Lyndall prefaces the "mockery" he quotes with "There goes a true woman-- one born for the sphere that some women have to fill without being born for it." Since she has just fiercely argued that she and many women are fit to occupy "man's" sphere of action and work, without once saying in jest or seriousness that she is a true man, Bristow is actually missing the point of the entire scene, which is that Schreiner is satirising gender stereotypes (African Farm, pp. 185-197). Bristow is forced to admit that Schreiner does not take the "scandalous risk of allowing Gregory Rose to fall in love with another man" yet he claims she permits a "near equivalent" by letting Rose dress up as a woman to tend his beloved Lyndall. In fact, Bristow cannot substantiate Schreiner's interest in taking any such "risk" at all, and by

Bristow's logic, one could as well suggest that Schreiner was actually hankering after a same-sex passion between females in setting her scene this way (and that Lyndall's "mannish" qualities of strength and pitilessness qualify for a "daring description with more than a hint of" -- lesbianism) were it not for the fact that when Schreiner wanted to do that (as she did in an early draft of Undine, discussed below) she quite plainly stated that one woman was in love with another, without recourse to anyone's cross-dressing.

What may have endeared the real-life Fincham still less to Schreiner than his lack of traditional machismo was his (to her mind) inferior intellect, and possibly some pretentiousness to do with his family background. The Blair family in Undine, like the Roses of African Farm, seem obsessed with establishing a blue blood-line. The Roses' manufacture of their family tree in African Farm has been mentioned above; George Blair (father of Albert and Harry) is described as having "married his first wife because she knew who her great-grandfather was. He would have sold his soul to be thought refined and of blue blood..." (Undine, p. 101). It cannot be purely coincidence that as Fincham abandoned his theological studies and became a farmer, Gregory Rose's first letter to his sister Jemima contains a complaint that he should have been a minister rather than a farmer (African Farm, p. 176). Gregory tries desperately to impress Lyndall intellectually and is aggrieved that she does not talk with him as she does with Waldo (African Farm, p. 227); likewise, Harry Blair is aggrieved that Undine will not speak of serious subjects with him (Undine, p. 112). Harry's brain is described as "crammed as full of facts and ideas as a brain could be; and yet not one of them had been able to reach him. Just the backboneless, warm-hearted, weak character which nature had given him he had..."[26] Undine, though younger and less well-read, looks upon Blair and his "blue-black woman's eyes" with "kindly contempt" (Undine, p. 95) and is interested in his encyclopedic knowledge of flowers instead of the deep topics he tries vainly to discuss with her (Undine, p. 110-2). But he is powerless to stop trying to win her, even in the face of insult, just as Gregory Rose, though utterly "wretched," is powerless to quell his passion for Lyndall. Lyndall tells Rose he is "like a little tin duck

floating on a dish of water, that comes after a piece of bread stuck on a needle, and the more the needle pricks the more it comes on" (African Farm, p. 231). Indeed, if these episodes are true-to-life, then Schreiner "didn't treat him [Fincham] sympathetically," at all; still, thirty years later Fincham, it seems, was unchanged. What prompted her to write about him to Ellis in 1915 was the memory of an occasion at about the turn of the century in which a train she travelled on was delayed in the middle of the veld and Fincham (from another car) had alit, picked some "little flowers," brought them to her window, and said (Harry Blair-like) "You used to like flowers once!" He then "turned away without another word or look..."[27]

While it would be inaccurate to declare Schreiner incapable of writing except autobiographically, it is demonstrable that there is nothing in Blair's passion for Undine, or Rose's for Lyndall, that is not thoroughly (and a sight more simply) explicable by calling it an unrequited heterosexual love rather than a bold attempt at challenging heterosexuality itself. Yet Bristow and Clayton, in their eagerness to prove otherwise, are forced to laud Schreiner not just on her political correctness but on her second sight: Bristow by citing the 1885 Amendment Bill and Clayton by finding it courageous for Schreiner to have depicted Gregory Rose dressing up as a woman so close to the time of the Oscar Wilde trial and the banning of Ellis's study of homosexuality.[28] All this is surely less convincing than Showalter's placement of the episode in the Jane Eyre tradition of the "blinding, maiming or blighting" motif in nineteenth-century women's fiction, in which an obstinate male has to be constricted in some manner before he can acknowledge the heroine's equality with him; such a verdict also tallies with Albert Blair's illness and death in Undine.[29]

In contrast to Fincham, Frederick Ludwig Julius Eberhard Gau's macho credentials are impeccable. Physically, Gau was handsome, tall, blond, and blue-eyed. He was born and raised in the German electorate Hesse-Kassel, and came from a middle-class family which had substantial military connections (one of his brothers was an officer in the Austrian army, another was in the Brunswick Hussars).[30] Although his business ventures did not always

succeed, he had something of an entrepreneurial genius and at twenty-six was a substantial landowner, a Freemason, and, during the period of Schreiner's involvement with him, the chairman of the Municipal Council. He was socially prominent too: in March 1872 he was written up in the newspaper for giving "a magnificient ball";[31] he was musical, and both played and sang at local concerts.[32] All in all it is not difficult to see in him a model for Albert "Piece-of-Perfection" Blair, who is "somewhat more than six feet in height, with a lithe graceful figure" with a head of "beautiful yellow-brown curls" and eyes of a "pale cold blue" (Undine, pp. 103-4). Likewise, the dangerously attractive Stranger who seduces (or is seduced by) Lyndall is "tall" yet "slight," with "keen blue eyes" and a "heavy flaxen moustache" (African Farm p. 235). This appears to have been the type of man who appealed to Schreiner, evidenced, outside the fiction, by her attraction to the blond, blue-eyed, cold figure of Karl Pearson, not to mention her alleged weakness in the presence of George Moore.[33]

Berkman acknowledges Gau's importance to Schreiner's ideas about sexuality, arguing that, regardless of whether the pair

> actually engaged in intercourse, her sexual passion and emotional investment in him were so intense that she could not contain or accept without guilt the tumultuous erotic energies released. The Gau episode thus strikes scholars as the key to Schreiner's adult sexuality, leading her to create a perfectionist ideal of intimacy that warred with her true erotic desires (her apparent attraction to strong, dominant men) and was destined to failure (given Victorian male socialization).[34]

Berkman does not concur with the analysis by other scholars which she mentions. While she admits that Schreiner's "erotic impulses diverged from her ideal of love" she argues that this divergence disappeared later from her life and her writing. Berkman's theory, she says,

> is complex. Although Schreiner was erotically drawn to dominant men, she was also sexually repelled by them, alienated by their denial of her passion for reciprocity and personal autonomy. Similarly, she was attracted to and disgusted by gentle, compliant males. Sexually aroused by their tenderness and nurturance, she found these traits fused with a pathetic lack of psychic and sexual vitality. Moreover, compliant men tended to invite her

> domination of them, a response that inflamed her negative self-image as wicked and selfish. Although in her adolescent years she longed to surrender herself to someone she worshiped, as she grew older she rejected such self-abasement in favor of an ideal of love between equals.[35]

There is truth here; but Berkman muddies the waters a little with her assertion that: "Because the two (Schreiner and Julius Gau) had discovered their mutual unsuitability, when Schreiner realized she was not pregnant she ended the engagement [emphasis added]."[36] As with other assumptions about the importance of events in Schreiner's life in her native land, Berkman resorts to speculation which (while it seems to empower Schreiner) is less than accurate. And, as with Berkman's inaccuracy about the Cawoods, this affects her readings of the novels. No evidence exists that Schreiner desired a break with Gau at all, and likewise in the novel Undine it is Albert Blair's choice to break with Undine. Every detail of Undine's lonely wait for Albert's rejection tallies with what we can construct from Schreiner's life, from weather accounts of Dordrecht in the winter to spring of 1871 (the former cold and snowy, the latter early) to the length of time both Schreiner and Undine wait to receive their letters of rejection-- eight weeks. Of Blair's letter to Undine Schreiner writes "What that letter said she could never remember" and, since Undine has chewed it to pieces whilst staring fixedly at a lone white feather "bobbing up and down" in the water into which she considered throwing herself, this is not surprising. Not only was Schreiner all her life an obsessive and often unconscious chewer of paper (including letters, telegrams and railway tickets) she wrote to Ellis of the Undine manuscript: "Do I really make a little feather go up & down the water like three [sic] really was when I read Julius Gau's letter?"[37]

It seems safe to surmise that Gau, not Schreiner, broke the match. If one seeks to remove, as Berkman does, the element of rejection from the "Gau episode," one removes a crucial motivation from the life and fiction. And though Berkman is correct in writing that Schreiner would later come to look to an ideal of love between equals, substantial evidence

exists that the ideal of a love to "look up to" (in the fiction and letters) remains a strikingly hardy impulse for Schreiner throughout the 1880s.

Of the three "propositions" Schreiner received, only that from Zadok Robinson remains to be discussed. Robinson was a cultured man who, like the creepy "Cousin Jonathan" Barnacles of Undine, spent a great deal of time reading and writing sermons (many for publication). Schreiner wrote to Ellis plainly enough that "the man with the mouth" (Barnacles in Undine) was based on her former employer.[38] After Ellis read the manuscript of Undine, Schreiner wrote to him, "Yes, all that part of Undine is exact autobiography. Old Robinson did leave his slipper. It is all true. It isn't art, any more than a diary is."[39] Barnacles" declaration of love occurs in Chapter 7 of Undine and comes out in "words as vehement and startling as the passion itself had been long restrained." Undine, appalled, is obliged to throw him from her, "quivering with rage," her face showing "intense loathing." "Filled with insufferable shame," he crawls from the room, leaving his slipper behind on the mat (Undine, pp. 129-30). Beeton, somewhat obtusely in these circumstances, since he knows about the connection between Undine and Dordrecht, insists on calling Schreiner's subsequent feelings of embarrassment and hostility with regard to Robinson both "a puzzle" and a "mystery."[40]

In Undine, "Cousin" Barnacles, because of his jealous passion, causes suspicion in the mind of Undine's fiancé, Albert, by insinuating that she had accepted him only after finding out that his brother, Harry, had been disinherited. There is no evidence that Schreiner blamed Robinson in a like manner for ruining her relationship with Gau, by, for example, making insinuations about her spurning of his brother-in-law, George Fincham. Schoeman surmises that, even if Robinson could overcome his own hurt pride at being spurned, he still might have advised Gau, his parishioner and personal friend, against the match because it was unsuitable for other reasons. A likely alternative (also suggested by Schoeman) is that Robinson had nothing to do with the break and that Schreiner "may have

used Cousin Jonathan's interference to evade dealing with seduction and pregnancy." For Schoeman,

> ... the whole romantic episode remains unconvincing, except for Undine's passionate reaction [to Blair's rejection], which is thus left without adequate motivation. In the eighties, when Olive was writing Man to Man, she had become a good deal more sophisticated and made it quite clear that Percy Lawrie had seduced Bertie..[41]

Even if the incriminating letters to Ellis did not exist, there are many internal clues in Undine connecting Zadok Robinson to Cousin Jonathan. The first exists in the name "Obadiah" which Schreiner gave to Jonathan Barnacles in her original manuscript.[42] Obadiah and Zadok are both unusual names; and both appear in the Nehemiah 10. Zadok further appears in the first book of Samuel, wherein the lament of David for Jonathan and the phrase "daughter of Belial" occur. The story of David and Jonathan appears in the section missing from the published Undine in which Albert Blair's mother falls in love with Undine.[43] Barnacles' parishioner, Miss Mell, is proved a "daughter of Belial" in the published version of the book (Undine, p. 214).

Three more connections, the extreme youth of Undine when Barnacles first meets her, her ease in speaking with him, and some of her reading material, also link the fictional minister with the real one. Schreiner obviously made an extraordinary impression on Robinson; he remembered at the age of eighty-six anecdotes about Schreiner when she was six and ten as well as when she lived in his house at the age of sixteen/seventeen, and even more extraordinary is the resemblance between the elderly Robinson's choice of words and that of the author of Undine.[44] In Barnacles, Schreiner created a middle-aged cleric who closely observes a young girl and falls in love with her:

> ... he understood her better than anyone else had ever done, in many ways. He knew of that power of passion that lay dead and unawakened beneath the cold, unfeeling shell; and he knew as surely the day would come when it would be called into wild life, not by his hand or that of any Harry Blair, with woman's eyes and soft trusting nature. (Undine, pp. 124-5)

One could almost feel sympathy for the character of Barnacles, as one does for Harry Blair, were it not for the former's insistence on giving Undine a "morning kiss" (Undine, p. 125) or on stroking her hair and "letting his hand rest on the back of her neck;" gestures which Undine grows to receive with "a feeling of disgust" whenever he "kissed or caressed his little daughter, as he called her" (Undine, pp. 86-7). The passion that Barnacles feels is thus paedophilic, almost incestuous (she his "daughter," he her "cousin"). He is described disturbingly as loving the teenaged Undine "with a love that had grown with her opening beauty and softening figure, as the worm grows while the rose but swells" (Undine, pp. 91-2); Robinson, interestingly, wrote that "Olive was a fine flower" which "expanded nobly..."[45]

Barnacles frequently reminisces about the first time he saw Undine as "a particularly childish child," Undine, p. 35, whilst she is looking "lovely with the hot blood in her cheeks and her exquisite little feet clinging to the rocks" (Undine, p. 55). Some years later, Schreiner describes how

> Cousin Jonathan thought, as he looked at her, that never, even on that first day when he saw her standing with her little naked feet upon the rocks, had she looked so deliciously lovely: as round, as downy and inviting as any golden peach that ever schoolboy eyes looked at... (Undine, p. 87)

In Robinson's reminiscences he frequently refers to Schreiner's "easy flow" of talk; compare Undine's easy "stream" of words and ideas when Cousin Jonathan first meets her (Undine, p. 55) and then note two later occasions when the heroine "rattles on" to hide her dislike of Barnacles and the "fear that he would feel it and be pained made her very voluble generally" (Undine, pp. 88 and 90). Lastly, Cousin Jonathan also disturbs her as she is reading Mill's Political Economy (Undine pp. 85-6) and, as mentioned above, this is a book Schreiner first read at Dordrecht.

All in all, the consequences of the year at Dordrecht are immense when considered in the context of the development of Schreiner's narratives. Apart from the emotional Sturm und Drang generated by her contact with the men mentioned above, it was at this time that

Schreiner met the man who was her model for Bonaparte Blenkins of African Farm.[46] The repercussions in her life were, however, mercifully small-- at first.

Two months after Gau brought Schreiner to Hertzog Rebecca wrote to Katie Findlay: "Poor dear Olive is passing through great trials and I can do so little to comfort her";[47] a month later "You must not be vexed with me that I do not throw more light on Olive's affair. I can't. We are in the dark too."[48] Clearly Schreiner had told her parents (or at least her mother) nothing. Regardless of whether Schreiner had reason to fear pregnancy, her family was not the ideal place to be open about any attraction, let alone sexual experience. The episode of the Schreiner's old friend Robinson's slipper, quite apart from Olive Schreiner's missed periods, would be immeasurably more difficult to excuse than Kate and John Findlay's winking in church. Schreiner's silence may have kept her safe, if emotionally isolated, within her immediate family. Unfortunately, Mrs. Hemming (Alice's sister-in-law), was different. Her visit to Schreiner in London in 1888 (sixteen years later!), combined with an incident at a hotel in Italy in 1889, prompted a desperate letter to Ellis:

> You remember that long ago I told you how, nearly 20 years ago, when I was at Dordrecht, I had such a horror of eating before people, I couldn"t... and how it kept on all the time my periods stayed away, and I told you what unkind, untrue things they said about it.... Well, there came some people here ten days ago, from the Cape, I think, or they knew people there, and they have been talking to all the people at the Hotel.... They sit and jeer at me at the table. The man... calls out across the table and asks, If that young lady can tell me what the word pickpocket means, and then every one at the table laughs.... I"m hunted to death.... Harry, the world isn't fair, I haven't sinned so much more than other people to be hunted down so. If it goes on a little longer I will kill myself. I wouldn't if I thought my reason would stay, but I know I can't bear much more.... I've never had a home, I've never had anyone to take care of me as other girls have. I was thrown out on the world when I was eleven, and even before that I hadn't a real home.... Oh, Harry, why didn't my mother put a garter round my neck the day that I was born? I am a fine genius, a celebrity, and tomorrow all these people would tread me under their feet. I can't go back to Africa [she had been considering it, and would go six months later] they will torture me too much. I want to go somewhere where no one knows me. It's harder than if the things were true, it's so cruel. I never told you the cruel things Mrs.

> Hemming said to me, when she came to see me in London last summer it was, that broke me down so.[49]

Even her celebrity could not protect her from the legacy of little Dordrecht, population 700. Schreiner's postscript reads: "Everyone will say again I am wandering without a motive. I have never moved without a motive; the hidden agony of my life, no human being understands."

The ironies are many. As Rive comments in a footnote to this letter, Schreiner was still getting over her involvement with Pearson when Mrs. Hemming arrived. And whatever Mrs. Hemming said to her then, she would have had plenty of opportunity to glean back in 1871-2, as her mother-in-law lived not far from Dordrecht in Burgersdorp and her father-in-law worked as a magistrate in Dordrecht. In From Man to Man, Bertie, who is seduced at fifteen (the age Schreiner always gave for the year she spent at Dordrecht, though she was in fact seventeen) goes to stay with her aunt "Mary-Anna" (the elder Mrs. Hemming's Christian name was Sarah Ann) and Bertie's uncle, who is, like Mr. Hemming, a magistrate. Schreiner did on occasion visit Sarah Ann Hemming, though it is unknown if that lady informed her, as Bertie's Aunt Mary-Anna did, that

> a woman's character is like gossamer, when you've dropped it in the mud and pulled it about it can never be put right again. With a man it's different; he can live down anything.... but the soap isn't invented that can wash a woman's character clean. (From Man to Man, p. 326)

The source of "Aunt Mary-Anna's" information about Bertie's character is, incidentally, the local minister's wife (as was Susanna Fincham Robinson).

Some of the origins of Schreiner's alienation from other women, which she referred to in 1875 as "my woman hatred"[50] can be located in Dordrecht. In addition to Mrs. Hemming, Schreiner seems to have had poor relationships with other townswomen, and felt the victim of malicious gossip on several occasions, particularly following some accusation (most likely of theft, as her letters to Ellis suggest). She may have begun her unpopularity by simply being gauche and unwittingly offensive, as she had been on a visit with Mrs.

Hemming in Burgersdorp in 1870 -- after which she wrote to Katie, "...in small towns...you are obliged to associate with everyone or mortally offend them."[51] Also, as Schoeman notes, if Dordrecht was indeed possessed of a rumour that Schreiner was pregnant, she may have been compelled to leave. Gau's returning her to her parents is suspicious: clearly he felt responsible for her condition or her reputation, and it really does not matter which, if the community was as strict as that Bertie suffers from.[52] Even the memory of the women Bertie overhears talking about her at a ball in Cape Town causes her to suffer a "suffocating tightness across her chest"-- years later in London (From Man to Man, p. 402). No biographer has remarked upon this coincidence, but Bertie is not burdened with asthma in the narrative; Schreiner, of course, was. Like the disjunction between Undine's circumstances and her speech noted in the preceding section, this suggests autobiography is intruding into the fiction.

The fiercest of Schreiner's asthma attacks (and in one of her accounts the first) occurred following her return in March 1874 from Cape Town to Hertzog where, following a chilly reception from her parents, she was unable to eat and ran outside, throwing herself on the ground and choking. Beeton, who can be relied upon to call this an instance of the "emotional immaturity" he is pleased to find at all points in Schreiner's life, does not trouble to explain the circumstances of this episode.[53] Schoeman surmises that her parents' coldness was brought about by her having disobeyed them in travelling to them from Cape Town via Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown instead of going back to Fraserburg with her sister Alice.[54] Schreiner had good reason not to wish to go back there and stay with Katie in Fraserburg, as their mother had directed her (the "suspicious" Katie's dementia was well under way now). Also, Schreiner may not have desired to be anywhere near any Hemming, even her own sister, Alice. In Cape Town she had lived with the unmarried sister of Alice's husband Robert Hemming, a woman with whom, Mary Brown recalled, Schreiner "did not get on well."[55] Miss Hemming, of course, could also have heard Dordrecht gossip from

her mother, and Schreiner may have feared on her arrival at her parents' house that they knew of her disgrace.

In addition, while in Cape Town, Schreiner had visited the southern suburb of Rondebosch. It would become the setting for Rebekah's married life in From Man to Man. Through its avenues Bertie would run in terror from a ball at which women gossip about her seduction, whilst the band plays "Oh the torture and the anguish / That cannot follow thee" (From Man to Man, p. 234).[56] In 1880, whilst writing Saints and Sinners, Schreiner wrote in her diary: "Had an idea about Bertie this afternoon -- suicide, quite strong." Perhaps this was rejected by the time the novel had mutated into From Man to Man. But it has interesting connections to that summer at Cape Town, where Schreiner reported in February 1874 that she was considering suicide, just as she had done in Hertzog in 1872, after Gau broke off their engagement. February 1874 was the month Gau dissolved his Dordrecht business operations and started on a move to Grahamstown, where he would soon marry one Florence Hamilton Reilly.[57] It is unthinkable that Schreiner could have remained unaware of his marriage, and one is reminded of Bertie, who learns of the engagement and marriage of her former fiancé, John-Ferdinand, while staying with her sister in Rondebosch (From Man to Man, pp. 146 and 153). Schreiner was wont to write the odd bit of what she called "horrid verses" following Dordrecht; they range from "I gaze across the dark abyss;" to "Oh he has married a lady fair," and (several years later) "There is a hand I never touch," which suggests Gau carried on in her memory.[58]

Indeed she could hardly avoid Gau, or many other people she had reason to wish to avoid, in the years to come. He was living in Grahamstown when she went to visit her mother there in 1881; he had set up a business there in 1878 with Samuel Cron Wright, the father of Schreiner's future husband. Reverend Robinson meanwhile seems to have attended an auction of lost property where he bought, against all odds, a box which Schreiner had lost on her sea trip in 1874. The box was was full of her papers -- journals and fiction -- which, as has been shown, were more than likely to contain autobiographical

details from which any model might well identify himself. That "brute," George Weakley, Schreiner's employer at Colesberg, had a sister who married Cronwright's uncle; George Fincham's daughter married Will Schreiner's son; several other connections existed and developed that look too close for comfort for a woman who remained terrified of gossip, who said "I can't go back to Africa, they"ll torture me to death" -- before she even met Cronwright. It seems probable she never told Cronwright-Schreiner about Gau (though others might have); it seems significant that she never told him about Undine. Schreiner's biographers have often commented on her passion for absolute discretion and her horror if she suspected people, even friends, of discussing her in her absence, and she was equally unwilling to discuss others. The goldfish bowl that was the English-speaking community of her youth suggests that her commitment to discretion was prudent, and not as irrational as some critics and biographers (notably Beeton) have sought to paint it.

Whatever the nature of Schreiner's year in Dordrecht and her continuing, helpless association with people who knew, or thought they knew about it, its immediate effect was to start her writing fiction. Little of this survives. First and Scott comment on her attitude and writings at this time:

> Absence and loss, failure and deterioration were more real to her than presence and belonging. This is reflected in her titles, often of stories that were never finished: "The Ghost", "Wrecked", or her sense of having[59] "the outlines (vague) of a song that was never sung [emphasis added]."

Allegorical stories were already Schreiner's first response to intolerable stress; they would later become her only response to any stress, as will be demonstrated.

The story "The Lost Joy", an allegory which Schreiner began in Hertzog whilst staying with her parents after Gau left her, does survive, although its ending was not written until she lived in England with her brother Fred. It was first published in 1883 in an edition of his school's magazine under the title "The Lost", and later (after Karl Pearson had had a look at it) was revised slightly and published under the same title in Oscar Wilde's magazine Woman's World in 1888, and finally in Dreams in 1890.[60] It may be that, in a veiled way,

this allegory constitutes Schreiner's attempt to come to terms with the outcome of the Gau affair; yet it took several years before she could fashion an explanation for what had happened to one allegorical character, "First-Joy," who disappears from the narrative early on. Within six months of beginning "The Lost Joy", she was to begin Other Men's Sins, the germ of Undine. In this, the Dordrecht story is told again, this time in a novel, an (apparently) more realist mode.

vi. Fairy Tales, Free Will and Feminism

As the previous section has demonstrated, a good deal of the raw material for the plots of Undine, From Man to Man and African Farm was in place by the time Schreiner left her parents' home in Hertzog and joined Theo and Ettie in the diamond fields of New Rush (soon to be renamed "Kimberley") in December 1872. At New Rush, in April 1873, her journal contains the first mention of Other Men's Sins, which from internal clues is the work which became Undine (Cronwright-Schreiner's speculation that this title has something to do with Saints and Sinners notwithstanding).[1] By June she refers to Undine Bock; by November she calls it A Queer Little Girl (which remained the title of the first chapter).

After nearly a year at the diggings, where she met men like John Pursglove and John Dugmore (the "original" of Waldo), Schreiner left for Fraserburg, where she stayed for three months with her sister Alice Hemming. Here she met Mary and Dr. John Brown, who became her lifelong friends and encouraged both her medical and literary ambitions. From Fraserburg, she made the trip already described, by ox-wagon to Cape Town, by sea to Port Elizabeth, and then by postcart through Grahamstown to Hertzog; from there, with the help of her Cradock friend, Erilda Cawood, she found employment at the house of George and Mary Weakley in Colesberg. Schreiner thus completed an arduous anti-clockwise circuit of much of the Cape Colony in the year and a half following the events at Dordrecht.

In Colesberg Schreiner had little time for writing. Although she initially felt content, the pressures of being a teacher, a nurse, a household drudge, and a clerk at Weakley's

printing press and shop, as well as enduring some kind of sexual harassment from Weakley himself, caused her to change her mind. Later she referred to Colesberg only as "that most miserable of all the stony holes on the face of the earth" and seemed happier in the "wild beautiful place" that was Klein Gannahoek, the farm belonging to the Stoffel Fouchés, for whom she went to work in February 1875.[2]

Exactly a year later, on 2 February 1876, she recorded in her diary that Undine was finished, although she carried on revising it whilst living at Ratelhoek. As late as November 1876 she still worried at it, calling it "one tissue of faults."[3] Some mystery attaches itself to a "child's exercise book" which Cronwright-Schreiner found and which he claimed "considerably antedate[s] the manuscript of the book we now have."[4] Believing him, Berkman and others have dated this exercise book as far back as 1867 (when Schreiner was only twelve years old). Schoeman's research has proved that not only was Cronwright-Schreiner's dating "arbitrary and unfounded" and that the copybook probably dates from 1874, but that there were two copybooks, not one. In the second, which consists of "16 small pages, numbered from 41 to 56, with the heading 'The Man with the Mouth, Chap 2' ", "Obadiah" (later Jonathan Barnacles) and Undine converse. Here too Undine has an encounter with a Mrs. Blair who disappears from the final version of the book; her strong resemblance to Mrs. Weakley helps place the writing after February 1874.[5] The period at Colesberg with the Weakleys supplied the last biographical incidents relevant to the plot of Undine, although Klein Gannahoek may have provided a model for the farm Wilge Kloof (Undine's childhood home).

Schreiner's reading during this period included the following works: Buckle's History of Civilisation, Mill's Political Economy, Darwin's Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex, Russell's History of the Heroes of Medicine (all read at New Rush); C. S. Henry's An Epitome of the History of Philosophy (Fraserburg); Emerson's Essays (Cape Town); Dickens' Dombey and Son (Hertzog); Prescott's History of the Reign of Philip II and an anthology of Shelley (Colesberg); Ouida's Tricotrin: The Story of a Waif and Stray,

Mill's A System of Logic, T. H. Huxley's Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews, Darwin's The Variations of Plants and Animals under Domestication, and Ruskin's A Crown of Wild Olives (the first year at Klein Gannahoek).[6] The education she obtained through the conversation, loan of books, and endless chess games in New Rush with Pursglove and Dugmore may have helped her too. Dr. John and Mary Brown (he a Briton, she an "Africander" of the influential Solomon family) supported her in her medical and literary ambitions and became lifelong friends; they also made available to her their private library, which contained works by Mill, Dickens, Jules Verne and Hawthorne.[7]

Although it would be strange for Undine not to be as autobiographical as it has been shown to be, given that it is the first effort of an autodidactic author between eighteen and twenty-one years of age who had read few novels before attempting her first, there is considerably more to the book than Schreiner's life story. Undine's flaws, and the fact that several of its themes are repeated in African Farm with greater skill, have caused most critics to neglect it; its melodrama and risible English landscape have also discouraged serious interest. First and Scott verge on declining to discuss the novel at all, finding it "harder to interpret than The Story of an African Farm precisely because it is so raw, so unclearly differentiated from its author's experience"[8] -- even though their knowledge of the biographical connections is restricted to the Gau episode (they seem unaware of Fincham, Robinson and Alice Hemming's influence on the plot). For Hobman, Undine is "immature and ill-constructed,"[9] for Friedmann "undeniably poor stuff,"[10] and for Berkman Undine is chiefly remarkable for being a younger, less self-confident portrait of the artist than is supplied in African Farm.[11]

Close examination of Undine's structure shows that, in fact, Schreiner tried to to organise her experiences within a literally fabulous framework in ways she assumed would be obvious to her readers; despite this, commentators as astute as First and Scott find the novel's "intricacies of plot" merely "exaggerated".[12] Yet if, to quote another negative

assessment, there is something of the "sugary and insubstantial" in the portion of the novel set in England, that is only fitting, for Undine (whatever else it may be) is a fairy-tale.[13]

Undine's antecedents lie in classical myth, in the popular tales of de la Motte Fouqué (Gottlob Schreiner's compatriot) and in Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid."[14] Schreiner's novel is the story of a woman whom the world declares to be not just unwomanly, but un-human, even devilish, for the crime of desiring both love and independence, for asserting her right to "think and to live" against Albert's dogmatic belief that a woman's only right is the "right of the rose... to smile and be" (Undine, p. 140).

Schoeman is so far the only scholar writing about Schreiner who has noted the significance of the title, Undine. He is brief about his observation, noting merely "It is not surprising Olive named her heroine after a legendary water nymph who had no soul, although one wonders why she decided to give her the surname Bock..."[15] Yet both names are important to the plot and theme of the book, and Schreiner perhaps considered her German source too well-known to elaborate upon further in the text. Undine (Ondine in the French translation) is the name Baron Friederich de la Motte Fouqué gave to his rendition of a classical story which was popular throughout Europe from its publication in 1812, and was also the model for operas from Hoffman in 1816, Lortzing in 1845, Lvov in 1848, Sernet in 1863, and later Dvorak and Rogowski, among many others. The story was translated into many languages and retained popularity among English-speakers throughout the century, particularly among the young. In America, Louisa May Alcott has her heroine, Jo March in Little Women (1868) ask for a copy of de la Motte Fouqué's Undine and Sintram as a Christmas present.[16] For her part, Schreiner most likely first heard the story from her father, who was addicted to fairy tales.[17] She also may have read the story in the original for herself, as she is recorded as having translated German children's stories aloud (word by word rather than for sense) for the amusement of the Cawood family.[18] And if the title of the novel Undine was not enough of an indication of Schreiner's intentions, the

young heroine's love for Andersen's The Mermaid and the Prince (a relative of the Undine story) should have helped make the author's intentions explicit by page 21.

Schreiner selectively borrowed themes from both De la Motte Fouqué's and Andersen's versions of the story. The myth on which each version is based appears in a passage by Paracelsus, wherein Undine is identified as an elemental water spirit, created without a soul but capable of gaining one through marrying a mortal and bearing a child. In de la Motte Fouqué's version, Undine is actually a changeling sent to a fisherman's family in place of a child who has disappeared and is presumed drowned. Undine marries a knight, Huldebrand, and thereby gains a soul, but Huldebrand eventually mistreats her and he grows to prefer the proud Bertralda (later revealed to be the fisherman's daughter, found and raised by a wealthy family). Undine's goblin relatives, particularly her uncle Kühlehorn, cause her trouble, eventually snatching her away from her husband. Huldebrand then feels free to marry Bertralda, but before they are wed Undine rises from a well, returns to her husband, and bestows on him a fatal kiss. In Andersen's version, "the little mermaid" falls in love with a human prince, whose life she saves during a storm at sea. She takes his unconscious body to the shore, but he fails to wake in time to see her and instead believes a human girl to have rescued him. The little mermaid's grandmother explains to her that humans have souls, but that the race of Sea-folk has a preferable lot in that, while soulless, they are allowed to live for three hundred years. Her granddaughter still wishes to have both a soul and her prince, however, and to that end makes a bargain with the hideous Sea Witch in which the mermaid exchanges her beautiful voice for a pair of legs. With these she has the appearance of a human and can dance at the prince's court, although every step she takes on land is as painful as if she took it on knife-points. Since she cannot speak, she is powerless to tell her beloved that it was she who rescued him, and, when he sees the beautiful human girl whom he believes to have saved him from drowning, he marries her. Since the Sea Witch warned the mermaid that if the prince married another, she would herself die the following dawn and be dispersed into small bits of seafoam as is the lot of

ordinary Seafolk (usually after three hundred years instead of the little mermaid's sixteen) the mermaid prepares for death during her prince's wedding night. Unknown to the mermaid, her sisters have bargained with the Sea Witch to gain the little mermaid back her rightful span of years, and traded their hair for a knife with which the little mermaid must kill her prince before the following dawn. She is unwilling to kill him and at sunrise, just as she begins to dissolve into seafoam, beings called the "daughters of the air" take pity on her and she instead is transformed into a kind of apprentice soul. They explain to her that:

> When for three hundred years we have striven to do all the good in our power, we obtain an immortal soul.... You, poor little mermaid, have striven after good with your whole heart; like us, you have suffered and endured, and raised yourself into a spirit of the air."[19]

Both versions of the sylph myth, as well as the Gau episode, contribute to the structure and imagery of Undine. In Schreiner's novel, the changeling's beloved and husband are not one and the same (as they are in de la Motte Fouqué) and their deaths, as well as that of her baby, precede hers; also, the evil interference of her goblin uncle is replaced by that of the clerical "Cousin" Jonathan. His surname, Barnacles, has perhaps allusive links to both the goblin uncle's name ("Kühl" = cold, "horn" -- can refer to "horny matter") and to the "oysters" which are painfully fixed to the little mermaid's tail in Andersen's version: "they hurt me so!"[20] As in Andersen's work, Schreiner's Undine is struck dumb at the moment in the narrative where it matters most that she speak out. When Albert asks her "did that little old cousin of yours never try to make love to you?" she cannot incriminate the man, thus leaving herself undefended from his subsequent treachery (Undine, p. 144). In its imagery, Undine not only abounds with the watery similes and metaphors one would expect, but also includes references to roses. Roses betray Undine's kinship to Andersen's heroine with her "rose-leaf" skin and her garden of "rosy-red flowers."[21]

Undine contains two "little mermaids" besides the eponymous heroine, and all three show devotion to unworthy princes, even unto death. Alice Brown is the first. As a young

girl, she strips and dives into a river to save the drowning Albert Blair, later becomes his mistress, and is then cast off by him; their baby dies and she follows it, drowning herself in a "muddy pool" that once tempted Undine to suicide (Undine, p. 198-9). The "Shabby Woman" Undine meets on board ship to Africa is also a mermaid, described in terms of "her flowers and her seaweeds" (Undine, p. 234). Undine herself was first discovered and desired by Cousin Jonathan Barnacles on a beach, where he watches her caper "as wild as the dancing waves" in what is clearly her natural habitat, after she has thrown her shoes, stockings, and a volume of George MacDonald's sermons to the sand. Returning the book to her, Barnacles says "The waves were very nearly stealing it, as I fear they may you..." (Undine, p. 53). Barnacles also helps Undine to catch a sea creature: "He asked what she was looking for; and when he understood very soon captured the queer little fish." Since it is Undine who is usually considered "queer" (see, for example, the title of the first chapter, "A Queer Little Child"), it is not entirely clear (grammatically) who or what the fish is that he has captured. Undine, "conscience-stricken," wishes only to return to her element, and she gazes "down into the little pool, wishing she were one of the little fishes swimming there." Later, Barnacles twice recalls Undine's "beautiful feet" on the rocks. Andersen's mermaid's feet are her chief source of pain on land; when Schreiner's Undine is found dead she is in a reclining position "with her feet crossed" (Undine, p. 374). This last detail thus recalls a fish's tail.

When Barnacles preaches, Undine is almost tempted in from her natural home, the sea: she writes of his "sweet" prayers: "'Twas like entering a silent sunny cove after being tossed among black breakers" (Undine, p. 43). But all that Barnacles tries to tempt his mermaid with -- Christianity, with its promise of an eternal soul -- is not attractive to her on his terms. She wants the love of Albert Blair, and to get it she must, like Andersen's heroine, cut out her tongue, for he wants her to stop reading, thinking, and talking so much, and to pay attention to music and dancing instead (Undine, pp. 137-42).

Schreiner added to her mermaid-allegory another level of metaphor which can first be seen in her choice of Undine's surname, "Bock." Schoeman dismisses it as an example of "Olive...[having] trouble with the names of her characters."[22] This might be a reasonable suggestion given the fact that, once Schreiner had exhausted all her own names and those of her mother, and borrowed freely from Dombey and Son and the Weakley family, she ran into trouble and recycled previously-used names, or simply omitted to name characters in the first place. But, in concert with the Germanic roots of de la Motte Fouqué's Undine, it is to German that one must look for an explanation. It is likely that the child of a German parent might be aware of two meanings of "Bock". As a verb, bocken means to be obstinate or refractory, or to sulk. As a noun, der Bock means the buck or he-goat, and in that context it is used frequently in German in connection with the devil, whose origins lie in Pan, the Greek goat-god. In Faust, which Schreiner read at Ratelhoek in 1876, Mephistopheles tells Faust that to get to the Walpurgisnacht festivities, "Ich wünschte mir den allerderbsten Bock."[23] Later, the choruses of wizards and witches sing the praises of the "Bock" along with those of the broomstick, both forms of transport for the devil's servants.[24]

It does not take a particularly close reading to see that Undine Bock is repeatedly accused of being not just soulless and inhuman (like a mermaid) but evil, satanic. Throughout the heroine's childhood she is constantly called queer, strange, and wicked: described as appearing on one occasion to look more like "some spirit who had just arrived from [Hell] ... than a carefully-brought-up little Christian..." and to have the gaze of a "Medusa" (Undine, p. 19). (When she is punished for having looked so, she is locked into a room where she virtuously refrains from reading one of her favourite stories, Andersen's "The Mermaid and the Prince"!) Undine's pet monkey, Socrates, is clearly in the character of a familiar; he dances a "true devil's quadrille" on the roof. Following the scrape his dance gets Undine into, the teacher asks Undine reprovingly "if you continue this course of action, what will become of your immortal soul?" and Undine answers resolutely, "I know

I'm wicked and I don't care, and I don't care what becomes of my soul" (Undine, pp. 30-1). (Undine's remark is close in spirit to that of that another reprobate, Huck Finn, who proclaims, "Alright, I'll go to hell!"[25])

In England, Undine's brother is called a "Freethinking child of the devil" (Undine, p. 77). When Frank Bock drowns in Shelleyesque circumstances his fiancée, Margaret, goes insane with grief. She bites and strangles Undine, crying out "You look like Undine; but you are the devil... You left his body lying there on the beach, and you tore it with your cruel hands..." (Undine, p. 80).[26] This is in some ways representative of de la Motte Fouqué and his changeling motif ("You look like Undine; but you are the devil...") and in some ways a twisted view of Andersen's, in which a mermaid kills a man, instead of saving him, and leaves him on the beach for a human to find. Later, when Blair decides to jilt Undine, he calls her "the little devil" (Undine, p. 170). Miss Mell energetically expresses a desire that Undine "be gone to the devil" (Undine, p. 214). Mrs. Snappercaps refers to Undine in terms of Satan disguised as a serpent: "that vile, lowly, venomous outcast" (Undine, p. 271). Finally, on the very evening Undine dies, her surname's meaning is reinforced when a "Dutchwoman" who turns out to be one of Undine's childhood classmates chances to see her in the diamond fields:

> "What is your name?"
> "Undine, Undine Bock," said Undine, slowly, as though puzzled to remember what it really was, and going back to the name of her childhood. [....] "Can I do anything for you?" Sannie asked ... as the memory came to her of the little schoolmate who, in company with her monkey, had been first and foremost in all evil and forever in disgrace. (Undine, p. 367)

Undine is an alienated and lonely misfit in England, a veritable "fish out of water." As a mermaid, her fishy half is best described as her intellect; her heart is her woman's half. Thus, when she finds herself beginning to change her habits in order to please Albert Blair, she wonders: "Am I no better than other women at all? I've no heart; if I lose my head what is to become of me?" (Undine, p. 108). She manages not to care about what anyone

thinks of her strangeness, until she falls in love with Blair. This love begins with an episode that recalls de la Motte Fouqué's knight, Huldebrand. While at the Blairs' house, Undine sees a painting in which "a man gorgeously clad in... knightly costume" lies dead in the arms of a woman whose "delicate and voluptuous development...[was] hardly concealed" by her "coarse, scanty clothing." Undine interprets the picture for her admirer, Harry Blair, glorifying the ideal of the woman's abased sacrifice to the man in much the same way as Lyndall does to Gregory Rose.[27] The man was a "lord" Undine says, and the woman

> ...a poor serf, with only her soul and beautiful body to give him. He hardly cared to take them... and now, in the hour of death, she has followed him and found him lying dead; and she is... in agony because he is gone, and in wild joy because he is hers alone now, hers and no other's, if only that she may lie at his feet and die there. (Undine, p. 103)

Albert Blair, unbeknownst to Undine, hears this and sneers "A very desirable fate, certainly," unaware that it is exactly how he and she will end. Startled, she turns to see that "'Piece of divine perfection' as his lady admirers were wont to call him -- Mr. Albert Blair" (Undine, pp. 103-4). There follows the Gau-like description of Albert, quoted above, which may also, as Schoeman notes, have been influenced by the handsome blond Lord Estmere of Ouida's Tricotrin. Albert's features are "delicately chiselled," his voice "melodious", but his gaze is "as icy and chilling as a moonbeam falling on a glacier" (compare Estmere's responding "chillily" in "cold distain" and in "cold musical tones").[28] Also, as Schoeman notes, there are points of similarity with the officer Jarno in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, although there is no clear evidence as to when in the 1870s she read this novel, as there is with Faust.[29] The overweening pride of the elder Dombey in Dickens' Dombey and Son, together with sundry other details of that novel (including portraits of proud women and the clear identification of prostitution and fashionable marriages of convenience, most dramatically in the confrontation on the moor between Lady Edith Dombey and her cousin Alice Brown) almost certainly contributed to Schreiner's creations

of both Albert and George Blair, Albert's wife, "Lady Edith" Mountjoy, and his mistress, Alice Brown.[30]

Undine initially resists the attraction she feels towards Albert. She is disturbed by the way she reacts to his gaze, which has the power to make everyone feel instantly "awkward, ill-dressed and ignorant" (Undine, p. 105). His influence rapidly reduces her to burning a book she loves because he disapproves of it; indeed, she renounces all that has consoled and fortified her in order to be what he would have her be. In contrast, when Albert's cynical father, George Blair, (rich, fat, and philistine) proposes to her because he is certain all women are mercenary, she finds it easy to refuse: "The idea of being any man's wife, of bearing any man's children, was absurd enough to her..." (Undine, p. 121). The next day she receives a proposal from Harry as well, to which she replies coldly, repenting afterward that she is "heartless", no "true-hearted woman" (Undine, p. 124). That evening Barnacles (a married man, like Robinson) makes the advances detailed in the previous section, and ends by crawling out of the room in utter humiliation.

Several weeks later her third proposal of marriage, from Albert Blair, is received differently. It follows Albert's explaining to Undine his idea of a "womanly" woman, that is, one who "should have nothing striking or peculiar about her" (Undine, p.137). Prior to this Undine has distanced herself from other women, but now she is mortified by her isolation and singularity, feeling that "She would have parted with all that was highest and best in herself to become a little less Undine..." (Undine, p. 138). The couple do have one brief period of genuine closeness when Undine answers Albert's request to explain how she came to hold her "extraordinary views and manners" which make her feel so evil, so unwomanly, so alone in society (Undine, p. 137). This rare contact can only take place, however, because Albert is subject to what the narrator calls the "insanity" which men can have,

> ...moments when their thoughts and feelings are opposed to all they have ever deemed rational, right or possible. Such moments came for the first and last time to the Piece-of-perfection as he sat listening to Undine in the firelight.

> A pity, nay, a passionate sympathy, filled his heart for her; for one moment he forgot that the soul which troubled itself further than to find and eat the bread and honey of this life was the soul of a fool -- forgot that the only right of a woman is the right of the rose -- to smile and be, not to think and live.
> "Your life has been lonely; no one has understood you; you may have had no one to guide you.... Will you let me be your friend and take care of you?"
> She sat and looked at him as one in a dream.
> "Come to me, darling," he said.... (Undine, pp. 139-40)

Within minutes of the kisses and pledges of love he extracts from her, Albert proceeds to pronounce on the necessity of his wife's always eclipsing all other women. To that end he asks Undine to pay more attention to music and less to her books; in fact, he says, he would rather she "left them alone altogether." Thus, where the little mermaid had her tongue cut out to gain legs in the vain hope of gaining her prince's hand, Undine has to cut out her tongue if she wishes to keep Albert's love and remember only "the right of the rose."

Roses represent sexual knowledge in Undine, but there are (Romantically enough) two kinds: that of innocence and that of experience. Early in the novel, whilst sitting with her brother Frank and Margaret, his betrothed, Undine feels that her companions are

> ...happy because they were together, and I because the roses were beautiful and the sky blue and they glad. The work had just dropped from my hands and I had just got into a delicious dream, in which rosebuds, princes and spirits were largely concerned, when Frank tossed a great white rosebud into my face. (Undine, p. 34)

Undine's "delicious dream" with its "princes" has erotic overtones, but the fact that the roses in her dream and the rose which Frank throws in her face are but buds symbolises her innocence. Shortly afterward, such innocence is a protective shield: when Jonathan Barnacles and a party of others approach the group, Undine and the lovers can "from behind our wall of roses... without being seen, observe and criticise them" (Undine, p. 36).

Following this scene, the entire party attends a revival meeting distinguished by its vulgarity. Undine returns home to read fairy tales (Wolf's, not Andersen's this time) in the corner of a sofa in the parlour. Ignoring her, a group of local women settle in the same

room and proceed to gossip about sex in an explicit fashion. Their discussion begins with an account of Alice Brown's rescue of Albert Blair some years before:

> "You will hardly credit it, but in place of going for someone, she had the immodesty to tear off her own clothes and leap in; and, as if that were not enough, she actually carried him in her arms up to their house. . .
> the brazen-faced creature."
> "Is it possible, my dear!" said Mrs. Goodman. "How wanting in modesty and self-respect! How very shocking!" (Undine, p. 46)

Mrs. Goodman reciprocates with an anecdote of the adultery of "Dr. Harper and Mrs. Harvey," adding that her servant attended Mrs. Harvey in childbirth and there heard:

> "...things, dear, dreadful things; she said"-- and there followed the relation, in minutest detail, of such things as I had not even dreamed of, whose hideous shadow had never yet been thrown across my young life. From my lonely African home I had brought an ignorance of evil (and of that which, holy and pure in itself, man's folly has made so) that might have been thought strange in a child of six. Much that had been the cause of vague speculation and wonder was made clear to me that night, and I was wretched... (Undine, p. 48)

Sexual knowledge changes everything for Undine, the narrator comments, for "alas! is it not the old, old story -- that the tree of knowledge is the tree of pain...." When Undine returns to her room, "...nothing looked as it used to look" and her "beautiful bunch of roses told quite a different tale from that which it had whispered in the morning." The flame of her candle, which previously had seemed like "a poor soul always striving" now looks "red and bad." Even beautiful Aunt Margaret (dressed in a crimson wrapper) "seemed to have changed, just like the roses and the light" (Undine, p. 49). Aunt Margaret asks her if she is studying the candle or her "little bare toes" (feet and hands are eroticised in all Schreiner's novels)[31] which provokes Undine's outburst: "Neither... but I wish I was not a woman. I hate women; they are horrible and disgusting, and I wish I had never been born rather than to be one" (Undine, p. 49). Undine's innocence is irrecoverable, but her knowledge does not make her less vulnerable. At the beach the following morning, she at

once meets Cousin Jonathan, who "liked beautiful things-- of the feminine gender" (Undine, p. 52) and who likes to capture "queer little fish."

Water, whether in the form of the sea, the river near Greenwood or the still "muddy pool" in the woods, is the natural element of Undine and her kindred. At their deaths both Alice Brown and Undine return to water (though in Undine's case it is a hallucination). The manner of their deaths puts them outside of the ordinary mortal world and also out of hope of a Christian heaven. Similarly, in Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," the author sets up his tale from the first as one concerned with the dichotomous worlds below and above water, writing of the sea that "many church towers would have to be piled one upon the other to reach right up from the bottom to the surface. Down there dwell the Sea-folk."[32] The ironic standard of measurement (by church towers) is crucial: the Sea-folk's exclusion from salvation after death arises from the absence of Christianity at the bottom of the sea. Thus the little mermaid's ignorance is such that when she saves the prince and lays him on a beach it is in front of "a church or convent, she did not know what -- but it was a large building of some sort."[33] Death for the Sea-folk means eternal nothingness, a return to atomised bits of "dead, salt sea-foam." (Equally, when Alice Brown's suicide is reported in Undine by Undine's maid Nancy, it is in this fashion: "She's come from nowheres and she's gone to nowheres" [Undine, p. 201]). Andersen remedies the injustice of the little mermaid's life of patient love and unrewarded sacrifice by the unsatisfactory invention of the "daughters of the air," and the tale ends with an uncomfortable compromise in which children are warned that their behaviour can cause time to be taken from, or added to, the sentence of years which the little mermaid's proto-soul must roam the earth. This conventional didactic ending does not mesh well with the otherwise subversive story.

Spiritually, it is just this kind of problem which worries the young Undine, the (to her) arbitrary distinctions in her religion which decide who is saved and who is not. Undine is terrorised by the Calvinist nightmares of "lost souls" plunging "over the edge into darkness" with "every tick of the clock"(Undine, p. 7). The very argument with her teacher

that gets her locked up in a room with Andersen's fairy tales revolves around the doctrine of damnation and God's having "prepared a heaven for the people he means to save and a hell for the people he means to burn...." Undine admits to being

> ...very wicked, but I'm not half so wicked or cruel as he [God] is. Nothing is, not even the devil. The devil is glad when we go to hell, but he did not make us on purpose to send us there, and he did not make himself, and I'm sorry for him. I believe he tries to be good and God won't let him, that's what I believe.(Undine, pp. 18-9)

What is at stake here is the question of free will and predetermination; the same doctrine Schreiner's brother gibes at before his untimely watery death: "it's a hard state of affairs when a poor fellow has to be called into existence for the purpose of being sent to fire and brimstone," (Undine, p. 35). Significantly, Undine, locked up on a Sunday with a choice of Andersen's stories and a religious text, feels morally bound to read the latter, which rejoices in the title A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of the Freedom of Will, Which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame.[34]

Schreiner seems to be making two points in this particular choice, the first being that there is something terrible in the idea of a tiny child being forced to read such material. The second point is that the injustice of Andersen's mermaid's foamy destiny lies in her predestined soullessness. The pains she takes to save her Prince's life, and then to suffer her tongue to be cut out and to walk as if on "knife-points," do not, according to the narrative, appear to qualify her either for union with her Prince or for a heavenly reward without the intervention of the ideologically suspect "daughters of the air" in their itinerant state of limbo. Likewise, despite Alice Brown's saving Albert's life, her suffering and social ostracism following his dalliance with her, the birth of her child and its death, Nancy Grey's verdict on Alice Brown's life and death is still that "She's come from nowheres and she's gone to nowheres" (Undine, p. 201). This is in fact a nice description of the lot of the predestined reprobate.

The little mermaid's grandmother tells her that "Men... have souls which always live -- even after the body has been buried in the earth; they rise up through the clear air, to the shining stars."[35] A star does speak to Undine as she lies dying, but it promises no Christian ideal of continuity of personality after death. Instead, the star says "I have been young and now am old... yet if I should say I have seen death as you fear it, I should lie. Change I have seen and desolation, but no death. Take comfort" (Undine, pp. 372-3). Andersen's spiritually ambiguous (but ultimately conventional) fate for his little mermaid is not copied: Schreiner describes a deathbed epiphany based on Christian teaching, but one based on Spencer's doctrine of the "Unity of all things."

Still, there are unmistakable similarities between the actual deaths of Andersen's and Schreiner's heroines. The little mermaid's last sight in life is the "white sails of the ship" that belongs to her Prince and "the red clouds of the sky"; among Undine's last words are "Prince, Prince," (the name given to Albert Blair's dog [Undine, p. 368]).[36] In place of red clouds, her last sight is of the "blood-red cracks" of a log in the fire outside her tent, from whose "heavy canvas sails" she had sucked rainwater the night before, crying out "Water, water, water!" in the delirium of her fever (Undine, p. 366 and p. 374). The little mermaid on the last night of her life can only look forward to "an eternal night, without a thought, or a dream"; in the delirium that precedes her death, similarly Undine slides into an amorphous "delicious dreamy darkness."[37]

Undine attempts to formulate a critique of that doctrine of damnation which so incensed its heroine and its author as children, and to discuss the mystery of death without resorting to Christian platitudes. The "great blue star" which tells Undine it is her "brother" speaks to her as she lies dying in the language of the creed Schreiner herself developed after Ellie's death, wherein "There is nothing added to Nature, nothing taken from her...." (Undine, p. 373). The impasse between predestination and free will, a vengeful God and a kind Jesus, disappears in a metaphor of wave and current that echoes Schreiner's reported conviction following her sister Ellie's death that "the whole of existence seemed to me more

beautiful because it had brought forth and taken back to itself such a beautiful thing."[38] Yet the extraordinary way in which the whole novel is saturated with fears and dichotomies on many levels indicates how profoundly the puritanical, Calvinist-inspired "persecutory imagination" John Stachniewski has so well documented as haunting the literary landscape of seventeenth-century England remained dynamic in Schreiner's haunted imagination.[39]

Another concern of Undine is a critique of the traditional conceptualisations of womanhood which alienate Undine and her isolated, unpopular, misunderstood fellow mermaids from human society as surely as does any religious iconoclasm. Undine worries that she is "no true-hearted woman," Alice Brown is accused of have no "natural feeling," and the "Shabby Woman" worries that she is "wicked," yet the narrative reveals that it is the slandered and self-doubting mermaids who are in truth most "true-hearted," "natural" and faithful in their relationships with the men they love. Undine marries the evil George Blair not out of mercenary motives but because she believes that by doing so she can serve Albert Blair, even though he has jilted her; later she restores his and his brother's inheritance. Alice Brown's love for Albert Blair is seen to be

> ... the deep love of years; giving all things, denying nothing, pouring itself out at the feet of that stern, strong man to whom it was only a thing to be used, drawn upon, and, when no longer needed, trodden on and forgotten. (Undine, p. 198)

This attitude puts her in strong contrast with her namesake, the transported convict Alice Brown of Dombey and Son, likewise a cast-off mistress. In Dickens' novel, a ferocious Alice Brown revenges herself on her wealthy former lover, Carker, by setting in train the events which lead to his gruesome death. (Subsequently, she is thoroughly evangelised and improved by Carker's sister-in-law, and goes on to die in a paroxysm of forelock-tugging gratitude to that lady).[40] Schreiner's heroines never complain against their lovers' treatment of them, but are roused by each rebuff to greater devotion and self-blame.

In contrast, the conventional married couples in the book (Jonathan and Jane Barnacles, the Shabby Woman's lover and his wife, Sarah Jane and Will Snappercaps,

Albert and Lady Edith Blair) are all seen to live together in unions of indifference or convenience. The mermaids' passions set them apart and make them, Schreiner would seem to suggest, better women, although they are seen as unnatural by a society which frowns on female expression of passion. The straightforward nature of such a conclusion is complicated, however, by the superficial treatment of the motives behind such passions. Schreiner does not attempt an explication of Albert's behaviour, and yet neither Alice nor Undine ever stops loving the man who, insofar as each knows, jilted her without reason. There is genuine masochism in the sacrifices each continues to make following their rejection at his hands, manifested, for example, in the way Undine behaves with Albert Blair's corpse:

> She took the sheet down off his face, and the warm cheek of the living woman was pressed close to the cold face of the dead man. In his ear she whispered the wild words of love that to the living she would never utter.... And the dead man lies so still; he does not send her from him; he does not silence her; he understands her now; he loves her now. She will see his face once more before it goes, and then she will creep close to him, and lie there, and never leave him. (Undine, p. 363)

It is Blair's very unresponsiveness in death that truly puts Undine into ecstasy, for she is free to fantasise a warm response from him. But even this hope is crushed when she lights a candle and sees his "old smile, half scornful, half-defiant," causing her to think, wretchedly, "Was there room in those sternly folded arms for her? He had lived alone... he had died alone. There was no room for her now" (Undine, p. 364). Undine's own death scene shows her to be fantasising still about his embrace. Schreiner's bold attack on the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and the Elect has no counterpart in her romantic ideology: erotic passion in Undine is curiously a helpless, once-and-for-all affair.

It is clear from the arguments made above that male-defined "womanliness" is a quality largely defined satirically in the novel Undine. While those critics who deal with the novel at all readily identify the injustice of Albert Blair's dogmatic pronouncements on ideal

femininity and the ways in which men, religion and female obedience are linked,[41] the degree to which women oppress other women is less remarked, and the derisive attitude of the woman-hating narrator is treated of still more rarely. In Undine, actual "womanliness" -- that is, behaviour exhibited by women -- is consistently identified with conformity, cruelty, narcissism, small-mindedness, jealousy and backbiting. For the heroine herself, womanliness is first experienced as a form of narcissistic sadism; having refused George Blair's proposal, crushed Harry Blair's with "a few very cool and careless lines," and then paused to consider that Cousin Jonathan, too, is enamoured of her, Undine feels pleasure in the power that comes from rejecting the men (Undine, p. 124).

There are many females with whom Undine has relationships, including her Sunday school teacher, her Dutch classmates, her mother, "Aunt Margaret," her grandmother, Mrs. Barnacles, Miss Mell, Nancy Grey, Alice Brown, her infant daughter Violet, "The Shabby Woman," Mrs. Snappercaps, the girl she names "Diogenes", and Mrs. Albert Blair (formerly Lady Edith Mountjoy). There is also, intriguingly, an earlier Mrs. Blair who appears in the copybook draft that Cronwright-Schreiner never mentioned: she, too, must be taken into account. The nature of these relationships, and the language with which women and "womanliness" are described, reward attention.

Where Lyndall is granted a cousin and Rebekah a sister, Undine's childhood provides her with no young female relative or friend of any kind. Her relationships with her mother (who is never described) and teacher (distinguished only by the "large wart" on her chin) are largely unpleasant; Undine's only contact with either is when she is punished for devilish offences against femininity (Undine, p. 14). Dutch girls her own age are represented as "cheese-faced" or "pudding-faced" half-wits whose most inspired inquiry in Bible class is whether the virgins of Matthew 25, were men or women, or if the bridesmaids in the verse "carried eau-de-Cologne in their pockets" (Undine, p. 16). These girls are praised by Undine's governess, whose ideas are described as "so truly correct, feminine and orthodox, that they might have all been placed in an ordinary breakfast saucer... without ...

fear of their ever running over" (Undine, pp. 12-3). When Undine's pet monkey escapes and she follows it onto a barn roof, one of the Dutch girls remarks "very deliberately": "You will fall down and die" (Undine, p. 29). Years later in the diamond fields, Undine meets one of her classmates again. As when Undine mounted the roof years before, she diagnoses Undine's state dispassionately, telling her own child that "the Englishwoman... will be dead in the morning" (Undine, p. 368). Though she promises to visit Undine that night, she is overtired from work and does not come; Undine dies alone.

Undine makes no real female friends during her sojourn in England either. She initially likes "Aunt" Margaret, a cousin who becomes engaged to her elder brother, and Aunt Margaret's happiness as a woman in love cause Undine to muse "How glorious it would be when she too, was one!" (Undine, p. 74). But Undine's introduction to "the facts of life" (through the evil gossip of the townswomen) causes even Aunt Margaret to appear differently. After Frank's death, the relationship is dramatically destroyed; Aunt Margaret's affection for her sister-in-law-to-be changes into murderous hatred and she is last seen as "a thing that licked its red lips," after having bitten and strangled Undine into unconsciousness. Her English grandmother's death shortly after Undine's marriage removes the last of the heroine's family, leaving her completely isolated. Of her Undine had only ever ventured one opinion: "I did not care for my grandmother nor yet dislike her. She was a weak, nervous little old woman, who had had all the soul pressed out of her long ago..." (Undine, p. 34).

Thereafter there is only a maid at the Blair household, Nancy Grey, who seems well-disposed to Undine, but is clearly not in her mistress' class, in any sense. Schreiner's portrayal of Nancy is as a stock functional device, as a servant who advances the novel's action by reporting, wide-eyed, the queer goings-on at the Big House whilst "chatting with her lover over the gate" of an evening (Undine, p. 188). Her persistent head-shaking declarations that Undine is "sort of strange and quiet like" serve adequately to reinforce Undine's status as an alien enigma in the neighbourhood.

Alice Brown, Undine's fellow mermaid, is in her own way, also a type. In face and figure she resembles Dickens' creation in Dombey and Son, but while Dickens took pains with his plot to make the proud Edith Dombey and the equally proud Alice Brown cousins, Schreiner stops short of anything but a symbolic kinship between her pair of mermaids. Thus, when Undine comes upon Alice Brown in a wood one day she feels mysteriously as if she has "come near to one who is of [her] own flesh and blood" (Undine, p. 190). Undine envies her, because Alice's eyes seem to say "I am not alone, for I have him, the child of love." Undine's next visit to Alice ends with her (Undine's) tormented, envious realisation, as Alice's son dies in her arms, that it is Albert's child. Here as elsewhere in Schreiner's writings, the strength of a woman's attachment to her baby is rendered as dependent on her feelings about its father: Undine herself expects George Blair's baby with loathing.[42]

This child, a "puny, shrivelled thing," clearly marked for an early death, is first described as "that thing" whose cry "made her lose all love of life... even more then [sic] the kisses of its father had done" (Undine, p. 203). Because it is George Blair's, "she hate[s] it," but gradually Undine comes to believe that "life is too wonderful to hate in. Poor little soul, we are all too nearly bound for hating" (Undine, p. 205). Yet her feeling is never other than the companionate desire of one lonely soul for another, rather than what is ordinarily termed maternal: the child, whom she names Violet, becomes "my little friend, who loves me" and the word "daughter" is never used (Undine, p. 207). The baby sickens, but Undine refuses to acknowledge it, maintaining that when she can take it "to the sea... it will soon be strong and well then." This is eerily reminiscent of Dombey and Son too; for in that book the sea is symbolic of death, most particularly that of little Paul Dombey, who is always listening for "what the sea is always saying" when it is in fact prophesying his death.[43] When Undine at last perceives that the infant is dying, she asks "Are we only to lift our heads above the water to be pushed down again?..." (Undine, 208).

After George Blair dies, Undine's cousin's wife, Mrs. Barnacles (still ignorant of her husband's passion for Undine) sees a potential for making social capital out of being

related to the rich young widow. Miss Mell, the confidant of Mrs. Barnacles, remains hostile. In speaking with Mrs Barnacles, she displays an aversion to Undine which is "quite irrepressible, inherent and inextinguishable" and brands her mercenary. When Cousin Jonathan informs the two that Undine has left the country and divided all the elder Blair's property between his two sons, Miss Mell is outraged. What could be worse than

> ...to be proved a daughter of Belial, a false prophetess, by Undine obstinately refusing to commit the evil prophesied by her....?
> Saints made perfect forgive such injuries, but not a wrinkled woman on the rotten side of forty, with no money or intellect to keep the wine of life from turning sour in her bottle. (Undine, p. 214).

Here, as elsewhere in the novel, Schreiner's display of misogynist metaphors is disturbing. Beeton, who notices that the novel deals more with "woman's injustice to woman" than "man's injustice to woman", still finds Miss Mell's characterisation delightful and revels in her Dickensian outlandishness.[44] But surely it is one thing for Schreiner to compare the sharpness of Miss Mell's nose to that of her voice (Undine, p. 45) and quite another to depict her with a vocabulary of decay ("wrinkled" "rotten" "sour") which is explicitly feminised: "in her bottle."

In the First Book of Samuel appear the sons of Belial (those sons of Eli "who knew not the Lord," [1 Samuel 2:23]) as well as the daughters of Belial (1 Samuel, 1:16). Samuel contains a story of the great love of David and Jonathan, and this story has relevance to the woman with whom Undine shares a cabin in the next chapter, Chapter 14, 'On Board Ship to South Africa.' Undine's cabinmate goes unnamed and can only be referred to as the "Shabby Woman," which is what her fellow passengers call her. Her story may well constitute the remnant of the "Mrs. Blair" which disappeared from the finished text, but remains in the copybook Cronwright-Schreiner suppressed. In this copybook Karel Schoeman discovered a section of Undine which describes an attachment which is quite obviously lesbian, and it is introduced frankly and with aplomb:

> ...the large, dark eyes turned to meet her [Undine], eyes so large, dark & passionate, that having once looked at them Undine looked at nothing else till she rose to go.
>
> It is a popular delusion & one very deeply seated that the only people in this world who fall in love with one another, are men & women. Why, all history, or experience, from the time of Jonathan & David downwards, teaches us, that people of the same sex may fall in love quite as passionately, quite as foolishly, & often quite as transitorily, as those of the opposite sex.
>
> Very generally there is great discrepance between their ages & a total differance [sic] in disposition but this is not always the case. Very generally too, it is only on one side & the loved object is quite unconscious of the homage paid it; but in the case of Undine & the owner of the black eyes, it was mutual, or almost so. Perhaps Undine did not fall quite so deeply into the slough of love, as her companion, but then in spite of her eighteen years & her friends five-&-forty [changed from "nine-&-thirty"], Undine was more of a woman than she was or ever would be.[46]

Though the romance here is between two females, whose passion is described with the Bunyanesque term "slough of love," at least two traditional notions, even clichés, of male homosexual love are also employed (the David and Jonathan story, the age discrepancy) which should provide future scholars with the task of tracing Schreiner's precocious acquaintance with them.

What is easier to establish, thanks to Schoeman's research, is evidence of biographical background to the episode. After presenting the passage above, Schoeman comments:

> The whole episode is so strange and charged with intensity that it is hard not to believe Olive is describing her own feelings: here, as elsewhere in her life, one cannot prove anything and has to fall back on inference and surmisal, but the older Mrs. Blair, with her "large, dark & passionate" eyes, strongly recalls the 34-year-old Mary Weakley, with her striking dark eyes and eyebrows, and it may have been Olive's devotion to her that is reflected both in the Shabby Woman's devotion to her aunt and in Undine's admiration for Mrs. Blair.[47]

Schoeman provides a photograph of Mary Weakley that fits Mrs. Blair's description, and though he does not mention it, her sons (two of whom were named George and Harry) provide names for two of the Blairs in the final text of Undine. Further, the Weakley children presented Schreiner with a volume of Shelley before she left Colesberg; Shelley is

the Shabby Woman's favourite author. The parallels with the real life and the fiction go further: Schreiner grew to hate George Weakley (later describing him as a "brute" to Ellis) and George is the name given to the most evil of the Blairs, Undine's husband. George Weakley's remark (a contemptuous one, following his refusal to pay her wages, "You stayed for your own pleasure") may have some link to George Blair's pride in understanding of woman's desires and woman's price. But Weakley had also been a source of some strange fascination to Schreiner, as she admitted to Ellis, and if the brutal aspect of his behaviour is rendered in the portrait of George Blair, another kind of behaviour is exhibited by the Shabby Woman's married lover, whose "bold, black eyes," beard, and tenderness to his children also reflect available information about George Weakley.

The Shabby Woman's long first-person narrative jars with the rest of the novel. Only in that she is a "mermaid" like Alice Brown and Undine is there any connection with Undine's story; otherwise, the episode seems completely the product of Schreiner's stay at Colesberg. Once again, the mermaid is alienated like other protagonists in Schreiner's work. The Shabby Woman is shown to have been orphaned young and as having suffered a virtually friendless childhood. Unlike the proud and intellectual (albeit self-taught) Undine, Lyndall and Rebekah, her early life is spent in a pathetic attempt to win the love of the girls and female teachers at her school, all of whom treat her with cruelty or indifference. Like Em (and Bertie), the Shabby Woman is a slow, domesticated girl who serves as a foil to the more active heroine, and what African Farm's narrator says of Em -- "She had given out so much love in her little life, and had got none of it back with interest," (African Farm, p. 179)-- is certainly true of her. As she grows up, her comfort is Shelley, whom she loves but does not understand and puts away because she hopes she will become "less stupid" if she stops reading poetry (Undine, p. 223-4). After leaving school she goes to work at her aunt's house by the seaside, where she is viciously overworked in a way that matches Schreiner's experience at Colesberg , even to the details of sleeping in her clothes

from fatigue.[48] Exploited by her aunt as a drudge as well as childminder, she uncomplainingly works harder and harder, hoping to win the aunt's affection.

Her misery is relieved by the arrival of a family whose head she initially fears but grows to love when she witnesses his gentleness when holding his "little girl on his knee" (Undine, p. 231).[49] Soon the man bestows kisses and embraces on her too, which he characterises as fatherly; incoherently she describes what later emerges as her own stunted sexual awareness. The man first kisses her whilst helping her to make "egg-flip"; the girl is undone with a feeling of "a great river running past her ears" (Undine, p. 232). The episodes in which the Shabby Woman and the bearded man have contact are extremely particularised, far more so than most anywhere else in novel: "I was passing the door with a cup of arrowroot for the baby when he called me to come in"; "I was kneeling on the pantry dresser, filling a glass pot with jam, when I looked round and saw him standing behind me" (Undine, p. 235). Following a jealous explosion by his wife, her lover proposes to take her away with him (Undine, p. 233-5). Meanwhile, clear manifestations of the girl's nascent sexual desire, characterised by her rubbing herself against his clothing, are reported disingenuously, as is her jealousy of her lover's wife. Eventually the "wickedness" of their illicit love overcomes her until she feels she is "in hell" and writes to tell him that she must leave, because although she can bear her own sin she cannot bear his hurting his family (Undine, p. 237). A mermaid in her own way (she is a collector of "pretty seaweeds" and sleeps on the beach), she also feels herself to be a devil: "He had called me his little angel ... and I had been like a devil to him" (Undine, p. 238). Predictably she surrenders him to his disagreeable wife, and Undine, the audience for the woman's story, then learns that the reason the woman is travelling to South Africa is to be with him -- or rather, his corpse. This manifestly prefigures Undine's fate: all the lonely mermaids are doomed to death, either their own, their lovers', or both.

Despite the omission of "Mrs. Blair" in the copybook passage, Undine retains remnants of eroticised relationships between women, and they are concentrated in the

episode of Undine and the Shabby Woman. There is the matter of the Shabby Woman's devotion to her aunt in which Schoeman notes a similarity to the "dark-eyed" Mrs. Blair and the real-life Mary Weakley, and yet some of the language used to describe Mrs. Blair is also transferred to the Shabby Woman herself. There is a certain amount of intimate contact between Undine and the Shabby Woman from the start, as Undine's sickness at sea causes her to require nursing.

> "You are very good to me, very good," said Undine one day, when the woman sat bathing her head with vinegar and water. "You do everything for me so much better than the stewardess can."
> "I ought to be able to," said the woman in a low, nervous voice. "I have been nursing for twelve years. I do nothing else." (Undine, p. 222)

When Undine begins to recover, she starts to write some poetry. Not only are the verses sexually suggestive (the "lines of rhyme told what she felt when there had been rain in the night and she went out to see the roses knocking their faces together after rain, sending a second shower into the face of the moist sweet earth") but Undine's feelings about the act of writing itself are also eroticised. It makes her "look radiantly happy, for it is as thrilling as a lover's hot kiss to have fixed on paper something that has looked beautiful to us" (Undine, p. 223). Undine's frankly post-coital joy following composition is mistaken by her cabinmate for the anticipation of seeing a lover in South Africa, as this exchange shows:

> "Are you going to some one?" asked the woman suddenly.
> "Going to some one?" repeated Undine inquiringly.
> "Yes. I beg your pardon," said the woman, seeming terribly abashed and speaking more nervously than usual. "I hope you will forgive me. But I meant -- you looked so happy -- and I -- I -- thought you must be going to some one." (Undine, p. 223)

Although it is not the intent here to see in every expression of affection between women in Schreiner's writings some kind of Sapphic utterance, there is room to see a recognition of attraction between women, which most often is registered in the writing when women characters feel most insecure or alienated in their heterosexual relationships.

Thus, Undine and Mrs. Blair fall into their "slough of love" whilst Undine is suffering from Albert's coldness; the narrator and her rival in "The Woman's Rose" feel drawn to one another when their flocks of admirers compete for them with a coarse lack of discrimination; and in the famous passage in From Man to Man where Rebekah imagines herself as a man in bed with a pregnant wife, Rebekah is shown to be suffering from a lack of tenderness in her marriage. These incidents can be read as overtly lesbian, or they can be seen as simply documenting the absences in the love of men for women, a love which in most cases is seen to be selfish. Each woman's real passion, however, is firmly heterosexual (whether masochistic, as are Undine's and Rebekah's, or sadistic, as is that of the narrator of "The Woman's Rose"). Each woman's homosexual passion is only presented, as it were, in the midst of despair of the fulfilment of her heterosexual one.

The Shabby Woman's tale is prefaced by accounts of the unfortunate woman's ill-treatment at the hands of other females. At first there is the panoramic scene on the deck of the ship bound for Africa, in which the Shabby Woman's appearance causes comment. Only one person--a man--has a good word to say for her, and he is mocked by the "captain's pretty sister" for it. Following this, Undine witnesses a small girl tormenting a dog. The girl's elder sister berates her but is mollified by the younger's reassurance that it belongs, not to "the lady in the black-silk dress" but to the Shabby Woman. "Oh, then it's all right," says her sister (Undine, pp. 219-20).

The "lady in the black-silk dress" has already been identified as another passenger, a "portly dame" who "devoutly" believes

> ... this ball had been launched into space and continued suspended there to serve as a floor whereon might be placed her well-shod feet. Long ago she had done her own ironing, and her own washing too at a pinch when no Kaffir maid was to be got, but her husband had been a lucky emigrant and those days were forgotten now. Her husband, who sat not far from her... fervently wished himself in old Africa again: old Africa, to which he would return smaller and wiser after his travels, the truth having been revealed to him during his wanderings that the world has greater things than a British

> settler. To his wife no revelation had been made, for the darkness that surrounds the female soul is dense. (Undine, pp. 217-8)

Equally hostile remarks are made by the narrator about two "Africander girls" returning to the colony "sublimely ignorant of everything in general and of their own deficiencies in particular" (Undine, p. 217). Only at the end of the Shabby Woman's narrative, when she remarks that a kind lady (referred to briefly and not by name) paid her fare on the ship to the Colony is any word said in favour of a woman (Undine, p. 240).

Once in Port Elizabeth, Undine feels differently about the freedom she dreamed of back in England. With little money left, she finds that to be thus free is to feel only "that a woman is a poor thing carrying in herself the bands that bind her" (Undine, p. 245). She contracts a lift to New Rush with a Mrs. Snappercaps, whose first act is to accept her only to cross her husband, who does not wish a passenger. There follows a farcical and yet disturbingly prolonged account of Undine's sufferings which is replete with accusations of her devilishness from one the narrator sardonically describes as a "good woman." Undine endures the journey, with the Snappercaps' filthy children frequently in her charge and always with Mrs. Snappercaps' suspicious eye on her. Mrs. Snappercaps' "sum of... labours" is meanwhile to "eat, sleep and slap the children" (Undine, p. 253). She is described as "looked upon among her female acquaintances as an exceptionally kind-hearted and generous woman, better than the run of themselves, and no doubt they were right" -- though her kindness is merely squeamishness with regard to the treatment of animals. She is described as "not a hard woman, only a woman" who "envied her white-handed soft-voiced little dependent as one feminine thing envies another" (Undine, p. 253). To Mrs Snappercaps, Undine is "a bad woman" even for wishing to walk alone of an evening and she is to be pilloried for reading Spencer's First Principles (Undine, p. 264). Each of Undine's actions, even acquiesence, is interpreted darkly, and Mrs. Snappercaps remarks to her husband that "it was those very agreeable quiet people who have all the devil's will and spirit in them" (Undine, 266). Finally, following torrents of nonsensical abuse of Undine,

Mrs. Snappercaps holds a series of religious readings for the improvement of Undine's character, concentrating on "denunciations against Pharisees, hypocrites and unbelievers," and continuing with a story from the second Book of Samuel, "wherein is recorded how the amorous King of Israel walked on his roof at evening tide and beheld the limbs of the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite." The sermon culminates with a hysterical outburst against her bewildered husband, whom she accuses of beholding Undine in a like manner (Undine, pp. 268-73). The effect of Mrs. Snappercaps' absurd calumny is finally to make Undine wonder, "Is it crueler pain to be pricked by a woman's pins than lashed by a great affliction?" (Undine, p. 277).

Once at New Rush, Undine is immediately robbed of her possessions by a Malay woman, then cruelly refused payment for some needlework undertaken for a "fleecy-white" lady (who, it will transpire, is Albert Blair's wife) because it is stained with Undine's blood (Undine, pp. 301-2). Finally Undine decides to support herself by ironing, because

> ... a short experience had made her very wise, and she knew that a man's dog is more enviable than a woman's friend if so be the one is mistress and the other maid. Needlework work must be done for women, ironing might be for men, so she decided in favour of the ironing. (Undine, p. 307)

This choice made, she finds work immediately, since one "Mary Jones... always drinks too much to do it." In sum, women at the diggings are no better than those in England.

Undine's last relationship with a female is with a little "Dutch" girl at the "diamond fields." It is for the most part a positive one, although the girl (whom Undine calls "Diogenes" because she sits in a tub) does grow unpleasantly jealous of a man Undine nurses. "Diogenes" is a Schreiner heroine par excellence. In this book of motherless girls her mother is, of course, dead, but instead of the more or less benign neglect with which Undine's mother treated her daughter, it is revealed that Diogenes' mother beat her daughter so badly the night she died that the girl's back was broken. At the time Undine meets her, Diogenes' home life consists of a drunken father, a procession of women who "stop with him," and endlessly quarrelling siblings. These cause her face to bear "the

shrewd suspicious old woman's look that the faces of [Diamond] Field children so soon learn to wear" (Undine, p. 306). Undine teaches her the alphabet, tells her stories and allegories and is rewarded by the child telling her "I love you better than anything" (Undine, p. 333). Diogenes' supreme gift to her benefactress is a single, "deep-bosomed" rosebud which she has taken enormous pains to grow. Yet the child's future, as predicted by the narrator, with touches of both the grotesque and the maudlin, is this:

> It may be that in the years to come Diogenes shall grow into a great, coarse, red woman as her mother was before her -- the mother of many children, the wife of many husbands whom she may drop as she does every hour the words that are not choice.
>
> It may be -- but there will come hours when the one pure and tender memory of her childhood will come back to her, and her children will wonder why she speaks so softly and the men why she has no oaths... They would wonder if they knew it was only the picture of ... the little slight figure standing at the tent corner with the red rosebud in its hand, and its great white kappie, and the... sunlight streaming over it.... (Undine, p. 354)

The language of this passage identifies two women as "great, coarse, red" (Diogenes, potentially, and her mother) and associates them with indiscriminate mating, breeding, and language. Furthermore, if Schreiner borrowed the name Diogenes (like several others) from Dombey and Son, it again puts neither girls nor the "Dutch" in a flattering light, for Dickens' Diogenes was merely the heroine's dog.

From Undine's governess's feminine ideas, amply contained in a breakfast saucer, to Miss Mell's misery and hypocrisy, to the description of the "darkness that surrounds the female soul," to that "feminine thing" Mrs. Snappercaps, to the "baby-faced" Edith Blair and her placid eyes, conventional womanliness is rendered as a worthless and pernicious condition. Within the dynamics of Undine's plot, however, remains the paradox that Undine remains passionately devoted all her life to the very man who first prescribed to her a gender code consisting of ten commandments of mediocrity, and further is reported as believing all his life save for one "moment of madness" that a "the only right of a woman is the right of the rose--to smile and be, not to think and live" (Undine, p. 140). Moreover, his

stern self-sufficiency in death is the genuine article; Undine's proud independence is revealed to be a sham in comparison, permanently vulnerable to her passion for him, first when she grooms herself for him, secondly when she burns a book for his sake, thirdly when she sells her body to his father in order to serve him, and finally when she cannot even die without dreaming of his embrace. The novel supplies no way out of the predicament of her passion for independence and for a man who demanded its destruction. Moreover, the misogynist rhetoric of the narrative (Schreiner is, as has been shown, far harder on women than on men) the only woman who is any kind of friend to Undine in the entire narrative (the Shabby Woman) is emotionally enslaved in a situation similar to Undine's.

It is worth studying Undine not so much for its themes -- for they are all, from religion to sexual politics, better accomplished in African Farm -- as for the way it shows Schreiner exploring, modifying and discarding various ideas about structure, setting and imagery in preparation for her later work. It is clear, from the evidence of the copybooks and the frequent references to revisions in her diary, that she took great pains to rework it, and the text shows numerous "clues" that show dedication to its typologically allegorical premises. In terms of the meaning of Undine in the body of Schreiner's fiction, one thing is clear. Although she would later write many allegories, never again would she attempt to make a whole novel a typological work, based, as her first novel demonstrably is, on a source like the Undine myth. Allegory would remain the form that came most naturally to her, as From Man to Man would prove, for The Prelude, she discovered after writing it, was an allegory of the whole novel.[50] But this is vastly different from the extended mermaid metaphor of Undine with its set-piece of Undine and Albert posed in front of the painting with the dead knight and the voluptuous peasant girl, or the self-indulgent stories Undine tells to Diogenes, which integrate into the plot even less well than "The Hunter's Allegory" does into African Farm. After Undine, the worst excesses of Corellian or Ouida-like description of her heroines would disappear; voguish Wertherian references to suicide (trite even when she made them) would cease too.[51] The misogynistic asides of the narrator of

Undine would disappear; so would some of the farcical humour of this first novel. Themes that would continue, including religious doubt (Waldo and Rebekah both listen in terror to the ticking of timepieces), the Emersonian desire to "love up" to someone, and the valorisation of self-sacrifice in love would become even stronger. Pairs of effeminate and excessively macho men would continue in Gregory Rose and Lyndall's Stranger and also (to a lesser extent) in John-Ferdinand and Frank in From Man to Man. Dead infants appear in all three novels; death at early ages would be the fate of Lyndall and Waldo as it was of Undine and Albert. Schreiner could never quite complete the novel in which a heroine would be allowed to live (and even Rebekah would have to carry on without Bertie or Mr. Drummond) but heroines would become more human in appearance (the mermaid, Undine has a kinship to the "elfin" Lyndall but Rebekah is identified with the more fleshy Queen Victoria).

Undine starts the trend for "little" as a description of heroines (Undine is to be Albert's "little wife" or his "little girl"; the Shabby Woman, too, is her lover's "little girl"). But though heroines remained small, the scope of their visions would grow larger. The solitary mermaid Undine has no real interest in other women in the abstract; she is too busy trying to escape their attempts to indoctrinate, oppress, murder, slander, exploit, rob or (if Schoeman's second copybook is taken into account) seduce her for anything like solidarity to be an issue in her life. As Rebecca West once sardonically commented, Undine seems to feel that the worst of being a feminist is that one has so little evidence. Schreiner created a heroine in Lyndall who is as alienated from her surroundings as Undine, but the author manages to theorise Lyndall's oppression in a way which does not rely as heavily on vulgar caricatures of conformist women. Also, by substituting a more complex explanation for the persistent attraction dominant men have for even the most independent of women, Schreiner replaced Undine's total capitulation with a more equable view of relations between the sexes.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE, "You Can't Get There from Here"

SECTION I -- "Olive's Loss:" Some African Farms and Their Economies

1 Olive Schreiner, From Man to Man, or, Perhaps Only... (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1926). All further references to this work appear in the text, hereafter cited as From Man to Man.

2 Karel Schoeman, Olive Schreiner: A Woman in South Africa, 1855-1881, trans. Henri Snijders. (Parklands, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1991), p. 181. Hereafter this book will be cited as Schoeman, Olive Schreiner.

3 Olive Schreiner, Undine (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1928), p. 1. All further references to this work appear in the text.

4 See Undine, Chapters 16 ("New Rush") and 20 ("Alone with the Stars"). The crowded conditions at New Rush in the mid-1870s are drawn still more vividly in Schreiner's unfinished novel Diamond Fields, discovered in 1974 by Richard Rive and published by him under the title "New Olive Schreiner Story Discovered" Weekend Argus, April 17, 1974, pp. 4-5, and 7. See also First and Scott (pp. 64-65) and Schoeman in Olive Schreiner (pp. 258-71).

5 Olive Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm, introd. by Dan Jacobson (1883; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986) p. 283. All further references to this work appear in the text, hereafter cited as African Farm.
Lyndall dies alone as her nurse, Gregory Rose, draws apart from her, feeling himself to be like Hagar in the "wilderness of Bathsheba" (see Gen. 21).

6 Frank discusses Bertie's last known whereabouts in Soho on p. 449 of From Man to Man; the Simon's Town brothel on p. 481. The latter was a sizeable settlement closer to the tip of the Cape of Good Hope than to Cape Town itself. Its dissolute areas are investigated by Drummond for Rebekah's sake and in the conclusion Schreiner (according to her husband) intended, Bertie is found there (From Man to Man, p. 482).

7 See Ellen Moers, Literary Women (London: The Women's Press, 1986), p. 261. Moers describes the "female landscape" of many writers: Welty, Chopin, Schreiner, Dinesen, and Lessing, among others. Schoeman, influenced by Moers, describes Schreiner's Karoo as "a Karoo that is to be found on no map ... a subjective Karoo," (Olive Schreiner, pp. 440-1).
Joyce Berkman too writes of the female landscape, belabouring early on the extended medical metaphor of her book by describing the Karoo as "an elixir." See Joyce Avrech Berkman, The Healing Imagination of Olive Schreiner: Beyond South African Colonialism (1989; rpt. Oxford: Plantin Paperbacks, 1990), p 19.

8 Olive Schreiner, Dream Life and Real Life (London: Fisher Unwin, 1893), pp. 13-50. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[9] Schoeman makes the point that Saints and Sinners must be considered a substantially different and separate book from From Man to Man (Olive Schreiner, pp. 383-9). He surmises that during Schreiner's lifelong "process of radical revision, the Saints and Sinners Olive had written at Ratelhoek in the seventies vanished..." (Olive Schreiner, p. 390).

The projected ending Cronwright-Schreiner claimed Schreiner described to him appears in précis on pp. 481-3 of the From Man to Man he edited and published. She described the ending of the book to Pearson in great detail in a letter of 6 July 1886 which emphasised Rebekah's relationship with Drummond (Rive, Letters. p. 86). Another variant ending was described by Schreiner in a letter to Edward Carpenter of 28 January 1889 when she wrote: "Do you know the novel ends by the mother telling her children they'll all go upcountry and dance naked on the rocks!!" (Rive, Letters, pp. 148-9).

[10] Josephine Dodd, an unpublished essay (Dept. of Women's Studies at the University of York, 1988), p. 15, paraphrases and quotes the work of Graham Pechey, "The Story of an African Farm: Colonial History and the Discontinuous Text," Critical Arts, 3, No. 1 (1983) pp. 65-78.

[11] Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 186.

[12] Rebecca Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 24 March 1874, quoted in First and Scott, p. 71. Despite Rebecca's desire to keep her daughter at home, finances might not have permitted in any case. On Schreiner's visit to her parents she had found Gottlob "wearing Will's cast-off clothes" (First and Scott, p. 70).

[13] Schreiner to Kate Findlay, 19 February 1875 (Rive, Letters, p. 15).

[14] Schreiner to Kate Findlay, 6 April 1872 (Rive, Letters, p. 5). Kate of all people should have understood this feeling; she too as a child had been "passed around" amongst friends and relatives, as First and Scott describe, pp. 44-5. Perhaps it is not coincidental that in her later years as a patient (one of the "sane insane" as the head of the institution described her) at an asylum in Natal one of her favourite phrases to repeat was "Give me a home with you." See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 459-60.

[15] Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 305. Schoeman quotes the offer of a typical advertisement by someone who called herself "an English lady." He is not always specific about his dates but quotes his sources as the Queenstown Free Press 1863-71 and the Cradock Register, 1863-81.

[16] Berkman, The Healing Imagination of Olive Schreiner, p. 21.

[17] First and Scott, p. 70.

[18] Schreiner to Cronwright-Schreiner, 18 December 1906 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, pp. 261-2). Scandals about governesses could not have been uncommon; one caused "Samuel Zwaartman" (the pen-name of H. W. A. Cooper, who was notorious for his satirical articles) to leave Fraserburg just before Schreiner arrived there in November 1873 (see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 277).

19 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 325.

20 Adriaan Muller was Mrs. Fouché's son by her first marriage and he "frequently cropped up in Olive's diary" (Schoeman,Olive Schreiner, p. 323).

Mrs. Fouché, Cronwright-Schreiner reports, teased Schreiner by saying "Hy es baie lief vir jou." "Ach nee!" Olive replied. "Ja," the old lady rejoined. "Kan jy dit nie zien nie? Kyk hoe stoot hy vir jou!" ("He loves you very much." "Oh, no." "Yes, can't you see it? Look how he shoves you!") See Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 109.

According to one of the Cawoods' sons, Mrs. Fouché was wont to tease Schreiner further after Muller married: "Now see what you would have had, if you married my son!" Hence the Cawoods called that portion of the land "Olive's Loss" (see Winifred B. Harvey, "Here Great Olive Schreiner Still Lives," Eastern Province Herald, 19 March 1955.

21 Schreiner to Erilda Cawood, March 1888 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 133).

SECTION II-- The Roots of Rootlessness

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1 See Jean Piaget, The Construction of Reality in the Child (New York: Ballantine).

2 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 7.

3 Cherry Clayton, "Life into Fiction," English in South Africa, 12, No. 1 (1985), 29-39.

4 See Berkman, The Healing Imagination. Berkman's error about Cradock can be found on p. 11 and that concerning the writing of Undine on p. 23. In addition, on p. 37, Berkman refers to Schreiner's "parents' references to England as their true homeland" (emphasis added). Gottlob Schreiner was born and raised in Swabia and there is no evidence that he ever referred to England in this way. Berkman's definition of "the language of the Boers -- the Taal" as a "mix of Dutch and French with some African" (p. 248) is downright risible.

Berkman's mention of the Cawoods occurs on p. 22, and merits full quotation: "The Cawoods, like almost all of Schreiner's employers, were Boers, the predecessors of twentieth-century Afrikaners. Sometimes for as long as eighteen months Schreiner did not set eyes on an English face. Through her friendship with these Ach exclaimers, she discovered the falsity and harm of British ethnocentrism. Cawood as well as other Boer women provided more appealing models for female selfhood than those Rebecca presented and prescribed. Besides admiring Boer females' strength, courage, and seemingly boundless self-control, Schreiner reveled in their warmth and matter-of-fact response to physical and sexual concerns. At the Cawoods she would regularly sunbathe nude on a large flat rock behind the house. ..."

In fact, the Cawoods were English--when Schreiner made the comment about eighteen months passing without sight of an English face she made it whilst living at the Fouchés

at Klein Gannahoek with the implied exception of her visits to her neighbours at Gannahoek, the Cawoods. (See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 335). This information is not among Schoeman's revelations -- it is easily gathered from Cronwright, First and Scott, Buchanan-Gould, etc. There is therefore no evidence that Mrs. Cawood exclaimed "Ach" any more than any other "English Africander" of her class and time; and indeed actual Boer women like Mrs. Fouché (whose vile temper and unpredictable explosions make one wonder at Berkman's admiration of "boundless self-control") were wont, by Schreiner's account, to swear like troopers. Tant' Sannie has an exemplary line in invective, as does the "Dutchman" of p. 265 of African Farm when he calls Gregory Rose a "Salt reim," a euphemism for "soutpiel," "salt-penis."

The "matter-of-fact" attitude to sexual matters Berkman notices was deemed coarse by most English observers of the time and in the fiction of the 1870s Schreiner characterised it as such. She shows a characteristic English "Africander"'s disdain in showing Undine's fastidious distaste for her Dutch neighbour and in Lyndall's distaste for Tant' Sannie's philosophy on marriage (see African Farm, p. 195).

If it is true that Mrs. Fouché was open about "sexual concerns," then Berkman construes this quality more charitably than Schreiner might have, for one of Cronwright's anecdotes concerns Mrs. Fouché's astonishment after eavesdropping on Schreiner and a male visitor one evening. "She had thought there was only one thing a young man and woman spoke about when alone for any time, but Olive and her friend had not said a word about it!" (Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 109). Finally, sexual matters were as segregated as everything else: it was Mrs. Fouché who refused a halfcaste prostitute bread, let alone a bed, when she went into labour on Klein Gannahoek; Schreiner helped "an old black man" deliver the baby in the open air. "I hope I cut the string right," she wrote in her diary (Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 458).

5 Stanley, "Feminism and Friendship"; Christopher Heywood, "Olive Schreiner and Literary Tradition," in Olive Schreiner and After: Essays on Southern African Literature in Honour of Guy Butler, ed. Malvern van Wyk Smith and Don Maclennan (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983), pp. 58-66.

6 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 66-7; p. 74; p. 102; pp. 172-3; p. 269; p. 280; pp 283-4; pp. 363-6, and passim.

7 Buchanan-Gould, p. 16.

8 See First and Scott, p. 30-1. The London Missionary Society "lacked white congregations but it held an almost continuous line of stations along the northern border..." (p. 28).

9 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 27.

10 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 39. Twenty men were killed at Umpukane that night (30 August) as the "amaMfengu's huts were razed, and their cattle and grain carried off by attackers." The Reverend Cameron described "women and children thrown down and trampled upon - while Balls flew about..." Rebecca "being a very nervous subject, (...) is represented as having been almost distracted."

It was likely that it was this raid (although it may have been another--there were several) that Rebecca Schreiner spoke of to her granddaughter Lyndall Gregg, who

reported: "She and my grandfather escaped with the family at night to a neighbouring mission, but she found on their return that her cook's head was in the oven, and her milkman lay dying under a pile of boulders." Lyndall Gregg, Memories of Olive Schreiner (London: W. & R. Chambers, 1957) p. 8.

11 Schoeman proves Schreiner left Balfour for Cradock within the first ten months of 1868 (Olive Schreiner, p. 148); she is therefore most likely to have been thirteen. Why Berkman says she left at the age of ten is anyone's guess (p. 11); on p. 237 she copies the usual line (Cronwright's) in saying Schreiner left in 1867, and also asserts (falsely) that Schreiner began Undine here.

12 Schreiner's letter to Ellis, 18 March 1889, seems to refer to the Balfour-Cradock move (Rive, Letters, p. 151-2). This is typical of a one to two year time lag in Schreiner's accounts of her childhood and adolescence; she almost always referred to her time at Dordrecht as "when I was fifteen" (she was sixteen and a half to seventeen and a half years old) and to the time of Ellie Schreiner's death as "when I was nine" (when she was in fact ten and a half).

13 First and Scott, pp. 48-9; see also pp. 45-6. Heavy work was expected of all the Schreiner children, as the Findlay letters show.

14 The "Shabby Woman" 's experience in Undine (pp. 229-30) resembles Schreiner's at Colesberg down to the details of sleeping in her clothes through weariness. Schreiner also wrote in her diary at Leliekloof (9 December 1880, quoted in Cronwright's The Life, p. 141) of a possible chance to accompany her sister Alice Hemming to England. "If I could help her and make her love me, how glorious!"
Her subsequent claim that being "half-starved" and hard-working was "beautiful" came in a letter to Ellis, 25 December 1884 (Rive's Letters, p. 62).

15 Elizabeth Rolland to "to my beloved Niece," Kate Schreiner, 1847, quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 132.

16 Letter from Catherine Lyndall, quoted in First and Scott, p. 24 (no date given).

17 First and Scott, p. 48.

18 As told by Zadok Robinson to Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 66.

19 Cronwright-Schreiner, p. 67.

20 Cronwright-Schreiner, p. 7. "Mrs. Schreiner in later years gave a woman friend an amusing account of how she became a missionary. ... she attended a revival meeting in London. One of the hymns asked 'Who will go and join the throng?' The young girl sang among the others: 'I will go and join the throng." She thus became infected with the missionary spirit. She concluded "It was all claptrap and nonsense, my dear."

21 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 109.

22 Carol Barash, "Virile Womanhood: Olive Schreiner's Narratives of a Master Race." Women's Studies International Forum, 9, No.4 (1986) p. 334. "Schreiner ...linked her sense of women as other to her love of her sister and to her sister's death: 'I sometimes think my great love for women and girls, not because they are myself, but because they are not myself, comes from my love of her.' "

She follows this quotation with the remark "We can read an ambivalent lesbian fantasy behind Schreiner's 'love' for other women; she describes women as sexually other, as objects of curiosity, power, and disdain. Schreiner enacted this objectification and scientific examination of other women, a pattern of defining herself by way of but in contrast to them, when she sought out and lived among prostitutes while writing From Man to Man." Not necessarily. See Schreiner to Carpenter (5 April 1888) "It's when I think of these women, Edward, that I feel I am a woman, and I'm glad I am a woman so that I may fight. . ."

23 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 112-4. Ellie died on the 22 August 1865, and the family was convulsed with grief. Having been "enveloped in the intense love the family always showed their babies" she was specially missed. John Findlay's sister Maggie said Ettie's grief was "painful beyond description to witness" and also mentioned Rebecca's "extreme" reaction.

24 E. A. Walker, W. P. Schreiner, A South African (London: OUP, 1937).

25 Theo Schreiner's letter is quoted in Schoeman, pp. 67-8. Wetherell's novel is named on p. 228 of Undine.

26 In a postscript to a letter of 29 June 1896 to John X. Merriman, Schreiner wrote: "No, I have never read Stevenson, strange as it may seem. I have a most peculiar antipathy to novels. I love The Mill on the Floss and Turganieff's Fathers and Sons and a dozen others, but I think I like them because they are science or poetry, not because they are novels!!! I have often tried to analyse why it is that I have this intense horror of novels, while all folks of this age from Huxley to Darwin to servant girls find pleasure in them and benefit too. They are so dry!" (Rive, Letters, pp. 286).

27 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 66-7. At the age of thirteen Elise Rolland (later Olive Schreiner's hostess/employer "Lilly" Orpen) wrote enthusiastically of such works as Richard Baxter's The Saints' Everlasting Rest, or A Treatise on the Blessed State of the Saints in their Enjoyment of God in Glory (1650) and a few years later much admired "Macneil on the Advent", probably a short title for Every Eye Shall See Him, or Prince Albert's Visit to Liverpool, Used as an Illustration of the Second Coming of Christ, a sermon by Hugh MacNeile.

28 First and Scott, p. 44 and p. 46. Getting the children "beyond the reach of native influence" was important that they might come back to missionary work "with a freshness," "if the Lord saw fit to call them."

See also Schoeman on the "swarthy demon of the house" (which seems to have referred to the black pupils at the industrial school in Healdtown) and numerous anecdotes of the explicitly sexual anxieties of the English colonists with regard to native populations (p. 61, pp. 92-3).

29 First and Scott, p. 48. Will Schreiner was beaten by Gottlob for shouting "Skelm!" (rogue, rascal) on another occasion (see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 59).

30 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 162-3.

31 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 162-3.

32 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 488: "If the traditional tribal black man had been unacceptable to most whites and determined efforts had been made to destroy his culture and 'civilise' him, the first generation to have undergone that 'civilising' process discovered that the educated, English-speaking black evoked an equally negative reaction. No matter how assiduously the ideal of westernising the native was pursued, the whites could handle the practical results of that process only by deriding and ridiculing them..." Or fearing them, indeed: see Payton's warning in the "diamond fields" of 1872: "Above all things, mistrust a Kaffir who speaks English and wears trousers."

33 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 323.

34 See A Dictionary of South African English, edited by Jean Bradford, new enlarged edition (Cape Town: OUP, 1980), p. 272, which establishes that the term dates at least as far back as 1878: "In Mafeking they are more used to the English. There was a time when the only people in Mafeking were the souties and their servants..." (Cape Star, 29 August 1878.) "...soutie for an Englishman -- one foot in England one in South Africa, appendage in the sea." (Informant Serviceman: Letter 4 February 1879.) The same page gives the definition of the milder epithet soutriem (salt-thong), using African Farm's mispelt "Salt-reim" as an illustration of its usage.

35 "English Africander" is the phrase Schreiner often used to discuss South Africans of English extraction: a contemporary told numerous anecdotes of the gaucheries of same, finishing with "What an amount of ignorance these English Africando's do show!" (Schoeman, p. 449, quoting John Dobie).

Schreiner's "contemporary and subsequent friend, James Rose Innes" complained of "the haziness of the South African background to the educational picture. As a boy I was better acquainted with the boundaries of France or Italy than with those of the Transvaal or Natal; and I could have located the counties of England more accurately than the fiscal divisions of the Cape." Schoeman quotes Innes' Autobiography (Cape Town:OUP, 1949) without a page reference, (Olive Schreiner, p. 353).

36 Olive Schreiner, Thoughts on South Africa (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1927). The young Olive's prejudice was so strong, Schoeman notes, that she would not get into the bed even though it was put to her that the man was a "Dutch [Reformed Church] minister" not a "Dutch Man" (and in fact probably bore the quite un-Dutch name of Reverend John Murray). See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 60.

37 On Schreiner's "love" for George Martin, an apparently very cultured and intelligent man, who was employer at Ratelhoek, 1876-9, see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 376-7. He and Schreiner would often discuss politics and he told her "if he had lived in the time of Halifax, he would have been a 'Trimmer'." (Olive Schreiner, p. 361).

As to Schreiner's attitude to her "Dutch" children, see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 445. Berkman cites "occasional physical assaults by her young charges": this is an overdramatisation (The Healing Imagination, p. 21) Schreiner's diary refers to a single blow (2 February 1876 at Klein Gannahoek, cited in Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 116) which was dealt by the formidable Annie Fouché (daughter of the still more formidable Mrs. Fouché). Schreiner liked the family well enough to work for them again at Leliekloof: the Fouchés were later extremely disappointed that Schreiner could not delay her journey to England in 1881 to see Annie marry; there is no evidence of further "assaults." In one letter to Will Schreiner 20 October 1875 (Rive, Letters, pp. 18-9) she had mentioned a backache because "one of the [Fouché] girls 'let a box fall on my back' but this was an accident and in her next letter praises her pupils.

38 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 142-4. Martin, an ex-minister, was a "liberal," a friend of Kotze, and a member of Naudé's congregation. Schreiner herself came to know Naudé and his family. Earlier, it would have been very difficult for her not to have heard talk of the scandals and charges of heresy made against Kotze, Naudé et al., while she lived with her parents in Balfour.

39 Karel Schoeman, Only an Anguish to Live Here: Olive Schreiner and the Anglo-Boer War 1899 - 1902 (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1992) pp. 42-43. Theo Schreiner differentiated between "refined, well-educated Dutch," and a "second class of well-to-do farmers... who retain much of the Dutch habits of thought and life, but are wishful to have their children--especially their daughters--well-educated and refined," and a third class, the "Doppers," who, "even when wealthy, are unprogressive, suspicious, bigoted, anti-modern, anti-educational, anti-British..." etc.

40 Rian Malan, My Traitor's Heart: Blood and Bad Dreams: A South African Explores the Madness in his Country, his Tribe, and Himself (London: Bodley Head, 1990), p. 17. For Schreiner's own account of a "Dopper," see an anecdote from the "The Dawn of Civilization": p. 914: "According to this [story], an old Boer from the backveld goes for the first time to the Zoological Gardens at Pretoria and sees there some of the, to him, new and quite unknown beasts. He stands long and solemnly before one, and looks at it intently; and then, slowly shaking his head, he turns away. "Daar is nie zoo'n dier nie!" ("There is not such a beast") he remarks calmly, as he walks away."

41 Thomas Forester, Everard Tunstall: A Tale of the Kafir Wars (London: Richard Bently, 1851). Quoted, without page reference, in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 416.

42 "She [Mrs. Fouché] wrote Olive a very violent letter when someone told her she was the original of "Tant' Sannie" in An African Farm," (Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 108). This would belie Mrs. Fouché's reputation for near illiteracy, but she might have dictated it.

In his thesis, Rive quotes, and then translates a passage from "Olive Schreiner: 'n Stem uit die Graf," Die Burger (Cape Town: March 17, 1923) wherein it is apparent that "Tant' Sannie" carried on offending: "...Sy in... 'Story of an African Farm', 'n boervrou beskryf het, waaroor ons as boervrouens ons skaam, en wat die wereld het as 'n tipiese boervrou. Hierdie ding val ons swaar om te vergeef." ("She described in ...African Farm a Boer woman whom we as Boer women are ashamed of, and which the world accepted as a typical Boer woman. This we find difficult to forgive.") See Richard Rive, "A

Biographical and Critical Study of Olive Schreiner (1855-1920)," D. Phil, Magdalen College, Oxford U., 1974, 103.

43 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 328.

44 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 329.

45 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 414. "From the early years of the occupation poems were written at and about the Cape, mostly after British examples, and by 1828 so much poetry had already been produced in South Africa that R. J. Stapleton could publish an anthology..." Pringle, possibly the first author to describe Boer or coloured populations in literature, did so amongst poems which described the bushy landscape around Grahamstown in terms of "grassy meads" and "lea;" other poets mention "forest, dell and lane." As Schoeman points out (p. 421), as late as the 1850s one G. Impey "could still describe 'The burghers' gathering' in the language of a Scottish border ballad. Gradually in the 1850s and 1860s, though, the "emphasis" grew to be "on the beginning of a new life, rather than the end of the old."

46 Makanna, or The Land of the Savage (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1834). This novel is discussed with relation to African Farm by Stephen Gray in his essay "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," in South African Literature: An Introduction (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), pp. 139-140.

47 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 415-6.

48 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 417.

49 John Robinson, George Linton, or The First Years of an English Colony, published 1850; preface quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 417.

50 The Tarkastad Chronicle, 1876 (translated and quoted by Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 475). He notes that other papers were not so kind about the Patriot: The Cradock Register dismissed its first edition as "a small pamphlet published in the bad Dutch so prevalent in this country".

51 S. J. du Toit's Die Koningen fan Skeben, published 1898, mentioned by Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 414, without further publishing information.

52 Schreiner to Ellis, 18 March 1889, (Rive, Letters, p. 151-2).

53 Schreiner signed herself "The Wandering Jew" in a letter to Karl Pearson, in an undated note, probably written mid-March 1886 (Pearson papers, Watson Library, UCL.

SECTION III -- "Claws and Talons"

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1 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 110 and p. 137. Schreiner's age is documented by her niece Lyndall (Will and Fan [Reitz] Schreiner's daughter).

2 The manuscript from which this passage is taken held at the South African Library, Cape Town (MSC 26) and is labelled by Cronwright-Schreiner "Balfour, Feb. 1865."

3 Schreiner to Mrs. Francis Smith, 22 October 1907 (Rive, Letters, p. 274).

4 Schreiner to Ellis, 28 March 1884 (Rive, Letters, p. 36).

5 Gottlob Schreiner's letter to John Findlay is quoted, without a date, in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 112.

6 Schreiner to Reverend J. T. Lloyd, 29 October 1892 (Rive, Letters, p. 213).

7 Letter to the Reverend J. T. Lloyd, 29 October 1892 (Rive, Letters, p. 212). "When I was a little child of five and sat alone among the tall weeds at the back of the house, this perception of the unity of all things, and that they were alive, and that I was part of them, was as clear and overpowering to me as it is today."

8 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 137.

9 This portion of a letter, written to Ellis on 28 March 1884, appears in Cronwright-Schreiner's Life (p. 81-2) but he excises the paragraph about Bertram when he includes the letter in his Letters (p. 14). Rive's copy of the letter occurs on pp. 35-6 of his edition of the Letters.

10 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 191.

11 See references in note 9.

12 First and Scott, p. 59.

13 James G. Kennedy, Herbert Spencer (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p. 36.

14 Cronweight-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 81-2.

15 First and Scott, p. 56-7.

16 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 54-55.

17 Schreiner to Mrs. Francis Smith, 19 April 1907 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 266).

18 Schreiner to Ellis, 5 April 1890 (Rive, Letters, p. 167-8).

19 "Three Controversial Novels," Church Quarterly Review, London, 29 (1890), rpt. in Cherry Clayton, (ed.), Olive Schreiner (Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1983) pp. 74-5. Clayton's anthology of critical responses to Schreiner will hereafter be cited as "Clayton" alone.

20 Canon MacColl, "An Agnostic Novel": review of The Story of an African Farm, The Spectator, August 1887, pp. 1091-3, rpt. in Clayton, p. 73.

21 First and Scott, p. 122.

22 Cronwright-Schreiner source is Mary Brown, who told him: "I sent this review [Canon MacColl's] to Olive... It was Mr. Gladstone who recommended Canon MacColl to read the book." The Life, p. 158.

23 MacColl, rpt. in Clayton, p. 73.

24 MacColl, rpt. in Clayton, p. 72.

25 Bertram's suicide affected Schreiner deeply. She wrote to Pearson on 17 February 1886: "When a human being who has been part of us, who has helped that which is our true self to grow, dies, then we have this great thing left that they live as it were in us still.... I have always felt that about the only man who ever helped my life & who killed himself. We can work out as it were their uncompleted lives" (Pearson papers, Watson Library, UCL).

26 Joseph Bristow, ed., The Story of an African Farm, by Olive Schreiner (Oxford: OUP, 1992), pp. xiii-xiv. "...Paley's book... opens with the memorable image of a timepiece. Paley argues that should he have been out walking and his foot struck upon a stone, he would be wise to think that this obstacle had lain there forever. But were he to have found a watch along his path, then he would learn that such a complex object, with its intricate component parts, had been put there for a purpose. This, Paley claims, is a suggestive metaphor for God's design in the world. Such theology, then, involves interpreting God's presence from the intentional organization of the natural environment."

27 Years later in England Frank comments: "It's all very well to laugh... but she is awfully bad, much worse than I am. She is only a little girl and she has not the right to have any thoughts at all. It's all very well for me to think that it's a hard state of affairs when a poor fellow is called into existence for the purpose of being sent to fire and brimstone; but it does not do for her; it's highly improper, highly," (Undine, p. 35).
Mrs. Barnacles remarks to Miss Mell later in the narrative that men don't want a girl like Undine, even with her good looks, because "with those idiotic ideas of hers, on religious matters too, half the men would not have her as a gift" (Undine, p. 84).

28 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 135.

29 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 133-4.

[30] First and Scott, p. 52.

[31] Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 90. The documentation of Gottlob Schreiner's report is given on p. 519, "Personalien des im Basler Missionhaus ausgebildeten Missionars Gottlob Schreiner, Evangelische Missiongesellschaft in Basel" (3.2.1921).

[32] Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 106, notes that he farmed near neighbours of the Fouchés in 1885, an elderly couple, "worthy, quiet, old-fashioned, Dutch....The old lady ... in all her life... had never bought a bar of soap or a candle; she had herself made every piece of soap and every candle."

[33] Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 45: "she [Ettie] was 'ever in the great Taskmaster's eye' -- a logical attitude for one who really... believed as she did."

[34] In a letter to John X. Merriman 29 June 1896, Schreiner throws some interesting light on this question, if only anecdotally. "Your remark with regard to the attitude of the Boers towards some of their old favourite Halfcaste servants is very true. I have been struck by the fact on some farms I have been on, that, while the Kaffirs [Bantu], who seem to me such a much more noble folk, are treated with scorn and severity, the Halfcaste servants, or some of them, are petted and spoiled. Does this not rise partly from the fact that blood is thicker than water?? In one family I was struck by the way in which an old coloured woman of 70 and her daughter of 40 seemed to dominate and govern the mistress and the house. I found out afterwards that the old woman had actually borne several children to the grandfather in the old slave times and later after she was freed, and that the daughter of 40 was actually own half sister to the mistress of the house! In many cases where there is of course no personal connection between the master's family and the coloured servants there is still a racial connection..." (Rive, Letters, pp. 284-6). This clearly runs contra to later Afrikaner mythology, which, Rian Malan writes (in documenting his own, miscegenating ancestors) "would claim that the so-called colored people were spawned in dockside brothels by seafaring white rabble, certainly not by Malans and their pious Calvinist ilk" (Malan, My Traitor's Heart, p. 11).

[35] In this passage we see Schreiner's considerable debt to Dickens. Consider Mrs. Skewton of Dombey and Son-- an angular lady, "not young" but with "dress and...attitude... perfectly juvenile." See Charles Dickens, Dombey and Son, ed. Alan Horsman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), p. 280.

[36] See First and Scott, p. 33, for an account of Rebecca Schreiner's father.

[37] Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 41. He footnotes that this anecdote was "related by Olive to Ellis about 1884." Perhaps this dates the episode to her most serious illness in South Africa, which occurred during the winter of 1878, when she was at Ratelhoek, by her own account "bleeding from the lungs."

[38] Erilda Cawood to Schreiner, 25 July 1879, quoted in First and Scott, pp. 78-9. This letter looks "deeply wounding," as First and Scott state, not just in its "absolute rejection of Olive by a woman whom she had loved and needed" for freethinking, but because it also accused Schreiner of "having exploited her friendship" with the

Cawoods. First and Scott emphasise also how Cawood's description of her former "almost idolatrous love" for Schreiner and her conviction that Schreiner was possessed of "intellectual, influential friends" indicate that there was a "real discrepancy between Olive's basic perception of herself as weak and inadequate -- in relation to her work, and her ability to control herself -- and other people's perception of her as almost uncannily powerful" (p. 79).

39 Joan Hodgson, quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner's The Life, pp. 370-2. Paradoxically, Hodgson thrice uses religious phrases to describe her aunt, claiming she spoke with "priestess fervour" (about dress reform); she "denounced like a prophet of Israel" on the Great War; she was like a legendary Gothic "Guardian-Woman."

40 This was Reverend John T. Lloyd's term in 1892 (see Cronwright-Schreiner, 289-90). Berkman footnotes this and other examples of "the acclaim" for Schreiner's "spiritual inquiry" which was praised by admirers from Laurence Housman, Gladstone, Lecky and Schreiner's revered Herbert Spencer himself (see Berkman's chapter "Freethinker and Mystic" in The Healing Imagination, pp. 43-73 and notes pp. 253-61).

41 First and Scott, p. .

42 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 61. Berkman writes: "I am convinced an answer [to Schreiner's lack of alternative, or surrogate, names] lies in her experience of a profound personal relationship with divine reality. Spencer's and Emerson's abstractions were too sterile for her rich and immediate perception of God's presence."

43 Cronwright-Schreiner's The Life, p. 98. Schreiner scholars, including the present writer, have been unable to locate the precise source of this quote/paraphrase in Emerson.

44 This entry Schreiner made in Hertzog (to which she had travelled after Cape Town, where she had obtained her volume of Emerson) on 8th April 1874, quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 98.

45 As Olive Schreiner told to Arthur Symons, from his "rough" notes, written 10 June, 1889; quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner, p. 187-8.

46 "Self-Reliance," in Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Richard Poirier, (Oxford: OUP, 1990) p. 132. This edition will hereafter be referred to in the notes as Emerson only.

47 "Self-Reliance," Emerson, p. 131-2.

48 Schreiner to Ellis, 9 July 1885 (Rive, Letters, pp. 64-5).

49 Arthur Symons, quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner, p. 187.

50 See Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 98, and Schreiner to Ellis, 28 August 1884 (Rive, Letters, p. 50).

51 "The Poet," in Emerson, p. 205.

52 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 60. Berkman quotes Schreiner when she declared herself unable to "understand the scorn of men towards matter."

53 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 60.

54 There is something Emersonian in Schreiner's letter to Cronwright-Schreiner on 3 October, 1907: "There is nothing I think a man might more wisely pray every night than that he may never change and modify his view except in the search for truth..." (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letter, p. 273).

55 Schreiner to Ellis, 8 April 1884 (Rive, Letters, pp. 36-7). She met Spencer in 1889, and was badly disappointed (see Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, 190-1).

58 "To Rhea", in Emerson, p. 498, lines 35-6, quoted in Undine, p. 115.

56 "A Dream of Wild Bees", in Olive Schreiner, Dreams (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1923) pp. 87-96. This "dream" was most likely written in the autumn of 1886 and sent in a letter to Karl Pearson (see Chapter 3).

57 "The Poet," in Emerson, p. 214.

58 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 45. Berkman's analysis of the context of Schreiner's idiosyncratic freethinking in comparison with other Victorian freethinkers in America and Britain is thorough. See the chapter "Freethinker and Mystic," pp. 43-62.

59 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 70. Schreiner acknowledged Mill as "the only man to whose moral teaching I am conscious of owing a profound and unending debt" in a letter to the Rev. Lloyd, 29 October 1892 (Rive, Letters, p. 213).

60 Schreiner to Betty Molteno, 22 May 1896 (Rive, Letters, p. 277).

61 "What is so splendid to me in all this suffragette movement is, not what they are going to get, what they must and will of course ultimately get, but that they are freeing themselves. It's a finer thing than women being given the vote..." Schreiner to F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, 28 June 1908 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 281).
She was still more forceful to Adela Smith, 5 November 1909: "It's the fact that, in some cause they believe to be of benefit to woman and promoting human freedom, there are found women ready to fight, to face ridicule, abuse, suffering, and even death if necessary, that is so grand! If I didn't believe in the vote being of use, the fight would be equally glorious to me!" (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 291).

62 First and Scott, p. 50.

63 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 56.

SECTION IV -- "Hadn't We Better Kill the Baby?"

1 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 8.

2 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 24.

3 Nina Auerbach, Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts (New York: Columbia U. P. 1985), p. xvii.

4 Schreiner to Ellis, 18 March 1889 (Rive, Letters, p. 151).

5 Schreiner to Cronwright-Schreiner, January 1893 (Rive, Letters, p. 218).

6 The dedication in From Man to Man reads: "Dedicated/ To My Sister Little Ellie/ Who Died, Aged Eighteen Months, When/ I Was Nine Years Old," followed by two lines from Emerson's poem "Each and All," "Nor knowest thou what argument/ Thy life to thy neighbour's creed hath lent," and then "Also/ To/ My Only Daughter/ Born on the 30th of April, and Died on/ The 1st of May [1895]." See also Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 70.

7 Schreiner to Pearson, 5 November 1886 (Rive, Letters, p. 113).

8 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 70. This probably comes from Havelock Ellis' notes of 6 June 1884 in which he wrote "Several of her sisters are married and rich. When much in want of money she wrote them and they refused to help her" (from the Havelock Ellis notebook, kept at the Humanities Research Center at Austin, Texas). See also Ridley Beeton's Facets of Olive Schreiner: A Manuscript Source Book (Johannesburg: A. D. Donker, 1987), pp. 17-8. in a chapter titled "The Havelock Ellis Notebook". This book will henceforth be referred to by the short title of Facets.

Concentrating on facts, it must be noted that there does exist a letter to Katie Findlay of 28 April 1875 (Rive's Letters, p. 16-7) which begins "It is really too good of you to say I must keep the money I borrowed from you..." but its sense of utter helplessness (Schreiner said she wrote it whilst wearing a hand-me-down waterproof from Kate, which was all she had for the coming winter "which promises to be bitter cold") suggests near-destitution; in the same letter Schreiner refuses help from John Findlay to travel to America, saying she was "unable to avail myself of it".

9 See the Havelock Ellis notebook, quoted in Beeton's Facets, p.22.

10 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 35.

11 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 27.

12 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 35.

13 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 36.

14 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 47.

15 See Schreiner to her mother Rebecca Schreiner of February-March 1896: "I believe that where, with regard to either religion or politics, parents and children, or even brothers and sisters, are not agreed, they should avoid these subjects" (Rive, Letters, pp. 266-7). See also Schreiner's letter of 25 May 1896 to Ettie (now Mrs. Stakesby Lewis): "... I feel I should tell you that your letter has made me feel sure that not she [Lilly Orpen] but you and perhaps Theo had been dividing between us [Rebecca and Olive Schreiner herself]." Schreiner, deeply wounded, reminds Ettie that she (Olive Schreiner) had often tried to "open mother's heart to you and to smooth away all little religious differences" and is shocked to find Ettie and Theo to have acted otherwise. In a postscript she reiterates her own code: "You must also not imagine I shall mention your name or Theo's ever to mother, except it be impersonally. The relations of parent and child are much too holy in my eyes to be interfered with" (Rive, Letters, pp. 279-81). The situation was exceedingly messy, as the letter shows Will and also a cousin to be involved in the intrigue.

16 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 14.

17 Will Stuart's reminiscences are kept in the Cullen Library of Witwatersrand University, labelled "The Schreiners," A.1199.

18 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 42-3.

19 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 47-8.

20 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 50.

21 Schreiner to Mrs. Francis Smith, 6th June 1907 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 270).

22 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 51. Will Schreiner defended the Zulu chief, Dinizulu, in a trial Cronwright-Schreiner calls "the outstanding glory of the South African Bar." For an idea of the horror of what Dinizulu and his people had suffered at the hands of the Boers (overseen by British indifference) see Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War (1979; rpt. London: Futura, 1988), pp. 566-8.

23 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 16.

24 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 275, notes that Cronwright-Schreiner mistook Korana for "Griquas." Fraserburg was still a frontier subject to native battles.

25 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 459-60.

26 Cronwright-Schreiner writes: "Olive said Katie was a woman of great ability, but suspicious, as were Alice and Olive herself" (The Life, p. 34). This could well have had to do with accusations Cronwright-Schreiner felt Schreiner made to him in the the final years of her life -- see especially a letter of May 1920 in which he complains of her

"unreasonable, absurd obsessions" about other women - (see First and Scott, pp. 315-6).

27 Theo Schreiner to Olive Schreiner, 19 March, "probably" in the year 1880; see Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 41-2. Theo warned his sister that her rationalism, while "at the opposite pole of religious thought" to their mother's Roman Catholicism, was equally useless "in the presense of eternal realities."

28 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 40.

29 Schreiner to Edward Carpenter, 8 October 1894 (Rive, Letters, p. 242).

30 Schreiner to Ellis, 10 July 1884 (Rive, Letters, p. 45).

31 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 179.

32 First and Scott, p. 56.

33 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 181.

34 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 182. The letter in which Schreiner informed her sister Katie of her wish to be called Olive was written 11 April, 1871 (Rive, Letters, p. 4).

35 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 180-1 -- his source is a letter from Rebecca Schreiner (the recipient of which he does not name) kept in the Findlay papers.

36 Rebecca Schreiner to Katie Findlay, Hertzog, 24 March 1874, quoted in First and Scott, p. 71; source, the Findlay papers. See First and Scott for a fuller account of the affair; pp. 46-7. Even Theo sympathised with Kate's plight.

SECTION V -- "The Dordrecht Salon: Early Reading and Three Propositions"

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1 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 29.

2 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 205. That the story itself was autobiographical is clear from a letter Schoeman found in the South African library, of "about 1903" from Schreiner to John and Mary Brown. There is no reason for Cronwright to site the story in Fraserburg (as he does on p. 95 of The Life) except that he knew it better than he knew Dordrecht.

3 Schreiner to Ellis, 29 March 1885: "I am living at the same kind of high pressure as that year at Dordrecht. I can feel myself growing intellectually" (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 66). Schreiner to Ellis, 16 November 1885: "Never, except perhaps when I was at Dordrecht, has my mind worked and expanded as it does now" (Rive, Letters, p.

68). Then (again to Ellis) 31 January 1886, "Yes, I have developed faster than ever in my life before, except that year at Dordrecht." See also Schreiner to Pearson 6 July 1886: "What do all the libertines in London, what do all the good husbands and wives know of happiness, compared with what I knew when I lay all night on the floor before the fire in Dordrecht, and read..." The book she cites here is First Principles, so she is either confusing Hermon with Dordrecht or Spencer with another book, or else she read it again; still, the connection with Dordrecht is what she remembers (see Rive, Letters, p. 90).

4 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 199.

5 Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 12 October 1871 (Rive, Letters, p. 4).

6 Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 6 April 1872 (Rive, Letters, p. 5).

7 Zadok Robinson to Cronwright-Schreiner, 30 December 1921. Cronwright-Schreiner reproduces this letter in The Life, p. 86.

8 It is suggested later in this chapter that luxury in general -- the silks and velvets and lace that adorn both Undine and Bertie during their sojourns in England -- are products of Schreiner's fantasies of European life, garnered partially from the fiction of Ouida, et al. But Gau's house seems to have been inspiration in itself: it contained "elegant walnutwood cheffioneer [sic], with marble top and mirror; reading and revolving tables; ladies' writing desk; magnificent chandelier; chaste [sic] tapestry carpet; pier glass, with beautiful lustres to match... choice pictures, vases &c. .... A superior new cottage piano, tri-chord, built expressly for a warm and changeable climate-- one of the best, if not the best, ever brought to the Eastern Province
An harmonium, ten stops" (see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 224; his source is an issue of the Frontier Guardian and Dordrecht Advocate printed in 1874).

9 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 229; the information comes from Havelock Ellis' notebook. "The remembrance of this gave her a great deal of agony for a very long time. She has never told it to anyone but me. It seems to her a kind of madness & she thinks the people thought her mad."

10 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 208-9 and 238. He mentions, but does not quote extensively, the key passage from which he makes his reconstruction, from Cronwright-Schreiner's letter to Havelock Ellis on 31 January 1922, part of which appears in Beeton's Facets of Olive Schreiner, pp. 65-6.

11 Zadok Robinson to Cronwright-Schreiner, 30 December 1921, quoted in The Life, p. 86. Interestingly, in view of what had gone on in Robinson's house, the letter Rebecca Schreiner wrote to tell him that Olive Schreiner had arrived safely was the "last point of personal contact" Robinson "had with the Schreiner family."

12 Schreiner to Katie Findlay, ?? August 1872, quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 234-5.

13 Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 18 August 1872 (Rive, Letters, p. 6).

[14] Schreiner to Ellis, 18 March 1889 (Rive, Letters, p. 151).
Several critics and biographers take it as read that sexual intercourse took place between Gau and Schreiner. Meintjes is emphatic, as is Calder-Marshall, who according to First, Scott and Schoeman, without source simply stated "She missed a period. She became terrified that she was pregnant." Calder-Marshall also pronounced later without source on the matter of a sado-masochistic affair Schreiner supposedly had on the Isle of Wight in 1881. See Johannes Meintjes's Olive Schreiner: A Portrait of a South African Woman (Johannesburg: 1965) pp. 21-3; Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 234; First and Scott, pp. 63 and 115; as well as Arthur Calder-Marshall, Havelock Ellis (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959), p. 91.
Grosskurth in her biography of Ellis calls Gau "her [Schreiner's] first lover" without further ado (Havelock Ellis, p. 105). Buchanan-Gould, in Not Without Honour, takes it for granted that the man she calls "Julius Zaar" was merely "indulging in an old trick to enable him to make love to the girl without binding himself too irrevocably" (p. 39). Berkman, in The Healing Imagination, is "cautious" (The Healing Imagination, pp. 27-9).
Schoeman refuses to say more than "it seems justified to assume" that intercourse took place: he posits an interesting hypothesis based on analogous episodes in the novels (as do most scholars) and also on a group of symptoms (dysphasia, amenorrhoea and possibly kleptomania) which had plagued Schreiner on and off since the summer she spent at Avoca, when she had first had difficulty in eating in front of other people. Both in the letter to Ellis above (18 March 1889) and in one which Schreiner wrote in Mentone on 4 September 1890 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 197), Schreiner refers to being taunted with some accusation of theft at Dordrecht by some South Africans (one of whom had "known old -------" Cronwright-Schreiner tried to blank out the name "Robinson"). In the 1889 letter, she wrote that they had mocked her about being a "pickpocket" and/or a "thief." In a letter in the interim, 12 July 1890 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 191) she refers to the incident in Mentone again, this time focussing on people making fun "of my not having been able to eat with other people." Reminding the reader of Schreiner's stressful circumstances preceding and coeval with her stay in Dordrecht, Schoeman writes "it would not be surprising if she reacted neurotically to the cumulative stress by developing a physical ailment of psychological origins, possibly anorexia or an anorexic condition (Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 231-40).

[15] Journal entry of 22 September 1872 (see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 235, and First and Scott, p. 62).

[16] Zadok Robinson to Cronwright-Schreiner, 30 December 1921, quoted in The Life, p. 86.

[17] Schreiner to Mrs. Francis Smith, 2 January, 1916 (Cronwright-Schreiner's Letters, p. 355).

[18] See From Man to Man, p. 173, where Rebekah looks at science primers which she had sent away for to Cape Town when she was a child. See also Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 174.

19 Schreiner to Cronwright-Schreiner, 16 June 1919 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 361). She wrote to Ellis on 16 May 1890: "Did I tell you that I'd at last discovered Wordsworth?" (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 187). Of her early "love" for Milton, see Schreiner's letter to Adela Smith of 5 May 1910 (Cronwright-Schreiner's Letters, pp. 294).

20 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 172-3.

21 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 192: "The point has been made but needs reiteration, even at the risk of becoming tedious, since it is crucial to a proper grasp of Olive Schreiner's mental growth: the country of her birth and childhood was a struggling agrarian colony, villages were undeveloped, distances vast, the white population was small and sparsely distributed, and the general intellectual level was by no means high; yet, in this country, a young magistrate's clerk in a town of fewer than 700 inhabitants could own a library of the calibre mentioned above and could travel the bleak wastelands of winter with Herbert Spencer's First Principles in his saddle-bag..."

22 Cronwright-Schreiner to Ellis, 31 January 1922, quoted in Beeton, Facets, p. 65.

23 Beeton, Facets, p. 66.

24 Schreiner to Ellis, 1915. This letter is quoted from Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 209. It is not included in Cronwright-Schreiner's Letters and Schoeman gives it no reference other than that he includes it in an essay he wrote titled "Gottlob Schreiner en die sendingstasie basel: 'n aantal dokumente oor minder bekende onderwerp" unpublished at the time of the publication of his Life, but intended to appear in Africana Aantekeninge en Nuus, n.p., n.d.). See also Richard Rive, "A Biographical and Critical Study...," p. 52

25 Joseph Bristow, Introduction to The Story of an African Farm, p. xxi.

26 See also Dickens' portrayal of the brainless, dandified "Toots" in Dombey and Son, p. 168, p. 554 and passim. He is enamoured of the heroine, Florence Dombey.

27 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 209.

28 Cherry Clayton, "Olive Schreiner and Feminism" University of Cape Town Studies in English no. 13 (1983) p. 54.

29 Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own: British Novelists from Bronte to Lessing (1977; revised edition, London: Virago, 1982), p. 150. This book will henceforth be called A Literature of Their Own as a short title.

30 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 222.

31 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 203.

32 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 223.

33 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner p. 226. Schoeman here quotes the "cynical but observant" Frank Harris, who witnessed Schreiner's introduction to the Irishman. "She did not seem to make much impression on Moore, but Moore evidently made an astonishing impression on her. I stood in frank surprise and watched the pair. Was it Moore's light golden hair and pale complexion or his prominent blue eyes that won her? I cannot say, but it was plain that she admired him. She looked at him with all her soul in her eyes." The source of this impression is Frank Harris's Contemporary Portraits, fourth series (London: Grant Richards, 1924), no page number supplied.

34 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 29.

35 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 29.

36 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 249.

37 Schreiner to Ellis, November 1884; quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 236. He gives the source of this letter simply as "Nov. 1884"; it is kept at U. Texas, Austin. Undine "chews" her letter. Cronwright-Schreiner records how Schreiner had a habit of chewing telegrams into "discoloured chewings." When agitated, she once chewed a railway ticket to "pulp" -- astonishing the ticket collector and herself. See The Life, p. 166. Schreiner's niece, Lyndall Gregg discusses this eccentricity of her aunt's as well. See Lyndall Gregg, Memories of Olive Schreiner (London: W R Chambers), p. 25.

38 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 202. "In the few known portraits of Robinson his wide, fleshy mouth is indeed rather conspicuous." His biography contains a photograph which supports this opinion.

39 Schreiner to Ellis, November 1884; quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 220.

40 Lest Beeton's Facets, which despite its new revelations is still disturbingly selective, give anyone a false impression of what he calls the Robinson "mystery", let the following be borne in mind. When Beeton provides excerpts of Ellis' notebook for references to Zadok Robinson, he quotes Ellis noting "He was her enemy" (p. 23). This, he presents to the reader as "mystery" and "something of a puzzle" and he suggests an unreasonable, paranoid fear on Schreiner's part, further quoting Ellis: "She always had a fear; suppose it [the box] should fall into Robinson's hands?" Beeton fails to quote the next two sentences Ellis wrote, which explain that "Some years after she [Schreiner] saw a letter from the friend of the family that Robinson mentioned to him having seen a box of hers on a sale of unclaimed luggage, but it only contained her papers, said Robinson. She concluded he had bought it -- probably rightly -- he was her enemy." This links to Schreiner's disastrous sea journey from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth, during which she lost a box containing clothes, many papers, and nearly all her money. Since the writing of Undine was well under way by 1874 when she made the voyage and since she also kept occasionally explicit journals, why should this development not have caused her anxiety? Robinson could scarcely have failed to recognise himself in the portrait of "Cousin Jonathan," the "man with the mouth."

Beeton went to Austin to research his book, and while he quotes extensively from letters to Ellis (pp. 185-8) he does not mention that which Schoeman does of November 1884 (above) which gives a fairly good reason for embarrassment at least between

Robinson and Schreiner. Instead Beeton prefers to leave an impression of Schreiner as motiveless and irrational, as he does with both George Weakley's harassment of Schreiner in 1873 and also with her affair at Ventnor.

41 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 212.

42 This fragment, which is labelled simply "The man with the mouth" is kept at the Public Library in Cradock.

43 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 311, for this segment: Albert Blair originally has a mother and an uncle "J. Fromer Esq." (instead of a father); the former falls in love with Undine.

44 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 66 and 84-87. See also Beeton, Facets, p. 65, bearing in mind that, when Beeton asks "When Olive made her statements to Ellis was she exaggerating the sinister proportions of Robinson?" he has failed to supply his readers with what "Olive" 's "statements" were, and so they are not in a position to judge. He does, however, suspect almost everyone's motives without prejudice, and so asks "was the aged parson [Robinson] hypocritically presenting the best picture he could for Cronwright's scrutiny?"

45 Zadok Robinson to Cronwright-Schreiner, 30 December 1921, quoted in the Life p. 85. Robinson writes that the flower-Olive "expanded nobly in a soil that could contribute almost nothing to her growth." He confesses that he can give but a "meagre account" of her "mentality and education;" perhaps he was awed by Schreiner intellectually during this year in which, by her own account, she expanded "mentally" more than any other (see note 179). Likewise Undine is aware that "Cousin Jonathan was good to her, did all in his power for her, but she liked him less as the years went on. She had never loved him, and the intellectual help which he had been able to give her ceased to be a bond between them when she had reached his ground and even passed beyond him" (Undine, p. 85).

46 Cronwright-Schreiner, p. 148. Blenkins' original was "an Irishman she knew at Dordrecht". Cronwright-Schreiner maintains Schreiner always "spoke of him with merry laughter."

47 Rebecca Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 6 October 1872, quoted in First and Scott, p. 61.

48 Rebecca Schreiner to Katie Findlay, 28 November 1872, quoted in First and Scott, p. 62.

49 Schreiner to Ellis, 18 March 1889 (Rive, Letters, p. 151).

50 Schreiner to Will Schreiner, 20 October 1875 (Rive, Letters, pp. 18-9). "Mrs. Cawood.... is such a dear noble-hearted woman, she is quite converting my woman hatred into woman love. A sex that can contain such women as she and Ettie cannot be quite an invention of the devil, though I still think he must have been very active about the time it came into existence."

51 Schreiner to Katie Findlay. Schoeman quotes this letter (Olive Schreiner, p. 230) and claims Schreiner wrote it from Hermon and that it is contained in Rive's Letters, but he is mistaken; it may be in the Findlay papers in Johannesburg. Buchanan-Gould also quotes from this letter (p. 38) and notes only that it is "undated."

52 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 234.

53 Beeton, Facets, p. 23. As remarked on in the Foreword, this episode causes him to explode: "Was there in fact anything really attractive about Olive Schreiner?"

54 The history of Schreiner's asthma is everywhere disputed in Schreiner's biographies. For the purposes of this discussion, two points only need be made.

One: Schreiner contradicted herself about the onset of her asthma (see First and Scott, pp. 67-8, and Schoeman, Olive Schreiner pp. 288-91). To Fan Schreiner (Will's wife) she said it first began on a cart-trip while she was living at the Robinsons (1871-2). Cronwright-Schreiner insisted it first occurred while on a trip with her aunt, Mrs. Rolland, on the way to Hermon in 1870 (see Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 90-1). To Ellis Schreiner wrote, 3 July 1884, that it was when she "was four days without food, and travelling all the time..... had no money to buy food. When I ate the first mouthful at the end of this time I got this horrible agony in my chest, and had to rush out" (Rive, Letters, p. 44). She remarks that when doctors asked her how it began, she is loath to tell them because it would involve "blaming those that are dearest to one." This last explanation tallies with Ellis' notes about an occasion when "about 17 and after she had been staying with her brothers and sister she left with insufficient money. Her brother Will got her £5.... This just paid her coach fare.... When she got home she was received very coldly. When she began eating, the agony was intense. She rushed outside & lay on the ground. They then were kinder to her" (see Schoeman quoting Ellis's notes, Olive Schreiner, p. 288, since neither Cronwright-Schreiner, First and Scott, nor Beeton quote it fully).

Two: regardless of when Schreiner's asthma began, this was obviously a particularly bad attack. Cronwright-Schreiner was so certain that he knew to which journey these latter notes referred (he thought it was when she travelled from the diamond fields of New Rush/Kimberley to Fraserburg to stay with Alice Hemming) that he actually changed the wording in the Life to "She left Kimberley with insufficient money" as well as making other changes. In his thesis, Richard Rive repeats this error (in between unmasking many of Cronwright-Schreiner's re-writings of the facts) and First and Scott repeat it again, ignoring that internal biographical evidence makes it more likely that Schreiner was referring to her journey from Port Elizabeth (during which she lost a box containing papers, clothing and most of her money) and that she therefore had to borrow money from Will (who was in Grahamstown) to get to Hertzog. Since Fraserburg and Kimberley are easily 400 km. from each other and Grahamstown is 400 km. or more to the south of either, it is hard to see how she would have borrowed money from Will on a journey between the two. Rive footnotes the letter to Ellis of July 1884 correctly, however (p. 44 of the Letters) changing his former opinion, apparently.

55 Mary Brown, quoted by Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 97.

56 In his thesis, Rive declares that Schreiner got her inspiration for the Rondebosch sequences of From Man to Man from a visit to Cape Town in 1889 (after she had

returned from her first sojourn to England). This is both an unnecessary supposition (for as we see Schreiner had already been to Rondebosch in 1874) and a misleading one (since it implies Schreiner must have written of Bertie's experiences in Cape Town well after 1889). See "A Biographical and Critical Study..." p. 111.

57 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 239.

58 Schreiner began her "horrid verses" in her diary on 22 September 1872: there Cronwright-Schreiner found the verses beginning "I gaze across the dark abyss/ From the golden brink of heaven / To the gulf below/ Of deathless woe..." The next day she begins the verses "He has married a lady fair, And oh, in her soft golden hair / Are glittering diamonds bright...." The verses which contain the lines "There is a hand I never touch / And a face I never see / Now what is sunshine, what is song, / Now what is light to me?" were written at Ratelhoek on her twenty-second birthday, 24 March 1877 (see Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 128-9). Cronwright confidently opines these lines refer to her "recently dead father," although, as Schoeman points out, grammatically they seem to refer to someone living, not dead, else she would have written "never more shall touch," etc., and the sense that the missed person is alive "sharpens the sense of loss" (Schoeman,Olive Schreiner, pp. 370-1).

In addition, it seems that the rest of Schreiner's diary entry for that day may link the verse to Gau, for in it she writes: "I must to-day begin the chapter concerning the evening party" which is likely to be the early form of the "evening party" in From Man to Man (p. 168). At this party Bertie's seduction by her tutor is made common knowledge and she flees in shame and horror. Bertie's connection with the events following Dordrecht has been made plain.

59 First and Scott, p. 84.

60 "The Lost Joy" originally appeared under the title of "The Lost" in The New College [Eastbourne] Magazine, April 1883, III, no. 4, pp. 312 - 315. A copy exists in box 841 of the Pearson papers, Watson Library, UCL. There it can also be seen as printed in Woman's World, February 1888, p. 145. Under its final title "The Lost Joy," it is included in Olive Schreiner, Dreams, pp. 13-21.

SECTION VI -- Fairy Tales, Free Will and Feminism

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1 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 383 and p. 386-7, where he catalogues objections to Cronwright-Schreiner's speculation that Other Men's Sins is Saints and Sinners as well as Cronwright-Schreiner's still less substantiated conviction that Thorn Kloof is the original of African Farm.

The strongest evidence against the Cronwright-Schreiner theory lies in Schreiner's persistent references in her diaries to "my book", always in the singular, in New Rush, Colesberg and later at Klein Gannahoek. Undine Bock, in short, was merely a change in title from Other Men's Sins and remains her first novel.

[2] Schreiner to Miss NcNaughton, 24 September 1875 (Rive, Letters) p. 18.

[3] Schreiner recorded finishing Undine in draft in her diary on 2 February 1876, and Cronwright-Schreiner copies it exactly on p. 118 of The Life. But then, in his introduction to the published text of Undine (p. xiii), he records this entry as 26 January. This allows him to footnote the information (in his own notes) with the coincidence of his birthday and election to the senate on that date (Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 384).

[4] Cronwright-Schreiner, Introduction to Undine, p. x.

[5] See Schoeman's reconstruction of the writing of Undine (Olive Schreiner, p. 386): "...Olive began Undine at the Diamond Fields, where she completed at least the second chapter, 'The man with the mouth'. In 1874, at Hertzog, she used the other surviving copybook (most likely one from her childhood that had been preserved in her parents' home) to begin a revision that needed, first, an introductory chapter on Undine's youth in South Africa -- the first chapter of the published text, which still bears the title she noted in her diary, 'A queer little child', and includes the episode of the ticking clock [which Cronwright-Schreiner later maintained was that from African Farm]. This revision pushed the original Chapter 2 further back into the novel, where it became first Chapter IV and later Chapter III. Her revision seems to have been so drastic, however, that Mrs Blair disappeared from the book and Albert and John Blair became brothers instead of cousins until, finally, the whole chapter was rejected. A fairly incisive but incomplete revision might also account for the present Chapter II, in which Undine herself, inexplicably and for the only time in the book, is the narrator.... a remnant of one of Olive's earlier efforts which somehow survived after she had finally abandoned the revision. In any event, the rejected chapter provides an interesting illustration of the nature and extent of her struggle to shape this novel."

[6] For evidence of Schreiner's reading, taken from various journals and letters during this time, see Cronwright-Schreiner, the Life, pp. 89-92, p. 94, p. 103, pp. 115-20; also Schoeman, p. 102, p. 172, p. 269, p. 280, p. 284, pp. 343-45, passim. Schoeman is the more useful, since he has taken pains to examine newspaper advertisements and library stock lists in order to show what was available in Schreiner's locality.

[7] For an account of Schreiner's social life at the diggings, see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 264-73. For more on John William Dugmore and his bearing on African Farm in particular, see Chapter 2.

[8] First and Scott, p. 92.

[9] Hobman, p. 42.

[10] Marion Friedmann, Olive Schreiner: A Study in Latent Meanings (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1954) p. 10.

[11] Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 9-10.

[12] First and Scott, p. 92.

13 Buchanan-Gould, p. 42.

14 In the absence of a version in translation of Baron Friederich de la Motte Fouqué's Ondine, a synopsis has been relied upon, found in The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed. Sir Paul Harvey, 4th ed. revised by Dorothy Eagle (1967; rpt. with corrections, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 845-6. What Schreiner called Andersen's "beautiful song in prose... 'The Mermaid and the Prince' " (Undine, pp. 20-1) is actually called "The Little Mermaid." Hans Christian Andersen, Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales: A Selection of the Stories Most Suitable for Younger Children (London: Ward, Lock and Co., n.d.) pp. 55-77.

15 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner p. 401. Both Dr. David Lindsay and Dr. Tony Brown of University of Wales, Bangor, also suggested the "Undine" connection.

16 Louisa May Alcott, Little Women and Good Wives, (New YorK: 1868; rpt. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1970) p. 1-2. " 'I do want to buy Undine and Sintram for myself; I've wanted it so long,' said Jo...."

17 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 18.

18 See Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 111, where Mrs. Cawood's reminiscence of this episode is recorded. Despite this, Cronwright-Schreiner declares, categorically (The Life, pp. 140-1) that his wife spoke no German (nor French, nor anything but pidgin Afrikaans). See Schoeman for a contradiction (Olive Schreiner, pp. 65-6). See also Schreiner to Pearson, 7 August 1886 (dated in collection as per postmark, 17 August) where Schreiner includes (apparently from memory) some verses from Goethe's "Künstlers Abendlied" which she calls her "old favourite." In her next letter to Pearson (n.d., but postmarked 8 September) she reproduced for Pearson's use many passages in German, without translation, from Brehm's Thierleben. Pearson, a scholar of medieval German and a fluent speaker of modern German, would obviously require no translation, but the manner of Schreiner's discussion suggests she was at ease with the text herself. (Pearson papers, Watson Library, UCL).

If African Farm be taken as biographical evidence, on p. 54 it is recorded that Em, Waldo and Lyndall sing German hymns and Otto tells them stories of his youth.

19 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," pp. 76-7.

20 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," p. 60.

21 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," pp. 56-7.

22 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 401.

23 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust: First Part / Faust: Erster Teil, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Peter Salm (1790; New York: Bantam [Dual-Language] Books, 1962) pp. 262-3.

24 Goethe, Faust: First Part / Faust: Erster Teil, pp. 272-3.

25 Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, ed. Peter Coveney (Harmondsworth, Essex: Penguin), p. 283.

26 See First and Scott, p. 87, on the similarities between Frank Bock's death off "Leeford" and Shelley's drowning off Leghorn.

27 Lyndall to Gregory Rose: "I believe you love me; I too could love so, that to lie under the foot of the thing I loved would be more heaven than to lie in the breast of another" (African Farm, p. 232).

28 For an account of the similarities between Ouida's Lord Estmere and Albert Blair, see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 346.

29 For an account of Goethe's "ambivalent and ultimately unsympathetic character of the officer Jarno, whose fair hair and bright blue eyes-- 'die hartherzige Kalte (...) die ihm aus den Augen heraussehe und aus allen seinem Gebärden spreche' -- remind one strongly of Albert Blair, the Julius Gau figure in Undine," see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 366.

30 See Dickens, Dombey and Son, p. 542, for a description of Mr. Dombey's "insolence of self-importance"; see p. 409 for Edith Dombey's "proud scorn... only tamed by a sense of its own little worth, and of the little worth of everything around it... in every scrap of gold so dazzling to the eye, she saw some hateful atom of her purchase-money... she fought her fate out, braved it, and defied it" (in this we see where Undine got her character and Lady Edith got her name); see also the meeting of Dickens' Edith and her cousin, Alice Brown, pp. 550-4.

31 Feet, ankles and arms especially are eroticised in all of Schreiner's novels. In Undine, Cousin Jonathan's talk of scientific matters so fascinates the heroine as a child that she can forget for a time "his mouth and ... even her own bare toes" (Undine, p. 54). It is only in her role as a pupil that either can escape the awareness of the sexual desire he feels for her.

32 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," p. 55.

33 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," p. 63.

34 Jonathan Edwards, A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of... Freedom of Will... (1754) is a text in which the author "combated from a predestinarian standpoint the Arminian view of liberty," according to Paul Harvey, ed. The Oxford Oxford Companion to English Literature, p. 262. Harvey adds that Edwards' writing was so turgid that Boswell commented: "The only relief I had was to forget it."

35 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," p. 65.

36 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," p. 76.

37 Andersen, "The Little Mermaid," p. 75.

[38] Schreiner to the Reverend J. T. Lloyd, 29 October 1892 (Rive, Letters, p. 213).

[39] John Stachniewski, The Persecutory Imagination: Puritanism and the Literature of Despair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[40] Dickens, Dombey and Son, pp. 782-6.

[41] Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 54.

[42] See Lyndall's feelings about the child of her "Stranger," African Farm p. 278: "I did not love it; its father was not my prince; I did not care for it; but it was so little." Schreiner later opined to Pearson (7 August 1886) that though she admired a "hack writer" she knew who craved a child and was indifferent to who fathered it, she herself felt "For the joy of maternity it seems to me absolutely necessary that the suffering she [any woman] has to undergo should be borne for one who appears to her admirable" (Rive, Letters, p. 101).

[43] See Dickens, Dombey and Son, p. 151, where Paul speaks of his puzzlement that "the sea should make me think of my Mamma that's dead, or what it is that it is always saying--always saying!". Paul greets his own death with the words "I hear the waves! They always said so!", p. 224. Toots later listens to "the requiem of little Dombey on the waters," p. 554; the waves foretell Mrs. Skewton's death, p. 560, and comment on it afterwards to Edith, p. 563.

44 Ridley Beeton, Olive Schreiner: A Short Guide to her Writings (Cape Town: Timmons, 1974), p. 31 and p. 33.

[45] "The man with the mouth" ms., Public Library, Cradock; quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 311.

[46] Ellis' notes on Schreiner are quoted most fully in Beeton's Facets of Olive Schreiner: those on pp. 19-20 concern the Weakley incident directly. Schoeman compares the Ellis passage with Cronwright-Schreiner's bowdlerisation of it, which can be seen on p. 100 of The Life (see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 313).

Beeton's assessment reveals him to be both embarrassed and exasperated; he clearly does not want to believe Schreiner's story of harassment, and remarks only that the notion of the "superior man forcing himself on the inferior girl" shows that "seeds of Olive's obsession with women's liberalisation [sic] had clearly been sown." Beeton, who examined Ellis's papers himself, notices that Ellis attempted to blot out some of his most explicit words about the incident but writes the episode off as an example of Schreiner's "persecution" mania or "Cinderella" or "beleaguered Victorian heroine" fantasies (Facets, pp. 19-20).

[47] Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 311-2.

[48] See Beeton, Facets, p. 20; First and Scott, p. 72; Schoeman, Olive Schreiner p. 308. Compare this with the "Shabby Woman's" experience, Undine pp. 229-30, 232-3,236-7. See also Undine's experience of looking after children, Undine, p. 277.

49 Schoeman produces a photograph of the dark-eyed, black-bearded, beefy George Weakley, tenderly holding a small child with his pocket watch held to its ear to distract it long enough for the photograph to be taken (Olive Schreiner, pp. 64-5). George Weakley and his baby son George Frederick are in photograph no. 60; Mary Weakley and her son Joseph Kinton in no. 61.

50 Schreiner to Mrs. Francis Smith, October 1909 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters), pp. 290-1. "... it flashed upon me.... And do you know what I found out -- after I'd written it? -- that it's a picture in small, a kind of allegory of the life of the woman in the book!! It's one of the strangest things I know of."

51 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther, translated with an introduction by Michael Hulse (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989).
It is notable that when Harry Blair complains that Undine discuss serious topics with him, he chooses the example of the morality of suicide (which Undine discusses with Mrs. Barnacles) (Undine, p. 112). In Werther, Charlotte, her fiancé Albert and young Werther often discuss suicide; Werther is obsessed with the subject and relates the pathetic tale of a seduced and abandoned girl who drowns herself in a river (p. 62-3).
In Undine the narrator remarks (after irrelevantly discussing the pleasures of achievement in painting [Werther is a painter]): "We walk about in this rich teeming world as through an empty, howling wilderness; and if we do not fear to meet with something more wearying on the other side, how we seek to get out of it by way of a muddy pool, a bullet, or a few drops of arsenic" (Undine, p. 174). Werther considers a dagger (p. 58) but takes the bullet (pp. 133-4); Alice takes the muddy pool.

Chapter 2

The Story of an African Farm:
"The Method of the Life We All Lead"

i. From Undine to The Story of an African Farm: An Introduction to the Text

According to Cronwright-Schreiner's The Life of Olive Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm began its life at a farm called Klein Gannahoek under the title Thorn Kloof.[1] He repeatedly claims that he had Schreiner's word that she wrote African Farm at Klein Gannahoek, but for various reasons (not limited to the fact that she was prone to confusing the names "Klein Gannahoek" with "Gannahoek" all her life) this will be seen to mean less than it initially appears to mean. His claim that Thorn Kloof is the original title of African Farm is one he came up with on his own whilst researching the biography, and it appears that he never discussed it with his wife.

In fact, there are no journal entries relating to anything called Thorn Kloof, or even any other fictional work apart from Undine, in the Klein Gannahoek journal.[2] Two months after Schreiner left the employ of the Fouchés at Klein Gannahoek and went to work for the Martins at Ratelhoek, there is a reference to Thorn Kloof on 24 July 1876 (which Cronwright-Schreiner interprets as indicating that such a work was well-advanced, and therefore must have been begun earlier).[3] A month later, Schreiner's journal includes a reference to a work called Sinners and Saints, whose name seems to have been changed to Saints and Sinners by October. This latter book was apparently complete in August of 1877 (though it was subsequently much re-written) while Schreiner was still at Ratelhoek, but in the interim the name Thorn Kloof completely disappears from Schreiner's journals. Unfortunately for Cronwright-Schreiner, where this title remains as a place-name in

Schreiner's writings is in From Man to Man: "Thorn Kloof" is the name of the farm on which Rebekah and Bertie grow up (see for example Chapter 3, "The Dam Wall," which opens with the words: "Thorn Kloof was expecting visitors..." [From Man to Man, p. 104]). The name does appear once in the text of African Farm, but with a lesser significance, not as a place-name but as the name of an air Gregory Rose whistles, the "Thorn Kloof Scottische" (African Farm, p. 223).[4] The homestead in African Farm remains nameless, unlike Wilge Kloof in Undine or Thorn Kloof in From Man to Man.

Cronwright-Schreiner repeatedly asserts (although, as we shall see, he doubted it in private at least once) that Thorn Kloof was the original title of The Story of an African Farm. Subsequent biographers (Schoeman apart) have in turn assumed this version of affairs to be accurate, or at least highly likely. Yet in fact, from the titles, texts and from such evidence as can be gleaned from the journals, it appears far more credible that none of this had anything to do with The Story of an African Farm. Thorn Kloof was simply an early title of Saints and Sinners, which was in turn the forerunner of From Man to Man. Schreiner always wavered between titles for the latter work and From Man to Man was not even her preferred title at the last -- she preferred The Kamel Thorn or Perhaps Only...

It is unsurprising that Cronwright-Schreiner had a difficult job interpreting Schreiner's fictional progress as recorded in her journals, since the evidence is ambiguous. Yet, with what Schoeman calls "habitual certitude," and "equally typical lack of proof," Cronwright-Schreiner declares that the writing of Tant' Sannie's wedding scene (Chapter Six of Book Two of African Farm) occurred in March of 1877.[5] This view relies on his association of a diary reference to writing out "the evening party" with the Boer wedding dance. Yet, as Schoeman argues, the Boer wedding is never referred to in the novel in this way, while the scene of Bertie's humiliation at a Cape Town ball in From Man to Man (Chapter VII, "Raindrops in the Avenue") is explicitly called an "evening party" in the text. Schreiner's next diary entry (5 May 1877) refers to "writing today the scene on the beach." The only possible relevance this could have to African Farm occurs in the chapter about

Waldo's letter, which is not referred to in her diary otherwise for eighteen months. On the other hand, there is an important scene on a beach at Muizenberg, near Cape Town, in From Man to Man (pp. 264-7). More evidence comes in the form of Schreiner's next entry (30 September 1877) which mentions her re-writing of a scene between the Drummonds (characters in From Man to Man). In all this time nothing that can be clearly connected to the plot of African Farm occurs, nor does it for a further fifteen months.

When these points are taken into account, and in light of further evidence below, it will become apparent that the most accurate chronology of Schreiner's compositions in the years 1875-1881 looks something like this: Undine was begun while Schreiner stayed at New Rush in 1872-3. It was originally called Other Men's Sins. (Cronwright-Schreiner mistakenly associated it with the much later Saints and Sinners because of the coincidence of one word in each title).[6] Undine was completed in draft on 26 January, 1876, at Klein Gannahoek; the whole was rewritten at Ratelhoek and it is quite likely that the first and the final chapters were almost completely new additions.[7] Its fate was to be partially cannibalised in the service of the language and themes of African Farm and in the plot of Diamond Fields, a novel she worked on in London in the early 1880s.[8] Saints and Sinners -- the original of From Man to Man -- was chiefly written at Ratelhoek between October 1876 and the latter part of 1877, having started life as Thorn Kloof and Sinners and Saints earlier in 1876. It was to undergo much rewriting before Schreiner left for England, being revised as late as 1880 at Leliekloof, and would become the first novel she submitted for publication while living in England.[9] The first draft of Saints and Sinners was written much faster than Undine had been, and it was finished before African Farm, in any of its various titular incarnations. Schreiner began to revise it as soon as she finished the first draft, apparently in company with a new work, which went without a name in her journals for a very long time.

As Schoeman writes, it is thus "permissible to assume she began writing it [African Farm] at Ratelhoek at the end of 1877 or early in 1878, shortly after finishing Saints and

Sinners."[10] Cronwright-Schreiner himself quotes a letter from Schreiner's mother of April 1878 in which she thanks her daughter for a "sketch" of her "new book" which even he identifies as being African Farm, quite untroubled by the fact that (by his reckoning) this "new" book would be at least two years old.[11] This really was African Farm, but it is new precisely because Thorn Kloof / Saints and Sinners is old enough to be well into its second draft. The first unambiguous reference to the plot of The Story of an African Farm in Schreiner's journal is not to be seen until December of 1878. At this time Schreiner was staying with the Martins at the Van Heerden estate, Katkop, when the Ninth Frontier War had made it inadvisable for the family to stay at Ratelhoek. Here Schreiner refers to writing "Waldo's Letter" which shows the first draft to have been well advanced ("Waldo's Letter" must refer to Chapter 11 of Book Two).[12] From here, clear references to the story become much easier to discern in the diaries. Finally, she records being "almost finished" with "my book" on 9 June 1879, while staying with the Cawoods at Gannahoek. Schreiner sent a completed draft to her friends in England, the Browns, sometime in mid-1880, while she was living with the Fouchés at Leliekloof. In August, 1880, it was evaluated by John Brown's cousin, a man with "literary connections," who sent it to David Douglass, an Edinburgh publisher.[13] He reported that "while showing a great deal of talent, it is too long and would require to be cut down for publication" and, though "heartsore" at the thought, Schreiner was revising the work throughout late 1880. To her despair, she had not finished by the time of her departure for England in March 1881.[14]

A reasonable explanation for Schreiner's association of African Farm with Gannahoek could be that she completed the writing of its first draft at Gannahoek in mid-1879. In addition, as discussed below, she could well have conceptualised it at Klein Gannahoek in 1876, a process she often referred to as "writing" but which involved neither pen nor paper.[15] This certainly could cause confusion, but it should not have to Cronwright-Schreiner; he knew all about her free use of the word "writing" (indeed, it forms part of his "proof" that she never made an actual manuscript of Woman and Labour

in the 1890s, contrary to her own statement) but he chooses to ignore the potential ambiguity in this case. As Beeton points out, Cronwright did at one point reveal a suspicion (in a letter of December 1921) that "our old friend Thorn Kloof" was in fact what he was to publish under the title From Man to Man.[16] This is not the position he takes in The Life, however, in which he spends several pages arguing otherwise. Why did Cronwright-Schreiner become so sure of his titles and therefore of his dates, and why does it matter to the study of African Farm? Some possible answers to the first part of this question will be dealt with in this section, including Cronwright-Schreiner's weaknesses as a scholar, his tendency to call attention to himself in his writings about Schreiner, and even perhaps the possibility that during the courtship of Schreiner and Cronwright in the early 1890s, Schreiner changed her own version of the writing of the novel. The answer to the second part of the question, the relevance of the dates to the study of African Farm, can only be begun here, and is further discussed in the third section of this chapter, "Some African Farms and Their Economies, Part II."

Concerning Cronwright-Schreiner's scholarship, it is fair to generalise that he was not a careful reader of the diaries or the novels; it is certainly demonstrable that he did not faithfully transcribe the former, and he mishandled the copybooks and manuscript of Undine. His theories of his wife's composition are contradictory and, if all his theories were true, it would mean that Schreiner was at work on some parts of each of her three novels during her stay at the New Rush diamond diggings as far back as 1873, whereas, both at Colesberg and for a considerable time at Klein Gannahoek, she continually referred in her journals to "my book"-- in the singular.[17] When scanning the diaries for references to the writing of African Farm, his confusion about the "evening party" described above is forgivable in comparison with this error, found by Schoeman in the Leliekloof journal:

> ... 12 December [1880] "I have begun to revise Lyndall. Must leave out much feel a little heart sore. No one will ever like the book, but I have had the comfort." In quoting this passage Cron had the name Lyndall printed in italics as if this were the title of the book, and that is how he interpreted the

> entry; but he himself had done the underlining in the manuscript: it might equally well have been the title of a chapter, as the reference to "Waldo's stranger" [which she recorded revising in a journal entry a few weeks before] was... [emphasis mine][18]

In the Life, Cronwright-Schreiner's description of his wife's asthma as the force which drove them both from his beloved farm, Krantzplaats, in 1894, is by turns heart-rending, humorous (if unwittingly so) and bitter. His sacrifice, which he undertook because his "sacred trust" to find a place where his wife could write came before all else, galled him in retrospect, and he can justify it to himself only by noting how he "did not know her so well then as... later, [nor] her impracticability, her inability really to work..."[19] Thirty years after leaving the farm he is still full of emotion, so much so that "I can hardly write about it now." If it were not for the fact that it would be "beyond the scope" of his biography to do so, he writes, he would "tell of incidents in my own life as a farmer" (which he then goes ahead and does anyway).[20]

Krantzplaats, besides being the farm Cronwright-Schreiner and Schreiner had to leave in 1894, had the coincidence of actually abutting Klein Gannahoek on its north-east side. Cronwright-Schreiner includes the passage above, as he includes an insistence on Thorn Kloof's being the original title of African Farm (hence determining the location of its composition at Klein Gannahoek) perhaps because both accounts allow him to insinuate himself into his wife's life story even before they met, a tendency both may have begun as part of their courtship, but which began to lead to strange statements and actions after Schreiner died.

Cronwright-Schreiner began his biographical researches after Schreiner's death on December 10, 1920. However, he delayed her reinterment on Buffel's Kop for a considerable time in order to make it coincide with the anniversary of the last day he had seen her alive (which had been on August 13, 1920).[21] The existence of Undine, which came as a total surprise to him, did not shake his opinion of his qualifications as an authority on her existence prior to his acquaintance with her. When he did discover it and looked for

information about it in Schreiner's journals, he managed to backdate its completion date from 2 February 1876 to 26 January in order comment happily on the "coincidence" of this date with his own birthday and the anniversary of his appointment to the Colesberg senate in an access of both ego and irrelevance.[22] His assertion that his wife lied about the writing of Woman and Labour during the 1890s is well known, but his story about one manuscript he did have the chance to know intimately (From Man to Man, a huge chunk of which Schreiner posted to him in 1911) shows that he disregarded it for more than a decade.[23] Posthumously, his editing of that manuscript allowed him to include strange, self-indulgent, wholly irrelevant footnotes, like that on the Muizenberg beach episode.[24]

Perhaps when it came to Schreiner's acknowledged masterpiece, the only novel which (being in print) could not be re-edited, it was irresistible at least to associate it with a place he knew well. He farmed Krantzplaats for ten years, long before he met Schreiner, and indeed when he did meet her it was at the Gannahoek homestead.[25] What with these coincidences, together with the fact that he eventually buried her at nearby Buffel's Kop, one can see the romantic attraction he might have to the idea of Schreiner's writing the book (which first caused him to write to her) at Klein Gannahoek. In the interests of fact, however, the farm for which Schreiner left Klein Gannahoek in May, 1876 -- Ratelhoek -- must be mentioned in more detail.

Then farmed by the Reverend George Andreas Martin, Ratelhoek lies at least fifty miles northeast of the Gannahoek/Krantzplaats area. The fact that Schreiner lived there for three years, longer than anywhere she had lived since she was a small child at Healdtown, increases the oddity of its absence in Cronwright-Schreiner's book. Schoeman believes that

> ...the emphasis he [Cronwright-Schreiner] put on Klein Gannahoek through descriptions and photographs is not justified by the facts of Olive's life. Ratelhoek, on the other hand, is not even marked on his map of Cradock farms connected with her. Later authors, who relied almost entirely on him... followed suit; and thus Olive came to be generally portrayed not only as the young farm governess writing by moonlight at her window -- a valid impression at least of her first five or six months at Klein Gannahoek -- but also working thus on her masterpiece, African Farm, as if

> the whole period of 1875 to 1881 could be summed up in that single image. At Klein Gannahoek, however, she spent only 14 months and, as far as may be ascertained, wrote only Undine...[26]

Cronwright-Schreiner subsequently downplays Leliekloof (where late in 1879 Schreiner again went to work for the Fouchés) when he asserts dramatically that despite her love for the place, she was only ever to see it once again in her life, accompanied by him (in fact she visited the place again fifteen years later and even wrote him a letter from the farm which he published in his Letters, but this fact appears to have slipped his mind).[27]

In Cronwright-Schreiner's defence, there was, as he explains, very little information on the Ratelhoek period, but of even the one diary fragment preserved Schoeman remarks "his quotations were... as selective as usual" and Beeton is as uncomplimentary.[28] Schreiner's own testimony concerning her writing, derived from the surviving journal entries of 1875-1881, is hardly copious and at one point there is a break of well over a year. Yet, as in so many matters, Cronwright-Schreiner's legacy has been to put a stop to research among biographers, let alone critics, despite the fact that each one deplores his scholarship at one time or another. Buchanan-Gould refers to "Ganna Hoek" (which she knows of as one farm only) as "the farm traditionally associated with the writing of The Story of an African Farm";[29] Hobman ignores the the Martin family and Ratelhoek completely, even though this requires her then to misrepresent the date and significance of events like Schreiner's father's death.[30] Even the industrious First and Scott, who include a map of "Cradock and Environs" which includes Klein Gannahoek, Gannahoek, Krantzplaats and Leliekloof, exclude Ratelhoek. Their chronology of the inception of Undine, African Farm and From Man to Man simply echoes Cronwright-Schreiner, with slight qualifications.[31] Rive, in his thesis, blandly states that at Klein Gannahoek "she completed Undine and wrote the major part of The Story of an African Farm, while also working on a third novel, From Man to Man" although in his Letters he is much more vague, settling for "It was on one of these [a number of Karoo farms] that Olive wrote the major part of The Story of an African Farm.[32] Berkman, who (as noted above) values biographical

information as a tool in literary criticism but is sure that First and Scott completed all necessary work of that kind, confidently states that Schreiner's years as a governess saw the completion of Undine and African Farm and the beginning of From Man to Man -- in that order.[33]

What relevance has all this to literary criticism? First, it surely matters that a complete draft of a book, Saints and Sinners, which was extremely similar to From Man to Man, (Schreiner's "big novel," which she never managed to finish [even after forty-two years]), was completed before African Farm. We cannot really know how similar Saints and Sinners and From Man to Man would have been in the end as (following the rejection of Saints and Sinners by George Meredith in 1881) Schreiner rewrote it. She later seemed unhappy about having taken it apart to do so and grieved that the "devil made me unpick it"; in later years, as Chapter 3 will show, the novel's final part was much affected by her "mental" debates with Karl Pearson.[34]

Besides its importance to the history of From Man to Man this re-jigging of Schreiner's composition timetable matters in that two years worth of experience, reading, travel, and the writing of a whole novel separated Undine and African Farm and that interlude accounts for the difference Ellis spotted between Undine and African Farm when he commented on the "magnitude of the step" she had taken in literary prowess from the writing of Undine to that of African Farm. It was at Ratelhoek that Schreiner read Shakespeare (certainly Othello at the least), Goethe's Faust and perhaps also Wilhelm Meister, as well as Gibbon, Macaulay, Mill, Montaigne and some books on anatomy. Through the bookshelves of the Reverend Martin and the small library at Tarkastad and the larger one at Cradock, Schreiner began at this time to read more literature and history than before (her preferred reading having been, as it would remain, scientific).[35] Like Dordrecht, Ratelhoek was a place to which Schreiner would later refer nostalgically in terms of her "mental growth," remarking in 1886 "I enjoy reading so intensely now, just as when at Ratel Hoek."[36] At Ratelhoek, Schreiner specifically links her reading to her

recovery from romantic disappointment: in a letter to Erilda Cawood of 24 April 1878 she writes that "...I am married now, to my books! I love them better every day, and find them more satisfying. I would not change lots with anyone in the world, and my old sorrows look very foolish to me now.[37] Excerpts from her diary in Ratelhoek show "intense and feverish creativity;" Schreiner frequently wrote of staying up late or rising early to write.[38]

Another reason for the importance of chronology, and a proof of its difference from Cronwright-Schreiner's version, can be seen in the landscape of African Farm. While Cronwright-Schreiner may have been correct in his statement that the farmhouse of Klein Gannahoek closely resembled that in African Farm, the land on which it is situated indicates something else. In From Man to Man there is a lushness to the landscape and a variety of fauna not unfaithful to the Klein Gannahoek/Gannahoek area, with its ravines and wild animals; African Farm, on the other hand, takes place in a "flat plain... of monotonous red," broken only by the kopjes that resemble giants' gravemounds. There is, of course, a correspondence between the different moods of the two novels and their landscapes; the lush ravine wherein Bertie is seduced and the thorn tree that tears her white dress after she confesses her seduction to her fiancé are clearly symbolic, as is, for other puroposes, the bleak and barren part of the Karoo in which Doss kills the dung-beetle in its futile "striving." However, the famous flat, "red" Karoo which so captivates readers (and, in the minds of many foreign critics, comes to stand as representative of the appearance of the entire Karoo, the size of which in fact is such that it covers a third of the present Republic of South Africa) is seen in African Farm to be like that surrounding Ratelhoek, where the dominant colour is that of "the red earth characteristic of the area to the east of Cradock--" where "the water of the rivers and dams is the same striking shade of deep orange."[39] Klein Gannahoek is situated, on the other hand, in an area of "dull brown" soil "at the foot of Van Heerdenskloof on the slopes of the Gannahoek Mountains" in a district full of "ranges and freestanding peaks."[40] Of course, the very first page of Undine (a work largely written at Klein Gannahoek) does open on very red Karoo indeed, amidst "red sand, great mounds of

round iron stones" and ducks who "disport themselves" in a "small pond of thick red fluid... under the happy delusion of its being water" (Undine, p. 1) but this is precisely the portion of the book which is most likely to have been a late addition written at --- Ratelhoek.[41] Finally, it is this portion of Undine which resembles African Farm more than any other, and may have been the first to have been salvaged when she despaired of the novel [Undine] as a whole -- which she did-- at Ratelhoek.[42]

It is also important to note that Schreiner suffered several bouts of serious illness during this time: Ratelhoek's climate was apparently very bad for her asthma and she often felt she as if she were suffocating. In her physical and emotional distress following the death of her father in 1876, she wrote that she would soon "have rest like he has."[43] Her chest still pained her the following year, and in early 1878 she had an attack so severe that thereafter her teaching hours, and her pay, were reduced; her journal records gruesome episodes like "bleeding of the lungs," breaking a blood vessel, and more. X-rays taken years later led her doctors to believe she had suffered from tuberculosis at the time of her stay at Ratelhoek[44] Once she wrote to Mrs. Cawood: "I woke up in the morning and felt as if I were dying, and I went to call someone, and fell against the door and cut my face all open, and it was half an hour before I got warm and could speak"[45] and she greatly distressed observers when she fainted while on a walk.[46] In a letter written to Ellis a decade later Schreiner recalled an attack of scarlet fever at Ratelhoek in which she "used to feel as if I was going out of my mind... my throat was so sore..... all my skin came off in flakes.... I didn't get strong for a long, long time...."[47] When she was well enough, Schreiner continued the outdoor "up and down" walks in which she "wrote" stories in her head. Her walks took her behind the farm and through a tiny cemetery there in which there were the graves of two Van Heerdens and of their daughter, Willelmina Taylor. It may not be insignificant to the plot of African Farm that Taylor died aged seventeen and was buried with her two-month-old baby.[48]

Perhaps, in the light of her personal experience of ill-health and her observations of ill-health in others, Lyndall's death at the age of seventeen in African Farm does not look as physically unlikely as some indignant critics have found it.[49] Lyndall (whose hauteur and appetite for knowledge and experience have thus far characterised her in the narrative) cries out in torment shortly before her death, "I do not ask for wisdom, not human love, not work, not knowledge, not for all the things I have longed for... only a little freedom from pain! one little hour without pain!" (African Farm, p. 274). Schreiner herself wrote that "It is curious that no one has yet ever seen in the "African Farm" what it is, a bitter cry against the power of physical disease and suffering over the spirit." Schreiner's singling out the aspect of genuine physical suffering in African Farm does not preclude her appreciating other readings of her own work, of course, whatever Rive may think; but she was right to comment on some readers' having missed the literal in amongst the allegorical in African Farm: as will be demonstrated below, it was "curious" indeed what people made of the novel.[50]

Within the pages of African Farm can be discerned a strange combination of factors -- Schreiner's "made-up" composite Karoo, her "landscape of memory and of the heart,"[51] "real-life" human originals, and traces of her eclectic (at times impoverished) scientific and philosophical reading. She freely admitted what she saw as faults of artistry in the novel when she commented to Ellis that "There is too much moralising in the story, but when one is leading an absolutely solitary life one is apt to use one's work as Gregory used his letters, as an outlet for all one's superfluous feelings..."[52] It is possible that Schreiner's "absolutely solitary life" was even more in evidence in the draft of African Farm which David Douglass saw in 1880. He was later to comment that he could "sympathise very sincerely with her lonely position and apparent friendlessness...."[53] As a novelist who had been exposed to very few fictional models and few people with whom she could discuss literature, struggling with many large themes and simultaneously using her work as an "outlet" to "superfluous feelings", Schreiner not surprisingly produced a novel which offers

an uneven, even a lumpy, mixture of mood, mode and metaphor. Labelling this mixture "the method of the life we all lead," as she did in her Preface to the second edition, was not just the manifesto of a modernist. It was also a profound act of courage and hope, for nothing in Schreiner's background had given her grounds for expecting communality of experience or perception in her audience. Of course, the fact that the Preface is written in response to the reception by the British public of the first edition of African Farm indicates that Schreiner felt confident enough at the time to spell out her beliefs in this way; almost as if, for a time, she were not alone.

It would not last.

ii. "A Damned Fine Horse": An Introduction to Criticism of The Story of an African Farm

> ... at present, we are left with the Olive school, whose recommendations to the dead include the following: that Olive should cut out the digression of the Allegory of the Hunter because it disturbs the narrative of the work, that Olive should excise chapters like the Emersonian "Times and Seasons" because generalized accounts of growing older by the calendar should be concretized within characters; that Rose should be more robust (because we like our heroes that way) or Uncle Otto a bit less vulnerable, and so on.... One detects the itch to sub-edit even today, a century after Schreiner received the manuscript back for her own revisions.[1]

The saying that "no two people read the same book" is truer of no novel than of The Story of an African Farm, whose critical history demonstrates how it has resisted categorisation and remained both an intractable and an endlessly accommodating text. Schreiner lived to see only a fraction of the fantasy sub-editing she has been subjected to, but she knew something of the phenomenon. After her death Havelock Ellis was to record that

> ... not long after I knew her, [she] directed what seemed to her a scathing criticism at a critical review I had written of a book, by saying that I reminded her of a man in South Africa who took a horse to market to sell, and admitted that the horse was lame of one leg and blind of one eye and

> possessed of various serious defects, "but," he concluded emphatically, "he's a damned fine horse."[2]

Repeatedly credited with a mysterious and enduring power and being a "damned fine" book in total, African Farm has provoked profound disagreements about just which parts of it are lame, blind or defective. There can be discerned in many reviews or analyses a flashpoint at which reverent enthusiasm turns to frustrated distaste, or vice versa: all depends on whether the "mysterious power" or the defects are discussed first. Francis Brett Young's epigram declaring the novel "the most perfect example of an imperfect masterpiece ever written" is as sophisticated a resolution of this dilemma as most commentators tended to arrive at until quite recently, and even now the tone of wistful or angry sub-editing persists.[3]

D. L. Hobman's simple approach to the novel can stand as loosely representative, in an introductory way, of the phenomenon of puzzlement, reproach, and qualified praise to be seen in many approaches to the novel. Her chapter "The Story of an African Farm" begins thus:

> Some novels resemble paintings, word pictures of scenes and events, or portraits of persons; others, like music, are poured out in a flow of melody, harmonious only if the listener's ear is attuned to the same wave-length. The Story of an African Farm belongs to the second category; its plot is confused; its characters are vague, and the heroine herself, like any Shavian puppet, is nothing more than a speaking-tube for the author's most cherished opinions. Yet the book radiates some mysterious quality, not unlike that of Wuthering Heights, although less powerful...

Edward Carpenter (Hobman continues) wrote of African Farm thus:

> Juvenile in some ways as that book was, somewhat incoherent and disjointed in structure, written by a mere girl of eighteen or nineteen, and with a title which gave no idea of its real content, yet its intensity was such that it seized almost at once on the public mind. The African sun was in its veins -- fire and sweetness, intense love of beauty, fierce rebellion against the things that be, passion and pity and the pride of Lucifer combined.[4]

It will be seen that many features of Hobman's approach (including her use of Carpenter's memoir) have proved perennially popular.

First, Hobman compares African Farm in style or effect with another art form, in this case, music (a contemporary reviewer lauds the "music of the speech")[5], and by including the caveat that a listener's ear must be "attuned to the same wavelength" Hobman subtly introduces herself as an interpreter so attuned. But introduction of other media as metaphors is a slippery slope at best, at worst merely a way of getting out of the difficulty of coming to terms with the prose as prose. Many commentators get carried away at this point into dogmatic pronouncements, or evasions of Schreiner qua artist. Berkman argues in one area for "painting" as the most suitable metaphor for Schreiner's achievements and seizes on Otto and Waldo's surname, Farber, with delight, under the impression that it means "painter" or "artist" in German. Regrettably, this is not so, so the lyrical structure she goes on to build on the notion is spoilt.[6] Yet, this comparison aside, Berkman's thesis that Schreiner wanted to be a doctor and always regarded writing as an inferior career allows Berkman to write absolutely uncritically of her subject as a creative artist, which makes The Healing Imagination of Olive Schreiner quite the most cheerful work on its subject.[7] Other critics, especially if they are themselves writers, are more uneasy about Schreiner's unorthodoxy as a novelist: Doris Lessing and Uys Krige declare the novel's virtues to be those of "poetry" and Jean Marquard argues for its "poetic unity."[8] Krige means this more than metaphorically, or stylistically -- he uses it as a stick with which to beat Schreiner who, he says, was never a novelist because she should have been a poet. Ursula Edmands claims Schreiner's interests were more in sociology than in novel-writing, and Rive agrees to such an extent that he ultimately characterises African Farm an interesting anomaly in the career of a born polemicist.[9] John van Zyl would hardly agree; in a short essay "Rhodes and Olive Schreiner", the title of which gives small clue to its real content, he vents his spleen about the "over-inflated" reputation of African Farm, in which twelve-year-old Lyndall's failure to oust Blenkins from the farm is seen somehow to shed light on Schreiner's attitude to Cecil Rhodes's politics more than a decade later.[10] Schoeman and Hobman, in their turn, conclude that Schreiner suffered from too much

emotion and too little detachment for either art or argument.[11] In marked contrast, Christopher Heywood not only claims for Schreiner the status of the "leading novelist of her generation"[12] but has also built Schreiner into an idiosyncratically defined "true great tradition" of the nineteenth-century novel, despite the fact that such a place would require Schreiner to have had a profound knowledge of Comte and Matthew Arnold in ways Heywood cannot substantiate biographically and seems to impose from without on the novel.[13] The dogmatism and hyperbole involved in some of these pronouncements eerily echo Cronwright-Schreiner's insistence that Schreiner "was a woman of genius...strange and incredible in her personality... [there is] no standard of comparison between her and normal or even abnormal persons.... I repeat that I am the only person who can be said to have known her...."[14]

Next, the structure and/or the plot of African Farm, and Schreiner's perceived [in]capacity for plotting, must be remarked upon, usually with dismay. One can call it "confused," as Hobman does,[15] "structurally a jumble and emotionally a chaos" and "horribly incoherent" as does William Walsh,[16] complain of "vagueness" as does Edward Aveling;[17] or one can sweepingly declare, as does Elaine Showalter, not only that matters of "plotting and construction were utterly beyond her" but indeed that "every word she wrote was saturated with ardent emotion, adolescent to the point of solipsism..."[18] (Apropos of this phenomenon, John Goode notes that Schreiner as an author gets treated like Hardy's Sue Bridehead as a character: as a mere "talented neurotic...")[19] But there are conflicting perspectives on plot as well: one contemporary reviewer found African Farm's plot "simple to baldness" rather than complex,[20] and Rive called Schreiner's plots mere "series of episodes."[21] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar straddle old and new approaches with their contentions that Schreiner was unable "to find a plot commensurate with her own and her heroine's desires" and yet structured African Farm with an admirable, precocious post-modernist sensibility.[22] More recently, an analysis by Annalisa Oboe can diagnose a complicated "system of antithesis" in the maligned structure,[23] while Clayton makes use of

Lukacsian theory to distinguish between the novel's "outward form" of individual biography and the inner "control of the narrative situation."[24] Gerd Bjorhovd prefers to deal with the structure as a "rebellious" one which exploits the genres of the Bildungsroman, the "Problem Novel," and "Local Colour," and transforms them into a pre-modernist modernist narrative.[25] Robert Green avoids the question, as he does others, by looking to Schreiner for prescience rather than antecedents, labelling African Farm a forerunner to today's "polyphonic novel."[26]

Next, one frequently notes in opening remarks on African Farm a wholesale dismissal of a key character and a grouping of the rest into sheep and goats. Usually the rejected character is Lyndall. Lyndall tends to be seen by South African reviewers as identical to Schreiner herself and by foreign critics as completely at home in the discourse of Schreiner's later book, Woman and Labour.[27] Beeton's opinion of Lyndall is predictably low, while Jacobson decries Lyndall's "portentous loquacity."[28] Yet it is not unknown for Waldo to be declared unrealistic as a character because of his precocious religious deviance, or to be found (as by Schoeman) simply "dreary."[29] Matters of simple fact about the three children on the farm are often misreported: e.g., Waldo is declared to be Lyndall's brother[30], Em declared to be a Boer, or Lyndall declared to have attended school in England (this latter mistake is made by critics famous for their close readings, Gilbert and Gubar, and they are so outraged that on three separate occasions they take Schreiner to task for having "repressed" information on Lyndall's English sojourn).[31] Patricia Stubbs, among others, imagines that Lyndall died in childbirth, though in fact she does not expire for several months afterwards.[32] Gilbert and Gubar, in an ill-advised blending of life and fiction, assert that Lyndall wilfully commits suicide because she refuses to bear children as "incessantly" as did Schreiner's mother, whose name they misspell as Rebekkah (ominously, as it indicates a confusion with Rebekah of From Man to Man).[33] They are obsessed with their own contention that Lyndall wishes women's anatomy to change and that she therefore killed herself: she (to Gilbert and Gubar) "starves herself to death"; is a victim of

"suicidal anorexia"; goes on "hunger strike," etc., and, in short, embraces martyrdom in reaction to the fact of biological motherhood.[34] Apart from Schreiner's lifelong valorisation of motherhood, her own mother's extreme fondness for babies, and Lyndall's particular objection to motherhood being that she does not love the father enough to wish to marry him, Lyndall does not wish to die, she wishes to get to Europe. She tries to eat, tries to live. Yet, obsessed with Schreiner's "fetishisation of self-sacrifice," of which there is far more evidence in every leading female character in Schreiner except Lyndall, Gilbert and Gubar read African Farm (1883) between the lines of Woman and Labour (1911).[35] An analysis must fall down if the novel and its author are discussed relentlessly in terms of the latter book's "sex-parasitism," whose terms, tropes, metaphors and masochism had been developed by Schreiner in concert, response and finally reaction to Karl Pearson, several years after African Farm was written.

Next to one's opinion on Lyndall as a character or her relegation as a symbol, is the divisive matter of which set of characters one finds convincing. Critics fall fairly predictably on either side of the fault-line between declaring Waldo, Em and Lyndall as sensitively-drawn children and Tant' Sannie and Bonaparte Blenkins as lurid, cartoonish, even racist portraits, or, conversely, in finding the former group morbidly sensitive caricatures or "mouthpieces" in comparison with the boisterous, life-loving latter group. Uys Krige complains of the fact that "Napoleon [sic] Blenkins" is an "outer" character, and is also disturbed that Tant' Sannie "strikes one now and again as being a caricature," and from the way he objects to both Strangers one would think he had not read Schreiner's Preface to the second edition of the novel, so incensed is he that these characters come "out of the blue" and that their backgrounds are not thoroughly explained.[36] Jacobson, however, likes the character of Bonaparte Blenkins, whom he finds "many-sided" in his violence, humour and "pathos," and that of Tant' Sannie, simply because she "is what she is."[37] Buchanan-Gould, too, finds the latter pair better drawn than Lyndall, Waldo and Em.[38] Walsh, after indulging in some Boer-bashing by declaring Otto an "extraordinarily successful" creation

of Schreiner's in his "innocent goodness" which he is sure has to be "German rather than Dutch," then finds in Blenkins and Tant' Sannie two "fully successful characterisations" which contrast pleasurably with the "high-minded feminist preaching" (Lyndall) and "shrill agnostic propaganda" (Waldo) that "muddle and muddy the real strength of the book [emphasis added]."[39] Doris Lessing is eclectic: she finds Tant' Sannie and Em "lifelike," and for her Waldo is not just "the heart of the book" but the "first appearance in women's writing of the true hero." She finds Otto and Blenkins unrealistic, and Lyndall is just a "projection."[40]

After which set of characters the critic prefers comes the matter of the critic's attitude toward "Times and Seasons" and "The Hunter's Allegory." They are perceived either as prized centrepieces or "unnecessary and tedious" (Edmands)[41] and "second-hand lyricism" (Jacobson).[42] In Schreiner's time, "The Hunter's Allegory" was so admired that (by popular demand) she re-published it separately in Dreams (1890). Allegory is a notoriously unstable literary element, however, depending so much on taste and circumstance for its appeal, and for every one who can be quoted as finding Schreiner's allegories mawkish or irrelevant, another can be found to declare them supremely important. Lady Constance Lytton was to write that when she was in Holloway gaol, Schreiner's later allegories sounded to her and her fellow suffragettes "more like a railway ABC guide to our journey than a figurative parable."[43] But most readings of African Farm fit within Gray's summary of "recommendations to the dead" and advocate cutting "out the digression of the Allegory of the Hunter because it disturbs the narrative of the work," and most especially recommend that "Times and Seasons" should be excised because "generalized accounts of growing older by the calendar should be concretized within characters... ." Stubbs is dissatisfied with the second part of the novel, and Gilbert and Gubar share this dissatisfaction because "their [Waldo's, Lyndall's, and Em's] youth, presented in the first book, is completely discontinuous with the adulthood they have mysteriously managed to attain in the second [emphasis added]."[44]

Schreiner's creation of Gregory Nazianzen Rose is critically divisive too. Critics like A. O. Cockshut certainly believe that Lyndall's acceptance of Rose's offer of marriage proves her a hypocrite as a feminist;[45] Gilbert and Gubar see in it only that patriarchy is in decline.[46] Of late critics with an interest in gender studies (Clayton, Bristow) attempt to expose it as a courageous service to the literature of homosexual rights.[47] For Green, the whole cross-dressing episode is connected with the concept of "passing" for white, the theme of Athol Fugard's Blood Knot.[50] Critics have recently turned to allegorical interpretations of Gregory Nazianzen Rose's full name, with odd results. Berkman, in mid-flow of a disquisition on the symbolism of roses in Schreiner's work, enthusiastically lights on his surname and pronounces it a clear reference to "the English War of the Roses" from which his family date "their aristocratic lineage". In fact, the Rose family does not; they date it to the Conquest, so the parallel is as meaningless as Berkman's identification of Gregory's surname with what she labels his tendency to see his life "through rose-coloured glasses," which remains, as it must, unsubstantiated.[48] No one has seen fit to link his name with that of Cowper Rose, an English lieutenant in the Royal Engineers who, in 1829, had written Four Years in Southern Africa, although this might be a likely source of inspiration for satire. Rose's various postures and predicaments might simply demonstrate Schreiner's command of sheer "satirical method," which Gray convincingly argues she might have deployed in response to the myth of the "virile English frontiersman and ranger" (of whom Cowper Rose was an exemplum).[49] The problem is that "satirical method" would imply a sense of humour, history, technique or all three, and while there are critics in plenty who will descry double-crossing feminism or a clairvoyant anti-homophobic posture in the construction of Gregory Rose, there are fewer to see humour in African Farm.

Rose's given names are identical to those of the fourth century saint, Gregory Nazianzen. Noting this, Joseph Bristow remarks that the saint is rumoured to have been initially unsure of his vocation. This is historically factual: the saint originally wished to farm. Such ambivalence allows Bristow to deduce that Schreiner's choice of Rose's names

contain a studied hint that Rose is unsure of his sexuality.[50] This ignores, for one thing, Schreiner's suitor George Fincham at Dordrecht (who, like Gregory Rose, had been forced by his father into farming from the ministry). Besides this, there is the matter of the source in which Schreiner is most likely to have come across the story of Gregory Nazianzen, which is Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Here St. Gregory Nazianzen's letters, which were elegantly written even when their subject was simply his self-pity at being sent by Basil to a remote and backward mission at Sasima, caused Gibbon to compliment his prose style.[51] This could have formed, in Schreiner's mind, a basis for ironic comparison with Gregory's whining epistles to his sister about being sent to farm in a remote part of the Karoo instead of becoming a minister (African Farm, p. 176).

Repeatedly, African Farm is compared to a similarly "elemental" book. Wuthering Heights is overwhelmingly the critics' choice (Hobman uses it, though she must add gravely that African Farm is "less powerful"). Jane Eyre and The Pilgrim's Progress tie for second place; Lessing includes Moby Dick.[52] Wuthering Heights is frequently used as a measuring stick because it, like African Farm, involves misunderstood orphans in a loveless, remote rural environment. Parallels seem to be drawn as much between the authors as the books, since both are surrounded with the mystique of having, apparently, sprung fully-formed out of their respective "wild" landscapes. Relatedly, it is this aspect (Schreiner's remote origins) that is often used to usher in explicitly personal remarks about her. Should critics lack the nerve to make such remarks, quoting someone else who did not so scruple is an invaluable alternative. Such remarks reveal how profoundly uneasy Schreiner's audience, then and now, has proved to be when the questions of her sex, class, and nationality are concerned, given the iconoclastic nature of the novel she had produced. Hobman (above) uses Carpenter, and he emphasises Schreiner's youth and exotic origins and (elsewhere) her looks[53] as one way of creating romance and dramatic contrast between the young, dark, mysterious, foreign Schreiner and what is intended to be seen as her thus exceptional achievement in touching the hearts and minds of intellectuals in Britain. No one can outdo

Calder-Marshall's contribution to this tendency. He describes a photograph of Schreiner as that of "a romantic, strong girl" with "a passionate face, the face of a Corsican bandit's mistress, a sultry Byron or an English noblewoman cross-dressing in the Levant." When he deflates this impression it is by branding her a precociously "awakened...girl" who had led a "very depressing life of work, drugs and moral failure" followed by "acute sexual pleasure" in masochism.[54]

But there is also the tactic of introducing Schreiner and denying any exotic qualities, emphasising instead her gaucheness, even her frumpiness, as a prelude to creating a contrast between her yokel origins and her thus exceptional achievement in touching the hearts and minds, etc. Putting aside all notions of Calder-Marshall's "sultry Byron," Walsh exploits the obverse angle baldly enough when he begins a critical paper with these words: "The Story of an African Farm, published in 1883 when the author was 28, was written by a small, plump, asthmatic South African, an ex-governess of missionary stock."[55] Kapp uses this approach in her biography of Eleanor Marx, but with a certain animus, referring to Schreiner as "this dumpy little woman" and citing Schreiner's age (usually greater than those of the men with whom she was involved) her height, and her hip measurement to ridicule Schreiner's life and work.

Finally, the matter of African Farm's "mysterious power" is explored. Both academics and novelists find themselves, as it were, fighting for breath. Many pages into a discussion some confess, as do Walsh or Beeton, that really, they haven't got anywhere at all in explaining the force of the novel by recounting its plot or even by trying to explain some of its themes.[57] Lessing, perceiving that if one uses "the rules that turn out a thousand good forgettable novels a year" African Farm is revealed to be "not a good novel" is moved to offer this allegory:

> True lovers of the novel must love it as the wise man in the fairy tale did the crippled beauty whose complaint against fate was that she was beautiful--for what use was her beauty? She was always trying for humanity and failing. And he replied that it was because of her trying that he loved her.[58]

Even an unfavourable contemporary reviewer is forced to admit the difficulty of describing what it is really "about."[59] Rider Haggard settles for saying that African Farm "differ[s] widely from the ordinary run of manufactured books..." and contains an "atmosphere of spiritual intensity.... [which] could not in all probability be even approximately reproduced."[60] Jacobson's embarrassment about and lack of interest in "spiritual intensity" causes him to round off a profoundly down-beat catalogue of Schreiner's "desperately unhappy" life and work, concluding that "nothing can take from her the honour of being the first to make usable the country and the people within it as a subject for fiction" (for all the world as if someone were trying to).[61] This conclusion is simply a very negative twist on the tendency toward "crystal ball" readings, the logic of which can be distilled thus: on reflection, Schreiner's novel disappoints, therefore one must at least find in it some worthy inheritance for future generations. Marquard, a South African, declares African Farm's feminism to be merely a "lateral growth" from the question of what it means to be South African; almost no British or American critic identifies this as a question in the text at all, in spite of self-righteously questioning the absence of black characters in the novel.[62]

Clearly all perspectives have values and limitations; but outlining even these few examples will suggest the variety of response The Story of African Farm has evoked. Beyond or to the side of ideological uses of the text, or simple factual errors relating to its production, a theory must be advanced that can account for at least some of the diversity above. For now, it is enough to venture a tentative thesis that African Farm is a book that readers do not "enter"; rather, it "enters" them in ways with which traditional elements like plot have very little to do. A resulting phemomenon has been that the book tends to be recalled in ways that reflect its prominence in the emotional lives of those readers. Some critics acknowledge this very effect. Having read the novel in her youth, Doris Lessing recollected that later "while I held the strongest sense of the novel, I couldn't remember anything about it. Yet I had only to hear the title, or 'Olive Schreiner' and my deepest self

was touched."[63] Hobman quotes an anonymous "gifted American woman" who wrote to her:

> I still believe that The Story of an African Farm is a powerful book. Though I have forgotten the plot and story... I still recall after a lapse of forty years or more, how my emotions were stretched to nearly breaking-point when the man, I have forgotten his name, sat writing and writing that long letter; only to be interrupted in the middle with the matter-of-fact information that Lyndall was dead.[64]

Walsh declares that African Farm ought to be one of "that ruck of works which though they may affect the reader at one time, usually when he is young, are happily and rapidly discarded..." yet confesses he finds it is instead "a novel which stays with one -- not harmoniously and consciously -- but embedded in the cells of one's memory."[65]

Surely such anecdotes are suggestive of the inadequacy of what Schreiner called, in her Preface to the second edition of African Farm, the traditional "canons of criticism." There she noted that such canons were meant to deal with novels of the Trollopian, well-made sort, in which the virtues of plot and harmonious structure are shown to advantage. African Farm, a most inharmonious text, has a correspondingly inharmonious history of diverse appeal: through its force churchmen left their faith; mill-workers found a role model; millionaires desired advice on philanthropy; Christians asked Schreiner to lecture on morality; other Christians ordered her book burnt; men like Samuel Cronwright and Roland Leighton set out to find themselves Lyndalls.[66]

Significantly, as Hobman's American author and Lessing tried to articulate, people who couldn't remember what the book was "about" remained in awe of its force. Critics remain in awe too, or perhaps trapped in defensiveness when they feel their arguments do not explain their attachment to it. Thus, as Stephen Gray has noted, many assessments collapse under the need to "hinge on a moral lesson or an artistic generality" at their close; hence, he says, Jean Marquard's retreat at the end of a "promising" essay ("Hagar's Child") into a line about Schreiner's being "a great artist."[67] Hence also Rive's almost maudlin selectivity in his article "An Infinite Compassion", in which he puts forward Schreiner's

"breadth of humanitarian spirit" as "one we should emulate today."[68] Something of the same kind happens in Berkman's more measured and articulate conclusion to The Healing Imagination. Here, despite the many qualifications she places about them, certain phrases -- "Many of us share her revolt against....etc"; "We are drawn to her visions of....", and "The enduring quality of African Farm resides in part in its contradictory messages of...." -- recall Gray's anxieties about Rive and Marquard, which he thought merely "an index of colonial critics' worryings about the status of their own culture."[69] He was mistaken; these "worryings" are visible in many writings about Schreiner, in which shortcomings in her fiction, politics, or life, howsoever defined, almost always provoke some sort of defense mechanism about the worth of her writings. Therefore, at the risk of falling into the traditional trap of trying to finish a sentence beginning "The real power of African Farm is...." a quotation from that novel may be offered as a common denominator, even though it is from the mouth of Waldo's Stranger (that same man who "believes nothing, hopes nothing, fears nothing, feels nothing"): "Certainly the whole of the story is not written here, but it is suggested. And the attribute of all true art, the highest and the lowest, is this -- that it says more than it says, and takes you away from yourself" (African Farm, p. 169).

If "it takes you away" it also brings "you" back to "yourself" and to your experience. For that very Emersonian reason ("Self-Reliance" states: "in every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty")[70] the common denominator among favourable reactions to African Farm is a sense of recognition. Recognition, however, depends on individual experience. Whether it be, for South Africans of Jacobson's and Lessing's generation, the overwhelming novelty of recognition linked to the first sightings of their own land in print, or that experienced by the Lancashire mill-worker who saw Lyndall as the character who articulated what she and "hundreds" felt, or that of the Reverend J. T. Lloyd, who felt the book described his own spiritual difficulties, a false note is struck only when a critic (such as

Jacobson) on finding that Lyndall's feminism or Waldo's doubt do not (unlike the kopjes and kraals) arouse recognition in him, damns them as part of the book's "glaring faults."[71]

The Story of an African Farm has a legacy in works of fiction whose surprising diversity echoes critical reactions briefly referred to above. Some authors proudly acknowledged a debt--among them Karen Blixen, who chose to publish the book known in English as "Out of Africa" as "Den Afrikanske Bondegård" ("The African Farm") when she brought it out in her native Denmark.[72] But perhaps it is in the work of another "colonial" who, like Schreiner, spent much of her life in Europe, that one of the shrewder comments on critical reactions to African Farm has been made. In the novel Maurice Guest (1908), "Henry Handel Richardson" (Ethel Florence Richardson Robertson) not only shows that Schreiner had influenced her writing (this is apparent in a diffuse way throughout the novel) but also uses African Farm as a plot device at one point in a way which provides a subtle commentary on several aspects of the book's critical reception. In Maurice Guest is a character named Mrs. Cayhill, who is a "vegetative" woman, an "immoderate" and indiscriminate reader. In this scene, she cannot remember the title of a book lent to her:

> "Let me see, it was . . . no, that was yesterday [...] -- oh, yes, I know, it was about a farm, an Australian farm."
> "The Story of an African Farm," put in Dove mildly, returning to his seat.
> "Australian or African, it doesn't matter which," said Mrs. Cayhill. "Yes, a nice book, but a little coarse in parts and very foolish at the end -- the disguising and the dying outdoors and the looking-glass, and all that."
> "I must say I think it is a very powerful book," said Dove solemnly. "That part, you know, where the boy listens to the clock ticking in the night and thinks to himself that with every tick a soul goes home to God. A very striking idea!"
> "Why, I think it must be a horrid book," cried Ephie. "All about dying. Fancy someone dying every minute. It couldn't possibly be true. For then the world would soon be empty."[73]

There is a familiar ring to Mrs. Cayhill's verdict -- "nice" initially, followed by a classic "damned fine horse" treatment. But it is Mrs. Cayhill's irritated rejoinder to Dove--

"Australian or African, it doesn't matter which" -- that hints at a critical fallacy the importance of which the novel's author, herself an Australian, knew.

The only way to repair faulty memories of the text is to return to it; the difficulty with African Farm is simply where to begin. Yet, whatever the nature of commentators' opinions on the curable, durable or aesthetically pleasing parts of Schreiner's "damned fine horse," arguments are bound to go astray when its genus is ignored. Schreiner's difficulties with her audience began, though they did not end, with the fact this was a South African animal, abiding in a South African habitat.

This is important not least because, as Gray puts it, the "landscape looms large in South African fiction because it looms large in the South African psyche...." However, in paying attention to the "South Africanness" of the setting of Schreiner's novel, it is important to note that not even every South African has agreed on this point. According to Raymond Sands' recommendations to South African writers, while what has to happen in a book "has to happen somewhere... the background has to give at all points significance to the transaction taking place in front before it, and not mountainously muscle into the front."[74] Both Stephen Gray and Rive have sought to qualify Sands' criticism of what Sands calls the "Scenic Special" in South African literature. Gray memorably ripostes that Sands "is exercising a judgment which is too conditioned by the conventions of the realist novel of Victorian England; one might as well say there is too much whale in Moby Dick."[75]

The next section will look at three of the ways in which the landscape in African Farm functions in the novel: as the battlefield on which different ethnic communities compete through history; as a literary landscape which repels Eurocentric interpretations (e.g, the pastoral, the adventure tale) and finally, through its colour and verdure, as the symbol for Lyndall's rage and Waldo's consolation. The colonial English speaker (traditionally shown to be alienated from the land beneath him or her within South African literature) is, in Schreiner's hands, alienated further by her unique perspective on the

emotional and spiritual isolation in which all of her heroes and heroines live. Exile, Schreiner implies, begins at home.

iii. Some African Farms and Their Economies, Part 2...

> "I will not go down country," she added; "I will not go to Europe. You must take me to the Transvaal. That is out of the world."
> (Lyndall to her Stranger, African Farm, p. 239).

Itala Vivan has called apartheid "that delirium of taxonomy."[1] The human taxonomy of African Farm is intricate, important, and not restricted, as apartheid was, to divisions among non-whites. For the English arriving in South Africa in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not colonise just black tribes, but a white one as well.

The "Dutch" people in South Africa had become, by the 1830s, not just colonisers, but colonised: a tribe fleeing northwards from what it saw as intolerable British oppression. If they were oppressors themselves, this is not how they saw the case, and not particularly how Schreiner saw it, in the 1880s, or ever.[2] Indeed, she later recalled that when she met George Meredith outside Chapman's office, before the publication of African Farm, there lay an open newspaper near him with "pictures of the Boer and British Amajuba troubles in the Transvaal". Feeling "hotly" on the matter, she "stated [her] opinion that the Boers were a noble race, and had been most unjustly treated by us."[3]

Lyndall had described the Transvaal as a place where the "people we meet... we need not see again in our future lives" (African Farm, p. 239). The white community there was known to be rural, remote, and consisting almost entirely of Boers; in the late 1860s when the book is set, Johannesburg did not even exist, and the Republic was still

independent. All the farms in Schreiner's novel (those in the Karoo, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal) are owned, or at least run, by Boers. English-speakers are primarily from towns or, like Blenkins, from Europe. All indigenous Africans in the narrative, whether "Kaffirs [Bantu]," "Hottentot [Khoikhoi]," or "Bushmen [San]", are servants. This matters, because while African Farm works on many levels, including that of spiritual homelessness, in its depiction of the distribution of land and people of South Africa in the 1860s and 1870s it also functions on a realistic level, which is so arranged as to then support the book's symbolic themes, including that of the struggle to belong, to find some kind of faith, some kind of home, and some way to communicate. Schreiner develops these themes through her juxtaposition of the relationships between Boer (Afrikaner) and English South African (Africander) and their relationships to the land on which they live. Lyndall and Waldo are, for various reasons, unable to accept or to be accepted by either community, and they seek escape from their unbelonging through books and artistic ideals whose Eurocentrism proves ultimately as unsatisfactory to them as the limited world-view of Tant' Sannie.

It is not to be expected that a white writer of Schreiner's time and background would have seen alternative possibilities for her characters in any indigenous culture. In Schreiner's literary culture, such as it was, the time for that had passed in the era of Romantic "noble savage" fictions, or in the non-fiction of explorers like le Vaillant.[4] Indigenous cultures are only just visible in African Farm, and are unthinkable as refuges for Schreiner's characters, as blacks are identified most often with servitude, addiction, superstition, or extinction. Blacks are always and only servants in the novel, and when

Lyndall describes the fate of an "independent" white woman her degradation includes being given "food with the Kaffirs, and a light to sleep with the dogs," (African Farm, pp. 190-1). In addition, as far as Lyndall is concerned, black women are as subject to their men as white women, because they are both "bought." In front of the uncomprehending Gregory Rose, she casually discusses the possibility that a passing "Kaffir" kicks his wife, and is allowed to, because he purchased her; later, her "Mozambiquer" nurse leaves her because her husband commands it (African Farm, p. 227 and p. 268). Lyndall makes the observation that the black man, without any rights in white society and even on the verge of racial extinction as she sees it, yet "has a right to" abuse his wife, because he bought her. Her very mention of the man confuses her audience, Gregory Rose, however, who remains "not quite sure of how to take these remarks. Being about a Kaffir, they appeared to be of the nature of a joke; but, being seriously spoken, they appeared earnest" (African Farm, p. 228). Lyndall has already made the observation that there is a similar topic in which "no one does [take an interest] unless they are in need of a subject on which to show their wit," and that topic is "the position of women."

When Waldo feels a kinship with a San man ("Bushman boy") with whom he works, it is only a source of shame, since it is derived from his realisation that he, like the "Bushman," is prone to get so "nice" (drunk) that he passes out in the road (African Farm, p. 256-7). There is also a sense in which the blacks are not just conquered and degraded, but possibly disappearing, as when Lyndall muses about the strength and beauty of the passing "Kaffir" mentioned above: "Will his race melt away in the heat of a collision with a higher?" (African Farm, pp. 190-1). Darwin is behind such thoughts, but in the

narrative there are precedents which also give cause for such anxiety: earlier in the book, while the children gaze on paintings by "Bushmen" Waldo remarks that "the Boers have shot them all," and in "Times and Seasons" the narrator remarks, in the course of a disquisition on the general injustice of the universe, that "the black man is shot like a dog, and it goes well with the shooter" (African Farm, p. 50 and p. 149). These comments, one on a general process and the other on specific events, were both accurate for Schreiner's locale and time.[5] So was the painful scene in which Otto's naïvety with regard to Tant' Sannie and Bonaparte Blenkins is rewarded with expulsion from job and home, his kindness to Tant' Sannie's "Hottentot woman" is rewarded by her callous laughter and cries of "Give it him, old missis! Give it him!" (African Farm, p. 90). Servitude breeds thoughts of revenge, for, as the narrator says, "It was so nice to see the man who had been master hunted down" -- even such a kind "master" as Otto. Vivan, Marquard, and Gray, who have written penetratingly about the role of blacks in African Farm from quite different perspectives and argued quite different conclusions, nevertheless agree that in the novel, black characters are "background," used as illustrations, "local colour," often compared to or actually referred to as "animals."[6] The conclusion in this context is that they can offer no "place" for Waldo and most especially Lyndall, precisely because they are so displaced and oppressed themselves and because, from Lyndall's point of view, patriarchy is equally in evidence in indigenous societies.[7]

Though the novel's setting is somewhere in a non-specified area of the Karoo, internal clues place it (insofar as it exists anywhere) in the area northeast of Cradock and near the Tarka river, where Schreiner lived as she wrote the novel at Ratelhoek. Though

the farms on which Schreiner worked were isolated, outside influences could and did intrude. Likewise, the "African Farm" of Schreiner's title is visited by the flotsam and jetsam of Europe like the Irishman Blenkins and Waldo's "French"-looking Stranger, whose influence through glib story-telling disturbs the farm's equilibrium. As Marquard notes, Tant' Sannie's "rudimentary culture" proves "as unequal to the threat of 'foreign' domination as Otto's kindness is. Her respect for black cloth, worn by Dutch predikants... renders her open to exploitation by the con-man Blenkins, the urban, European child of the gutter."[8] Both sets of stories (those of the con-man and those of Waldo's intellectual Stranger) are dangerous to the "Dopper" way of life of Tant' Sannie, a woman who prides herself on never having read anything but her Bible. When she discovers Blenkins's perfidy she attacks him with a barrel of pickled mutton and drives him from the farm; when she finds Waldo reading Mill's Political Economy she throws it "into the back of the oven" until it blazes "out of existence, like many another heretic of flesh and blood" (African Farm, p. 114). Historically, the Boers of the Eastern Cape were vulnerable to the restless currents of more recent European immigrants and, because not every intruder could be chased away nor every book burnt, many moved northward in a series of lesser Treks. Thus, when Rose follows Lyndall "out of this world" via Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State onwards to the Transvaal, his stops along this three to four hundred mile journey are inevitably at a succession of "Boer farms" where he must seek information from various "ooms" and "tantes" and their "shoeless children" (African Farm, pp. 265-6).

Boer wealth -- counted in money, land, livestock, and family connections -- is shown to be considerable within the text. While the farm on which Em, Lyndall and Waldo are

raised is Dutch in style and run by a Boer woman, it was owned by Em's English father and is due to be inherited by her at seventeen (African Farm, p. 45). But Tant' Sannie has money and sheep of her own, which are sought by suitors including Piet Vander Walt, and when they marry she goes to his large farm. Blenkins forsakes his mercenary suit of Tant' Sannie because he finds that her niece, Trana, is even richer, due to inherit "two thousand pounds... and a farm, and five thousand sheep, and God Almighty knows how many goats and horses" (African Farm, p. 116).[9] The ranting stream of consciousness Tant' Sannie indulges in at the novel's close, which is so impenetrable to Em as to make her think the older woman has gone mad, begins when she tells of Blenkins' marriage to an elderly woman: "And she eighty-two, and goats, and rams, and eight thousand morgen, and the rams real angora, and two thousand sheep, and a shorthorn bull..." (African Farm, p. 295).

The contrast between the British settlers and the Boers has implications even for the longevity of individuals from either group. Em's father was either not up to the land he owned or not up to Tant' Sannie herself; he is therefore dead. The evergreen Tant' Sannie, who burnt one of her late husband's books because its iconoclasm might be responsible for her sheep getting scab, thrives. Her success is explicable in terms of her perfect Darwinian adaptation to her surroundings and also by her allegiance to cheerfully interpreted patriarchal decree. To do as her ancestors did in every thing, is to obey the commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayst live long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee!" (African Farm, p. 294). God's promise is long life in exchange for filial respect; but the land is already given -- or, in the Boer woman's mind, a given. She affirms a connection to her land and to her kin -- and

Schreiner reiterates throughout the novel that these two basic connections are the province of the Boers, and it is clear from the start that neither roots nor family are the portion of Waldo and Lyndall.

"Tant' " is of course an abbreviation for "Tanta," aunt, and "Oom" is uncle. These are the common appellations by which even non-family members are permitted to address Boer adults with respect and yet without formality, and thus the idealistic German Otto first describes the farm's social atmosphere to the Irishman Bonaparte Blenkins by saying "We deal not in titles. Everyone is Tanta and Oom..." (African Farm, p. 53). (In his optimism, however, Otto is mistaken in his use of "We": he is not part of a happy family; he and his son eat "rations" in their hut, not at the farmhouse). Tant' Sannie defines herself by her family connections. When Piet Vander Walt begins to court Tant' Sannie, she introduces herself with the words: "I was related to your aunt Selena who died. My mother's step-brother's child was married to her father's brother's step-nephew's niece." "Yes, aunt," replies her suitor dutifully, "I knew we were related" (African Farm, p. 203). At their nuptials, the narrator remarks that "to a Dutch country wedding guests start up in numbers astonishing to one who has merely ridden through the plains of the sparsely-inhabited karroo" (African Farm, p. 210). The plain on which the English children find themselves so alone teems then, as only the union of two Boers can make it do, and the festivities which follow in the Vander Walt farm show an integrated community at ease with itself, with none of the class-ridden conflict Waldo finds in Grahamstown or the tortured lack of communication between souls that he and Lyndall experience.

Indeed, a good deal of the torment of this latter kind occurs outside the farm whilst the wedding takes place, as Waldo and Lyndall sit in the wagon under the stars, discussing their respective ambitions and alienations. Lyndall is said to have left the dance not long after midnight, a time at which, the narrator relates, " ...the bride is led to the marriage chamber and undressed; the lights are blown out, and the bridegroom is brought to the door by the best man... then the door is shut and locked, and the revels rise higher than ever" (African Farm, p. 212). Everything that is fatal to Lyndall (work, sex, the issue of marriage, childbirth, even the climate) seems easy for the Boers. In contrast, Tant' Sannie, according to Gray, "contains a motor energy within the novel that is the mainspring of the pastoral life and its perpetual renewals."[10]

> Tant' Sannie... puffed toward the door. "If a woman's got a baby and a husband she's got the best things the Lord can give her; if only the baby doesn't have convulsions. As for the husband, it's very much the same who one has. ..." (African Farm, p. 293)

Gray is right to find in Schreiner's perspective a "wry admiration" for Tant' Sannie, who is after all right: "Lyndall's moral and feminist 'convulsions' " help to kill her.

Most ironically, for all Lyndall's talk of independence, it is Boer women who are seen to rule their own lives and those of others. There is evidence that this aspect of the novel is faithful to historical circumstance: among the differences that surprised British newcomers was the fact that Romano-Dutch law allowed women to leave their husbands (whereas English law did not). The robustness of Boer women was noticed by the alarmed English Archdeacon Merriman, who gave an account of "many Dutch farmers' wives cantering into town astride men's saddles."[11] The British settler woman, however, after a "brief liberation, reverted to being a lady.... hemmed in, idealised and frustrated." This historical comment is perfectly borne out in Schreiner's text, rendering Gilbert and Gubar's view of many portions of African Farm difficult to understand. For these critics, the rule

(or misrule) of Tant' Sannie is completely incomprehensible and causes them to declare themselves puzzled at the development of Lyndall's feminism in the absence of a patriarchal structure visible on the farm against which to rebel.[12] Some attention to the two worlds in which Lyndall lives, but cannot belong, would be of use in answering Gilbert and Gubar's question.

In the South Africa in which Schreiner spent her youth, Boer society retained certain aspects of peasant culture, while being composed of farmers saved from being peasants because of the cheap labour blacks supplied. English-speaking society, particularly in the southern and western parts of the Cape, was one in which bourgeois Victorian mores and notions of class made themselves felt. Lyndall is oppressed by not fitting into either society; she finds Tant' Sannie's philosophy of marrying young and marrying often vulgar and repulsive. But this does not in the least justify Gilbert and Gubar in their reading of the character of Tant' Sannie as "a huge foreign woman" whose "ignorance of the children's language" underlines a "monstrous egotism."[13] Tant' Sannie is not foreign; the word does not work even as a metaphor. She and her kind belong to the land in ways in which neither Lyndall (the child of English immigrants) nor Schreiner (who named her heroine after an English immigrant) had not had the time, nor, for some time, the motivation, to do. Furthermore, since it is Tant' Sannie's people and language who arrived at the Cape in 1652, it is English which is the parvenu tongue and thus it is especially in her language that Tant' Sannie puts much of her quite justified sense of belonging (or "egotism" as Gilbert and Gubar would have it). Lyndall might feel a great deal less alienated if it were the Boer woman who was foreign. Schreiner's depiction of Tant' Sannie's power in the course of the major part of the narrative serves to emphasise the isolation and paradox of Lyndall's view of women's issues. "The idea she [Lyndall] espouses is a European cause célèbre," writes Jean Marquard, "nobody in her world cares about -- or understands -- the feminist issue."[14] Marquard is true to the novel; even Waldo is puzzled by Lyndall's oratory; Em, representative of traditional English attitudes in the Cape, wishes only to be Gregory's

ordered-about "little wife," while Tant' Sannie' might justifiably be very surprised indeed if anyone told her she was not more than equal to any man.

Where Lyndall got her "feminist convulsions" then (or where she developed her ideas of feminism in the absense of patriarchal structure Gilbert and Gubar seem to think necessary for their acquisition) is simple to answer. She acquires them where Schreiner did, inside the Cape colony, less through formal education than through reading and sheer observation. As Lyndall says to Waldo, "...I bought books and newspapers... I made acquaintances, saw a few places, and many people, and some different ways of living..." (African Farm, p. 186) -- in the southern parts of the Cape Colony. The greatest fallacy into which Gilbert and Gubar are led by their claim that Lyndall went to school in England is their failure to comprehend how trapped Lyndall really is.[15] Unaware of the social structures of the area, which are frequently flagged up in the text of African Farm, they omit to see that, in the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal, there is no such thing as the "New World" in which they imagine the novel is located. (The phrase Gilbert and Gubar employ is, "By situating Lyndall as prophetess in an alien African landscape, moreover, Schreiner implies that the New Woman has no place in the old world....")[16] Presumably, they can make this kind of deduction because they think Lyndall made a choice to return to South Africa, instead of never getting the chance to leave it. In fact, Lyndall's (and Gilbert and Gubar's Utopian feminism's) greatest problem is quite simply that concepts like the "New World" no longer apply. Imperialism doesn't leave patriarchy behind when it moves house. Lyndall doesn't need to go to school in England because by the 1860s it is thoroughly possible to have one's female soul compressed in a boarding school even in a place like Grahamstown. (Undine's persecutor Mrs. Snappercaps is a graduate of such a school which, the narrator implies, explains much of her character [Undine, pp. 253-4]).

Waldo finds no more happiness in the towns than Lyndall does. His travels through the Eastern Cape (described in Chapter 11, "An Unfinished Letter") take him up to Kimberley and down to the sea at the "Kowie" south of Grahamstown, and he works as a

clerk in Grahamstown itself (which had been overwhelmingly populated by the British since the 1820s).[17] He hates his work, he hates the other clerks' "bowing and smirking"; one whom he believes his friend (a sharp young man with a taste for pulp fiction) rides his horse to death and leaves it for the "aas-vogels" to eat. He longs for the "blue sky" and the only man he respects in his workplace is a "Kaffir storeman. His work was to load and unload, and he never needed to smile except when he liked, and he never told lies" (African Farm, p. 252). Finally, his seemingly invincible innocence is destroyed during a concert in the Botanic Gardens in the town in which his beloved Stranger suddenly looks no more than a fop, and he himself feels the corruption in a fall from grace comparable to that in Genesis. When Waldo sees the fashionably-dressed group that he is both startled and bereft: "When I was listening to the music I did not know I was badly dressed; now I felt so ashamed of myself. That day on the farm, ... I thought he [the Stranger] quite belonged to me; now, I saw he was not mine" (African Farm, pp. 260-1). Thus is Waldo's fantasy of belonging anywhere or with anyone rudely destroyed.

All of the townspeople in African Farm are of English origin, with the exception, perhaps, of Waldo's "French-looking" Stranger. Lyndall finds her dashing "Stranger" in the unnamed Cape town where she goes to school. He it is whom the Dutchman calls a "Salt-reim," a euphemism, as has been discussed above, for the stronger term "soutpiel" (African Farm, p. 265). It is in the person of Gregory Rose that the dilemmas of English class and convention trying and failing to impose themselves on the Karoo are most strikingly set forth. Though raised on "Rose Farm," Rose was educated in a town school. Many factors make him a "Salt-reim" too, for he is a man with one foot in Britain and another in Africa, leaving his "manhood" truly compromised, as the epithet suggests. While he lives on Em's farm, he decorates his wattle-and-daub dwelling out by the sheep-kraals "with prints cut from the Illustrated London News." He looks down on Waldo's origins too -- calling him "that low German." He is a man who, having failed in one career (the ministry) moves instead into farming; while the change his family made to their

homestead's name seeks to deny that they engage in such a low occupation at all. Rose becomes engaged to one woman (Em), then leaves her for another (Lyndall), and, while loving her as a man, must dress as a woman to be near her. All his circumstances underline his insecurity, including his refusal to relinquish his British-based notions of class and labour division, of manhood and of "ladyhood." As he conceals his man's clothing and takes on female dress, he feels ashamed that he is watched by a mierkat. Schreiner's lifelong admiration for these creatures, indigenous to the Karoo, whose egalitarian methods of young-rearing and hunting gave the lie to contemporary notions that Nature had "ordained" sex roles within families, animal and human, suggests that the reference to the animal at this point is not accidental (nor is Lyndall's admiration for ostriches, as she observes one pair, the cock brooding on the eggs and the female far from the nest [African Farm, p. 187]). Gregory's mierkat serves to underline the lesson he must learn from his "womanhood": that modes of love and service need not be gendered. He learns the lesson well, and grows by cutting himself off from his previous rigid prejudices.

As keen as they are to read African Farm through Woman and Labour, darkly, Gilbert and Gubar are keener still to examine it alongside Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland.[18] Publication dates of the texts (1883 and 1915) and nationalities of the authors (South African and American) apart, there is something profoundly disturbing in the way in which Gilbert and Gubar remark that both Schreiner's and Gilman's work is set "on the outskirts of civilization" and that both go "in search of the female heart of darkness." Not only is Herland a piece of feminist science fiction whose narrative takes place in a non-existent country and African Farm a novel which is firmly grounded in place and time (the narrative refers to both a year, 1862, and at least four towns) but it is possible to argue that as far as Lyndall is concerned, "civilization" is all too near. Lyndall begins her account of her disappointment with her miserable "finishing school" (savagely defined as "finishing everything...") by saying that her first impulse was to run away and get work with the first

Boer-woman and soap-pot she could find. In other words, disappointed by the power available to females of her class and ethnic group, she briefly considers a return to what she thinks of as a near-barbaric lifestyle which at least allows women to work. Therefore, it is in terms which describe their own perspectives more than any geographical features apparent in African Farm that Gilbert and Gubar limit their discussion of Schreiner's beloved Karoo to "alien" or "eerie" or the landscape as a whole as mere backdrop to a search "for a female heart of darkness."[19] This kind of language creates resonances and expectations of fictions by Haggard and Conrad, but these fictions were written after Schreiner's, and follow in a tradition with which Schreiner (as her novel and its preface show) wished to have nothing to do. Adventure stories in which a white European arrives in, penetrates and seeks to conquer an Othered, mythologised, feminised Africa (and, analogously, seeks to suppress or live out his "darkest" fantasies) cannot be used as the standard for African Farm.

Although Gilbert and Gubar discuss at some length the nineteenth-century British fascination with Egypt, their easy assertion that Haggard knew that "the first bestselling novel ever written about Africa was, after all, by a woman [Schreiner]" throws into unhelpful obscurity other important fictions about southern Africa.[20] These extend from Camoens' sixteenth-century Portuguese romantic epic featuring Adamastor and later versions of the myth in English, including that by the Romantic poet Wheatly, through the Munchausen tales of Raspe (and the British hack-writer who followed him) to the docu-drama style of early nineteenth-century Great White Hunter narratives such as that by Cowper Rose -- not to mention pulp "adventure romances." Africa, about which at one time almost anything could be invented because so little was known (a fact Jules Verne, for example, delighted in)[21], had been fertile ground for European fantasy for centuries, as Gray has shown in essays like "The White Man's Creation Myth of Africa," "The Frontier Myth and the Hottentot Eve," and most particularly, "The Imaginary Voyage."[22] Crucial to virtually all such narratives was the scene of arrival and traumatic entry into the foreign

land, very often through a catastrophic shipwreck, followed by a quest into the interior. Yet, as Gray points out when considering Waldo's perspective as he looks out to sea in African Farm, Schreiner reverses the

> ..., poles of Southern African experience... for, in the eyes of the brooding inlander, it is Europe which represents the distant, unattainable core of mystery, and the once mystically exotic inland is no more than the datum of his existence.[23]

It is noteworthy that Schreiner's novel is initially set in the middle of the countryside, and that a disparate group of alienated characters wander in circles around it until they die. None finds what she or he seeks. The sea by which most adventurers arrive and leave is for Waldo nothing but an anti-climactic disappointment which in turn seems to prefigure a colonial's reaction to Europe:

> I walked all night, Lyndall, to escape the heat, and a little after sunrise I got to the top of a high hill. Before me was a long, low, blue, monotonous mountain. I walked along looking at it, but I was thinking of the sea I wanted to see. At last I wondered what that curious blue thing might be; then it struck me it was the sea! .... I wonder if all the things we long to see-- the churches, the pictures, the men in Europe -- will disappoint us so! (African Farm, p. 259)

Schreiner's novel resists and parodies some previous treatments of Africa, many of which Haggard continues rather than inaugurates: Gray notes (in the essay "The Rise and Fall of the Colonial Hunter") how King Solomon's Mines in particular is "inventive" rather than "innovative," appearing to question "many of the conventions of the genre... not in order that they be discarded but that they may be reasserted with renewed strength."[24] Of course, Haggard adds contemporary twists on the white man's anxieties not just about black men but about white women, as Gilbert and Gubar have shown.[25] Where Schreiner's karoo is an amplified, intensified vision of a real area with quite explicitly (though not sensationally) drawn features, Haggard's landscape of Kor is a total fabrication, a land which is threatening because it is a woman (treacherously pitted, full of tunnels in She, or, as in

Solomon's Mines, studded with landmarks like the mountains called "Sheba's breasts" which lead to "treasure caves.")[26] But, although King Solomon's Mines and She may betray heightened pre-fin-de-siècle sexual terrors, Africa had been "feminised" before, even in works of non-fiction (Livingstone's panting accounts of mountain-climbing in the African interior make particularly lubricious reading). Schreiner's approach is new because she describes a landscape not only as occasionally "eerie," but as frequently mundane, resistant to conventions of pastoral or Romantic epiphanies, obviously heartless and usually sexless. The land around the farm, which is chiefly characterised by poverty and drought, represents something quite different from either Haggard's paranoid fantasies of a seductive but threatening female Africa, or the hardy playground of those authors who chose Africa as the setting for the genre of "adventure romance."

This very fact has everything to do with the anxieties of southern African literature begun by Schreiner in which both Marquard and Gray have identified a tradition of landscape description which concentrates upon the bleak, the stark, and the barren. The climate is seen as hostile and the very land itself is often depicted as a thin crust traversed by "white zombies" and occasionally punctured by accusing bodies which refuse to stay buried, like the anonymous black corpse in Gordimer's The Conservationist.[27] Marquard writes:

> Political and social anxiety is projected by the writer not only onto her protagonists but onto the physical environment itself. Lack of communication, oppression and cultural poverty are human and social conditions germane to the South African setting and in the five novels I have mentioned, we see the land itself becoming a symbolic extension of these harsh social facts.[28]

While adventure writers for the most part dealt with the blood-curdling or blood-letting aspects of settling a colony, Schreiner began a discourse of the aftermath of colonisation. This less glamorous subject, given colour and shape by Schreiner's characteristic pessimism about human communication and her resignation to, and ultimately valorisation of, the sensitive individual as inevitably alienated, leads quite naturally to an emphasis in her

landscape description on the barren and the stark. This kind of description of an anti-Romantic landscape of resistance has proved, in this century, so influential that Marquard feels obliged to note, "One would never think, when reading some modern South African fictions, that it is physically beautiful country."[29] She sees this as part of an anxiety about "place" which is felt by the colonist:

> Knowing where he belongs and where he feels at home has been a central problem for the protagonist of white South African fiction from Schreiner onwards....estrangement, alienation, displacement, which are dominant themes in white South African fiction, reflect the protagonist's insecurity with regard to the land and to his right to own it. The South African protagonist is not a passive creature of history as he often is in British or even American fiction. He has, in a sense, chosen his life and constantly affirms or questions that choice.[30]

In this essay, dealing specifically with the farm in southern African literature, Marquard examines works by five female authors - Schreiner, Pauline Smith, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer and Bessie Head. While acknowledging that most deal with "women's themes" or feminism directly, Marquard nevertheless takes the view that

> in each of these novels [The Story of an African Farm, 1883; The Beadle 1926; The Grass is Singing 1950; A Question of Power 1973; The Conservationist, 1974] the woman question is a secondary theme, a lateral growth shaped by *the more profound question* of what it means to be a South African. In each case self-definition transcends gender but is solidly grounded in location. Each writer explores ways in which the South African landscape is taken into the psyche of the protagonist. [emphasis added][31]

In African Farm, the landscape is perfectly adapted as a vehicle of metaphor for resistance to European colonialism since, even in the absence of hostile "natives" (like the vanished "Bushmen," about whom Waldo remarks evenly "the Boers have shot them all"), it resists the taming and prettifying restraints of agriculture, and cannot thus be depicted through the conventions of the English pastoral. Marquard compares passages from Lessing's novel The Grass is Singing (1950) and Raymond Williams' The Country and the

City (1973). Marquard notes how different Williams's evocation of the English landscape's "country ants and harvest offices" is from

> Lessing's prose [which] is weighted by its emphasis on the negative relation between nature and the character who experiences it (unlike the harmonies evoked by Williams). Nature is depicted as unnatural, unproductive, unyielding, incommunicable.... Because there is a timelessness in the bush, time dominates. ... Lessing's narrative gives us a sense of land as quintessentially unchanging because it is not primarily in touch with agriculture and its processes.[32]

Waldo, who participates in the "agricultural processes" of the farm more than Lyndall, is shown (particularly as long as he struggles with Christian doctrine) to be in a relationship of conflict with the land on which he works. It is his business rather than hers to partake in the struggle to plant, to build dams and to manage livestock. The scarcity of water, the prevalence of natural threats to the sheep and ostriches, the merciless heat, are frustrating and estranging barriers between Waldo and the spiritual succour he seeks from the land; indeed, at the moment of greatest anxiety in Waldo's childhood (as he confesses "I hate God!") the land appears blankly unresponsive to him:

> With his swollen eyes he sat there on a flat stone at the very top of the "kopje"; and the [prickly pear] tree, with every one of its wicked leaves, blinked, and blinked, and blinked at him. (African Farm, p. 42)

Marquard compares Waldo's experience and that of Lessing's Mary Turner in The Grass is Singing. Both Waldo's pear and Turner's bush seem "to mock the colonist's attempt to establish individual identity... [and seem] to confirm them in negative feelings of guilt, fear, self-denial,"[33] and sure enough, the leaves of the tree are shown to "glint[] just like his own heart -- cold, so hard, and very wicked" (African Farm, p. 42).

In contrast to Waldo's self-doubt, the apparently self-confident colonists of African Farm, like Blenkins and Rose, are shown to respond inadequately to their environment, yet they do so in ways which suggest that they, as characters, are parodic residues of fictions

about Africa which Schreiner rejects. Bonaparte Blenkins, con-man and story-teller, represents in part the tradition of Munchausian tall-tale telling about far-away places (which ironically he, being in Africa, has to invert by concocting outrageous tales about Europe in order to impress the locals). Blenkins is a coward, an opportunist, and a liar, who turns even a fright by a very young ostrich into a terrific epiphany in the telling ("Ah my friend," he said tremulously [to Otto], "eternity has looked me in the face! My life's thread hung upon a cord! The valley of the shadow of death!" [African Farm, pp. 62-3]). But he also makes a stirring myth about his place in Africa, presenting himself as an "honest" capitalist colonist, a veritable Crusoe, spinning stories about his own worthy (rather than parasitical) existence. Blenkins elides from Munchausian tales (telling Otto about his residence, "Bonaparte Hall," his sojourn in Russia, and his shooting there an unlikely number of bears and wolves, in the company of the "Duke of Wellington's nephew")[34] to solemn intonations about his reasons for being in the Cape.

> ".... I said to my wife, 'There is Africa, a struggling country; they want capital; they want men of talent; they want men of ability to open up that land. Let us go.'
> I bought eight thousand pounds worth of machinery -- winnowing, ploughing, reaping machines; I loaded a ship with them.... Where is the ship with the things? Lost -- gone to the bottom! And the box with the money? Lost -- nothing saved!" (African Farm, p. 61).

Bonaparte's hard-luck story (oddly, his horse too seems to have died and his only remaining money to have been lost in a river) is meant to seem especially poignant given his apparent reasons for coming to Africa, which are because "they" want men to "open up that land." The irony of this becomes apparent immediately as Blenkins, a parasite who eventually kills his host (Otto), begins at once to eat Otto's food, wear Otto's clothes, and preach in his place (usurping his function). His very sermons are Munchausian tales of volcanoes and include an absurd and nasty account of a six-year-old boy whose lie about eating dried peaches sends his soul to everlasting perdition. Through this teaching of lies, and other aspects of Bonaparte's reign on the farm later, when he ousts Otto and then sadistically

beats his son, Waldo, all the while telling him that in doing so he is "acting as his father," Schreiner suggests the hypocritical tyranny of paternalistic colonialism itself. Later, in greater and more devastating detail, Schreiner would explore this kind of colonial self-delusion (that in southern Africa it is an easy matter to become rich, that ungrateful "natives" need discipline and instruction) in the confessional nightmares of Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland.

Blenkins, like Munchausen, claims to have learnt many languages in the course of his travels, but confesses to Otto that sadly he has neglected to learn Dutch and German, the only tongues he could actually use on the farm (African Farm, p. 59).[35] Bonaparte's confidence increases as his stories are believed. Lyndall alone is skeptical, for Blenkins' expert manipulation of others' fantasies is foiled by her common sense. Neither she, nor the narrative, consents to have truck with the sorts of tales unscrupulous narrators tell about Africa as a continent of mystery and "otherness." Lyndall also doubts an anecdote in which Blenkins claims to have shot ten oddly symmetrically-arranged bears in Russia. ("Uncle Otto," she asks, "did you ever hear of ten bears sitting on their tails in a circle?" African Farm, p. 60). Europe is for her a desired and "other" place onto which she projects her ambitions and fantasies, but this does not mean she will believe just anything about it. Just before her death, Lyndall turns to Shakespeare and other European texts whose stories she does accept as valid, convinced that their truth will help her. But one by one she is forced to reject her books, even throwing some out of the window in her pain and frustration, because they are useless for the place she is really travelling to. In this context, Blenkins' inability to tell her as a child about the Zodiac is ironic anyway; it would be a guide to the northern hemisphere's sky, not the one which moves over her head on the plain where she dies. Lies and truth, the scurrilous ramblings of Munchausen and the lofty cultural status of Shakespeare, alike fail to address her situation. Gray provides this comment:

> Schreiner is not advocating that all books should be flung out-of-doors; she is merely dramatizing the dilemma which she and her characters find themselves facing: how do books contain relevant experience (or, ironically, in Blenkins's case, how can the right books be kept at bay)? In her rejection of the books generally available to her, she was creating the possibilities of a new type of literature, born out of new areas of life. In short, she was, with The Story of an African Farm, the first author to think out a blow-by-blow answer to the question: what can Southern African literature be?[36]

Gregory Rose, as mentioned above, can be seen in the light of Cowper Rose and other "virile frontiersmen" against whom he appears in such stark contrast, and it is through him that Schreiner continues her attack on fictions about Africa as well as on the tyranny of sex-role conditioning. As Gray points out, Rose is rather a failure as a Great White Hunter: he never brings anything home but Doss.[37] Crucially, in his insecurity about his masculinity, it is Rose who most frequently expatiates on what is the province of men and what of women, to anyone who will listen (a group restricted to his sister Jemima and his fiancée Em). He says of Lyndall's driving "It's so unwomanly" and brags that if he had "a wife with pride I'd make her give it up, sharp" (African Farm, p. 206). He threatens the kind of behaviour Haggard might approve of (suicide when he fears Em does not love him, as well as vaguely violent feelings of "madness" occasioned by witnessing Em's kissing Waldo) but carries nothing out.[38] His adventure-quest becomes, not the masterful wresting of a proud siren, rendered a penitent fallen girl, from her rake of a lover, but the humble serving (in disguise) of a dying woman who never gives up her "pride" at all. As Gray sees it, it is in Rose's position compared to Lyndall that he most appears a failure as a "hunter":

> It is typical of Schreiner's satirical method that in order to have him reach the bed of his desires, deep inland, she has him shave off his beard and dress as a woman. This is the ultimate downfall of the virile English frontiersman and ranger, a humiliation that must rate as blasphemous to hardcore adventure readers.[39]

It will be argued below that Rose's humiliation is also his education, and important to Schreiner's ideal of self-sacrifice in love, but Gray is right to point out its calculated

offensiveness to a certain audience used to quite different views of the English colonial abroad. Schreiner reveals a familiarity with a very racy kind of sub-genre of this, which she most likely gained in Cradock, Colesberg or Grahamstown stores, in a brief episode which takes place in Grahamstown where Waldo is employed as a clerk. A "fast" young man whom Waldo wishes to befriend (believing him to have a common interest in reading) is unimpressed by Waldo's cherished copies of Elementary Physiology and First Principles, and says so:

> "Golly!" he said; "I've got a lot of dry stuff like that at home I got for Sunday school prizes; but I only keep them to light my pipe with now; they come in handy for that." Then he asked me if I had ever read a book called 'Black-Eyed Creole'. "That is the style for me," he said; "there where the fellow takes the Nigger-girl by the arm, and the other fellow cuts off! That's what I like" (African Farm, p. 253).

Here, adventure tale moves into the area of rape, a rape of a "Nigger-girl" whose colour is no doubt considered a badge of receptivity. Schreiner returns to this attitude later in Trooper Peter Halket when the English "hero", trying to describe his relationships with two black women he has bought and made pregnant, finds it impossible to understand the preference of one of his captives (a married woman) for her black husband.

In the red ravine where Rose changes clothes, Schreiner buries the frontier hero of even such relatively unsensationalised novels as John Robinson's novel of 1876 George Linton, or The First Years of an English Colony (see Chapter 1). Moreover, Gray notes that "in finding her structure," Schreiner "has taken the outstretched glove of hunter-adventure fiction and tried to turn it inside out."[40] "The central irony" he finds in this process is that at the centre of the Allegory of the Hunter is a man who does not come back with the quarry. Neither does Rose, of course, and the mixing of styles between the Allegory of the Hunter and Rose's search is one of the many examples of the Schreiner's indication that

> Since the even stratifications of English life underwent an unpredictable and diverse set of variations once they were rearranged by Southern African

> experience, the old compartmentalizations of the society reflected in the fiction Schreiner knew had to be reassessed, frequently with bizarre results. One has to say that, if in the nineteenth century it is bad taste to mix farce with tragic downfall, in Southern Africa it was a matter of everyday life. Thus, what appear to be some of Schreiner's most incongruous moments are in fact her most true moments: why should she not have a Blenkins terrified out of his wits by being pecked on the pate by an ostrich, or a Rose stuffing his male garments into an anthill? Why not, as Fitzpatrick and Buchan will, write a novel which has as its most adjusted character a dog?[41]

Why not indeed? Animals in African Farm, including Doss the dog and Hans the ostrich, are usually shown to know where they belong, and who their enemies are.

African Farm contains a number of historical markers that link it to its time and place of production. Beyond the book's setting and idiom,[42] there is the matter of the very real drought of 1862 (African Farm, p. 44) which Schreiner chooses to make the year Blenkins arrives at the farm. This drought is declared by Gray to be a "watershed point" [sic!] in the novel and in Southern African literature (although he misdates the end of the drought somewhat).[43] Still, the fact that he discusses it at all is refreshing: he wrote in 1979 that, Voss apart, no attention had been paid to the cycle of history in the novel.[44] In 1987, critics like Bjorhovd still have little idea what to do with history in African Farm. She writes that Schreiner's inclusion of a year 1862 is simply an:

> An interesting point... in fact a suggestion of an entirely different kind of text, a chronicle or historical novel, which is not followed up elsewhere in The Story of an African Farm. For the main effect created by Schreiner's writing is of something timeless rather than something time-specific, even -- and this may sound contradictory, considering the highly detailed descriptions of the African landscape and community -- of something universal rather than place-specific. Here, then, is one more interesting indication of the tendency of Schreiner's text to give the reader "leads"; that is, beginnings of a discourse which may, however, turn out to be dead ends.[45]

Bjorhovd's language is telling. The text is in fact littered with very specific portraits of places, people and local literary models (e.g., newspaper caricatures) of which she

(Bjorhovd) is simply unaware, in addition to the "highly detailed..." ones she thinks she understands; if the "general effect" of the book is different for different readers, that does not mean that "1862" is included simply as a novelist's red herring, or tease. In fact, one is not obliged to an Either/Or reading of African Farm ("timeless" or "time-specific"; "universal" OR "space specific"). A Both/And proposition not only works better, it is the only thing that works at all satisfactorily. The drought of 1862 was real, as real as Grahamstown's Botanic Gardens, or Bloemfontein; but this is not to say that Schreiner did not use these events and places as symbols as well. Likewise, Tant' Sannie can be Gilbert and Gubar's "mother figure on the farm" whose presence is a "dilemma" that can be "crystalliz[ed] into the sentence, 'There is no mother and she is huge,"[46] and she can be Schreiner's old boss Mrs. Fouché having one of her bad days,[47] and an example of the beleagured Boer, [47] and a stock caricature of peasant tradition,[48] but she cannot remain "that foreign woman," if this be an African farm at all. Gilbert and Gubar's analysis shows up some of the most salient theoretical inadequacies of the one-size-fits-all key Jacobus and Moi have accused them of trying to use to "unlock" every woman's text of the nineteenth century.[49]

A final point needs to be made about the land of African Farm, and that concerns its colour. Rose's ravine is in the Transvaal, but many hundreds of miles to the southwest in the Cape Colony, from its internal clues more or less in an area like the red triangle of land in which Ratelhoek lay, is an African farm which is also described--most of the time, anyway--as being built on red earth. Schoeman notices that "it is only when the harshness of reality is briefly suspended for the characters in her works that the colour of the landscape mellows to a softer brown"[50] (most notably on occasions in From Man to Man), but that, generally speaking, in Schreiner's "writings of the seventies... there is no room for such

mellowness, nor is it typical of her Karoo." Fittingly, throughout the childhood strivings for justice and growth of both Waldo and Lyndall, the landscape is unremittingly bare, dry, hot, and usually red. ("In Olive's Karoo," remarks Schoeman, "it is nearly always summer, and there is usually a drought").[51] The ferocity of the particular drought of 1862 is described thus, at the beginning of Chapter 2 of Book One:

> From end to end of the land the earth cried for water. Man and beast turned their eyes to the pitiless sky, that like the roof of some brazen oven arched overhead. On the farm, day after day, month after month, the water in the dams fell lower and lower; the sheep died in the fields; the cattle, scarcely able to crawl, tottered as they moved from spot to spot in search of food. Week after week, month after month, the sun looked down from the cloudless sky, till the karroo-bushes were leafless sticks, broken into the earth, and the earth itself was naked and bare; and only milk-bushes, like old hags, pointed their shrivelled fingers heavenwards, praying for the rain that never came. (African Farm, p. 44)

Another striking image of dryness and death occurs in the course of "Times and Seasons" when the narrator tells how "life takes us by the neck and shows us a few other things, new-made graves with the red sand flying about them..." (African Farm, p. 148). Following the outer events and inner developments sketched in the "Times and Seasons" section, Waldo is able to forge a new contract, a radical renegotiation of his relationship with the land which calls him not to "master" it but to investigate its processes. During the course of Waldo's emotional recovery from his spiritual crisis, the "we" of "Times and Seasons" is finally able to discern other colours in the Karoo than just a "flat plain of monotonous red" (African Farm, p. 152). The Karoo begins to show the yellow of the exquisitely complex bitto flower and the "tiny black people with red stripes" who move inside it. There are other colours seen in "bluebells" and a "green fly laying her silver eggs" and a "white hen." At last, "the earth ceases to be a weltering chaos" (African Farm, p. 154) and the pear tree

ceases to mock his faith, because he renounces his faith. Not until he gives up wishing for a miracle ex machina (as on the occasion of his ritual sacrifice of the mutton-chop) can the natural at last give him of its beauty. Waldo establishes a positively ecstatic connection to the land just before his death, a connection which follows the renunciation not just of religion, but of his love for Lyndall and his ambitions to leave the farm. If a pastoral, it is a new Spencerian variant, dependent on one's discerning (and being fulfilled by) endless connections, webs and networks among all organisms. The pathetic fallacy is reversed -- in the Karoo, internal harmony is finally shown by the bending of the will and spirit of the human observer to the land, seeing human truths through the landscape and not by the religious or romantic light of his or her own emotional state. Indeed, human emotional states are frequently obstacles to the appreciation of nature, as the narrator explicitly recognises:

> Go out if you will, and walk alone on the hill-side in the evening, but if your favourite child lies ill at home, or your lover comes tomorrow, or at your heart there lies a scheme for the holding of wealth, then you will return as you went out: you will have seen nothing. For Nature, ever like the Hebrew God, cries out "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Only then, when there comes a pause, a blank in your life, when the old idol is broken, when the old hope is dead, when the old desire is crushed, then the Divine compensation of Nature is made manifest. (African Farm, p. 298)

At the end of the novel, the landscape of the farm is suddenly characterised by lushness, and "beauty and growth had crept even into the beds of the sandy furrows and lined them with weeds." The abrupt greenness of the landscape follows another novel event in African Farm: the wild, mid-winter storm which occurs in Chapter 11, "An Unfinished Letter". During this chapter Waldo learns of Lyndall's death, and it is only after this revelation that Schreiner's "red" Karoo turns green. The anomalies of the storm which breaks the drought and lead to the blooming of the desert may suggest that Lyndall's passion and obstinacy somehow underlie the dramatic, desperate, impoverished aspect of the land (represented by

its angry red colour) and that without such animating anger it obediantly blooms for men's use.

Waldo's death, a matter of melting into a kraal wall on a "shimmery afternoon", is in happy contrast to Lyndall's death in the cold "Grey Dawn." It was Lyndall who was methodically crushing ice-plant leaves whilst meditating on a future wherein she might wear diamonds; in Waldo's final scene, he is shown simply stroking the leaves of the ice-plant. He is equally solicitous toward the chicks that crowd round him, but his kindness is futile because of their instinctive distrust of humans. A being so passive and unwilling to hurt is not able to survive in the Karoo, where nature seems to distribute death as part of a game, like that of the dungbeetle in Doss's jaws. But neither, it appears, was Lyndall able to survive, she who was so passionate and aggressive and willing to sacrifice anything to her ambitions (Em's marriage, Rose's heart, her lover's heart). Lyndall has almost no relationship to the landscape except for a kind of respect for its integrity and ruthlessness, which are like her own. Her dread of the "Grey Dawn" is associated with an intermediate stage in which she fears to lose her vivid definition and individuality (we see her resplendent in moonlight, declamatory in starlight, and devastating in harsh sunlight on the kopje [African Farm, p. 36, p. 218, p. 227]). When Lyndall knows she must die she chooses to be transported across a plain to blue mountains, but predictably enough the mountains are not blue at all, but brown as they approach (African Farm, p. 283). Lyndall dies there in the plain, in a cart dwarfed by the mountains it cannot reach, a speck in the vast "waving grasses" of the Transvaal. The irrelevance of the humans to their environment ironises the scene.

The changing colours and textures of Schreiner's Karoo are indeed important, for she manipulates her landscape in a number of ways, the most important being the ironical transformation of the land itself (most closely connected with, and used by, Waldo and Gregory Rose) at the death of Lyndall, whose one ambition had been to escape from it to the cities of Europe. African Farm opens under the "full African moon" with which Lyndall

is identified, and the landscape is repeatedly described during her childhood as parched, pleading and red. Yet, shortly before her death, as she lies in a hotel in a town where the "leaden rainclouds lay close to the roofs of the houses," her final decline heralds the end of a drought. In the brief peace Waldo finds thereafter (and the listlessness which is Gregory's portion) both work or sit in a different Karoo, referred to variously as covered by "a heavy coat of green that hid the red earth everywhere", "that broad green earth" and "the green karroo" (African Farm, p. 292, p. 294 and p. 296). For Schoeman as for Moers, the Karoo is meant to symbolise "physical and spiritual freedom"-- which seems paradoxical, since the Karoo blooms so spectacularly only when Lyndall has gone, as if it demanded her sacrifice to do so.[52] Lyndall is released from this sacrificial role by readings analogous to Moers' reading of Willa Cather, for whom it is "desert land" that is attractive, and not "garden[s] of settlement."[53] Certainly, gardens in Schreiner's novels are almost always symbolically redolent of Eden (as the gardens of her allegories are of Gethsemane). In the novels, they are the home of serpents (like that Rebekah finds in From Man to Man), "falls" (e.g. Bertie's seduction in From Man to Man), and also of the appalled recognition of social conventions as regards good and evil. Hence, Waldo, ignorant of his shabby appearance until he sees his charismatic Stranger (dressed like a dandy and with a fashionable woman on either arm) in the Botanical Gardens of Grahamstown, looks at himself and says: "When I was listening to the music I did not know I was badly dressed; now I felt so ashamed of myself" (African Farm, pp. 260-1). Bertie, appalled by the consequences of confessing her loss of virginity to her shocked fiancé John-Ferdinand, tears her skirt and leaves part of it caught in a tree in her rush to leave him, as if she, too, suddenly knew herself to be naked.

These encounters indicate that Lyndall is wise to go alone to the solitary "kopje" near the farm to read when she knows she is pregnant, wise to go "upcountry" thereafter, and wiser still to go out into the veld when she knows her death is near. She, who as a child called the death of Napoleon "glorious" because it occurred on "a lonely island" finds dignity, if not solace, in open spaces. Waldo's progress is, like Lyndall's, one of bitter

renunciation: he has to grow to envision morality without God, Art without result or reward, labour without dignity, and, finally, life without Lyndall. However, in the golden afternoon of his death, Waldo is "happy." It is even as the very air assumes "the colour of ripe corn" and, the narrator rhapsodises, "life is delicious" that Waldo dies. Ironically, in an environment, atmosphere and existence that finally consent not only to bloom but to bear fruit and nourish, Waldo ceases to be, having come to terms with Lyndall's death only because he is capable of dreaming a dream of self-abnegation in "Universal Unity" and can therefore mutter to himself

> No death, no death.... there is that which never dies -- which abides. It is but the individual that perishes, the whole remains. It is the organism that vanishes, the atoms are there. It is but the man that dies, the Universal Whole of which he is part re-works him into its inmost self.... we abide. (African Farm, p. 290)

According to his dream, then, Waldo must return to the earth to be with Lyndall, to become like her, a kind of atomic, yet cosmic, compost, from which new life is created. This is a re-working of his previous appalled consideration in "Times and Seasons" of beloved "eyes" being eaten by "worms" in red graves. Waldo's death is also a part of the "system of ironies" Gray has identified in that, by dying, Lyndall and Waldo also achieve a "home" in South Africa at last, the only "home" possible for non-Afrikaner white South Africans of their time. Their deaths constitute

> ... the first appearance of a struggling but implacable fatalism which has taken its place in the fore of the South African English mentality which, in the last resort, can only die on the land to prove it has lived above it. Mulch, Schreiner implies, is the lowest, and first, form of belonging.[34]

As such, it is, at least, a start.

iv. The Matter of Lyndall: "A Most Unfeminist Way to Die"?

According to First and Scott, Schreiner "flew into a rage at Frederic Chapman's suggestion that she should add a few sentences to make Lyndall marry her Stranger in secret, otherwise 'the British public would think it wicked, and [W. H.] Smiths... would not put it on their stalls!' "[1] Yet, on the occasions on which African Farm was thrown out of libraries or burnt, the grounds given tended to be its religious, rather than its sexual, unorthodoxy. Nearly a century later, long after crisis-of-faith novels have ceased to shock, Lyndall's attitude to marriage ("yes" to Rose, "no" to her Stranger, the father of her child) continues to puzzle and upset many critics for whom the death of God has long been a given. Moreover, the death that really bothers such critics (Cockshut and Lerner in particular) is Lyndall's. They, like some feminist critics, find Lyndall's dying an obstacle to their appreciation of Schreiner's feminism.[2]

Wherein lies the integrity and power of a heroine like Lyndall, and does Schreiner qualify-- some have claimed "nullify" -- such attributes in her construction of the circumstances of Lyndall's death? In this section, it will be argued that Lyndall's behaviour is consistent with the lessons of her "education" (on the farm, in her "finishing school" and in the anonymous Transvaal hotel in which she gives birth). Lyndall's experiences and attitudes, counterpointed by those of Waldo, illuminate Schreiner's valorisation of lonely struggle and feminist self-reliance.

As the novel opens, the young Lyndall is shown sleeping, possessed of an "elfin-like beauty" which seems to "belong [] of right to the moonlight," (African Farm, p. 36). When older, Lyndall identifies womankind as a whole with the moon when she rages that "Men

are like the earth, and we are the moon; we turn always one side to them, and they think there is no other, because they don't see it-- but there is" (African Farm, p. 199). Lyndall's beauty is described as positively alien ("elfin-like") in one of the few echoes the book contains of Undine's theme of an other-worldly heroine. In the opening scene, her isolation is established in one touch: the moonlight wakes her and she cries out to Em, but Em sleeps on. So, "pulling the sheet over her head" she goes "to sleep again," thus creating a picture which foreshadows the opening of the story "The Buddhist's Priest's Wife," in which the narrator writes of the dead heroine (also covered by a sheet) "You would think she was asleep" (Stories, Dreams and Allegories, p. 61).

Waldo's isolation is similarly established early in the narrative of African Farm. Also awake that night, he lies in anguish of soul, pondering the dilemma of evil in a God-created world and the injustice of the Calvinist doctrine of the Elect. He cries out to God, who does not answer him any more than Em answers Lyndall. Near Waldo, oblivious to his pain, sleeps his German father Otto, whose firm faith and good-natured dreaminess blind him to the evil dreams of others. His credulity is the weakness through which the children's only home, his cabin, is threatened and finally destroyed.

"Shadows from Child-Life," the first chapter of African Farm, which includes the ambiguously titled section "The Watch" (signifying both the timepiece Waldo listens to and the vigil he keeps), contains the first of many unanswered appeals made throughout the novel for comfort, for justice, for home, for mere contact. This is reinforced in the second chapter of African Farm, when Waldo tries to convey to Lyndall his sense of living on land which already has a layered history of displacement and transience:

> "Sometimes I lie under that hill with my sheep, and it seems that the stones are really speaking -- speaking of the old things, of the time when the strange fishes and animals lived that are turned into stone now; and the time when the little Bushmen lived here.... It was one of them, one of these old wild Bushmen, that painted those pictures there. ....
> He used to kneel here naked, painting, painting, painting; and he wondered at the things he made himself," said the boy, rising and moving his hand in deep excitement. "Now the Boers have shot them all, so that we never see a yellow face peeping out among the stones. ... And the wild bucks have gone, amd those days, and we are here. But we will be gone soon, and only the stones will lie on here, looking at everything like they look now. I know that it is I who am thinking," the fellow added slowly, "but it seems as though it were they who were talking. Has it never seemed so to you, Lyndall?"
>
> "No, it never seems so to me," she answered. (African Farm, pp. 49-50)

In his urgency to communicate with Lyndall Waldo makes the longest speech he makes in the book, as boy or man, and it falls completely flat. Indeed, for him it is easier to communicate with stones than with his closest living companion. The orphaned English Lyndall, with almost no blood ties with the people among whom she lives, transfers her needs into aspirations and dreams of the future, whereas Waldo (soon to be orphaned and similarly unconnected) takes refuge in dreams of the past; in the process they miss each other completely, foreshadowing many similar encounters in the narrative, where, with the best of intentions, they cannot understand one another. The more extreme the crisis in which an individual finds him or herself, the greater the futility. This is made clear on the occasion of Lyndall's and Waldo's conversation after the death of Waldo's father, Otto:

> "There is no God!" he almost hissed; "no God; not anywhere!"
> She started.
> "Not anywhere!"
> "Waldo, you are mad," she said, drawing herself from him instinctively.
> In truth, is it not life's way? We fight our little battles alone; you yours, I mine. We must not ask or find help.
> When your life is most real, to me you are mad; when your agony is blackest, I look at you and wonder. Friendship is good, a strong stick, but when the hour comes to lean hard, it gives. In the day of their bitterest need all souls are alone. (African Farm, p. 102)

When Waldo is nearly beaten to death, Lyndall's kiss on his shoulder is, as the narrator states, "all the comfort her young soul could give him," since her words "we will not be children always; we shall have the power too, some day," (African Farm, p. 127) do not seem enough, nor are they borne out as truth in the novel's second Book.

In Book Two, when it is Lyndall who is in mental torment, the same lesson is repeated more directly still:

> Perhaps she [Lyndall] thought of the narrowness of the limits within which a human soul may speak and be understood by its nearest of mental kin, of how soon it reaches that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow footfall is ever heard.
>
> (African Farm, p. 196)

Lyndall cannot even make her heart plain to her lover when she tells him "...I like to experience, I like to try. You don't understand that" (African Farm, p. 238).

Waldo and Lyndall continually attempt dialogue throughout the novel, although they never completely comprehend one another. Their conversations can hardly be called such: most often they talk "past" one another. A striking anomaly in this novel of alienated individuals is Lyndall's comment to Waldo that he is "not alone" because she exists, but she makes it on the occasion when he is on the point of leaving the farm (forever, as far as he is concerned) and her intentions are clearly to do likewise, in the opposite direction (African Farm, p. 224). Waldo's most coherent and articulate attempt to convey his feelings to Lyndall (in the letter which forms the greater part of Chapter 11 of Book Two) is made ironic by Em's abrupt remark, when he has almost finished writing, that Lyndall is dead (African Farm, p. 263). Thus the first and last lessons Schreiner requires of her heroes and heroines is that attempts at communication are futile.

If neither mental "kinship" nor love can be of use in a crisis, how much worse is it when individuals who are in conflict of interest, or outright enemies, attempt to communicate? The narrative does not even record an attempt at this. Instead, the rule on

which Blenkins operates is put forward as a reason why society is unlikely to improve. His "simple rule" can be expressed thus:

> Whenever you come into contact with any book, person, or opinion of which you absolutely comprehend nothing, declare that book, person or opinion to be immoral. Bespatter it, vituperate against it, strongly insist that any woman or man harbouring it is a knave, or a fool, or both. Carefully abstain from studying it. Do all that lies in you to annihilate that book, person, or opinion. (African Farm, p. 112)

The narrator remarks that this rule is already "largely acted upon, but [should it become] universal, would save much thought and valuable time..." This comment is made just before Blenkins and Tant' Sannie burn Waldo's copy of Mill's Principles of Political Economy; thus, between Blenkins's rule and Tant' Sannie's less formulaic intellectual Luddism, transmission of ideas which might facilitate greater understanding between people is halted. Schreiner's choice of this book for destruction is especially poignant in that Mill's book is one whose vision, John Gray has written, is of a

> ...society of men and women devoted to the higher pleasures of the intellect, culture and natural beauty, without deep antagonisms of class interest but often engaged in creative conflicts of ideas... respecting one another's freedom...[3]

Early on Lyndall places her faith in achievement and education, bypassing the religious doctrines that torment Waldo and comfort Em. While Waldo seeks knowledge for its own sake, Lyndall seeks it as a weapon, as a means to power. This is clear from Chapter 2, "Plans and Bushman-Paintings" in which, as shown above, the plans are all Lyndall's and the contemplation of the paintings all Waldo's. Em, confused by both, cannot understand Lyndall's ambitions:

> ".... She [Tant' Sannie] is a miserable old woman," said the girl [Lyndall],..."but I intend to go to school."
> "And if she won't let you?"
> "I shall make her."
> "How?"
> The child took not the slightest notice of the last question, and folded her small arms across her knees.

> "But why do you want to go, Lyndall?"
> "There is nothing helps in this world," said the child slowly, "but to be very wise, and to know everything -- to be clever."
> "But I should not like to go to school!" persisted the small, freckled face.
> "And you do not need to. When you are seventeen this Boer-woman will go; you will have this farm... but I," said Lyndall, "will have nothing. I must learn."
> "Oh Lyndall! I will give you some of my sheep," said Em...
> "I do not want your sheep," said the girl slowly; "I want things of my own..." (African Farm, pp. 45-6)

Lyndall's grounds for needing education are stated in terms of economic necessity "I ... have nothing. I must learn." More dubiously, she extrapolates this into an economic equation: "there will be nothing that I do not know. I shall be rich, very rich..." From this proposition, she elides to a detailed discussion of her self-adornment in "pure white silk" with "little rosebuds" and "petticoats... embroidered... all the way through" when the desired state of education and wealth is attained. This is not accidental nor inconsistent; it accords with her speech at the beginning of the chapter when, having precisely crushed a "crystal drop" of an ice-plant leaf, she comments on her desire to grow up and wear "real diamonds" in her hair. In a more sinister sense, it accords with her account of girls' socialisation later in the book (African Farm, p. 188) when she tells Waldo, "To you it [the world] says -- Work! and to us it says Seem!".

From an early age, Lyndall devotes herself to both learning and appearance, amazing her cousin Em:

> "Lyndall," the child said to her little orphan cousin... "how is it that your beads never fall off your needle?"
> "I try," said the little one gravely, moistening her tiny finger. "That is why." (African Farm, p. 38)

Lyndall's studied perfectionism may not at first seem in concert with the trivial nature of the pastime, though it demonstrates her characteristic determination to succeed in every endeavour. It is later, when Lyndall uses the example of a little girl who "threads blue beads" for a necklace and then takes it with her to look into a mirror, that the earlier episode takes on a new meaning. This girl (spoken of in terms of a totalising "we") had

wanted to play outside with boys, but had been forbidden to do so, in order to save her complexion. But when the necklace is finished and "we" look into the glass at complexion, dress, and "our own great eyes," it is then "the curse begins to act on us. It finishes its work when we are grown women, who no more look out wistfully on a more healthy life...."(African Farm, p. 189). The "curse" works on Em, who at the age of twelve can imagine no way off the farm but marriage (African Farm, p. 45). Lyndall's relationship to the "curse" is complex: it remains half a system she exploits and half a seductive doctrine she has internalised. Hence, while desiring to "have things of my own," she yet awaits a saviour who will free her from the responsibilities and consequences of her own desires.

Albeit a loving cousin (even when losing her fiancé to Lyndall) Em, in her reactions to Lyndall's behaviour, occasionally resembles the women in Undine who find that book's heroine unnatural. The first scene in which this is suggested occurs when Otto has been thrown off the farm and the girls sent to their room. While Em "wail[ed] bitterly," Lyndall "lay on the bed with her arm drawn across her eyes, very white and still":

> "Hoo, hoo!" cried Em; "... Hoo, hoo! ... perhaps they won't let us go and say goodbye to him [Otto]. Hoo, hoo, hoo!"
> "I wish you would be quiet," said Lyndall. "Does it give you such felicity to let Bonaparte know he is hurting you? We will ask no one. It will be supper time soon. Listen -- when you hear the chink of the knives and forks we will go out and see him." (African Farm, p. 91)

Foiled subsequently by Bonaparte and Tant' Sannie, who lock the girls in, Lyndall grinds her teeth and proceeds to unscrew an iron bedknob. Then,"climbing up again [to the window] she broke with it every pane of glass... beginning at the top and ending at the bottom." She then seeks to lift the outer iron bar by making a hole and slipping a pen-knife through. To Em's question of whether Lyndall believes this possible, Lyndall replies, "No, but I am trying." When Lyndall fails, she sets out just as coolly to burn down the window.

> "But won't the whole house take fire and burn down too?"
> "Yes."
> "But will it not be very wicked?"

"Yes, very. And I do not care." (African Farm, pp. 92-3)

Not until this method fails does Lyndall give up. Em, who fails to perceive the workings of tyranny as clearly as Lyndall, and worries about Lyndall's "wickedness" as much as that of her oppressors, bootlessly begins to wail for Tant' Sannie. Lyndall's comment to this is the keynote of her character:

> "I am going to sleep," she said. "If you like to sit there and howl till morning, do. Perhaps you will find that it helps; I never heard that howling helped any one." (African Farm, p. 93)

Later, when it is Waldo whose predicament concerns the girls, their conduct is reminiscent of the scene above. Em finds Lyndall's demeanour as inexplicable and even heartless as Undine's companions found hers, although Em does not likewise vilify her. Eventually, it is by Lyndall's force of character, rather than Em's begging, that Waldo is succoured. Schreiner economically demonstrates both the strength of Lyndall's will, and what it costs her to exercise it:

> For ten minutes after she [Em] was gone Lyndall worked on quietly; then she folded up her stuff, rolled it tightly... and stood before the closed door of the sitting room with her hands closely clasped. A flush rose to her face; she opened the door quickly, and walked in, went to the nail on which the key ... hung. Bonaparte and Tant' Sannie sat there and saw her.
> "What do you want?" they asked together.
> "This key," she said, holding it up, and looking at them.
> "Do you mean her to have it?" said Tant' Sannie in Dutch.
> "Why don't you stop her?" asked Bonaparte in English.
> "Why don't you take it from her?" said Tant' Sannie.
> So they looked at each other, talking, while Lyndall walked to the fuel-house with the key, her underlip bitten in. (African Farm, pp. 126-7)

Inevitably, such force helps Lyndall away from Em and the farm to her much-desired place at school. But on her return, Em, now betrothed, quickly learns that even this achievement is dismissed by the superior Lyndall, who counters Em's homely notions of love with an assurance, a flippancy, and a much-fingered man's gold ring, that all bespeak greater experience than Em's. Em again finds her puzzlingly unfeminine, but still feels "rebuked and ashamed. How could she show her the white linen, and the wreath, and the

embroidery?" (African Farm, p. 183-4). Once home from school, looking like a "little queen," Lyndall still inspires awe in Em, although the most radical results of Lyndall's education are revealed not to her but to Waldo.

While sexual experience isolates Lyndall from the innocent Em, the intense reality of other manifestations of the "woman question" in her own life isolates Lyndall even from Waldo, with whom she has her most sustaining relationship. She brings up the topic while commenting on the ostriches which are his livelihood, only to find that their behaviour has never suggested to him what it does to her:

> ...an ostrich hen came bounding towards them, with velvety wings outstretched, while far away over the bushes the head of the cock was visible as he sat brooding on the eggs.
> "I like these birds," she said; "they share each other's work, and are companions. Do you take an interest in the position of women, Waldo?"
> "No."
> "I thought not...I'm sorry you don't care for the position of women; I should have liked us to be friends: and it is the only thing about which I think much or feel much-- if, indeed, I have any feeling about anything," she added flippantly, readjusting her dainty little arms. "When I was a baby, I fancy my parents left me out in the frost one night, and I got nipped internally -- it feels so!" (African Farm, p. 187)

Lyndall mocks herself concerning her outer coldness, which proceeds from an inner one. She has been frozen by the impossibility of love and companionship in human society-- while in nature the ostriches raise their young in sexual harmony and with a fair division of labour. Worst of all, she finds that Waldo has never noticed the "position of women," nor the contrast between society and nature that she has seen.

Despite this unpromising beginning, Waldo grows more sympathetic to Lyndall's arguments. His initial difficulties derive partly from the fact that he has never left the farm (and thus has yet to experience the bourgeois culture Lyndall has seen) and partly because he is so much an unwitting convert to Lyndall's politics already, having himself known oppression as a creator, a "feminised" occupation in the text.[4] Lyndall tells Waldo of her

time at school where she found no companionship of thought or feeling from her female schoolmates. Nor, the text makes it apparent, did she find it with the men who flirted with her lightly or all too dangerously in the town where the school was located. Instead, she who once said to her cousin that she "never heard that howling helped any one," and felt so sure that "There is nothing helps in this world... but to be very wise, and to know everything -- to be clever," learns at school how mistaken she is. In fact, "howling" is a great asset in a woman and "being clever" is not. As she remarks to Waldo, "A little weeping, a little wheedling, a little self-degradation, a little careful use of our advantages, and then some man will say -- 'Come, be my wife!'" Lyndall also tells him she has learned that "The less a woman has in her head, the lighter she is for climbing" (African Farm, p. 189).

Lyndall can mock the shallowness of a society wherein she is forced to rethink her childhood hypothesis about the relative importance and order of tears, brains and looks to a woman's destiny, yet it is clear that she has been pained and even deeply damaged by the acquisition of her knowledge. She has paid for her education, chiefly through alienation from her own body, which, in Book Two, is frequently reduced to an "it" and finally to "the little crushed heap" (African Farm, p. 282). The difference in Schreiner's treatment of Lyndall between Books One and Two is in fact part and parcel of the theme of alienation, for in becoming a woman Lyndall has lost her self-possession: on the first night she comes home from school "she looked about among the old familiar objects; all was there, but the old self was gone" (African Farm, p. 183). When, from whatever viewpoint, critics complain that the Lyndall of Book Two is somehow less "real" than that of Book One, it might be argued that this is consonant with Lyndall's realisation of her place within colonial society, which is, as she puts it to Waldo, to "Seem" rather than to "Work," and that she becomes, as it were, an "object" in the text because she is an "object" to herself. Schreiner shows how Lyndall learns to think of herself in "parts," as in the following passage:

> Look at this little chin of mine, Waldo, with the dimple in it. It is but a small part of my person; but though I had a knowledge of all things under the sun, and the wisdom to use it, and the deep loving heart of an angel, it would not stead me through life like this chin. I can win money with it; I can win love; I can win power with it; I can win fame.... I once heard an old man say, that he never saw intellect help a woman so much as a pretty ankle; and it was the truth." (African Farm, p. 189)

"This chin," and later, "my little neck" (African Farm, p. 198) show how Lyndall mimics the language of sexual dissection employed by the old man, a language familiar to any modern reader of popular magazines for women, or pornographic ones for men. When Gilbert and Gubar wonder at the absence of a crushing patriarchy in the text (and therefore wonder at the source of Lyndall's rebellious dissatisfaction) they fail to register the brooding sense of the voyeuristic masculine judge who lurks behind Lyndall's constant self-adornment.[5]

Clothes, mirrors and bodies are important in African Farm, as they are in From Man to Man, where, as Dodd has shown, Schreiner's "use of spatial and sartorial metaphors indicates a keen awareness of the unequal distribution of power and the social construction of identity."[6] In African Farm, clothes are often associated with the objectification of women's bodies, of which Lyndall is particularly conscious. Her prolonged attention, and flippant attitude, to her own dress and adornment suggest that they are, in some senses, "foreign" to her, that they are as much "drag" as Gregory's nurse's outfit. When he takes on his disguise as a female, he must also learn to take on a new attitude towards his body, scrutinising his now-beardless face in the mirror, and finding himself hobbled, when he would flee, as "strange skirts clung about his legs" (African Farm, p. 271). For her part, it is Lyndall's stylish dress (as well as her experienced patter about men) which alienates her from Em. A picture of a "lady," torn from a magazine and hung in the farmhouse, which once formed the inspiration for the girls' childhood ideas of beauty, is now surpassed by Lyndall herself, who seems to her cousin "far more like a princess, than the lady who still hung on the wall" (African Farm, p. 183). Her looks even awe Waldo. She must reassure

him in the first instance: "My dress has changed a little, and I also, but not to you" (African Farm, p. 185).

At the close of her first conversation with Waldo after returning from "finishing school," Lyndall twice comments on the effort that such elegance requires:

> "Sometimes," she added... shaking the dust daintily from her skirts, "when I am not too busy to find a new way of doing my hair that will show my little neck to better advantage, or, over other that work of that kind, sometimes it amuses me intensely to trace out the resemblance between one man and another.... to trace the analogy there always is between the progress and development of one individual and a whole nation; or again, between a single nation and the entire human race.... It is the most amusing thing I know, but of course, being a woman, I have not often time for such amusements. Professional duties always first, you know. It takes a great deal of time and thought always to look perfectly exquisite, even for a pretty woman."
> (African Farm, pp. 198-9)

Bracketing her Spencerian discussion (the product of her reading), Lyndall makes two remarks about the effort, the unceasing labour, behind her appearance. She clearly makes the point to Waldo, who seems to pull back from her at one point because of it (Lyndall says: "Let me take your arm, Waldo. How full you are of mealie dust. -- No, never mind. It will brush off.") The conventional Victorian treatment of a beautiful woman (unless she is depicted as a scheming antagonist) makes her appearance a matter of blushes, taste, and simplicity; Lyndall's words lay bare the fiction of the "natural beauty." In a like manner, Waldo's forays into work likewise lay bare the falsity of the concept of "dignity of labour" under capitalism.

When Lyndall speaks to Waldo (in the third person) of her desire to work as an actress, it is because "What she would be she cannot be because she is a woman"; the career is thus a second-best option (African Farm, p. 216). She chooses acting because, she says, she has "a sweet voice, rich in subtle intonations," "a fair face," intuition, and a "delicate expressive body." Her intention to use her body, face and voice as tools is almost dispassionate; her attitude toward her beauty is one of cool appraisal. She nevertheless,

because of her idealism about love, has difficulty with what she knows is her lover's chiefly physical desire for her. He mocks her for what he deems her pretence of ignorance that his love of her must be anything but primarily carnal, since such feeling is what he says "love between a man and a woman means" (African Farm, p. 237). Whilst mocking her in what is clearly meant to be seen as a familiar way in their relationship, he says:

> I like you when you grow metaphysical and analytical.... Go a little further... say, "I love you with the right ventricle of my heart, but not the left, and with the left auricle of my heart, but not the right"... I like you when you get philosophical. (African Farm, p. 237)

When he grows serious, it is only to inform her that "it is all very well to have ideals and theories" but

> ... you know as well as anyone can that they must not be carried into the practical world. I love you. I do not pretend that it is in any high, superhuman sense, I do not say I should like you as well if you were ugly and deformed, or that I should continue to prize you whatever your treatment of me might be, or to leave [love?] you though you were a spirit without a body at all. (African Farm, p. 237)

When Lyndall's Stranger asks her why she ever loved him, she replies that he was strong,

The last direct speech Lyndall makes before leaving the farm forever is addressed to her eyes:

> "We are all alone, you and I," she whispered; "no one helps us, no one understands us; but we will help ourselves." The eyes looked back at her. There was a world of assurance in their still depths. So they had looked at her ever since she could remember, when it was but a small child's face above a blue pinafore... "We shall never be quite alone, you and I... we shall always be together, as we were when we were little."
> "We are not afraid; we will help ourselves!" she said. She stretched out her hand and pressed it over them on the glass. "Dear eyes! We will never be quite alone until they part us; -- till then!" (African Farm, pp. 242-3).

For Hobman, this scene is proof of Schreiner's own egotism: "the narcissistic colloquy between Lyndall and her own reflection... reveals the author's excessive centredness on herself," and others have agreed at least to the extent of labelling Lyndall's attitude to her

"bondage" when ill as narcissistic.[6] But it can also be argued that Lyndall's eyes, through which she speaks to her own soul, fulfil such a mediating role because they remain the only part of her body she can still recognise, the only part of her that has survived the collision of her childhood ideals with the harsh facts she learned at school. Lyndall is disconnected from other parts of the female body -- her chin, her "little neck," her hair -- and their presentation or adornment. Her attitude to the secret parts by which are enacted "the love between a man and a woman" is more ambiguous. She admits to her lover that she accepted him because he was both the "first man [she] ever was afraid of" and because "I like to experience. I like to try. You don't understand that" (African Farm, p. 238). This suggests that even sexually, Lyndall conducts experiments with her body and remains, to an extent, objective about its activities. Her fear too is less of her lover than of her own awakened desires, and of how they blind her temporarily to the fact that "your hands and your voice are the hands and voice of any other man" (African Farm, p. 237).

Only Lyndall's eyes remain inalienable from her sense of self, the only features to escape her objectifying, systematic exploitation of her other physical attributes in the service of her ambitions, or the treacherous volitions of her not-completely-controlled sexual and emotional needs. (Although she believes her sexual responses to be untrustworthy, believing she will cease to desire her lover within a year, she is forced to admit that until then he holds some power over her). In her self-objectification, she merely copies her culture's attitudes to women's bodies in general. . She has to "dismember" her body and her heart (as her lover says, into the "right auricle" and "left auricle" etc.) in order to come to terms with the diversity of her desires. What is revolutionary in Schreiner's construction of Lyndall, and what rightfully earns African Farm the title of the first novel in which the feminist heroine is wholly serious,[7] is the way Lyndall is capable of analysing the diversity of her own desires, and the painful ways in which they conflict.

Schreiner conveys both Lyndall's pleasure and the psychological and physical dilemmas that result from that pleasure, but she does not suggest that Lyndall's enjoyment

of sex makes her an abandoned creature, addicted to pleasure. This represents an advance on Schreiner's previous effort, Undine, since in that novel Schreiner had "split" characters and avoided any fulfilled sexual desire on the part of its heroine. Instead of Undine's being seduced and made pregnant by Albert Blair, that experience had been transferred to Alice Brown, a woman depicted as dark, sensual, unintellectual and so dominated by her emotions that she chose suicide when her last connection to her former lover was broken. Schreiner's feat in uniting desire and rationality into one heroine is remarkable, given the fictional role models available to her. Even more original than Lyndall's feminist rhetoric is the novel's exposure of the conflicts which this union of desire and ambition engenders within Lyndall. Lyndall's rhetoric is in fact largely derivative, much of it stemming from the writings of Lecky.[8] The connection Lyndall perceives between marriage and prostitution (see African Farm, p. 190) has been seen as innovative by some who have called her "the first to recognize the link between capitalism and sexual parasitism,"[9] but to a reader of Dombey and Son, or Charles Kingsley's Hypatia, these "recognitions" constitute no great leap.

Lyndall's analysis is keenest when she makes clear that when women are not permitted a healthy outlet for intellect and ambition, both desire and the ability to generate desire in others, become tools:

> "Power!" she said suddenly, smiting her little hand upon the rail. "Yes, we have power; and since we are not to expend it in tunnelling mountains, nor healing diseases, nor making laws, nor money, nor on any extraneous object, we expend it on you. You are our goods, our merchandise, our material for operating on; we buy you, we sell you, we make fools of you, we act the wily old Jew with you... we keep six of you crawling to our little feet.... We are not to study law, nor art, nor science, so we study you. There is never a nerve or fibre in your man's nature but we know it." (African Farm, p. 192)

What Lyndall decries, by using the language of capitalism ("You are our goods, our merchandise") is the mutually exploitative system which perforce divides the sexes and creates lonely individuals. Lyndall attempts to posit a future society in which men and

women will be the happier for shared labour and sexual honesty-- a day "when love is no more bought or sold" (African Farm, p. 195). Much of her argument is devoted to goading men out of their blindness, in their own interests. The ideal unions she dreams about, of mutual love and respect, are meant to benefit both sexes, as well as children (she argues that women need better education than they currently get if only to be decent mothers [African Farm, p. 193]). It is therefore somewhat puzzling to find that Beeton characterises Lyndall's concerns as being those of a merely "practical" nature "-- the inadequacy of the conventions, the question of labour, the position of women." In contrast, he says, "Waldo is concerned with more elemental questions-- death, God, and the meaning and purpose of life."[10] In a similar vein, Lerner declares Lyndall's concerns "tedious" to "readers today who feel no patriotic attraction to the subject [feminism]."[11] Lerner's lexical usage of "patriotism" is particularly ironic in view of its derivation, and Beeton fails altogether to justify his own division of what are the merely "practicical" and what the "elemental" concerns of the novel or, indeed, of life. Lyndall is female and poor, vulnerable in her isolation, and these facts limit her options, as she explains to Waldo in detail (African Farm, pp. 189-90).

The "question of labour" -- especially woman's labour -- is an "elemental" consideration in that it affects what "meaning and purpose of life" woman may find. Undine, in her turn, had sneered at gold and given all hers away, until she learned that a woman is "a poor thing," free only to starve. Lyndall begins knowing this. As regards Waldo's more "elemental" concerns about death, death is also important to Lyndall because it is the only state which can return equality to women deprived of autonomy since birth. Lyndall admits that women have one advantage over men -- they can "wheedle" their way into loveless but financially sound marriages, but this course she rejects as prostitution:

> There are men enough; but a woman who has sold herself, even for a ring and a new name, need hold aside her skirt for no creature in the street. They both earn their bread in the same way. (African Farm, p. 190)

While still a child Lyndall declares her intention to grow to fight the strong and protect the weak. But her own impotence becomes clear to her after her time at the "finishing school" in town. Waldo thinks that her ability to articulate her oppression is enough:

> "Lyndall," he said, putting his hand upon her-- she started-- if you think that that new time will be so great, so good, you who speak so easily--" She interrupted him.
> "Speak! Speak!" she said; "the difficulty is not to speak, but to keep silence."
> "But why do you not try to bring that time?" he said with pitiful simplicity. "When you speak I believe all you say; other people would listen to you also."
> Then over the small face came that weary look it had worn last night...
> "I, Waldo, I?" she said. "I will do nothing good for myself, nothing for the world, till someone wakes me. I am asleep, swathed, shut up in self; till I have been delivered I will deliver no one."
> (African Farm, p. 196)

This latter statement has been seen as enigmatic at best, at worst as an abrupt betrayal or deflation of Lyndall's feminist stance into helpless passivity. It is simply Lyndall's revelation that she can manipulate the structures of socialisation of women only so far: at some stage the structures' enervating effect overtakes her and she looks outside herself for salvation. Lyndall describes herself as "shut up in self" because there is no place in her world to let herself go. It is the doctrine of a deliverer who will find her a place that becomes the real obstacle to Lyndall's liberation -- and it is paradoxically the counterpart to the doctrine of feminism she brought home from her education in town. Certainly as a child, Lyndall admired autonomous heroes-- as when she made Em marvel at her account of Napoleon:

> "He must have been very happy," Em said.
> "I do not know," said Lyndall; "but he had what he would have, and that is better than being happy."
> (African Farm, p. 48)

But there is a wistfulness in the young woman come home from town that did not exist in the child, a desire for too much, perhaps to have what she would have and be happy.

Having lost faith in the procurability of worthwhile knowledge in the educational structures available to her, and, further, having seen that the acquisition of knowledge was not, in any case, the passport to power, money and freedom she had dreamed it might be, Lyndall transfers the resolution of her own conflicts onto an external redeemer. Having apparently rejected the Christian concept of God along with Waldo (with a grim speed that contrasts strongly with Waldo's long and poignant struggle) and indeed rejected much of Waldo's philosophising about the nature of beauty, she declares: "Life is too short for mights; we must have certainties" (African Farm, p. 197).

With regard to Lyndall's condition when she makes this statement, it is plain that she intends in one regard at least to find a saviour on a most practical level. Indeed, it seems appropriate to consider at this point the time scheme of The Story of an African Farm, beginning with Chapter 4 of Part Two, in which Lyndall returns to the farm. The conversation with Waldo on the position of women and Lyndall's need for a deliverer takes place the morning after her arrival. But Lyndall has also spoken with Em the night before, and this discussion provides clues as to Lyndall's situation. Em's proud news of her betrothal to Gregory Rose is received with some scorn; men's love is a fickle thing, Lyndall says, and she is not herself planning marriage: "I am not in so great a hurry to put my neck beneath any man's foot," and neither does she "greatly admire the crying of babies" (African Farm, p. 184). In the next chapter (Chapter 5), "Tant' Sannie Holds an Upsitting and Gregory Rose Writes a Letter," four weeks pass. Chapter 6 covers a day and a night, those of Tant' Sannie's wedding and feast, and Gregory's revelation that he loves Lyndall. In Chapter 7, Gregory breaks off his engagement to Em, and, after "some days," Chapter 8 begins, wherein Lyndall tells Gregory that he may serve her, if he wishes, by giving her his name (marrying her) although she will not say why (in an episode that has outraged and puzzled many a reader).

The point is, surely, that when Chapter 7 opens, Lyndall is already pregnant and, having been home more than five weeks, knows it -- which casts an ironic light over her

earlier remark to Em about not admiring "the crying of babies." In Chapter 6, while gazing at the stars with Waldo, Lyndall discusses her hopes for the future, speaking of herself, evidently, in the third person:

> "Suppose a woman, young, friendless as I am, the weakest thing on God's earth. But she must make her way through life. What she wants she cannot have because she is a woman; so she looks carefully at herself and the world about her, to see where her path must be made... Before her are endless difficulties... If she has made blunders in the past, if she has weighed herself down with a burden which she must bear to the end, she must but bear the burden bravely, and labour on. There is no use for wailing or repentance here: the next world is the place for that..."
>
> Waldo listened. To him the words were no confession, no glimpse into the strong, proud, restless heart of the woman. They were general words with a general application. (African Farm, pp. 216-7)

Waldo here misses a point, but we are not meant to. Lyndall's words are indeed a "confession" to such "blunders." Shortly after this conversation, when Lyndall desires to go home and returns to the dance while Waldo in-spans the horses, she runs into the infatuated Gregory and unmistakably conceives a plan to use him:

> "I have been looking for you everywhere, may I not drive you home?" he said.
>
> "Waldo drives me," she replied, passing on; and it appeared to Gregory that she looked at him in the old way, without seeing him. But before she had reached the door an idea had occurred to her, for she turned.
>
> "If you wish to drive me, you may." (African Farm, p. 218)

Gregory certainly does not fit the description of the great being whom Lyndall will be able to worship, but he might function as protector in name. When her lover asks her why she wishes "to enter on this semblance of marriage" she replies: "Because there is only one point on which I have a conscience. I have told you so" (African Farm, p. 236). Thus she is afraid for her child, if not for herself, and, though she can hardly guess it from Rose's behaviour at this point, it is he who will dress as a woman and learn to nurse her, providing a heartening reply to her bitter offer of a ring to any man who would become a woman (African Farm, p. 187).

But the problem for feminist critics, and the ammunition for anti-feminists, has always been the difficulty of rationalising Lyndall's encouragement and acceptance of Gregory, followed as they are by her change of mind and flight with her original lover, the father of her child. Conservative critics like Beeton and Cockshut find the former dishonest and the latter inexplicable, and feminists are hardly happier. As Carol Barash puts it, "Lyndall's feminist rhetoric is at odds with the novel's plot. Without explanation, Lyndall destroys herself by capitulating to the unnamed man who wishes only to master her."[12] Krige is still more uneasy: "Must we presume that the lofty-minded Lyndall is about to stoop to a piece of trickery as mean to herself as Gregory?"[13]

To unravel the apparent mystery of Lyndall's actions, one has only to look at her motivations as stated in the text. Firstly, by her own admission, she desires a certain kind of love, which Schreiner herself once described as loving "up to" someone. Lyndall describes it thus: "... I want to love! I want something great and pure to lift me to itself!" (African Farm, p. 242). Cronwright-Schreiner maintained that Ellis reported that Schreiner told him that "the keynote to Lyndall's character... is the expectation of meeting some great perfect being who will make it possible for her to be good."[14] Although Lyndall's desire for certainties rather than "mights" bespeaks an earthly saviour, rather than the heavenly one Waldo so pined for, the language she uses to describe her need is religious -- perhaps inevitably. Kathleen Blake aptly described The Story of an African Farm as a book which "tells how some Victorian South Africans try to live in the world when God has gone out of it."[15] With reference to Lyndall, she notes that "a lover/saviour is awaited with special desperation."[16] Why this is so, in contrast to Waldo's eventual acceptance of a world without such an ideal, is the reflection of their inevitable differences, and of Lyndall's isolation in a society that constructs gender on savagely different lines.

Secondly, part of Lyndall's tragedy is that along her search for a God-like love and "to know everything, to be very wise" she discovered only sex, and, while such a discovery is scarcely unique, it is for her singularly disastrous. If she is to retain any autonomy at all,

she must not marry her lover. In Chapter 9, "Lyndall's Stranger", she tells him she believes his love for her is merely a zest for conquest, and hers for him the desire "to experience, to try;" her love is perhaps also born of the fact that he is the first man she has ever feared. This need not be read as Schreiner suggesting that what a woman really needs is a mysterious and masterful man (Undine gave enough evidence on that point) but in describing Lyndall's painful experience of the "search for God in man" she suggests that a woman who wants "something to worship" may end by being "attracted to what inspires fear."[17] The chapter also implies that, having undertaken a Faustian journey for universal knowledge (one Goethe scholar has noted that "Faust's irrepressible quest for knowledge... is of an erotic nature"),[18] Lyndall is shipwrecked not just by her disastrous pregnancy but because merely erotic, and not fully loving, experience has become an interference and an obstacle to her further questing.[19] Her articulate and strongly-worded rejections of her lover's proposal of marriage show how she has come to understand her mistake:

> "...why not marry me?"
> "Because if once you have me you would hold me fast. I shall never be free again." She drew a long low breath. (African Farm, p. 236)
>
> "If you do love me," he asked her, "why will you not marry me?"
> "Because if I had been married to you for a year, I should have come to my senses, and seen that your hands and your voice are like the hands and voice of any other man. I cannot quite see that now. But it is all madness. You call into activity one part of my nature; there is a higher part that you know nothing of, that you never touch. If I married you, afterwards it would arise and assert itself, and I should hate you always, as I do now sometimes." (African Farm, p. 237)
>
> "Well, since you will not marry me, may I inquire what your intentions are, the plan you wrote of. You asked me to come and hear it, and I have come."
> "I said, 'Come if you wish.' -- If you agree it, well; if not, I marry on Monday."
> "Well?"....
> "I cannot marry you, because I cannot be tied; but, if you wish, you may take me away with you, and take care of me; then when we do not love any more we can say good-bye...." (African Farm, pp. 238-9)

The novelty of sex and the mingled fear and desire Lyndall feels are, she realises, temporarily blinding, and she refuses to be bound permanently while under their spell. Her lover strongly objects however to her claim that her nature has a "higher part":

> "You are acting foolishly, Lyndall," he said, suddenly changing his manner, and speaking earnestly, "most foolishly. You are acting like a little child; I am surprised at you. It is all very well to have ideals and theories, but you know as well as anyone can that they must not be carried into the practical world. I love you. I do not pretend that it is in any high, superhuman sense; I do not say that I should like you so well if you were ugly and deformed, or that I should continue to prize you no matter what your treatment of me might be... That is sentimentality for beardless boys. Every one not a mere child (and you are not a child, except in years) knows what love between a man and a woman means. I love you with that love. I should not have believed it possible that I could have brought myself twice to ask of any woman to be my wife, more especially one without wealth, without position, and who--"
> "Yes-- go on. Do not grow sorry for me. Say what you were going to-- "who has put herself in my power, and who has lost the right to meet me on equal terms. Say what you think. At least we two may speak the truth to one another." (African Farm, pp. 237-8)

Lyndall's lover defines and defends their relationship as one of physical attraction. Lyndall's reply mocks the condescension inherent in her lover's aggrieved suggestion that it is really too much that he must propose twice to a poor, unconnected woman whom he has irrevocably compromised. She insist instead on her definition of their relationship, and on the validity of her ideals; she refuses marriage even when he is humble:

> "Oh my darling," he said, bending tenderly, and holding his hand out to her, "why will you not give yourself entirely to me? One day you will desert me and go to another."
> "No, life is too long. But I will go with you." (African Farm, p. 239)

Finally, it is he who concedes: "It is better to have you on those conditions [of removal from society, and of temporariness] than not at all. If you will have it, let it be so," even though he fears that "One day you will desert me and go to another" (African Farm, p. 239). His behaviour until he leaves her for the night is solicitous and conciliatory. Lyndall, weary, remains on his knee, and the dog Doss awakes to see her: "...his yellow eyes filled

with anxiety... not at all sure that she was not being held against her will." Doss's behaviour, and Lyndall's fatigue, could be read as signifying her defeat, but the chapter as a whole does not bear this out. It is surely inaccurate to see Lyndall as having capitulated, as Barash would have it, for she wins every point she essays. It is her man who must finally say "If you will have it, let it be so."

Lyndall's pregnancy is undoubtedly the chief of the "blunders" she described to an uncomprehending Waldo and constitutes the death of all the ambitions they discussed. It is also the source of the eerie dream visited on Em which foreshadows the death of both Lyndall and her baby. Em's dream occurs in Chapter 8, "The Kopje", immediately before the arrival of Lyndall's "Stranger." The first part of this chapter shows Rose's pathetic pursuit of Lyndall, which takes the form of the kind of "sentimentality for beardless boys" her lover later derides. After a fair amount of tormenting him with her superior wit, Lyndall shocks Gregory with the suggestion that if he truly desires, as he maintains, only to serve her, he may marry her. Gregory is slow to believe that she is sincere:

> "Do you really mean it?" he whispered.
> "Yes. You wish to serve me, and to have nothing in return!-- you shall have what you wish. Do you see this dog? He licks my hand because I love him; and I allow him to. Where I do not love I do not allow it. I believe you love me; I too could love so, that to lie under the foot of the thing I loved would be more heaven than to lie in the breast of another... I may yet change my mind about marrying you before the time comes. It is very likely. Mark you! I remember your words: --You will give everything, and expect nothing... You will serve me, and greatly. The reasons I have for marrying you I need not inform you of now; you will probably discover some of them before long."
> "I only want to be of some use to you,"he said. (African Farm, p. 232)

This scene incenses Cockshut, who comments that Lyndall seems to have "the great advantage of living in a world where her type [the New Woman] is still unfamiliar." He maintains that Lyndall hypocritically preaches feminism and claims a New Woman's rights while still being able to "appeal at times to male chivalry, as the 'Old Woman' had been

accustomed to do."[20] Yet Schreiner has already satirised Rose's absurdly grandiose ideas of love during the scenes in which he courts Em. He is there revealed to be a weak, selfish man, with a distorted, possessive, idea of love. His pride is wounded by Lyndall, who scarcely notices him, kisses the uncouth Waldo, and despite the smallness of her hands (a smallness with which Rose seems obsessed), keeps an iron grip on the horses she drives out alone. She is "so unwomanly," Gregory writes to his sister:

> I pity the man who marries her; I wouldn't be him for anything. If I had a wife with pride I'd make her give it up, sharp. I don't believe in a man who can't make a woman obey him. Now Em-- I'm very fond of her, as you know-- but if I tell her to put on a certain dress, that dress she puts on; and if I tell her to sit on a certain seat, on that seat she sits; and if I tell her not to speak to a certain individual, she does not speak to them. If a man lets a woman do what he doesn't like, he's a muff.
> (African Farm, pp. 205-6)

Gregory Rose is here repeating what, in effect, was Albert Blair's attitude toward women, but the weaker man's fantasies of domination are just that--fantasies. Cockshut abhors the spectacle of Lyndall "appealing to the chivalrous male, trained in the tradition of the knight-errant... not as a damsel in distress, but as a sarcastic schoolmistress. It can't last."[21] But Gregory's blustering is not chivalrous, merely tetchy. Cockshut claims that Lyndall's hypocritical pose "can't last", that Olive Schreiner's "New Woman" is here living on "borrowed time", but what he misses is that Olive Schreiner's "New Woman" hasn't a chance and knows it.[22] Her borrowed time is just about six months, and her choice is between a weak and petty would-be tyrant and a more dangerous man, her lover, whom she has found to have a more formidable power over her, because it is one in which her desires have made her collude. (Lyndall later describes Gregory to her lover as a fool, but a harmless one, who would not dare to kiss her hand a year after marriage if she did not wish it. In the presence of her lover's magnetism, it is not difficult to appreciate her dilemma in trying to retain some autonomy).

In the process of making Gregory her fail-safe, Lyndall appears peremptory, even cruel. But she does no more in practice than what Gregory has asserted in theory ("If I had a wife with pride I'd make her give it up, sharp"). She asks no more of him than he offers her: service which is to be its own reward. Nor does she "appeal" to him-- he appeals to her. Finally, as she tells him on the kopje, she does not despise his love, nor think service and suffering for a beloved ignoble, but imagines both as joys. From this moment, the comedy of Gregory's pompous, vain notions of love comes to an end, and so does Lyndall's baiting of him. As in Undine and From Man to Man, Schreiner suggests that the act of loving ennobles and enriches the lover as much as the beloved, so much so that it may not even matter whether the love is requited in the end. Gregory's education in such a lonely kind of loving begins on the kopje. Later, when Lyndall has deserted him, Em "wished that he would still sometimes talk of the strength and master-right of man; but.... He had forgotten that it is man's right to rule" (African Farm, p. 245). In Undine, the female corollary of this had been expressed as "a woman's only right is the right of the rose." In African Farm, things change.

Em knows all about lonely, unrequited love, she who "had given out so much love in her little life, and had got none of it back with interest" (African Farm, p. 179). When Lyndall returns from the kopje, Em tells her of a dream in which she sees a dead baby, which people tell her is Lyndall's. In the dream, Em is incredulous: she thinks of Lyndall as a little child. But as she searches for her, Em meets only people dressed in black. The prophetic significance of the dream is lost on the dreamer, but not on Lyndall, who at this point mutters: "There are some wiser in their sleeping than in their waking" (African Farm, p. 234). Em is impelled to tell Lyndall that her dream made her see that "it isn't anybody's fault that they love you, they can't help it. And it isn't your fault; you don't make them love you...." Em, then, forgives Lyndall for Gregory's defection. "Thank you, dear," Lyndall replies. "It is nice to be loved, but it would be better to be good" (African Farm, pp. 233-4). Safer, too, it appears.

Lyndall's thanks are spoken just before the arrival of her "Stranger," and they bear emphasis for this reason. Peeved at what he believes are Lyndall's "excellent tactics," Cockshut observes drily that "Lyndall seems to be entirely free of authorial criticism."[23] But, as is shown by Lyndall's speech to Em, Schreiner doesn't need to utilise the narrative voice to criticise Lyndall because Lyndall criticises herself. Lyndall has been praised elsewhere for being the "first wholly serious feminist heroine in the English novel, and she remains one of the few who is not patronized by her author."[24] It is perhaps this latter fact that irritates Cockshut, who is dealing with Schreiner in the context of the "New Woman" literature of the time, many of whose authors made a mockery of notions of women's freedom. Nor can Lyndall's "freedom from authorial criticism" serve to erase the evidence of her enslavement by an oppressive social system -- an enslavement which is communicated through plot and setting and not merely by the fact of her death. In connection with this point, Stephen Gray (in the course of illustrating the "facile typecasting" which Schreiner was herself subject to) makes an observation which is rare:

> When in 1894 W. T. Stead hailed her [Schreiner] as "the Modern Woman, par excellence...." and excerpted Lyndall's entire speech on the lot of women (in chapter 6 of Part Two) as illustration, he made a false start at defining Schreiner, because he failed to mention that the obverse view to Lyndall's is structured into the scene which apparently allows her such a free rein. While expatiating in her quotable manner, Lyndall is placed by Schreiner in a Cape cart that is going nowhere. Off stage, meanwhile, Tant' Sannie is dancing herself into a lather at her thoroughly admirable wedding feast.[25]

More hopefully, Gregory's lessons in love and service can be read as an aspect of the novel's de-polarisation of the sexes. The emotional letter Lyndall receives on her deathbed from her lover, pleading for her to let him return-- "My darling.... I have learnt to love you more wisely, more tenderly than of old; you shall have perfect freedom..." -- echoes the theme that love educates to better understanding (African Farm, p. 278). Waldo's letter to Lyndall records a breakthrough on his part as well, and one which, were it not for her death, would seem to suggest a hope that the isolation of each might have ended: "... you will

work, and I will take your work for mine. Sometimes such a gladness seizes me when I remember that somewhere in the world you are living and working" (African Farm, p. 263). These admissions by men are uttered within the time of the novel itself, not within a hazy future. Lyndall, who fears at her death that she has accomplished nothing, has in fact profoundly changed other lives in the direction of her dreams.

The matter of Lyndall's death has been as variously interpreted as any aspect of Schreiner's fiction, but among a number of critical voices (in and out of the feminist camp) a consensus of disapproval can be heard. For Lerner, Schreiner cheats by portraying Lyndall's complaint as a nebulous Victorian decline. His diagnosis concludes with a curiously aggrieved pronouncement that it is "a most unfeminist way to die."[26] Showalter finds it almost an act of cowardice, declaring that, "rather than struggling... [Lyndall] die[s]."[27] There is a general sense that Schreiner killed off her creation either unrealistically (that is, without sufficient physical reason within the text) or unethically (according to some definition of feminist criticism, particularly that which applauds role models only) or unaesthetically, or in a manner which offends on all three accounts. A few points need to be made about these matters.

Patricia Stubbs makes a simple but significant error in supposing Lyndall to have died in childbirth when in fact she dies three months afterwards.[28] Such a death in childbirth would however have been less extraordinary than Stubbs implies, as a brief consideration of the rate of maternal and infant mortality in Schreiner's milieu has by now made clear. In the novel, the baby lives three hours according to Lyndall, but only two according to the landlady, who says that when it died Lyndall

> ... almost went with it. After a while she was better; but one day she got up out of bed, dressed herself without saying a word... and went out. It was a drizzly day; a little time after some one saw her sitting on the wet ground under the blue gum-tree, with the rain dripping from her hat and shawl. They went to fetch her, but she would not come until she chose. When she

> did she had gone to bed, and had not risen from it; never would, the doctor said. (African Farm, p. 269)

A mother of seventeen, of small size, in shock, alone (having dismissed her lover) who has recently almost died in childbirth, sits in the rain all day and catches--a cold? pneumonia? Does it matter? Her other problems are surely sufficient to make for a convincing death on the purely medical level, as comparable or lesser problems did for many a frontier woman and her babies including some in Schreiner's own family history. Schreiner had also repeatedly witnessed first hand a kind of "fevers that took one off." Laurence Lerner, however, is not convinced.

> What does Lyndall die of? There is after all no necessary connection between her refusal to marry and her long, slow death. ... The long delay between the birth of the baby and Lyndall's death, makes any medical explanation difficult. Lyndall, like so many other Victorian heroines, goes into a decline: that mysterious complaint, unaccompanied by any precise diagnosis, which is so quintessentially female, and suggests that the functioning of the female body is both secret and unreliable, surrounding illness with the same hush of frightened modesty that, for the woman, surrounds sex. It is as if illness provides the opportunity to shift a girl's timid puzzlement about sex to the man who reads about her, forcing him too to submit without understanding to the mysteries of female physiology. It is a most unfeminist way to die.[29] [emphasis added]

Lerner here makes a number of possibly accurate points about fading Victorian heroines, but unfortunately Lyndall is not one of them. Equally unfortunate is Lerner's irritation at being blinded by gynaecological science, or lack thereof, so peeved is he that a necessarily male reader must be "forc[ed] ... to submit to female physiology." Surely, if one asks the detective's question about Lyndall -- did she jump or was she pushed -- the answer is clear. In sexual terms, she jumped (with all that implies) and was one of the first heroines in English literature to do so. In this context, it is hard to understand whose is the "hush of frightened modesty"; it certainly isn't Schreiner's. Secondly, the charge is inaccurate because Lyndall's death is not attributed in the text to any disease of the female genitalia, however mysterious. According to the landlady, Lyndall recovered after childbirth and only

became ill again after obstinately sitting out for many hours in the rain at her baby's grave. With narrative economy, Schreiner leaves the account of Lyndall's pain and pride to the landlady, who remarks: "She would not come [in] till she chose." It is thus Lyndall's pride, and perhaps pneumonia, which kill her, in spite of her attempts to recover by sheer will-power. For these reasons, neither Lerner's interpretation nor Gilbert and Gubar's insistence on an anorexic's "death wish" will do.[30] "She would not come till she chose" is a sentence reminiscient of the heroine's admired Napoleon, of whom she says, "He had what he would have" -- and its brevity and toughness are typical of Lyndall. As Bristow remarks, Schreiner's treatment of the subject should not be mistaken for "coy discretion" or "inability to handle sensitive subject-matter."[31]

Lyndall struggles and suffers, sometimes stoically, sometimes not. Gregory, nursing her, witnesses outbursts which range from the petulant to the awe-inspiring, but they all concern one theme: survival. One is of necessity stating what ought to be obvious, but Schreiner's heroine ultimately really desires to recover, and she expresses her desire so to do with the healthy egotism of any life-loving human animal, and employs a great deal of typical self-deluding optimism as her terminal condition becomes more obvious. When she can no longer deny her approaching death she ceases to struggle; but this is not to say that she has not struggled earlier, as Showalter alleges, or that she commits suicide by refusing to eat, as Gilbert and Gubar maintain, or that she somehow just lingers on in a murky gynaecological limbo, as Lerner suggests.

The most appalling aspect of Lyndall's delirium is that it humbles her, reduces her ambitions, forces her even to call upon God. This attempt to bargain away all her former desires for "one hour free from pain" sounds like breaking down under torture, and not at all like Showalter's "giving up too easily and too soon" or Gilbert and Gubar's "sheer death wish."[32] Schreiner is here trying to excite pity, not a sense of retribution, by showing Lyndall in agony, and Schreiner does not imply that Lyndall's ambitions are sinful, merely that her pain is all-consuming. Lyndall's courage is highlighted when, following the agony

already described, she tells Gregory that she is "better" with "not too much" pain. She remains determined to live even after the well-meaning landlady of the hotel forces the reluctant doctor to break the news to her that she is dying. Lyndall speaks explicitly of her baby only once, recalling how she felt but did not see it as it lay beside her; how small and cold it was, how it

> "...crept close to me; it wanted to drink, it wanted to be warm." She hardened herself-- "I did not love it; its father was not my prince; I did not care for it; but it was so little." She moved her hand. "They might have kissed it, one of them, before they put it in. It never did any one any harm in all its little life. They might have kissed it, one of them." (African Farm, p. 278)

Lyndall, like her baby, is also "little," alone, cold, seeking for love and trying to be nourished, and she too is ultimately buried by a stranger (Rose never reveals his identity to her). Of Lyndall's comment, "I did not love it," Blake remarks that, while "Schreiner often makes much of motherhood" (in Woman and Labour, for example) "she can be unsentimental about a mother's feelings for a baby not conceived in affection" (in Undine as well as The Story of an African Farm).[33] This goes against much Victorian belief, both feminist and anti-feminist, but it is in keeping with the lesson that Lyndall is being taught in a larger sense. Lyndall has been searching for a force higher than herself to redeem her, but Schreiner had already judged this futile when Lyndall cried out "I want to love!" on Otto's grave. Then, the narrator had commented:

> ...so the living soul will cry to the dead, and the living soul to its God; and of all this crying there comes nothing. The lifting up of the hands brings no salvation; redemption is from within, and neither from God nor man: it is wrought out by the soul itself; with suffering and through time.
> (African Farm, p. 242)

Schreiner does not soften this lesson by making Lyndall find a sentimental salvation in the ideal of motherhood as such. The author remains true to her moral and more importantly, to Lyndall's character.

Lyndall's last trial, however, is that the intensity of her visions and her will to live is the reverse image of her declining physical state, and both trick her into a sense of strength. "I do not want to even think I have been ill," she tells Gregory. "It is thinking and thinking of things that make them real. When you draw your mind together, and resolve that a thing shall not be, it gives way before you; it is not. Everything is possible if one is resolved." She eats heartily and attempts to dress, but can scarcely stand (African Farm , pp. 281-2). After an ignominious fall, she at last loses her delusions that she will overcome the effects of her illness. She is carried out into the ox-waggon she had previously ordered to take her to the Cape, knowing that it will only take her to her death.

Gregory sits apart from Lyndall in the waggon. His pain is expressed in a maternal allusion, saying, like "...Hagar... Let me not see the death of the child' " (African Farm, p. 283). Alone at the last, Lyndall feels her identity re-assert itself:

> Through these months of anguish a mist had rested on her mind; it was rolled together now, and the old clear intellect awoke... It looked back into the past; it saw the present; there was no future now. The old strong soul gathered itself together for the last time; it knew where it stood.
>
> ...the white face on the pillow looked into the white face in the glass. They had looked at each other often so before. It had been a child's face once, looking out above its blue pinafore; it had been a woman's face, with a dim shadow in the eyes, and a something which had said, "We are not afraid, you and I; we are together; we will fight, you and I." Now tonight it had come to this. The dying eyes on the pillow looked into the dying eyes in the glass; they knew that their hour had come. She tried to speak to it, but she would never speak again...the body was dead now, but the soul, clear and unclouded, looked forth. (African Farm, pp. 283-4)

At her death, Lyndall uses her "beautiful eyes" again to fuel her sense of independence and strength. Her own imaginary friend as a child, she is also her own ally and (finally) longed-for saviour as an adult. When Schreiner writes "Had she found what she sought for--something to worship?" the answer lies in the mirror on which Lyndall's gaze leaves the

impression of her dead face as one of "marvellous beauty and tranquillity." In her act of trying to "worship" the good, she has become good.

Lyndall's "complex feminist self-knowledge" is arrived at through much suffering and the worship of false gods.[34] As Blake has it, "the novel is not sanguine about any fillers-up of God's absence. Redemption must come from within." Blake draws a comparison between Waldo's attempt to find fulfilment through work and Lyndall's to find it through love, calling the latter's disappointment "deeper and more deeply investigated. Self-divided in her feminist aims, she thwarts herself."[35] Lyndall suffers by clinging to fantasies of salvation by another, but, as has been shown, Schreiner carefully extinguishes hope after hope until, in extremis, Lyndall stands alone, after (literally) falling down.

Clayton has pointed out that:

> Feminist criticism seems to be divided as to whether fiction should offer 'role models' to women... or whether, if the author lives in a period where the real circumstances are crushing, a woman author's 'duty' is to be faithful to those tragic limitations and annihilations of possibility.[36]

It is clear which direction Schreiner took; for her, Lyndall's death expressed a "truth" of the kind she defined as faithful to creative vision and to her view of the possibilitities of her time. Auerbach might, however, disagree, discerning as she does a pattern in nineteenth-century literature in which male novelists seem to give their heroines a sense of "option and power" while female ones tend to "cast a lugubrious and punitive glower" on their heroines' aspirations. Of George Eliot and Louisa May Alcott in particular, she remarks that:

> As with so many women writers, the inevitability of defeat seems more literary than actual: the writer appropriates to herself all the joy of achievement, in life and art, leaving her failed self to infect her heroines and edify her readers.[37]

Such a judgment cannot be made about Schreiner, or about her decision that the appropriate fate for Lyndall was death. For one thing, nothing in Schreiner's life up to her writing of African Farm could have prepared her for "joy and achievement, in life and art." Her life had been marked by inadequate (and finally absent) parents, the death of an infant,

illicit sexual experience, abandonment and severe illness -- in short, all of the things, except death, which mark Lyndall's short career. Schreiner's story is fashioned out of her own complicated experience of cramped potential, passion and disappointment -- and it is a story in which the heroine is, if dead, still heroic. That the odds are against the bravest heroes is no surprise to Lyndall, who foretells her own death when, as a child, she relates her version of Napoleon's last days to her cousin. Time and again Lyndall emphasises the emperor's isolated status: "They were many; he was only one" -- and she dwells on his "long, lonely nights" on "a lonely island" where he dreamed of past glories and planned future ones.

> "And then?" said Em, much interested.
> "He died there on that island, he never got away."
> "It is rather a nice story," said Em; "but the end is sad."
> "It is a terrible, hateful ending," said the little teller of the story, leaning forward on her folded arms; "and the worst of it is, it is true. I have noticed," added the child very deliberately, "that it is only the made-up stories that end nicely; the true ones end so." (African Farm, p. 48)

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO, "THE METHOD OF THE LIFE WE ALL LEAD"

SECTION I -- "From Undine to The Story of an African Farm... "

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1 Cronwright-Schreiner's version of Schreiner's writings during the years she spent in the Cradock and Tarka districts can be seen in The Life, pp. 120-144; the specific theory about Thorn Kloof occurs on pp. 122-3.

2 For a good selection of the journals in published form, see Clayton's Olive Schreiner, pp. 101-07. Some differences appear between details in Clayton's readings and those of Cronwright-Schreiner, but perhaps not enough (see below).

3 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 122. The vital passage in the Ratelhoek journal of 24 July 1876 is this: "...I have not yet made up mind whether I shall first finish Undine or Thorn Kloof, and, if I finish Undine, I shall publish it" [Clayton's version in Olive Schreiner reads "send it", not "publish it"; Olive Schreiner, p. 106] and "finish" in this context could refer to simply finishing it in her head (see below).

4 See A. E. Voss's essay " 'Not a Word or Sound in the World about Him that is not Modifying Him': Learning, Lore and Language in The Story of an African Farm," in Clayton, Olive Schreiner, pp. 170-180. "John Speriwig" seems to be a corruption of a popular Afrikaans "Jan Pierewiet", while a Scottishe was "a quick two-step popular in the latter half of the nineteenth century" which Voss thinks matches an early title for African Farm (p. 178) as per Cronwright-Schreiner's Life.

5 See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 386, Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 124.

6 Cronwright-Schreiner's chronology of From Man to Man, just after his Introduction to that novel, cites two of Schreiner's journal entries from August 1873 because they mention the title "Other Men's Sins" (p. 19). The next entry he considers relevant does not occur until August 1876.

7 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 386.

8 See Rive's thesis for a comparison between Undine and Diamond Fields and the mystery surrounding the latter's disappearance in the mid-1880s, pp. 119-20. It reappeared in Cronwright-Schreiner's hands in 1932, then disappeared again until Rive found it in 1974 (see "New Olive Schreiner Story Discovered" Weekend Argus, April 17, 1974, pp. 4-5, and 7.)

9 George Meredith, one of Chapman & Hall's readers (who would later accept African Farm) was not impressed with Saints and Sinners; his notes state only "Plot silly. Early part well-written." See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 388.

10 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 391.

11 Rebecca Schreiner to Olive Schreiner, 16 April 1887, quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 124.

12 "Ratelhoek Journal," Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 124.

13 First and Scott, p. 80.

14 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 448 - 9, 457-8.

15 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 382. "From Olive's early childhood the first phase of her creative work comprised pacing up and down, 'clapping my hands', and telling herself the story out loud; and these actions, which of course reflect the true genesis of a work, she tended to describe as 'writing'." Schoeman also quotes Alice Corthorn's defence of Schreiner years later, "Cron would not understand that she wrote her books in her head, and would subsequently swear she had written them. It wasn't lies. She was incapable of telling lies. But the scenes or themes she described were so real to her that she was convinced that she had put it all on paper."

"Writing out," on the other hand, was a physical process. In the journals 1875-81, there are several entries which seem to support this view. For example:

> *20 June 1875*. "I wrote a good deal today and yesterday and am pretty well satisfied but it gets on slowly and there is that dreadful writing out still to come" [emphasis added].

In the entry of 24 July 1876, it appears that the 2 February 1876 entry (in which Schreiner wrote that she had "finished" Undine) might indicate that "finish" was as elastic a verb as "write:"

> "I have not yet made up my mind whether I shall first finish Undine or Thorn Kloof.... I have just finished reading Undine over as far as I have written her out and am not disgusted" [emphasis added].

The following day, she writes: "...I am going to walk up and down and finish Thorn Kloof" [emphasis added].

16 Beeton, Facets, p. 65. The letter, written 29 December 1921, is in the Havelock Ellis Collection at Austin, Texas.

17 See, for example, the journal entry for 27 June 1874 (when Schreiner lived with the Weakleys at Colesberg) when she recorded "sitting at the table to write, for the first time since I have been here, to look at my book;" (quoted in Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 383) or the Klein Gannahoek journal entry of 16 April 1875, "I am getting on a little... with my book..." (Cherry Clayton, Olive Schreiner, p. 101).

18 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 392. Cronwright-Schreiner's interpretation (see The Life, p. 124) has become standard. Hence, in Cherry Clayton's anthology Olive Schreiner

(p. 106), the journal entry is entered with Lyndall in italics. Beeton, in Facets of Olive Schreiner, writes in a footnote "Olive... considered other titles for An African Farm, e.g. Mirage... and, later, Lyndall" (p. 76) even though he elsewhere attacks Cronwright-Schreiner's scholarship, e.g. concerning his transcription of the Ratelhoek journal, which is so bad, Beeton writes, that he is forced to "disregard his [Cronwright-Schreiner's] version..." (p. 30).

A key witness about African Farm's title, one would expect, would be Mary Brown, to whom Schreiner sent the manuscript in 1880, but Cronwright-Schreiner, who used her testimony in writing his biography, records that: "Mrs. Brown does not remember what name (if any) the book bore when she received it in 1880." Indeed, when she came to write her own memoirs, she therefore quoted him in the matter of the book's being called Lyndall(!) See Mary Brown, "Recollections of Olive Schreiner," from Angela James and Nina Hills (eds.) Mrs. John Brown (1847 - 1935) (London: Murray, 1937) an extract of which appears in Clayton, Olive Schreiner, pp. 42 - 6.

19 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 272.

20 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 272.

21 See First and Scott concerning Cronwright-Schreiner's making "Schreiner into a child of nature, for it was only as such that he was able to contain his disapproval for her 'strange and incredible' personality" (p. 332). They comment on Cronwright-Schreiner's behaviour after Schreiner's death thus: "Whereas in other parts of his book there are lengthy justifications of his behaviour, here there is none, and in a situation that calls for one" (p. 328). For his subsequent melodramatic anniversary-interment following a train ride with the coffin, "Our Last Ride Together," see p. 329.

22 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 384.

23 For Cronwright-Schreiner's explanation for why his wife's revised dedication of From Man to Man came as a surprise to him after her death, see his introduction to From to Man, p. 10-11.

> When we lived at De Aar, from 1907 onwards, it was her custom, (necessitated by ill-health) to leave home every year to escape the great summer heat of the upper Karoo.... often.... [to] Cape Town; she was there in 1911, and then had "The Prelude" and the first six chapters retyped... and sent to me by the typist.... Knowing what the package contained, I do not think I opened it then; nor do I remember having seen the alterations she had made in the Dedication and the Title. I put the package carefully away, and when I left De Aar in 1919, stored it there....

Schreiner went to England in 1914 and Cronwright-Schreiner did not come to see her until 1920. He waited more than three months to return to South Africa after her death and did not open the package until nearly 1922.

24 See From Man to Man, p. 264. In the midst of a particularly dramatic episode, Rebekah's emotional trip to and flight from Muizenberg (having there witnessed her

husband making love to her neighbour) Cronwright-Schreiner reminisces about the seaside of decades before (right down to its jellyfish and the "unsullied slopes" about the beach) which he compares to that of the contemporary 1920s, where, "the railway whistle screams, and half-clad children, not rising to the simple dignity of the nude or maintaining the convention of ordinary clothing, paddle on the sand..."

25 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 231-41.

26 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 359.

27 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 445: "Since Cron... visited the farm only once and very briefly, he does no more justice to its role in Olive's life than to Ratelhoek." See also p. 447, "In his biography Cron states categorically [twice] that Olive revisited Leliekloof only once -- with him -- in 1896, and never again.... [see Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 138 and p. 286] Yet her planned revisit did take place in 1912..." Cronwright-Schreiner actually quotes a letter she sent to him from there (see Cronwright-Schreiner's Letters, p. 299. The visit was in March, 1911, not 1912, as Schoeman writes).

28 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 359. Beeton, Facets p. 30.

29 Buchanan-Gould, p. 58.

30 Hobman, p. 34. Hobman's inaccurate version of Schreiner's life as a governess cannot be blamed completely on Cronwright-Schreiner. Although Schreiner's father died late in August 1876, and she was told of the news by Reverend Martin, her employer at Ratelhoek, who had been informed by letter a few days latter, Hobman claims that Gottlob Schreiner's death had driven Schreiner into employment at Colesberg with the Weakleys. In fact, Schreiner began work for the Weakleys more than two years before her father's death, in May 1874.

31 First and Scott, p. 66 and p. 84.

32 See Rive, "A Biographical and Critical Study..." p. 65, and the Letters, p. 3.

33 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, pp. 22-3 and p. 7.

34 Schoeman discusses the disintegration through "radical revision" of the manuscript of Saints and Sinners of the 1870s in Olive Schreiner, p. 389-90. On 11 July, 1884 she wrote to Ellis "I have so cut up and changed the thing that there is hardly anything left, and I don't know how to put it together. This afternoon I nearly... burnt the whole MS. I would give hundreds of pounds if I had never touched it, and published it just as it was... I think the devil made me unpick it" (see Rive, The Letters, pp. 45-6).

35 For what can be known of Schreiner's reading at Ratelhoek, see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 363 - 367.

36 Cronwright-Schreiner, in The Life, quotes a journal entry of 12 August, 1886 (when Schreiner was living at Harrow) "I enjoy reading so intensely now, just as when at Ratelhoek. Everything prints in on me" (p. 172).

37 Schreiner to Erilda Cawood, 24 April 1878 (Rive, Letters, p. 22).

38 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 367.

39 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 354.

40 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 439.

41 See Chapter 1 and Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 386, for arguments concerning Undine's construction.

42 The last known reference to revising Undine occurs in the Ratelhoek journal in late September 1876, when Schreiner wrote simply "I am going to read Undine. I don't feel a bit inclined; it's like going to the slaughter" (three times in the previous year she had written in her journals that she was thinking of abandoning the book). Since this entry does not appear in Clayton, see Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 384.

43 See Ratelhoek journal of 18 September 1876, quoted in Clayton, p. 104.

44 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 367-8. Information about the X-rays is contained in a letter to Ellis of 19 October, 1918 (Cronwright-Schreiner, The Letters, p. 358).

45 Schreiner to Erilda Cawood, 4 August 1878 (Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 5).

46 This was reported by one of the daughters of the Reverend S. P. Naudé, the unorthodox Dutch minister (see Chapter One); the episode is recorded in Cronwright-Schreiner's The Life, p. 131.

47 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 126.

48 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 353.

49 See, for example, Laurence Lerner, "Olive Schreiner and the Feminists," in Clayton, Olive Schreiner, pp. 181-91.

50 Rive, "A Biographical and Critical Study....", p. 93. Rive deduces from this one-off comment that Schreiner "saw its [African Farm's] purpose and intention in a one-dimensional light."

51 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 441.

[52] Schreiner to Ellis, 25 February 1884 (Rive, Letters, p. 35).

[53] David Douglass's letter quoted in part in First and Scott, 80.

SECTION II -- "A Damned Fine Horse..."

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[1] Stephen Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," in Southern African Literature: An Introduction (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), p. 157. Henceforth, passages from this book will be noted by chapter name and page.

[2] Havelock Ellis, quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 163. Ellis also mentions the incident in My Life (London: Heineman, 1940) p. 181. In a letter to Ellis of 2 February 1889 (Rive, Letters, p. 149), Schreiner begins: "Don't you pitch into me, Henry Havelock! I'm still learning you to do the damned fine horse!"

[3] Francis Brett Young, quoted by Schoeman in Olive Schreiner, p. 413.

[4] Hobman, p. 50. Hobman quotes from Edward Carpenter, My Days and Dreams: Being Autobiographical Notes (London: Allen and Unwin, 1916).

[5] Review of The Story of an African Farm, The Young Man (London, n.d.) rpt. in Clayton, pp. 70-1.

[6] Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 228. Berkman's notion that "Farber" (Waldo and Otto's surname) means "painter" in German is inaccurate (even if the "a"has an umlaut, the word means means "textile dyer" at best). Even if Berkman were correct, her extrapolations from such a word are wild. She ranges forward and backward through time and between the fiction and the life in her enthusiasm to express her feeling that, "Thriving on multivalent symbols, the visual, cinematic quality of Schreiner's prose... reflected her sense of herself as a painter.... Quite deliberately, Schreiner assigned Farber as Waldo and Otto's surname (Farber means Painter in German). Both father and son have artistic souls. In London and when travelling in Europe Schreiner visited galleries and commented on what she saw. ... When Undine visits the Blair home at Greenwood, she muses over the content of a canvas on the wall. Likewise, young Rebekah delights in inventing stories for her favorite pictures in an alphabet book."

First, it takes some stretching to see Otto's soul as "artistic"; secondly, Schreiner's putative fondness for art galleries a decade after the writing of African Farm has scant applicability to the question of the novel, and at any rate can only be substantiated by the single exhibition [Holman Hunt] which Berkman mentions; thirdly, Undine's opinion of the painting is given purely because of the masochistic love-story she imputes to it and its foreshadowing of the course of her love affair with Albert Blair. Finally, Berkman's

example of the young Rebekah using an alphabet book is stretching the "painter" point beyond reason or context. (See From Man to Man, pp. 44-5, where the five-year-old makes up stories around a picture captioned "P stands for Peter and his Pig.")

7 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 26: "It was to a career she would always regard as inferior to medicine that she ultimately turned. Through her pen she would seek self-fulfilment and social service. Her pen became her scalpel and her suturing needle."

8 See Doris Lessing, introduction to The Story of an African Farm (Johannesburg: Hartegen, 1968), p. viii. For Krige's opinion, see his edition of Olive Schreiner, A Selection (London: OUP, 1968) p. 1. "Perhaps the main fault of The Story of an African Farm flows from the fact that Olive Schreiner is not basically a novelist but a poet... with all the ... intense inner life characteristic of the poet's unique personality.... she is more lyrical than epic... lacks balance and poise, objectivity, detachment..." See also Jean Marquard, "Hagar's Child: A Reading of The Story of an African Farm," Standpunte, 12 (February 1976), rpt. in Clayton, Olive Schreiner, pp. 143-153.

9 Ursula Edmands, "Olive Schreiner," Journal of Commonwealth Literature, no. 8, (December 1969) pp. 107-24; rpt. in The South African Novel in English, ed. Kenneth Parker (London: MacMillan, 1978) p. 45.
Rive supports this view: "It is acceptable to conclude that she was essentially a polemical writer and used the creative form because she had discovered it first and was for a long time afraid or unaware of the possibility of abandoning it as a medium.... It is more likely that she was not really adequate as a novelist because she was more of a polemicist. It thus made of her an extremely able polemicist who had written a great novel." See Rive, "A Biographical and Critical Study...", p. 211.

10 John van Zyl, "Rhodes and Olive Schreiner," Contrast, Cape Town, (August, 1969) pp. 86-90.

11 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 394, Hobman, pp. 54-5.

12 Chistopher Heywood, "The Story of an African Farm: Society, Postivism, and Myth," in The Flawed Diamond, edited with an introduction by Itala Vivan (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1991) p. 26. Hereafter this book will be referred to as "Vivan."

13 Heywood, "Olive Schreiner and the Literary Tradition," in Olive Schreiner and After: Essays on Southern African Literature in Honour of Guy Butler edited by Malvern van Wyk Smith and Don Maclennan (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983) p. 60. Hereafter this book will be referred to as "Van Wyk Smith and Maclennan."

14 Cronwright-Schreiner, Life, pp. vii and ix. First and Scott diagnose Cronwright-Schreiner's problem. He had to make her "into a child of nature, for it was only as such that he was able to contain his disapproval for her 'strange and incredible' personality. In his mind he saw a causal chain involving her absorption in nature, her genius as being in some

way untutored, and, most importantly -- since it was this he set himself to rationalize -- her inability to produce, or be part of the 'real' world. It gave the impression of a woman whose talents and personality had sprung from nowhere" (p. 332)

15 Hobman, p. 50.

16 William Walsh, "Olive Schreiner: A Manifold Voice," Studies in Commonwealth Literature (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), rpt. in Clayton, p. 135-6.

17 Edward Aveling, "A Noteable Book," Progress, a Monthly Magazine of Advanced Thought, (September 1883) rpt. Clayton, p. 67.

18 Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own, pp. 197-8.

19 John Goode, "Sue Bridehead and the New Woman", in Women Writing and Writing About Women, ed. Mary Jacobus (London: Croom Helm in association with Oxford University Women's Studies Committee, 1979), p. 109.

20 "Three Controversial Novels," Church Quarterly Review, 29, January 1890, rpt. in Clayton's Olive Schreiner, p. 74.

21 Richard Rive, "An Infinite Compassion," Contrast, Cape Town, no. 29, (October 1972), p. 34. This view is expressed in his thesis, p. 94.

22 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, No Man's Land: Volume II : Sexchanges (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 52-3. This volume will hereafter be referred to as Sexchanges.

23 Annalisa Oboe, "Contrasts and Harmony: The Antithetical Structure in The Story of an African Farm, in Vivan, p. 85.

24 Cherry Clayton, "Forms of Dependence and Control," in Van Wyk Smith and Maclennan, p. 22.

25 Gerd Bjorhovd, chapter 2, "Modernism in Embryo," in Rebellious Structures (Oslo: Norwegian Univerity Press, 1987), p. 25.

26 Robert Green, "Stability and Flux: The Allotropic Narrative of An African Farm," in Clayton, p. 161.

27 See Stephen Gray in "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 137; see Gilbert and Gubar in Sexchanges for a straightforward identification of Lyndall with the sex-parasites of Woman and Labour (p. 60-3, and passim). For example, apparently Lyndall's "anorexic devolution proves the truth of her [Schreiner's] assertion that the female parasite is incapable of an independent existence."

[28] Dan Jacobson, introduction to The Story of an African Farm, p. 19.

[29] Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 405.

[30] Berkman, Feminism on the Frontier, p. 44.

[31] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 58, p. 131, p. 140.

[32] Patricia Stubbs, Women and Fiction: Feminism and the Novel 1880-1920 (1979; rpt. London: Methuen, 1981), p. 113.

[33] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 62.

[34] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges. Concerning Lyndall's "anorexic devolution," (p. 60) see also p. 61, p. 71, and p. 79.

[35] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 79. Gilbert and Gubar duly note that Schreiner's "fascination with self-sacrifice" is more prominent in her "short meditations" than in her novel, but they repeat their contention that "Lyndall masochistically embraces martyrdom...."

[36] See Krige's introduction to Olive Schreiner, A Selection (London: OUP, 1968) p. 3.

[37] Jacobson, p. 21.

[38] Buchanan-Gould, p. 75.

[39] Walsh, p. 136.

[40] Lessing, pp. xiv-xv. "Lyndall is that projection of a novelist created as a means of psychic self-preservation.... Of her we can say: that kind of embattled woman was the product of that kind of society, where women had a hard time of it. But Waldo is the truth of Lyndall, and he is timeless. .... Waldo is the first appearance in women's writing of the true hero, in a form appropriate to the novel..."

[41] Edmands, p. 44.

[42] Jacobson, p. 19.

[43] Constance Lytton, Prisons and Prisoners: Experience of a Suffragette (1914; rpt. Wesk Yorkshire: E. P. Publishing, 1976) pp. 156-7.

[44] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 56. If some find "Times and Seasons" an inadequate account of Waldo's development, the fact that Lyndall is not granted a similar explanatory

chapter irks some even more. Stubbs writes: "The second part of the novel, with Lyndall's declamatory speeches and her death in childbirth [sic], in no way measures up to the earlier chapters. The story gets cut off from the harsh, sun-dried African landscape and looses [sic] its sense of time and place...." Mostly, Stubbs objects to Lyndall's feminism, whose conclusions are "true" but "not worked satisfactorily into the novel;" she wants to have seen Lyndall "experiencing these truths."

45 See A. O. Cockshut, Man and Woman: A Study of Love and the Novel, 1740-1940 (London: Collins, 1977), pp. 148-9.

46 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, pp. 58-60.

47 See Clayton, "Olive Schreiner and Feminism" University of Cape Town Studies in English No. 13 (1983) p. 54, and Bristow's introduction to African Farm, p. xx- xxi.

48 Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 228. See African Farm, p. 175 for an account of the Rose lineage; see the whole of Chapters 3 and 5 of Book Two for evidence that "rose-tinted glasses" are a strange accessory of one more self-pitying than optimistic.

49 Cowper Rose, Four Years in Southern Africa (London: Coburn and Bentley, 1829). Gray discusses Rose's book in "The Frontier Myth and the Hottentot Eve." Without mentioning Cowper Rose specifically with regard to Schreiner, Gray nevertheless sees the "ceremonial defrocking" of Schreiner's Gregory Rose and related "cool and blatant ironies" in Rose's story as a calculated affront to the "romantic British hero" in contemporary adventure novels about South Africa ("Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," pp. 145-6). It was the popularity of the memoirs of actual explorers like Cowper Rose that helped to fuel the vogue for adventure fiction. For information about that, and the periodicals through which Schreiner would have come into contact with the literary stereotype of the "virile frontiersman," see Schoeman, pp. Olive Schreiner, 415-423.

50 Bristow, p. xx.

51 Edward Gibbon's The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in Six Volumes, introduction by Christopher Dawson (1766-1788; rpt. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1962) vol. 3, pp. 76-80; also vol 2., p. 257. Voss makes a similar observation in " 'Not a Word or Sound in the World about Him that is not Modifying Him': Learning, Lore and Language in The Story of an African Farm," in Clayton, Olive Schreiner, pp. 173-4, quoting an apposite passage from Gibbon: "Instead of employing the superior talents of Gregory in some useful and conspicuous station, the haughty prelate [Basil] selected, among the fifty bishoprics of his extensive province, the wretched village of Sasima, without water, without verdure, without society...frequented only by the passage of rude and clamorous waggoners."

52 Hobman, p. 57; Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 56-7; Lessing groups it with Moby Dick, Wuthering Heights, and Jude the Obscure, p. vii. Beeton exploits the comparison with

Wuthering Heights for the purposes of his usual mode of oblique criticism: for him, Schreiner's novel is "in many ways (and, in most cases, unfortunately) more 'intellectual'" (A Short Guide, p. 21); the "bond between them [Waldo and Lyndall]... is never so powerfully realised as the bond between Heathcliff and Cathy...." (A Short Guide, p. 22).

53 Carpenter, My Days and Dreams, p. 227.

54 Calder-Marshall, pp. 90-1.

55 Walsh, p. 135.

56 Yvonne Kapp, Eleanor Marx, vol. II, The Crowded Years, (London: Laurence and Wishart, 1976), p. 24 concerns "this dumpy little woman..." who nevertheless "fascinated those that met her."

57 See Walsh, p. 141; after thousands of words he concludes: "And yet I cannot feel the account I have given, fair as I believe it to be, explains the intense, lasting effect this strange novel makes on the reader." See also Beeton's conception of the "great merit" of the book, elsewhere called an "enigma," which he somewhat nebulously concludes to be "evoking atmosphere" and "illuminating values": but even to come to this he must first exclude a large portion of the book, e.g., that containing Lyndall's "tedious" moralising about "the cause of woman" (A Short Guide, p. 21).

58 Lessing, p. viii.

59 See "Three Controversial Novels," Church Quarterly Review, London, Vol. 29 (January 1890), an excerpt of which is published in Clayton, pp. 74-75.

60 Rider Haggard, "About Fiction," Contemporary Review, London, (February 1887), an excerpt of which is published in Clayton, p. 75-6.

61 Jacobson, p. 18 and p. 23.

62 Jean Marquard, "The Farm: A Concept in the Writing of Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer and Bessie Head," The Dalhousie Review (1979) p. 293. Hereafter this essay will be cited in the notes as "The Farm..."

63 Lessing, p. viii.

64 Hobman, p. 57 (the "gifted American woman" who wrote to her goes unnamed).

65 Walsh, p. 135.

[66] Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth. An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900 - 1925. (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933). Schreiner and Lyndall were frequent topics of conversation between Vera Brittain and her fiancé Roland Leighton.

[67] Gray, in "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition" (p. 138), comments on an essay by Marquard thus: "In a piece that threatens to unleash new possibilities in approaches to Schreiner, Marquard also spoils it all by drawing to the conclusion that, once all reservations are duly made, Schreiner was a 'great artist.' " This essay is "Hagar's Child: A Reading of The Story of an African Farm, Standpunte, Cape Town, Vol. 29, No. 1 (February 1976), rpt. in Clayton, Olive Schreiner, pp. 143-53, and will be cited hereafter by the short title "Hagar's Child."

[68] Rive, "An Infinite Compassion," summarised in Gray, p. 138.

[69] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 138; Berkman, The Healing Imagination, p. 236.

[70] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," p. 131.

[71] Jacobson's description of the joy of coming upon African Farm as a child is well-known: "...for the first time, some sixty years after it was published, I had to struggle with my own incredulity that the kopjes, kraals and cactus plants she mentions were of the same kind as those I was familiar with: so little experience had I of encountering them within the pages of a book. For it isn't only the hitherto undescribed, uncelebrated, wordless quality of the life around him that makes it seem implausible to the colonial as a fit subject for fiction; it is also... its appearance of drabness, its thinness, its lack of richness and variety in comparison with the books that come to him from abroad" (see Jacobson, introduction to African Farm, p. 18-9; Jacobson's comment about the book's "glaring faults" is on p. 19).
Lessing, p. vii, discussed how she found African Farm the "first 'real' book I'd met with that had Africa for a setting." Mary Brown's report of her conversation with a "Lancashire working woman" is in Memories of a Friendship, p. 5. The thoughts of Rev. Lloyd on Schreiner's influence are found in Cronwright-Schreiner's The Life, pp. 218-223.

[72] See Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 67.

[73] Henry Handel Richardson (pseudonym for Ethel Florence Richardson Robertson, 1870-1946) Maurice Guest, (1908; reprt. London: Virago, 1981) pp. 78-9.

[74] Raymond Sands, "The South African Novel: Some Observations," English Studies in South Africa, March 1970, p. 95. Sands' comments are discussed in Rive's thesis (p. 31) and Gray's "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," (p. 149).

[75] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 149.

SECTION III -- "Some African Farms and Their Economies, Part 2"

[1] Itala Vivan, introduction to The Flawed Diamond, p. 12.

[2] Certainly Schreiner, in her later political writings, never questioned "the right of the white man to come into Southern Africa, provided he did so as a genuine settler and not as a freebooter" (Jacobson, p. 14), an attitude which explains her preference for the entrenched Boers to men of the ilk of her own Trooper Peter Halket, who is in South Africa to make his fortune and get out. Rive, in his thesis, astutely comments on Schreiner's false identification (as late as 1919) of Boers as by definition anti-capitalist, "not realising the similarity of motive in the opposing groups," p. 307.

[3] Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 155.

[4] See Gray, Southern African Literature: An Introduction, and Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 414-19.

[5] The San people really were hunted like rabbits by Boer hunting parties. See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 162. See also pp. 489-90 the case of a "coloured" man, Frans Bruintjies, who was shot by two Van Heerdens not long before Schreiner arrived in the area, and the vindication in court of the murderers.

[6] Vivan, in "The Treatment of Blacks in African Farm," in Vivan, pp. 95 - 106, systematically documents "seventy-two" appearances by blacks in the novel and concludes that "when she [Schreiner] wrote The Story of an African Farm she achieved what for the time could be called a miracle: she wrote of blacks 'realistically,' that is, reflecting the actual way blacks were considered by whites. No idealizations, no lies, no exoticisms; only a stark, often brutal reality, white South African culture. And, also, an implicit indictment of it."
Gray records (and disagrees with) Marquard's belief that African Farm is kept from being the Great South African novel because it does not deal with blacks extensively enough; Gray argues that Karoo society was never the place for blacks in white literature; it was the home of the "Hottentot Eve", a female interpreter and mediator between whites and blacks and here between whites and whites (i.e., the "coloured woman" who mocks Otto). See Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 157 and "The Frontier Myth and Hottentot Eve," pp. 38-71.

[7] Marquard, "Hagar's Child," p. 147.

[8] Marquard, "Hagar's Child," p. 147.

[9] In her years as governess, it was at Katkop, well to the north of Ratelhoek, where the Martins fled in advance of the Ninth Frontier War, that the "knowledge of farm-life Olive

had acquired with the Fouchés and Martins was enriched by a more patriarchal and aristocratic Boer lifestyle..." Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 371.

10 Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 147.

11 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 210.

12 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, pp. 52-3.

13 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 56.

14 Marquard, "Hagar's Child," p. 150.

15 See Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 58, p. 131, p. 140. These authors actually add a detail to their claim that Lyndall went to England by reporting that she got the money to travel from some English relatives. This is baseless. Lyndall has no family anywhere, and she never leaves South Africa.

For authors famous for close readings, Gilbert and Gubar also curiously misspell the Transvaal, Bonaparte's name, Schreiner's mother's name. Their discussion (p. 55) of "Tant' Sannie discover[ing] that he [Bonaparte] is considering giving the ring he stole from Otto to her wealthier niece," is simply inaccurate. Blenkins was prevented from stealing Otto's ring by a farcical episode involving an ostrich whom he mistakes for Otto's ghost. This very ostrich has been set free by Lyndall in the earnest hope that it might kill Bonaparte (see African Farm, pp. 99-102).

16 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 63.

17 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 276.

18 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, pp. 50- 82.

19 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 50.

20 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 35.

21 "In an interview in 1895, when Verne was 78... he said: 'When writing my first book, Five Weeks in a Balloon, I chose Africa as the scene of action, for the simple reason that less was, and is, known about the country than any other...." (Gray, "The Imaginary Voyage," p. 88.

22 See Gray, Southern African Literature: An Introduction, pp. 15-92.

23 Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 140.

24 Gray, "The Rise and Fall of the Colonial Hunter," p. 122.

[25] Gilbert and Gubar discuss Haggard's She in Sexchanges, pp. 10-28 and passim, H. Rider Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, (1885; New York: Pyramid, 1966), pp. 39-40.

[26] Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p. 34.

[27] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," pp. 152-4. See also Nadine Gordimer, The Conservationist (London: Cape, 1974).

[28] Marquard, "The Farm...." p. 295.

[29] Marquard, "The Farm...." p. 295.

[30] Marquard, "The Farm...." p. 293

[31] Marquard, "The Farm...." p. 293.

[32] Marquard, "The Farm...." p. 295.

[33] Marquard, "The Farm...." p. 295.

[34] Rudolph Erich Raspe (and others), The Surprising Travels and Adventures of Baron Munchausen (exceeding all Other Travellers in Russia, the Caspian Sea, Turkey, Egypt, Gibralter... into the South Sea; Also, an Account of a Voyage into the Moon and Dog Star), (London: T. Hughes, 1819). See especially Chapter II, *In which the Baron proves himself a good shot. He loses his horse, and finds a wolf;--Makes him draw his sledge.--Promises to entertain his company with a relation of such facts as are well deserving their notice.*

See also Stephen Gray on Blenkins as "lethal Munchausen" in both "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition", p. 144, and more generally in terms of African literature in "The Imaginary Voyage," pp. 73 - 92.

[35] See Volume II, A Sequel to the Travels and Adventures of Baron Munchausen (published simultaneously with Vol. I, above) Chapter I, in which *The Baron insists on the Veracity of his former Memoirs.--Forms a Design of making Discoveries in the Interior Parts of Africa....* Of his linguistic skills (the Baron boasts: "in the course of my peregrinations I have acquired precisely nine hundred and ninety nine leash [sic] of languages") see p. 2. Blenkins tells Otto, "I, my friend...have been in every country in the world, and speak every civilized language, excepting only Dutch and German. I wrote a book of my travels--noteworthy incidents...."

[36] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 141.

[37] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 156.

[38] Arthur Symons wrote down an account of a whole night spent talking with Schreiner. This account (dated 10 June, 1889) includes the following passage: "Divine and delicious was Rider Haggard's advice. He sent her some of his books, of which she read Dawn, and he said: 'You should write something more cheerful, something more like this (Dawn, I think, or one of those books)--that would suit the public taste better.' 'Cheerful!' she said: 'why there was a murder or a suicide on every other page!' " (see Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 190).

[39] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 146.

[40] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 156.

[41] Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 156.

[42] Voss, "Learning, Lore and Language," in Clayton, pp 174-7.
Schreiner's characters do not just have existential difficulties with communication, they have very real linguistic ones. Apart from the Afrikaans/English divide, there is a hierarchy of spoken English which divides the characters. As Voss's research has shown, "the idiom of Lyndall and the narrative voice is marked as South African almost exclusively by lexical items," (e.g., "the narrator's 'stamped mealies,' 'roaster-cakes,' 'Boer-brandy', " etc.) while Lyndall uses terms like "span-in" and the narrator "pack... out" for "unpack," "on the analogy of Afrikaans 'uitpak.' " In contrast, "the group of substandard SAE [South African English] speakers includes Waldo, Em, and the landlady of the hotel where Gregory nurses Lyndall." The latter's use, though "lightly marked as substandard SAE" is significant, as when she says of Lyndall "A pretty thing, isn't it?" (Showalter, among others, has complained of Lyndall's being objectified as "it" in this way). Waldo's language is much more "thoroughly marked," writes Voss, giving many examples which contrast not just to Lyndall's speech but to that he finds when working as a clerk in Grahamstown, where the "snobbish cant, the 'fast' talk of pretensions to upward social mobility" prevails. Blenkins makes use of this language according to his needs, but Gregory uses it all the time.

[43] Gray, in "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 144, is surely wrong to say that the drought lasts "until Waldo is in his early twenties; that is, the novel covers the time from two years before 1862 to quite close to its date of first publication." On the contrary, we are informed that Em and Lyndall are each twelve years old in the year the drought began in 1862 (African Farm, pp. 44-5); since Lyndall dies at 17 the story must end by 1868 at the latest, while its publication was not until 1883 (a gap of fifteen years).

[44] See A. E. Voss, "A Generic Approach to South African Literature," University of Cape Town Studies in English, no. 7 (Sept. 1977) pp. 110-19, cited by Gray, Southern African Literature: An Introduction, p. 189.

[45] Bjorhovd, Rebellious Structures, p. 30.
See Voss, "A Generic Approach...", p. 112, for a remark on the sense of geological time in the novel (see also Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 138-40). Voss also points out how

"Schreiner's story very sensitively registers" the change that the discovery of diamonds was making and would make to the pastoral life of the farm (Voss, p. 113; see also Gray, p. 142, African Farm, p. 257 and p. 268) and mentions the coming of the railways that so appalls Tant' Sannie (African Farm, p. 294).

46 Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 56.

47 See Cronwright-Schreiner's excerpts from the Leliekloof journal for examples, e.g that of October 18: "Mother Fouché is in a very good temper, but she'll blaze, when she hears the Rennies want me," or 1 November, "Mother F. is very nasty to me today..." 2 November, "I hope Mother F. will be smooth today..." (Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, pp. 138-9).

48 See Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 147, for a description of Tant' Sannie's representation of "a dogged and unstoppable continuation of peasant living..."

49 Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.) 1985. Moi, citing Jacobus for support, argues that Gilbert and Gubar are limited by their need to see "the good text" as "an organic whole" (which is bound to limit African Farm). Jacobus's complaint -- that the critics frequently attempt to "unlock... the secrets of the female text again and again with the same key" in this context rings true as well.

50 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 434.

51 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 435.

52 Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, p. 441.

53 Moers, p. 263.

54 Gray, "Schreiner and the Novel Tradition," p. 154.

SECTION IV -- "The Matter of Lyndall..."

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1 First and Scott, p. 119. See also Schreiner to Ellis, 5 November 1909, quoted in Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 156.

2 See Laurence Lerner, "Olive Schreiner and the Feminists", from Olive Schreiner and After: Essays on Southern African Literature in Honour of Guy Butler (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983) pp. 74-5. See Cockshut, p. 145.

[3] John Gray, "John Stuart Mill: The Crisis of Liberalism," in Political Thought from Plato to Nato, (London: Ariel Books) 1984, p. 155.

[4] Kathleen Blake, Love and the Woman Question in Victorian Literature: The Art of Self-Postponement (Sussex: Harvester, 1982), p. 212. Having discussed the valorisation of labour in the "Hunter's Allegory," Blake comments on the irony that "...when Waldo is grown and goes out to work in the world, he finds labour alienated as well as back-breaking.... The most tangible reward of labour is sleep."

[5] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, pp. 52-3.

[6] Josephine Dodd, "Unfinished Business: Olive Schreiner's From Man to Man and the Politics of Gender," (unpublished essay for University of York's Department of Women's Studies, February 1988), p. 14.

[7] Hobman, p. 55. Gilbert and Gubar, in Sexchanges, p. 61.

[8]See First and Scott on the influence of Lecky's theories on the co-relationship of prostitution and marriage in History of European Morals (1879), p. 173.

[9] See also Dickens, Dombey and Son. Some examples: "You know he has bought me," she [Edith] resumed. "Or that he will, tomorrow. He has considered of his bargain; he has shown it to his friend; he is even rather proud of it; he thinks that it will suit him, and may be had sufficiently cheap; and he will buy tomorrow..." (p. 381). "There is no slave in the market: there is no horse in a fair: so shown and offered and examined and paraded, Mother, as I have been, for ten shameful years.... Is it not so? .... Have I been hawked and vended here and there, until the last grain of self-respect is dead within me, and I loathe myself? Has this been my late childhood? I had none before.... Let him!"... (p. 382).
See also Charles Kingsley's Hypatia, or New Foes with an Old Face (1853; rpt. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1907). Schreiner's familiarity with this text is not a matter of proof, but speculation; the textual similarities are, however, frequently astonishing. Through his characterisation of Hypatia (the intellectual), Pelagia (the sensual courtesan) and Miriam (the wily madam), Kinglsey presents a classical "splitting" or virgin/whore syndrome. The character nearest to Lyndall is usually Kingsley's hero, Philamon, who yearns for a union based on respect and intellect as well as sensuality, refusing the dichotomy of the "bought" sexual partner or wife.

[10] Beeton, A Short Guide, p. 21.

[11] Lerner, "Olive Schreiner and the Feminists", p. 70.

[12] Barash, "Virile Womanhood," p. 335.

[13] Krige, introduction to "Olive Schreiner: A Selection," p. 4.

14 Cronwright-Schreiner, The Life, p. 148.

15 Blake, p. 210.

16 Blake, p. 211.

17 Blake, p. 211.

18 See Peter Salm, introduction to Faust: First Part..., p. xiii.

19 Blake, p. 214.

20 Cockshut, pp. 148-9.

21 Cockshut, p. 150.

22 Cockshut, p. 150.

23 Cockshut, p. 151.

24 Showalter, A Literature of Their Own, p. 199.

25 Gray, "Schreiner and Novel Tradition," p. 137.

26 Lerner, "Olive Schreiner and the Feminists," p. 74.

27 Showalter, A Literature of Their Own, pp. 200-1.

28 See, for example the case of "Morsie" (Maria) Bertram (Willie Bertram's sister). She died in the winter of 1872 at Dordrecht, during Schreiner's stay there; the local paper recorded that "the deceased was a most likeable person, who had enjoyed the best education in England and Paris." As Schoeman records, "Morsie's" death "made a strong impression on Schreiner". She referred to Bertram's death again in an 1889 interview with Arthur Symons. See Schoeman, Olive Schreiner, pp. 228-9.
She later wrote to Mrs. Francis Smith:
"Long ago when I was a girl of 15 a girl whom I had known very slightly all my life and who was... older than I, about 19, died suddenly of fever.... her death was a milestone in my life marking off what had been from what came after, so it seemed to bring me face to face with death. I think her death struck me so deeply just because she didn't seem to have much intellect or deep feeling, but [was] so very pretty, so bright, so full of the joy of life. None of the deaths of the people I loved best in the world have seemed so deadly!" (Schreiner to Mrs. Francis Smith, 6 November 1908 [Cronwright-Schreiner, Letters, p. 284]).

29 Lerner, "Olive Schreiner and the Feminists," p. 74.

[30] Gilbert and Gubar, Sexchanges, p. 141.

[31] Bristow, introduction to African Farm, p. ix.

[32] Showalter, A Literature of Their Own, p. 203.

[33] Blake, p. xi.

[34] Blake, p. 215.

[35] Blake, p. 211.

[36] Clayton, "Olive Schreiner and Feminism," p. 57.

[37] Auerbach, Romantic Imprisonment, pp. 85-6.