Tall Enough?

An illustrator's visual inquiry into the production
and consumption of isiXhosa picture books in South Africa

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature________________________________ Date: ___________________________

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a visual, sociolinguistic and cultural inquiry into the role of isiXhosa picture books in contemporary South Africa. From the standpoint of an illustrator, I examine several of these works arising out of a history that alienated many isiXhosa readers and writers from their language. I examine factors that influence the design, content and very notions of *reading* itself through the multiple *languages* offered by the picture book format. I argue that these books occupy a problematic space where *production* and *consumption* are affixed to paradigms of economics, language and literacy incongruent with the lives of many isiXhosa-speaking readers. My overall conclusion is that literacy and visual literacy are essential to developing an authentic 'reading culture'. Fostering a meaningful relationship with printed words and images is critical to both the emerging reader and the emerging illustrator. In producing illustrations for an isiXhosa narrative, I consider the shape of my own visual literacy through mediations with drawing and writing, relating my activities to those of a child learning to distinguish between pictures and words. The *cross-over* space where image/text distinctions blur potentially invites new narrative expressions. The picture book is a suitable format for expanding notions of *vision* and literacy, 'subverting' paradigms and revealing the richness of contemporary African tales. I rest my fundamental premise on an insistence for an increase of accessible, quality picture books in African languages that stimulate the artistic and intellectual development of all readers.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis is ‘n visuele, sosiolinguistieke, en kulterele ondersoek van die rol wat isiXhosa prenteboeke in kontemporêre Suid-Afrika speel. Ek ondersoek verskeie isiXhosa prenteboeke, vanuit die oogpunt van ‘n illustreerder, deur klem te plaas op die wyse waarop baie isiXhosa lesers en skrywers vervreem is van hulle taal. Verder ondersoek ek die verskillende *tale* binne die prenteboek formaat asook faktore wat die ontwerp, inhoud en die begrip van *lees* beïnvloed. Ek redeneeer dat hierdie boeke ‘n problematiese ruimte beset waar beide die produksie en verbruik daarvan verbonde is aan paradigmas van taal, geletterdheid en ekonomie wat teenstrydig is met die lewens van baie isiXhosa-sprekende lesers. My algehele gevolgtrekking is dat geletterdheid en visuele geletterdheid uiters belangrik is in die vorming van ‘n geloofwaardige ‘leeskultuur’. Die opbou van ‘n betekenisvolle verhouding met gedrukte woorde en beelde is noodsaaklik vir beide die *opkomende* leser en illustreerder. Deur die maak van illustrasies vir 'n isiXhosa narratief , beskou ek die vorming van my eie visuele geletterdheid deur die bemiddeling van skryf en teken, en vergelyk my aktiwiteite met díe van ‘n kind wat die onderskeid tussen prente en woorde aanleer. Die oorbruggingsruimte waar die onderskeid tussen beeld en teks onduidelik raak kan moontlik ‘n platvorm skep vir nuwe narratiewe uitdrukking. Die prenteboek is ‘n gepaste formaat vir die uitbreiding van die begrip van *sig* en geletterdheid, deur paradigmas te ‘ondermyn’ en die rykdom van kontemporêre Afrika-stories te openbaar. Ek baseer my hoofargument rondom ‘n aandrang op die vermeerdering van toeganklike, kwaliteit prenteboeke in Afrika-tale wat die artistieke en intellektuele ontwikkeling van alle lesers stimuleer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS viii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT OF ISIXHOSA PICTURE BOOKS 8

Colonial influences on isiXhosa picture book production 9

Bantu Education and a reading culture 16

The "marketization" of reading 18

Publishing isiXhosa picture books: the "educational look" 21

Economics of picture book consumption 26

CHAPTER 2: FORM/LANGUAGES OF PICTURE BOOKS 31

The design language of narrative 32

"Detailed" versus "vague" and *vectors* in the development of narrative 33

The language of access 37

Children, literacy, and isiXhosa picture books 39

Visual literacy and multi-literacies in picture book reading 41

Orthographies of the unknown and emergent literacy 43

Visual language of orality 45

The social language of reading 47

Social shaping of visual literacy 50

Artistic and cultural motivations: the shape of my own visual literacy 52

CHAPTER 3: CONTENT AS SUBVERSIVE 54

An illustrator's concept of "subversive" *54*

Subverting Western notions of childhood 55

African tales that "subvert" the narrative *59*

The subversive 'carnival' *65*

Collaboration and hybridization as subversive *67*

CONCLUSION 72

BIBLIOGRAPHY 78

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a body of research about books and producing the books themselves proved to be no easy task as I've learned throughout this year. As a foreigner, I'm also still learning how things work in South Africa, leaving me to wonder sometimes if I would ever figure it out by the time this thesis was due. I'd like to offer thanks to specific people who assisted me throughout this project: my supervisor Professor Keith Dietrich who offered ideas and the right advice at just the right time; Professor Mhlobo Jadezweni in the African Languages department for opening my eyes to storytelling and for being an inspiring partner in the production of *uTshepo mde/Tall enough*; Elisabeth Anderson and Lorato Trok at the Centre for the Book for all their advice, information, encouragement, and enthusiasm; Arthur Atwell and company at Electric Book Works for their consistent energy, knowledge, creativity, and support; Jean Williamson at Biblionef for giving me books and letting me wander through her stacks; Karen Stewart and Louis Barnard for sharing the illustration ride; Michael Taylor for his reliable critical eye; the residents of 19 van der Stel (and its Cape Town branch) for their patience, support, food, and computers; Romaine Hill for editorial support, Adrienne van Eeden for translation, Rachel Jolly for her consistent commentary; and finally, to my family from afar without whose love and faith (albeit through the wires) I wouldn't be able to do any of this.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.1 W.B. Bennie, *A practical orthography for Xhosa*. 1931. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris)

Figure 1.2 (a) Title page from W.B. Boyce, *A grammar of the Kafir language*. 1834. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. **(b)** Excerpt from *A grammar of Kafir language*, see details above. (Boyce 1834: 1)

Figure 1.3 Title page from John Knox Bokwe, *Amaculo ase Lovedale*. 1894. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University.

Figure 1.4 (a) Double-page spread from R.M. Agar O'Connell, *Iintsomi: Bantu folk tales.* 1934. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Agar O-Connell 1934: 34-35) **(b)** Title page from *Iintsomi: Bantu folk tales*, see above details.

Figure 1.5 (a) Cover of J.J.R. Jolbe, *Lovedale Xhosa rhymes/Izicengcelozo zaseDikeni*. 1957. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. **(b)** Double-page spread, see above details. (Jolbe 1957: 34-35)

Figure 1.6 (a) Title page from W.H.I. Bleek, *Reynard the fox in South Africa (or Hottentot fables and tales)*. 1864. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris) **(b)** C. Hoffman, *Bantoe stories uit Transvaal*. 1930. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris)

Figure 1.7 Illustration from *Xhosa fireside tales, part 1*. 1963. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Savory 1963: 56)

Figure 1.8 Double-page spread from *Dema & Demzana*. 1994. Collection: Kayamandi Public Library. (Milne 1994: 4-5)

Figure 1.9 (a) Illustration from James Marshall, *Abathathu phezulu emthini.* 1986. Collection: Kayamandi Public Library. (Marshall 1986: 35) **(b)** Illustration from James Marshall, *Abathathu phezulu emthini*, see details above. (Marshall 1986: 12)

Figure 1.10 Illustration from Leo Lionni, *uFrederick*. 1993. Collection: Kayamandi Public Library. (Lionni 1993: s.p.)

Figure 1.11 (a) Title page from Glynis Clacherty, *Just me and my brother*. 2004. Collection: African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. (Clacherty 2004: s.p.) **(b)** Double-page spread, see above for details.

Figure 1.12 (a) Illustration from Jamela Robertson, *Old Miss Toto*. 2004. Collection: African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. (Photograph: H. Morris) (Robertson 2004: 3) **(b)** Cover of Jamela Robertson, *Old Miss Toto*, see details above. **(c)** Illustration from Jamela Robertson, *Old Miss Toto*, see above. (Robertson 2004: 2)

Figure 1.13 (a) Title page from Glynis Clacherty, *Simon's Story*. 2004. Collection: African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. (Photograph: H. Morris) (Clacherty 2004: s.p.) **(b)** Double-page spread, see details above.

Figure 2.1 Double-page spread from Fatima Dada, Gcina Mhlope, Leoni Hofmeyr, & Pandora Alberts, *Isipho sikaThandeka*. 2002. Collection: Centre for the Book, Cape Town. (Dada, Mhlope, Hofmeyr & Albers: 2002: 3-4)

Figure 2.2 (a) Page illustration from Maryanne Clegg & Shayle Bester, *Abahlobo abathathu*. 2004. Collection: Centre for the Book, Cape Town. (Clegg & Bester 2004: 7) **(b)** Illustration from Maryanne Clegg & Shayle Bester, *Abahlobo amathathu*, see above for details. (Clegg & Bester 2004: 6)

Figure 2.3 Page illustration from Reviva Schermbrucker & Motlhalefi Mahlabe, *Cindy*. 2001. Collection: private. (Schermbrucker & Mahlabe 2001: 14)

Figure 2.4 Page illustration from Reviva Schermbrucker & Motlhalefi Mahlabe, *Cindy*. 2001. Collection: private. (Schermbrucker & Mahlabe 2001: 32)

Figure 2.5 (a) Cover illustration from Sue Kramer & Reviva Schermbrucker, *Mhlanguli*. 1998. Collection: private. **(b)** Illustration from Sue Kramer & Reviva Schermbrucker, *Mhlanguli*, see above for details, (Kramer & Schermbrucker 1998: 8)

Figure 2.6 Hannah Morris, three paintings from the series for the picture book *uTshepo mde/Tall enough*. 2006. Gouache on paper, 15 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 2.7 (a) Page illustration from Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury, *Kakhulu*. 1994. Collection: private. (Cooke & Oxenbury 1994: 19) **(b)** Title page from Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury, *Kakhulu*, see above for details.

Figure 2.8 Hannah Morris, *isiXhosa poster*. 2006. Ink on paper, 84.1 x 59.4 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 2.9 Hannah Morris, *Observing my own life* series, 2006. Ink on paper, 12.75 x 21 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 2.10 Hannah Morris, hand-lettered pages from series for the picture book *uTshepo mde/Tall enough*. 2006. Gouache on paper/digital, 15 x 15 cm (left); 30 x 15 cm (lower left). Artist's collection.

Figure 2.11 Page illustration and text from Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury, *Kakhulu*, 1994. Collection: private. (Cooke & Oxenbury 1994: 19)

Figure 2.12 (a) Page illustration from article, *The language of pictures: visual literacy and print materials*. 2004. Collection: private. (Arbuckle 2004: 452) **(b)** Page illustration from *The language of pictures: visual literacy and print materials*, see above for details. (Arbuckle 2004: 453)

Figure 2.13 (a) Hannah Morris, double-page spread drawing from *Observing my own life* series. 2006. Ink on paper, 20.65 x 26 cm. Artist's collection. **(b)** Hannah Morris, drawing from *Observing my own life* series, see above details, 20.65 x 12.85 cm.

Figure 3.1 Hannah Morris, three paintings from series for the picture book *Mamasianoke: the endless stream of selfish birds*. 2006. Gouache on paper, 15 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 3.2 (a) Hannah Morris, drawing from *Observing my own life* series. 2006. Ink on paper, 20.65 x 12.85 cm. Artist's collection. **(b)** Hannah Morris, ink painting from *The art narrative* series. 2006. Ink on paper, 15 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 3.3 Hannah Morris, *The home of the noise*. 2006. Collage, 33.4 x 37.8 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 3.4 (a) Cover illustration for VisionK, *Amabali ethu/Our stories*. 2005. Collection: private. **(b)** Page illustrations from VisionK, *Amabali ethu/Our stories*, see above for details. (VisionK 2005: 9,17,19)

INTRODUCTION

> Too many people still believe Africa to be mute, inarticulate, tongue-tied by the hundreds of vernacular languages spoken between Cape Town and Timbuktu.
>
> Terry Lindhors (1995:4)

IsiXhosa picture books play a fascinating role in discussions of literacy, language, illustration, storytelling, and identity in South Africa. As a student in the MPhil programme Visual Arts (Illustration) at Stellenbosch University, I am drawn to this topic for several reasons. It is an under-researched area with significance for future developments around reading, literacy, visual literacy, and social and creative empowerment in the South African context. As a student of cultural studies, art, illustration, and writing, I have a sincere interest in this body of knowledge as filtered through these multiple perspectives. Given the scope of the thesis, the topic is relatively manageable in terms of producing an original body of research that hopefully proves useful to those involved in children's literature, literacy, language development, and illustration.

Using historical records, historic and contemporary picture books, personal interviews, my own illustration work, and research that spans semiotics to cultural studies, I attempt to place isiXhosa picture books within the larger historical and sociological landscape of South African children's book production. I seek to illuminate the complicated and problematic position these books occupy in the literary, linguistic and cultural circles of this country. From its inception the project of producing picture books for the community of children most proximal to me – isiXhosa speakers – the idea was soon complicated. I started hearing comments about the "reading culture" – who reads and specifically, who does *not* read. Isabel Hofmeyr from the University of Witswatersrand sums up aptly the sort of commentary I heard about *reading* in African language-speaking communities:

> Most of these opinions are invariably negative. In such pronouncements, the phrase 'reading culture' is generally encountered in close proximity to the phrase 'lack of'. The assumption is plain: there is no reading culture or at least not the kind that is assumed to be 'normal', i.e. a book-buying culture with significant amounts of time and resources being devoted to leisure reading. (2005: http://www.nlsa.ac.za/docs/bibliophilia8_2005/edhofmeyr.doc)

I began asking questions. What picture books are being produced? What is their history? Who reads them? As illustrated literary works, do they relate to the richness of oral narratives and poetry of the isiXhosa culture? And finally, what do these books *mean* from their images and text?

These questions motivated my research and led me to the ultimate conclusion that the majority of picture books made available to most isiXhosa-speaking children fall short of providing a meaningful, enticing and significant experience.[1] As the title of this thesis suggests, in the following exploration I attempt to discuss the various reasons *why* these books are not "tall enough", due to economic, historical, sociological and cultural factors. Framed in the discourse concerning *reading*, my focus is how narrative and design paradigms reveal more about adult concerns than they do about a child's desire for a narrative journey.

Existing research on this topic is slim, as I mentioned at the start of this section. There are studies, articles, commentaries and collected essays about picture books for children in South Africa (see Cilliers 1988; Heale 1996, 2004; Jenkins 1993; Radebe 2005; van Vuuren 1994). Within these works, there are minimal references to picture books in African languages, and more often than not these suggest the need for further research. The exception is Radebe (2005) whose article notes specific developments within literature aimed at black children in the 1990s. Children's picture books in African languages are considered in light of historical developments in the field of South African children's literature (Jenkins 1993) or as minor components in the publishing field (Van Vuuren 2004) or as the source of folk tales (Cilliers 1988; Heale 1996; Jenkins 1993). There is a small, articulate body of research on literary works in African languages in South Africa (Hofmeyr 2005; Mathonsi 2005; Msimang 1996; Opland 1996; Peires 1979) that includes the artistic, political, and cultural dimensions of literature produced by African language speakers. However, within these writings children's literature is for the most part left out of the discussion. Research on children's literature throughout Africa includes mention of picture books, but is restricted to cultural and linguistic considerations, such as *orality* and identity (Khorana 1988). There is a substantial and growing body of contemporary research on language policy and literacy produced by the powerhouse research body of PRAESA[2] at the University of Cape Town (see Alexander 2000; Bloch 1996, 2002, 2004), as well as researchers from the University of South Africa (Arbuckle 2004; Carstens 2004). There is, however, little if any research that combines these topics which, as I argue, is necessary for any sort of visual or cultural analysis of isiXhosa picture books.

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[1] Finding "print rich" classrooms (with English and indigenous language books) across sub-Saharan Africa is still a "rarity" (Bloch 2004:13); in South Africa, a 2003 Department of Education survey into literacy revealed that less than 40 percent of all children were literate in Grade 3 (nine years old) (Anderson 2005:236), and as Elisabeth Anderson, Director of Centre for the Book, writes, "alarmingly, almost 90 percent of young children (under the age of seven) in South Africa have no access to books at all". (2005:237).

I have structured this thesis to follow the format of a *visual analysis* of a picture book. In the following three chapters, I examine respectively the *context*, the *form* and the *content* of isiXhosa picture books. Working within a postmodern, post-structuralist framework that takes into account semiotic and sociolinguistic considerations, I seek ultimately to reveal how the visual codes of image and text relationships *shape* and *are* shaped by language, culture and history. Ultimately I seek to promote the production of picture books and illustrated narratives in isiXhosa and other African languages in order to expand children's minds and encourage expressive empowerment.

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[2] Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa.

Chapter 1 initiates a study of the broader context of picture books. I employ an historical view of isiXhosa picture books that considers the development of South African picture books and isiXhosa as a written language. I examine how colonialism shaped the production and publishing of isiXhosa written works (along with English and Afrikaans books) to suit a colonial agenda. I examine the effects of apartheid on the growing body of literature for children. More specifically, I look at how Bantu Education policies had more often than not a detrimental effect on reading and literacy for isiXhosa speakers. The curtailing of steady, quality education, as well as restrictions placed upon cultural productions through censorship laws, contributed to a disenfranchisement regarding reading for many isiXhosa-speaking people. The chapter considers the relationship that developed between the publishing industry and educational departments that heavily favoured reading as *educational* in light of a restricted market for isiXhosa speakers. I examine the current production of educational readers aimed at children in contemporary classrooms and school libraries as an example of the widespread *market-sanctioned* notions of reading as educational rather than for pleasure or cultural development.

Chapter 2 addresses the form of the picture book as a literary and artistic genre. I initially take a semiotic approach and then broaden to incorporate sociolinguistic[3] considerations in uncovering meaning through the various *languages* of picture books. Using several contemporary isiXhosa picture books as examples, I consider, through a semiotic lens, the *design language of narrative*: the making of meaning through image and text relationships. I focus on the specific elements of *graphic vectors*, and *detailed* versus *vague* imagery in developing a pictorial narrative, using the work of Roland Barthes (1977; 2002), David Crow (2003), Gunther Kress (2000; 2003), Perry Nodelman (1988) and Theo van Leeuwen (1996), for semiotic grounding and design considerations. I deepen the topic by discussing the *language of access* – situating the reading of African-language picture books within a larger discourse of language and literacy in contemporary South Africa. The current and often contentious discussions regarding the *inclusion* and *exclusion* of African languages in various fields will form the backdrop for considering reading development in children. I rely on research and discussions by Dr. Neville Alexander (2000) and Carol Bloch (1996, 2002, 2004) from PRAESA, as well as other contemporary literacy researchers in South Africa, in discussing trends that approach reading and literacy education from a didactic, institutionalized standpoint. I consider notions of *emergent literacy* – how children become truly literate through their own manipulations of writing and drawing. As Gunther Kress writes, " [s]pelling, probably for all children, starts as the making of visible traces: a line drawn to accompany the telling of an unfolding event, or the developing of a description" (2000:6). Thus through the interplay of image and text, children learn to develop a meaningful relationship with literacy and visual literacy. I consider this paradigm within the context of a print-scarce environment for many isiXhosa speakers. Simultaneously, I parallel a discussion of my own hand-lettering of a contemporary story in isiXhosa as a form of the "emergent literacy" of a language I do not speak. I ground these various considerations within the works of Donis Dondis (1973), Gunther Kress (2000) and Thuli Radebe (2001) who consider *design* as stimulating a narrative.

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[3] I use David Bloome and Judith Greene's definition: "A sociolinguistic perspective requires exploring how language is used to establish a social context while simultaneously exploring how the social context influences language use and the communication of meaning" (1984:396).

I further the discussion of visual literacy in the last section of Chapter 2 as I consider the *social language* of reading. I incorporate the work of Martin Prinsloo (2005) for discussion regarding the sociological matrix through which literacy in South Africa shapes itself. The discourse forwarded by Pierre Bourdieu (1993), regarding *radical* *contextualization,* is useful for my discussion of the picture book as a meaningful object shaped by a larger context of sociological and cultural factors. In this light, I consider my own cultural and artistic standpoint, referring to the writing, illustrating, and the visual interpretations of isiXhosa as it demonstrates the shape of my own visual literacy.

Chapter 3 positions isiXhosa and other African folk tales as *subversive* on multiple levels. I initiate a discussion with an *illustrator's* notion of subversivity, entailing my own perception of African folk tales, coming from a Western literary tradition. The premise of this chapter is based upon culturally-shaped Western notions of innocence and childhood as reflected in the picture book. As I argue, a children's picture book carries with it sociological, linguistic and psychological weight, along with the means to "subvert" literary, cultural, and personal paradigms. I include both Alison Lurie's (1990) discussion of subversive children's literature and Perry Nodelman's considerations of childhood and reading. Expanding the notion of subversive to the *matter* of narrative, I consider Mikhail Bahktin's (Barnard 2005, Curran & Takata 2004, Macey 2001, Shohat & Stam 1998) notions of the "carnival", as I look at the subversion of "high and low" culture, and the overturning of preconceived notions of "right" and "wrong". I consider within this discussion the *visuality* of subversivity, and how, translated into the world of picture books, the *surreal* can engage the reader through an underlying attraction to humour. The chapter closes with a discussion of collaboration and hybridization as subverting the standard norms of picture book *production*. I consider how collaboration in the form of participation encourages meaningful relationships with writing, reading, and illustration for the emerging reader/writer/illustrator. This dynamic encourages an expansion of narrative form by including multi-vocal influences and challenging notions of single authorship. To illustrate these considerations, I include a contemporary example (*Amabali ethu/Our stories,* 2005) of a collaborative picture book produced in Kayamandi and Stellenbosch. Considering *Amabali ethu/Our stories*, I look at "hybridization" as a mode that speaks to South African design and, as I argue, narrative sensibilities. The format of a picture book is highly suitable for hybridization, especially given South Africa's diverse nature and dynamic interaction between cultures.

The body of this research ultimately rests on the notion that the picture book is an exciting format where image, text, language and narrative interact in a meaningful and influential expression. As I see it, storytelling is the space for mediation with life itself and the format of a picture book affords a widespread opportunity to expand the visual and narrative codes of this journey. In initiating the following thesis, I consider Walter Benjamin's (1968:91) words:

> The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work – the rural, the maritime, and the urban – is itself an artisan form of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus the traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT OF ISIXHOSA PICTURE BOOKS

> To get African children to develop a culture for reading must be understood within the context of the traditional oral information systems such as storytelling.
>
> Hale Tsehlana (2005:2)

The context of isiXhosa picture books in South African literary history straddles the parallel development of both South African children's literature as a whole, and isiXhosa as a written language in particular. This historical overview includes the first published works in isiXhosa, as well as the inception of the production of children's picture books. I focus on the fact that, in producing indigenous language picture books, the publishing industry served mainly the interests of the colonial powers, fuelled by religious beliefs and anthropological curiosity. Within this dynamic isiXhosa (and other African language) speakers mediated with printed language in their particular way, but by and large, the majority of publications served to meet overseas demands for entertainment, cultural "data", and the domestic pressures to "educate the people". In this chapter, I set out to show how picture books were created more to provide stimulation for mainly Western-educated audiences, both abroad and within South Africa, than they were to promote African narratives for African-language speakers. As Meena Khorana (1998:2) writes, "[l]anguage became an instrument of subjugation that fostered a sense of inferiority and lack of pride in African languages, culture, and history".

From this complicated inception, I move on to consider how Bantu Education policies during the apartheid years furthered a disenfranchisement, not only in relation to literacy and the concept of reading for pleasure, but also through modes of cultural production. Censorship in the form of official policies, as well as self-imposed notions of inferiority in producing Western narratives stilted the growing body of isiXhosa literature. This, in turn, influenced the production of children's picture books in isiXhosa, in that the majority of picture books were created by non-isiXhosa-speaking writers and illustrators. I consider these books in light of the publishing industry's role in sanctioning notions of reading as "educational" rather than as "pleasurable". As I seek to demonstrate, through the publication of mainly educational readers, the "reading market" was demarcated by the publishing industry's paradigm of *reading* as a mode to instruct African language speakers how to speak, live and ultimately, behave.

Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I seek to address the economics of consumption: how the cost and location of buying books is restrictive for many isiXhosa speakers. I open a discussion about a potential shift in the site of purchase of books to a more inclusive, culturally relevant, and accessible location for the isiXhosa speakers who live rurally or in urban locations, where transportation is not always available or safe. I propose several ideas gathered from conversations with literacy workers for ways to include isiXhosa and other African language speakers in the reading market.

Colonial influences on isiXhosa picture book production

The European books of the eighteenth century, heirs to South African children's books today, arrived with the missionaries. Making their way first through the Western Cape and then further into the heart of the country, the missionaries brought with them not only the literary conventions of Europe but also ethnographic zeal affirmed by God and science. John Bennie and his colleagues of the Glasgow Missionary Society were the first to print isiXhosa in 1823, having created the first systematic translation of the isiXhosa language in a printed orthography (see Figure 1.1). Bennie's grammar book, along with W.B. Boyce's *First Kafir grammar,* published by the Wesleyan Mission Press in 1834 (see Figure 1.2), actualized the goals of "'reducing to form and rule this language which hitherto floated in the wind'", and revealed clear religious motivations. (Opland 1996:112.) Boyce writes beseechingly in the orthography's introductory letter to the Reverend William Shaw: "'We do not however view you merely as our Pioneer in the moral wilderness in which we labour; we have reason thankfully to acknowledge the measure of success with which the Divine Blessing has accompanied your various plans for the extension of the Work of God'" (Boyce 1834:sp). *The Journal of Folk-Lore,* published by the South African Folk-Lore Society (which eventually collected many of the tales that later became children's stories), advertised parallel scientific motivations:

> Communications from the lips of the aborigines, written down in their own language and words, and accompanied by a translation into English (or some other modern European language) will, generally speaking, be published in both languages at once; and it is, therefore, hoped that the proposed journal, even under present disadvantages, may be of some little value to philologists, as well as to ethnologists, and those students of Comparative Folk-lore for the benefit of whose branch of science it is chiefly intended. (Preface 1879:ii-iii)

The creation of orthographies spawned the written form of isiXhosa that previously had remained an oral language composed of several principle genres: the riddle (*iqhina*), the proverb (*iqhalo*), the formal speech (*intetho*), the song (i*ngoma*), the folk tale (*intsomi*), the historical legend (*imbali*), and the praise poem (*izibongo*)[4] (Opland 1996:111). Missionary presses, such as the Lovedale Press, carried on with their evangelical materials including their earliest project of publishing the Bible in isiXhosa, booklets of rhymes, folk tales and hymnals (see Figures 1.3 - 1.5). As Jeffrey Peires (1975:155) writes in his detailed history of the press, Lovedale remained "the focal point of the literate Christian culture which emerged among the Xhosa of South Africa's

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[4] Opland makes it clear that these oral genres are still very much alive in present times.

Eastern Cape".[5] As Peires reveals, under the leadership of R.H.W. Sheperd, Lovedale Press moved beyond publishing to censoring the manuscripts. Of the Bantu people whom he considered his literary "charges", Sheperd wrote: "'They are at the adolescent period, a period which, as in the life of individuals, is difficult for any people. It is difficult and trying not only for themselves but for those who are in any sense their guardians or their guides'" (cited in Peires 1979:157). Peires further quotes one of Sheperd's comments about S.M. Molema's 1950 submission of a history of the Rolong:[6] "'This is Hitlerism with a vengeance! And there are other similar passages – particularly with reference to the British – the writing of which may give emotional satisfaction but which seems not dispassionate enough for serious history'" (cited in Peires 1979:159). The Lovedale Press was revealing, not only in its racist attitude, but also in the impact of what Peires calls the "great orthographic upheaval" of the 1930s. By virtue of the International Institute for African languages and Cultures, this new quest proposed a standardization of African languages (1979:160). Peires writes (1979:161) of this shift: "[T]he awesome effect of the 'New Orthography' was to turn every literate African into a functional illiterate". [7]

This situation left many isiXhosa authors with few other options than to curtail their work to meet the demands of such a press as Lovedale and to mediate with the hegemonic language systems. This mediation centered primarily upon religion in hymnals, newspapers, and booklets. In his article detailing isiXhosa newspapers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jeff Opland (1996:110) writes how they "[confronted] the dominance of European models and editorial control". With the emergence of an educated isiXhosa elite that included such writers as John Knox Bokwe (see Figure 1.3), John Tengo Jabavu, Thomas Mqanda, S.E.K. Mqhayi and W.B. Rubusana, a body of literature published in the newspapers grew. This writing reflected the oral nature of transmission by employing *dialogue* tactics – the "write as you speak" style – and elements of praise poetry. The growth of this style was short-lived however: "The first three Xhosa journals settled into the mode of talking down to their readers rather than engaging in dialogue with them, still less in providing a forum for them to write for themselves" (Opland 1996:116).

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[5] Peires' criticism of the censorship tactics and literary manipulations at Lovedale is well argued. He simultaneously pays tribute to the impact Lovedale had in publishing isiXhosa literary works. From its inception up to 1939, it produced 238 books in isiXhosa, more than any African language except for Swahili (Peires 1979:155). Peires' intentions remain critical: "My object has simply been to examine the various ways in which the Lovedale Press processed and thereby altered the historical manuscripts which were sent to it" (1979:170).

[6] The shortened form of *Barolong* or the clan name for the Batswana living in the Northwest of South Africa. [Online] Available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barolong [23 October, 2006].

[7] The changes were far-reaching: three new letters were introduced, a number of new *didacts* (two-letter consonants) were created, *diacritic marks* (sign written above or below letters) to indicate tone and stress were instituted, the practice of doubling vowels to indicate length was started, and new rules were developed for the division of words (Peires 1979:161).

Religious texts became a site of contention: they were the main form that shaped isiXhosa-speakers' reading and writing culture. The format allowed for syncretism as Christianity intermingled with isiXhosa culture. Isabel Hofmeyr writes:

> [T]he hymn was a form rapidly appropriated into African Christianity. While a new genre, it permitted Christians to draw on older performance traditions of song, dance and sacred poetry. In a constrained mission environment where Africans were afforded only limited avenues of expression, the hymn form offered a site of creativity for many African Christians. (2005: http:// www.nlsa.ac.za /docs/bibliophilia8_2005/edhofmeyr.doc)

Hofmeyr makes an important point of connection: "This idea of print culture as integrally woven into sound and music is apparent elsewhere too" (2005: http://www.nlsa.ac.za/docs/bibliophilia8_2005/edhofmeyr.doc).

Speaking of John Knox Bokwe, remembered today for his religious music books and pamphlets, Hofmeyr continues:

> The text itself frequently moves between text and tonic-solfa notation. The text assumes that the reader can both read print and tonic-solfa notation and that one will read and sing. The idea of reading entailed here is a particularly rich one involving several senses rather than simply relying on sight only. (2005: http://www.nlsa.ac.za/docs/

bibliophilia8_2005/edhofmeyr.doc)

Despite the missionaries' contribution to literacy and to isiXhosa as a written language, C.T. Msimang (1996:53) describes the cultural legacy precisely: "We cannot turn a blind eye to the restrictions which they imposed on the development of African literature. I have referred to the restrictions as informal censorship." He describes these further (1996:53): "Africans were indoctrinated into disowning their traditions and customs which were dubbed heathenish. Secondly, they [missionaries] discouraged, delayed or even downright refused to publish materials which were at variance with their gospel teachings." The significance of the effects of Christianity on reading is important as I attempt to ground isiXhosa reading and writing in its nuanced history, as well as to recognize the multi-dimensional aspect of literacy and reading, a topic I pick up for further discussion in Chapter 2.

The first secular books produced in isiXhosa came from the press at St. Peter's Mission in Gwatyu in 1875-1877, including two collections of folktales. Opland writes of the publishing presses' shift: "[T]he mission agencies debated and accepted the need for the publication of vernacular works of literature as an aspect of their responsibility for black education" (Opland 1996:126). However, at the same time, the tales gathered from the amaXhosa were written for English and Afrikaans speaking audiences (see Figure 1.6). South African children's literature authority, Jay Heale (2004:6), writes of this eventual literary shift towards children: "In the ears of a 17th century European, tales of talking animals seemed childish. So when those stories reached printed form, they were considered as reading matter for children. African children's literature had begun." Elwyn Jenkins (2004:13) expands the description of these tales' popularity: "White children learned the language of their nannies and absorbed their folktales. If they were not so fortunate, their parents wanted them to hear or read indigenous stories collected in books." The power and cultural legacy of the folk tale became visually accessible. Donis Dondis (1973:178) writes, "what to do, what to think, what to know, how to behave became a more public and uniform matter".

Parallel streams of children's literature comprised the white South African reading culture. One literary current was fed by the books imported from England, preferred by the English-speaking population, especially after the 1925 adoption of Afrikaans as one of the two official languages that increased the publication of Afrikaans books. The other body of literature came from the translated "indigenous tales" originating in African languages, though the languages themselves remained the subject of dominion. The first truly popular South African children's book, *Jock of the Bushveld* by Sir Percy FitzPatrick (published in England in 1907), paints an accurate picture of the times both in form and content and, as Heale (2004:8) viscerally describes, "'boys' and 'kaffirs' and 'yelling niggers' and ... the whites would not 'live a day if they didn't know who was *baas*'".

The themes of these illustrated books were religious and didactic by nature. Phyllis Savory's well-known collection called *African fireside tales, part 1*, published in English, is indicative of the portrayals of folk tales at the time. There is a sombre tone to the illustrations (see Figure 1.7) by Gerard Bengu, as if they were relics in a museum. Jenkins writes of Savory's book: "Her introduction to her Xhosa tales in *African fireside tales, part 1* reads like a bad primary school text" (1993:11), and about Gerard Bengu's sepia illustrations, "[they] add to the schoolroom atmosphere with their old-fashioned formality" (1993:12).

Books in English during the early years of the twentieth century clearly mimicked their British models: fairy tales, talking animals and "boyish heroism" (Heale 2004:8). Childhood (English and Afrikaans children both) had been affixed a certain "appropriate" visuality about the "wild" and its placation within the narrative. Jenkins describes how the line between adult concerns and children's desires was blurred:

> Because all but the most recent books were intended for white readers, and hence for a culture different to that from which the stories came (a fact which is usually prominently announced on the cover or title page), the writers are tempted to meet the curiosity of whites, or even instill curiosity where it did not exist before, by taking a slightly pedantic or anthropological stance. In fact, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a collection of tales has been published for an anthropological purpose or to entertain children. (1993:11)

By 1990, at least 150 different books of African folk tales had been published in English, at least three-fifths since 1965 (Jenkins 1993:8). The writing of these tales, although "preserving" a cultural production, affixed them to a particular context sanctified by a style "appropriate" for children, illustrated and packaged in a book format. Jenkins comments: "Once the stories have become reified in print, there may be a temptation for teachers and readers in the future to consider them only as written literature, forgetting their different provenance" (1993:25).

English and Afrikaans hegemony manifested itself officially for the following seventy years of South African history. Published picture books based on stories from isiXhosa and other African cultures met the needs of a white readership. Ironically, these tales were translated back into their original languages, thus sustaining the flux of cultural manipulation. Subsequently, many tales adopted a certain "anthropological" style aimed at "African". Samantha Naidu (2001:20), in her article about folk tales and nationalism in the *New South Africa*, describes some of these first collections in regards to their ethnological 'packaging': "Some of the first collections were classified as anthropology, including histories and ethnographies of the relevant cultures, providing glossaries and maps, sketches and then later, photographs". She explains that this packaging was to ensure accessibility for the "foreign" readers. However, as she writes, the outcome was an "exoticizing" of the tales, "presenting them as curiosities from 'other' and different cultures" (2001:20).

More often than not, the visuals portrayed people with a certain stereotypical distortion (see Figure 1.4) that speaks more to connotations of culture rather than being illustrations to deepen the story and engage a child's attention. In more contemporary picture books from the 1990s, the imagery is often *vague* and inarticulate, or specifically "Africanized" for the sake of sanitizing and "making more accessible" an otherwise complicated tale. Kathleen Milne's rendition of the story of Demane and Demazana is a case in point (see Figure 1.8). The muted background colours and the featureless figures in Milne's book merge together in a flat patchwork rather than as an articulated scene. The page border's pattern is equally non-descript, adding to an overall "Africanized" effect that reassures the reader of a certain authenticity (Naidu 2001:22). Of this book, Naidu writes: "Even though colour is used as a synecdoche for 'earthy' Africa, the 'stylised style' bears a strong resemblance to Gauguin, and is employed for a subtle form of sanitization" (2001:22). Like many books in this genre, the "anthropological" look translates the text as more of a "frozen" and often inaccurate moment rather than an engaging narrative.

Bantu Education and a reading culture

With the 1948 installation of the National Party into South Africa's official seat of power, apartheid educational policies began shaping the patterns of reading and learning for all South African students. For black students, this meant an inferior allocation of resources and materials. Until as late as the 1970s, the apartheid regime siphoned out five percent per capita of money spent on white schools for black education (Fuller 1995:5). The 1951 Group Areas Act physically enforced "separate and unequal" policies, and the 1958 Bantu Education policies designed a vocational and instructional skills curriculum to instruct black students on how to properly fulfil subservient roles. The effect translated into a disparity in educational levels which inherently affected literacy and a reading culture. At that time, educational theory was based on didactic pedagogy. Heale (2004:9) writes that "the idea of enjoying reading was not in the syllabus". In terms of language policy, researcher and writer Neville Alexander (2000:4-5) from the University of South Africa describes the workings of Bantu Education:

> [D]uring the 'fifties, we debated with waxing passion the question whether or not we should pay any attention at all to the 'tribal languages' instead of concentrating on English, the 'international language'. The debate was exacerbated and rendered particularly vicious by the fact that at the time, the Afrikaner National Party was using the very sensible UNESCO declarations on the importance of using vernacular languages as media of instruction in schools in order to justify and beautify its racist curriculum.

The poignant irony of the success of this curriculum revealed itself. The inculcation of racist ideology through the mother-tongue attached a stigma to many isiXhosa speakers' view of their mother-tongue as any kind of *official* language of power. Neville Alexander (2000:17) comments on this dynamic: "L1-medium [first language] education came to be equated in the minds of most black people with inferiority and racial ghettoisation". Lorato Trok from the Centre for the Book's FWIP (First Words in Print) literacy programme[8] comments on the stigma around mother tongue literacy she currently encounters, stemming from the historical displacement of language: "The younger mothers I've met, most of them don't understand the importance of children learning in their own language. They want their children to go far, [they say] 'I want my

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8 The Centre for the Book in Cape Town is a non-governmental organization devoted to the promotion of reading in South Africa; FWIP is a literacy programme that seeks to distribute picture books free of charge to children under the age of six in their mother tongue. The programme works in various geographical areas in South Africa also providing competitions and holding training workshops planned for South African writers, illustrators, and publishers to produce books for children aged 0-10 (De Beer 2004: 8).

child to learn to write and read in English.'" (Personal interview, Cape Town, 27 July 2006.) Teacher and author, Barbara Baloyi (herself speaker of five African languages), is quoted as painting a larger picture for the preference attached to English:

> 'The experience of the European child has been validated in the school classroom and curriculum. This view of English learning as natural, neutral and beneficial seems to prevail amongst English teachers. There is even among black pupils, parents and academics in South Africa a self-satisfied assumption that English is good and can serve as a unifying tool to the diversity and multicultural nature of this country.' (cited in Newfield & Stein 2000:304-305.)

The "marketization" of reading

With apartheid policies firmly in place,[9] books remained in the domain of the school. As school was the reserve where the majority of isiXhosa children came into regular contact with picture books, *reading* became synonymous with *education*. The prescription policies of the apartheid regime designated which books were "suitable" and which were "controversial", starting "with directives to the various language boards which were charged with the screening of literature for school and college use", as C.T. Msimang describes. He continues that, "forms had to be filled in to indicate that the book in question did not contain 'offensive stuff'. From there it filtered to the publishers who refused to accept manuscripts that were 'offensive'" (1996:55). Few children's books achieved more than one edition of printing unless they were prescribed for school study, thus solidifying the symbiotic relationship between the publishing industry and education system. It is therefore necessary to include the "educational reader" in a survey of isiXhosa picture books, as it became a genre highly influential on notions of reading, as well as one of the few types of books aimed at an isiXhosa-speaking audience.

This is not to say that other genres of picture books were not developing. Protest writing, both adult and for children, during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, did not, for the most part, make it onto the "approved" school reading lists. Protest literature that had seeped into children's literature in the late 1970s, was subsequently banned, *Journey to Jo'burg* (Beverly Naidoo, 1986) and *The sound of Gora* (Ann Harries, 1980) being two of the well-known works in English. Despite the censorship and the external pressures of international sanctions, South Africans of all ethnicities continued protesting against the apartheid state through literature, with a few brave independent publishers bringing the work to fruition. The Msinga Series of the 1980s, produced by Johannesburg's Ravan Press, marked the beginning of protest literature for children with the publishing of *The story of Mboma* (Mboma Dladla, 1979), about a black boy in Natal going away to school. The Series eventually ended, but not before it published the first full colour picture book by a black author and illustrator – *Our village bus* (1985) by Maria Mabetoa.

The fact of the matter remained that English- and Afrikaans-speaking writers and illustrators were producing the majority of published books. Though sympathetic to the civil rights struggle and very often blunt in criticism against the state, the market (as well as modes of production, including authoring and illustrating) remained in the domain of the *approved* lists. The few black writers writing for children (Es'kia Mphahlele, Njabulo Ndebele, Chris van Wyk, Gcina Mhlope, Don Mattera and Mothobi Mutloatse) had little chance of financial reward for their publications. The "internal censorship" of Africans, writing and reading in their mother tongues (as mentioned earlier with regards to Bantu

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9 C.T. Msimang makes sure to point out that despite its legacy, apartheid did contribute to the *writing down* of isiXhosa: "It cannot be denied that like the missionaries before them, the apartheid administration did a lot in developing African languages and literatures, especially in comparison with the rest of the continent" (1996: 55).

Education stigmatization), dovetailed with state-sanctioned literary censorship. The publishing industry built upon this dynamic, fostering a complicated situation for black writers and artists. "Many authors had to make a choice," wrote C.T. Msimang (1996:55), "either toe the line by avoiding offensive themes or stop writing in African languages. Many opted to write in English and exploit overseas readership." N.N. Mathonsi from the isiZulu Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, writes pointedly, as he negotiates the factors involved in this social, cultural and political dynamic:

> Writers internalised the publishers' requirements and thus became their own censors, and from then on African language literature was never able to throw off its shackles. It is the problem of being convinced that African language literatures are inferior to the western languages that has made censorship in the mind-set easy. Writers allowed the western languages to set the standard by which their writing could be judged, and consequently they found themselves pre-occupied with trying to prove to the white man that their languages were capable of doing what white languages can do ... This disadvantaged them to the extent of creating the impression that they never told any stories in their lives and therefore had to learn storytelling from the white experts. (Mathonsi 2005:8)

It is indicting commentary. To discuss the full implications within the space and focus of this thesis is beyond my scope. However, I include Mathonsi's comments to foreground the contentious literary dynamics undergirding isiXhosa literature. And though there were children's books produced by isiXhosa speakers, as mentioned earlier, the majority of the books aimed at isiXhosa-speaking children came from white writers and illustrators, many of which, were overseas productions translated into African languages with content matter highly irrelevant to the lives of isiXhosa children (see Figures 1.9 – 1.10). This is hardly to say that there should be no global exchanges of classics; my point here is that, without a solid base of quality indigenous classics, in the mother tongue language, with which a child grasps a clear understanding of reading and writing, the subject matter of such translated works remains obsolete. The second genre of books produced for an isiXhosa reader is discussed in the next section. Developed under the auspices of the educational departments, it is referred to here as the "reader series".

Publishing isiXhosa picture books: the "educational look"

In this section I discuss educational readers of the kind encountered by many children in South Africa's primary school setting, but in particular those aimed at African language speakers, specifically isiXhosa children. Many isiXhosa children find the most regular access to books in the school setting. My point here is to discuss the impact of the publishing industry in shaping specific notions of reading through language and imagery. My underlying question is what is *left out* of this paradigm, a point I discuss further in Chapter 3. For the moment, I consider Abebe Zegeye's pointed queries as stimulating my line of inquiry. He asks, "What is African knowledge? Are we talking of European knowledge in Africa, or African knowledge in Africa, or African knowledge in Europe? What are the other forms of knowledge economies existing in Africa that have been marginalised by powerful multi-national publishing houses working with their local agents?" (2005:32.)

I discuss *African* knowledge in regards to narrative style and content in Chapter 3 but carry on further here with the discussion of the publishing industry's influential role in shaping *reading*. Set within this discussion is consideration of the "visuality" involved in reading (a point I pick up for further discussion in Chapter 2). The overlap of language and image within a specific context – in this case, the school setting – constructs a specific paradigm enforced through image, text and the overall design of the book.

With a retail market of private books sales at around five percent, Kathrine van Vuuren (1994:46-47) succinctly sums up the connection made earlier between publishing and education: "Publishers … attempt to produce books that will appeal to libraries and educational departments, all of which are to a greater or lesser extent 'official' institutions (and are sometimes evenly directly funded by the government), and are therefore likely to be conservative in outlook". *Less innovative* is a polite description for the majority of works produced which Jenkins (1993:5) labels as an "industry", noting that "[what] has developed to meet this demand is not conducive to quality".

The publishing industry's market base of the library and school system demands a style for these "reader series" with the intention of educating. The market is a lucrative one for those involved, including authors and illustrators. Heale (2004:30) points out an often-added bonus on top of guaranteed royalties, "the series of readers used in education may have tighter editorial control and guidance for its writers and illustrators than is provided for freelance books". The books' visual panorama spans only as far as the publishing industry allows; the artistic vision more often than not remains hemmed in by notions of "proper education". Jenkins furthers the debate: "As is usual with children's books, sales are to a large extent dependent upon the selection by adults of what they believe should be either good for children or what children should (rather than do) enjoy, so trends in the market reflect adult concerns more than children's tastes". (1993:10).

He alludes to the creation of a design paradigm which I discuss, focusing on several examples of educational readers representative of the kind encountered in classrooms of isiXhosa children (as well as English and Afrikaans children). I include these readers (see Figures 1.11-1.13) because of their status as a series and as subject matter aimed at a black readership. Looking at Figure 1.11, *Just me and my brother*, I wonder what elements lend to the "educational paradigm" that has dissuaded many children from taking a sincere interest in such books. The "red ribbon" on the upper right corner of the book cover signifies not only a connection with HIV/AIDS but also registers it as part of a series (in this case the Red Ribbon series), and therefore repetitive and generic. The format – glossy and thin – adds to the ubiquitous look of a *series*. The illustrations themselves depict noticeably distorted, awkward figures that seem uncomfortable on the page. As I mention in Chapter 2, children make connections with images when they can recognize themselves within the narrative in a meaningful way.

The second book (Figure 1.12), *Old Miss Toto,* is a clear example of the *educational manoeuvring* accomplished by both image and text, including elements such as the red ribbon, the bands of colour on the spine (also signaling "series"), and the somewhat frightening logo on the back (the JAWS lion). The combination creates a disturbing impression, as the red ribbon usually signifies the sombre reality of HIV/AIDS. The illustrations are vague with few graphic vectors to entice the reader (see Chapter 2 for more discussion on vectors and pictorial narrative). Heinemann Publishers, who produce the Red Ribbon series, describe on their website (2006: http://www.heinemann.co.za/Schools/LCArchive/redribbon.asp) that it is "a series [that] builds the values, skills and attitudes children need to cope with HIV and Aids by informing about HIV and Aids, guiding healthy lifestyle choices, inspiring action and encouraging acts of compassion". All told, I question whether the book is appealing and meaningful, one of the main reasons a child should be attracted to a book. Carol Bloch (2002:70), an Early Childhood Development literacy specialist with PRAESA, states that the real power of reading "comes through many varied and meaningful engagements with books". Fiona de Villiers writes positively in a *Mail & Guardian* article that the Red Ribbon Series provides, "an excellent opportunity for team or integrated teaching. It is an opportunity for teachers of the whole school to discuss how it can help in the creation of school Aids policies and others policies, such as anti-discrimination policies, and how it can lead to more creative teaching and learning." (De Villiers 2004: http://www.mg.co.za/articledirect.aspx?area=mg_flat&articleid=192975.) What I ask here is whether the books provide an opportunity for truly engaged reading? I suggest rather that by nature of the design and the target market, the books underscore the notion that black children must "be educated".

The last reader I study (Figure 1.13) is the only book that had visual and narrative appeal. Illustrated by Paddy Bouma, the pictures clearly carry the story, with their sensitive depiction of a believable and rather tragic boy character. The fact that it is a *reader,* with its requisite red ribbon logo and standard format, begs the question of whether or not children would distinguish it as a *story* or as a *reader.* However, the style of the *readers* persists, compartmentalizing as a whole notions of reading and education – what a child should know – into glossy booklets with didactic "instructions" for how to live life. Heale (2004:25) comments how anything other than a safe look poses a threat for the corporate publishing houses: "Most publishers can only consider creating books for children if they come under … 'educational' and can be used for actual teaching. Individual fiction titles are a risk." At the expense of local culture, many of these stories remain unpublished and unread, indicative of what scholar Abebe Zegeye (2005:34) describes as the two "economies" of "knowledge production" fashioned by publishing in Africa:

> The first economy is the formal industry and it has huge financial resources to fund publishing. Publishing comes out of international investors as well as local publishers … The other form of knowledge production relates to what happens in communities where the written word is not so dominant. Here, popular songs and other oral expressions are used to conceptualize and contain popular wisdom and knowledge.

I will discuss further orality in terms of its potential *visuality* in Chapter 2, and then in Chapter 3 in terms of influencing a narrative style.

To paint a broader picture of the publishing industry as it relates to producing educational readers, Hannes van Zyl[10] described, in a 2001 public address, how South African publishing has been impacted by global trends: the worldwide consolidation of the industry, an increasingly dominating role for English, and growth in electronic products (2001:s.p.). Of the industry in Africa as a whole, he noted, "[a]s far as books are concerned, Africa is still, to a large extent, a colonized continent" (2001:s.p.). Regarding the African continent, van Zyl outlines the facts: ninety-five percent of all books published in Africa are school books, compared to the thirty-five percent in industrialized countries. The cost of distributing books to outlying rural areas in Africa often amounts to two-hundred percent of the price of the books, compared to thirty percent in urban areas. Africa reads about twelve percent of the books published worldwide, but creates only three percent of the books read worldwide. Owing to trade tariffs, exchange-rate problems and poor infrastructure, it is often easier for publishers in Africa to deal with publishers in Europe than publishers in neighboring countries (2001:s.p.).

As it stands now, children's books in Afrikaans continue to dominate the local publishing industry. In 2002, Afrikaans books accounted for approximately R79 million of indigenous publishing, compared to R50 million in English; nearly all of the books published in any African language are translations of books written originally in Afrikaans or English (Van Zyl 2001:s.p.). Far-reaching changes have taken place since the late 1990s, primarily the decrease in state spending and all forms of institutional purchasing, as well as a decrease in orders from big booksellers due to a surplus stock. Several publishers have also closed down. Van Zyl compares the amount of educational publishing to general publishing, saying that it is now generally balanced though, lower than what it is in industrialized countries (2001:s.p.).

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[10] Van Zyl until only recently was head of NB-Publishers, the publishing house for such South African publishers as Tafelberg, Human &

Economics of picture book consumption

A discussion about the status of picture books in isiXhosa in the publishing industry requires a simultaneous reckoning of the economics around "consumption" of books beyond the educational setting. Current economic and educational disparities makes purchasing picture books an unrealistic luxury for many isiXhosa-speaking citizens[11]. As Jack Zipes suggests in the following quote, access to the *discourse* around picture books is elusive to those with limited educational backgrounds or restricted economic means. He writes (2001:68):

> [To read] is a privileged act because many families cannot afford [it] … or because the parents do not think it necessary or valuable to have books in the house, especially if there is a television. It is a privileged act because many families do not participate in or have been excluded from the discussions and debates about the issue pertaining to books produced for young readers. These discussions and debates often take place in specialized journals, magazines, newspapers, educational pamphlets, and now on the Web to which they do not have access or want to have access.

Added to these economic barriers is the contention surrounding the *market* for African language books. It remains a heated topic of discussion within and outside of African language speaking communities, indicating there is no overriding paradigm for official incorporation of African languages in intellectual fields. Outside academic circles, in the field implementing literacy programmes through the FWIP programme mentioned earlier in this chapter, Trok experiences first hand the diverging opinions framed by geography and education:

> People who want to read their own languages are people who are in the rural areas – people who are not considered a market. People

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Rousseau, Kwela, and Queillerie.

[11] According to the 2001 Census, in the Western Cape the largest percentage of male and female Black Africans employed (aged 15-65) makes R501-R1,000/month (Statistics South Africa, Census 2001:78); in the rural areas such as the Eastern Cape, the figure is even lower: the per capita (1993 figures) annual income is the second lowest in the country at R4,151 (Statistics South Africa 1997:2).

> who are able to buy books are black people who want to read English – who are educated. But the people who want to read [in their language] who don't have the money to buy [them] are not considered a market because they cannot buy books that cost R100. They are not a market to publishers.[12] (Personal interview personal interview, Cape Town, 27 July 2006.)

"Purchase" involves not only the transaction of money for a book but also the location. With the price of picture books already prohibitive for an average isiXhosa-speaking adult struggling to feed her/his family, the added perceived exclusivity of bookstores only compounds the disassociation with books. Trok encounters this sentiment in her community visits: "These book shops are so exclusive – they're in malls and in upmarket areas" (personal interview, Cape Town, 21 July 2006). She continues, ironically referring to the name of one of the best-selling book chains in South Africa, "[t]here's not Exclusive Books in rural areas and even if there was, it is too upmarket for people to buy the books". Her suggestion for publishers in expanding their market is to stock the corner Spaza shops – to "tap into the markets in rural areas and urban townships. They would be the people who would definitely buy books. [One would have to] not just put the books there, but go out and tell the people the books are there." (Personal interview, Cape Town, 21 July 2006.)

Isabel Hofmeyr continues with this theme in her discussion of book development in South Africa:

> Most accounts of book development point to the fact that there have never been, and still are almost no book outlets in South African townships. However, there is little attention to how in the past, books and print culture were distributed within African communities. This is an area of which we know almost nothing. While Africans had almost no access to bookshops in white areas, there were none the less

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[12] For the Western Cape, of 2,566 households surveyed during 2000 with annual incomes ranging from 0 – R40,000+, the average annual amount spent on reading materials and stationary was R150.91 (R54.34 being spent on books, excluding those for tuition) (Statistics South Africa 2000[a]:34). For the Eastern Cape in the same year, of 3,475 households surveyed with the same income range, an average of R34.71 was spent on reading material and stationary (R7.59 spent on books, excluding those for tuition) (Statistics South Africa 2000(b):36).

> avenues of distribution like the postal service, religious book depots, some bookshops (Vanguard Books is a notable example). Very important as well was the sale of print culture on the street. This pattern of distribution has persisted and newspapers and magazines undoubtedly constitute South Africa's popular literature. (2005: http://www.nlsa.ac.za/docs/bibliophilia8_2005/edhofmeyr.doc)

Just as it was during the period of colonization, when the missionaries came to South Africa, so in present day South Africa much literary activity occurs through popular media as outlined by Hofmeyr, bringing the literary development in African speaking communities full circle in the sense of the parameters of my discussion. Dislocating the points of purchase from "upmarket" connotations promises to be an exciting development in isiXhosa books, picture books included. My intention here is to promote an accessible location where books are available as the "jam" for a potential reader's real "bread and butter".

Moving beyond the individual-buying scenario, the library remains an underdeveloped resource. Elisabeth Anderson (2004:1), Director of the Centre for the Book, has this suggestion for placating the demand aspect of the publishing market: "Large scale purchase by libraries could enable South African publishers to increase print runs and help develop a truly South African culture of literature and reading as well as reducing the cost of books". The 1,200 public libraries in South Africa (albeit unevenly spread out) Anderson states, could become "central node points" for sub-libraries, "giving every South African access to a wide variety of books within walking distance" (2004:1). In a discussion based on her experiences in Bangladesh, Mofidul Hoque (2004:s.p.) further promotes the notion of shifting purchasing power; she mentions schools and communities in addition to libraries, insisting that "for the promotion of good books for children the concept of market should not be dependent on the individuals but on the community itself".

Libraries are not without their own conflicts. Heale (2004:20) writes of earlier times: "There was a growing perception that libraries existed in order to provide information. Information meant facts and facts meant more marks in exams". Libraries can manifest a stigma attached to literacy for the illiterate, many of whom are still suffering the effects of Bantu Education's policies (I enter into a more detailed discussion around literacy and language in Chapter 2). Trok expands on this: "For them, libraries have always been for people who are literate; it has always been about getting an education. You go to a library in order to complete an assignment, or to do some research about a project." (Personal interview, Cape Town, 27 July 2006.) It is part of her task to teach programme participants that reading is *fun*, something much more meaningful and inherently entertaining than the educational readers of their schooling years. FWIP's partnerships with Adult Basic Education Training programmes strengthen a system for people to overcome illiteracy in a practical way.

Locating an inviting library can be difficult, especially in rural areas. Trok says that "[i]f there are libraries, they're small buildings with books so irrelevant to the community. Old books – old, didactic, and in English. Most of them have been donated from Europe, and are irrelevant to the communities." (Personal interview, Cape Town, 27 July 2006.) Once inside the library, the librarian him/herself might not be literate. If they are, and even if they come from a teaching background, Trok comments, "they are not [necessarily] readers … They don't know how to influence reading with children, even the teachers themselves, even the librarians, the ones that I work with. They are not readers and they have no idea. If people ask, 'Where can we get this book?' they have no clue what to do." (Personal interview, Cape Town, 27 July 2006.) The library as a basic service was not promoted during the apartheid era, and continues to be an unclaimed space. Trok muses on this point: "Most of the people live in rural areas or in urban townships. We do with so little space between ourselves – remember the majority of people in this country are Africans. So the space is so little for all of us ... there was no movement between the people, and people were kept away from basic services, the library being one of them." (Personal interview, Cape Town, 27 July 2006.)

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to outline the context of isiXhosa picture books. Starting with an historical overview, the timeline presents the flux in the publishing industry's dynamics in producing isiXhosa literature. IsiXhosa as a written language became a site of contention for language, expression and power. The overarching pressures of colonial forces suppressed a truly authentic body of isiXhosa literature from developing. Racist paradigms in regards to African languages exacerbated difficulties surrounding literacy and the notion of reading for pleasure. In turn, this situation impacted the textual and visual paradigms of picture books intended for isiXhosa-speaking children. In conjunction with the publishing industry, South African education departments dominated the production of these books. The partnership deemed *reading* as *educational*, particularly for African language-speaking children. It has been my argument in this chapter that the educational readers, albeit with the best of intentions, have created further obstacles in fostering an appreciation for reading as a pleasurable activity that stimulates the mind and soul. Compounding this situation is an economic, logistical and cultural reality, where access points for obtaining books (other than the school setting) are either remote or obsolete (libraries) or distant and exclusive (book shops) for the average isiXhosa-speaking parents and children living in rural and even in urban areas.

CHAPTER 2: FORM/LANGUAGES OF PICTURE BOOKS

> It is the merest blindness and even callousness to be prepared to push to the margin the indigenous languages of the majority of our people which … constitute an inestimable cultural legacy and potential on the one hand and the basis of a potentially vast (language) industry, on the other.
>
> Neville Alexander (2000:s.p.)

> That joining together of the objective detachment of art and the vulnerability of love say more about what picture-book art offers children than I could say in many pages; it is objective awareness based on a deep understanding that allows us first to know the world and then to love the world we know.
>
> Perry Nodelman (1988:286)

Any discussion of picture books situates itself between a literary and a visual exercise. The picture book is a unique genre of literature, "a kind of text, a quasi-literary artifact more closely allied to other kinds of texts than to works of visual art" (Lewis 2001:1). To discuss the format of an isiXhosa picture book requires a broad view that incorporates *language* on multiple levels of meaning. Given the historical context described in Chapter 1, the role of isiXhosa picture books in South Africa's literary and cultural landscape is deeply bound to discourse surrounding language and cultural expression. In this chapter, I expand my analysis to examine through a semiotic lens the formal devices of image and text interplay – the *language* of design that shapes a pictorial narrative. Looking at several contemporary examples of isiXhosa picture books, I focus on the visual *vectors,* and *vague* versus *detailed* imagery. From the *visual* I move through semiotic channels to the *cultural* with sociolinguistic considerations of how language impacts access to isiXhosa picture books. I focus specifically on the discourse around language policy in the Western Cape as it relates to the position of African languages, literacy, and visual literacy.

Within this context, I consider the notion of *emergent literacy* in light of children's and my own artistic mediation with writing and language in developing "orthographies". Part of this typographical development involves the *visuality of orality* or the visual renderings of type, as I suggest, that alludes to verbal expressions in an oral story. My point here is that text can cross over into image and so in doing, blurs the line between the *reading and viewing* and the *reading and hearing* of language. Broadening the discussion even further, I move on to consider the social shaping of reading and visual literacy – how cultural and sociological factors shape vision. I include commentary of my own notions of visual literacy in the light of illustrating for isiXhosa readers, where I discuss my illustration work as examples of mediations with image and text relationships.

The design language of narrative

The question I pursue in this section lies at the heart of any semiotic query – as Roland Barthes (1977:32-33) asks: "How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there beyond? Such are the questions that I wish to raise by submitting the image to a spectral analysis of the messages it may contain." I begin my own "spectral analysis" with a discussion of words and illustrations[13] in selected isiXhosa picture books. I use semiotic tools to temporarily unpack image and text in order to discuss the construction of narrative. *Meaning* in picture books is multiple, as Barthes (1977:42) writes: "The letter of the image corresponds in short to the first degree of intelligibility (below which the reader would perceive only lines, forms, and colours) ... everyone from a real society always disposes of a knowledge superior to the merely anthropological and perceives more than just the letter". But in order to get at what is *beneath the letters*, it is necessary to first look at the language of images and design.

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[13] I define illustration as images *deepening*, *counterpointing* or *speaking to* words, in light of Barthes' questions: "Does the image duplicate certain of the information given in the text by a phenomenon of redundancy or does the text add fresh information to the image?" (1977: 38)

"Detailed" versus "vague" and vectors *in the development of narrative*

Walter Benjamin, writing of "the storyteller", claims (1968:87): "[He] takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale." Using image and text, the picture book storyteller (the writer/illustrator) has to invite the reader *beneath* design into the *narrative space*. Through elements of composition and pictorial action, the writer/illustrator encourages the reader to identify with the story. The reader in this case is an isiXhosa-speaking child or adult who may or may not be able to read. Radebe (2005:133) describes this situation, making the link to literacy that I will discuss in more detail in the following sections:

> [T]he semi-literate parent can use the picture-book as an aid to his/her own reading, while sharing an experience with his/her child; the illiterate parent can use the picture-book to create narrative through the context clues of the visual story and in this way share a rich experience with the child; for the adult struggling towards literacy the picture-book provides a unique medium for dealing with complex issues in an accessible way.

The postmodernist shaping of children's picture books in the Western literary world opened up the narrative space, to adults as well as to children, through notions of the *indefinite*, the *unfixed* and the *intertextual* – to how text and image could be read with multiple meanings. These meanings are made in part through mediation of visual images. Donis Dondis (1973:146) writes that "every conceivable visual form has an incomparable ability to inform the observer either about himself and his own world, or about other times and other places, faraway and unfamiliar". The glue that solidifies the reader's connection to the narrative is the "believability" of its images. "Children cannot be lied to," writes Thuli Redebe (2005:128) in her article about South African children's literature in the 1990s. She continues, "literature for young readers should at all times be honest in acknowledging the world for what it is". In the space of a picture book, I argue that it is the use of detail based on keen observation that makes an illustration honest and credible.

The book *Isipho sikaThandeka* (see Figure 2.1) is a case in point. Created for the Centre for the Book's FWIP literacy programme as described in Chapter 1, this book presents a rich trove of details for a child's eye to follow: the taxi registration plate, the "clinic" sign, the corrugated tin sidings of the cash store, the throng of chickens, dogs, children, and the *mama* with a basket balanced on her head. The "indexical" photographs running down the left and right sides of the double-page spread give the reader items to look for, making reading an interactive game. *Abahlobo abathathu* (see Figure 2.2) also provides similar details which describe familiar scenes: the *mealies* spilling out of a plastic shopping bag, the surfboard and accompanying leash, even the frenetic nature of the taxi ride describe a South African environment. Victor Watson (1996:151) writes about the acuity pre-readers and readers have for noticing such details: "The picture on the page becomes a framed treasure-chest of details to be discovered and recognized, to be delved into in no pre-ordained sequence and with no predictable outcome".

Crucial in the use of details is their placement as *vectors* to inspire the narrative. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996:57) offer a concise definition of the term in their seminal text, *Reading images: the grammar of visual design*: "The hallmark of a narrative visual 'proposition' is the presence of a vector: narrative structures always have one, conceptual structures never do ... [T]hese vectors are formed by depicted elements that form an oblique line, often a quite strong, diagonal line." Eve Bearne (1996:xvi) furthers this explanation saying "[i]n picture books, vectors, gaze, colour, shading and spatial organization act as visual connectiveness and conjunctions; repeated visual motifs echo the text cohesion in narrative verbal text created by lexical repetition or ties". Visual vectors move the reader through the narrative space. In Figure 2.1, the man riding a bicycle is one vector, moving diagonally across the page, while the minibus taxi is a second vector, moving in the opposite direction. These create a tension, as well as a path for the reader's eye to follow. In Figure 2.2, the reader's eye follows the literal vector of the road that journeys off the page, beckoning the reader to move with the road to the next page. All the while, the vectors weave a path through the narrative by virtue of the pictorial composition.

The images under discussion are specific because they describe a South African landscape. They avoid what Dondis (1973:28) describes as *visual ambiguity* – "like verbal ambiguity, [it] obscures not only compositional intent, but also meaning. The natural balancing process would be slowed down, confused, and most important, unresolved by the meaningless spatial phraseology". South African children's book researcher, Heale, uses the phrase (email interview, 7 July 2006) "vaguely African" to describe those attempts to represent "Africa" *authentically* yet generically.[14] By virtue of the details, readers recognize themselves through a landscape or experience familiar to them. Thuli Radebe aptly describes several of these contemporary cultural landscapes:

> South African children today and throughout the 1990s have been, and are still faced with world fashions, international as well as different variations of local music, easily available drugs, thriving malls and suburbs, deteriorating city centres and towns pressured by street hawkers, poverty and excessive wealth. (Radebe 2005:125)

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[14] Samantha Naidu describes this notion: "The reader is given something to identify with but is also reassured of the 'authenticity' of the tales" (2001: 22).

The Keteka Series produced by the Early Learning Resource Unit[15] effectively presents sensitive and humourous photographs reflecting the lives of several children in contemporary South Africa. Small details are recorded (see Figure 2.3), such Cindy's sly grin as she buttons her shirt, the slouching, easy poses of children sitting at a table (see Figure 2.4), and the mysterious "3" on Mhlangali's hand. These engage the reader with a personal view of the characters' lives. The written narrative in four languages is colour-coded for easy identification, allowing the reader to compare the languages and hunt for associations.

Balance in a composition deepens even further a reader's engagement with the page as Dondis (1973:23) describes here:

> Balance is as fundamental in nature as it is to man. It is the state opposite collapse … In visual expression or interpretation, this process of stabilization imposes on all things seen and planned a vertical 'axis' with a horizontal secondary referent which together establish the structural factors that measure balance … It is an unconscious constant.

In my own illustrations for *uTshepo mde/Tall enough* by Mhlobo Jadezweni, I attempted to create a compositional space composed of specific and curious details to engage a child's attention (see Figure 2.6). Within the composition, I made space for the reader's own construction of the narrative. The chair and the bird remain unexplained (the chair is repeated from the previous page as a metaphoric link with uTshepo's transition; the unmentioned bird is later revealed in the story). In both cases, the reader has to create her/his own meaning for these images without textual references (Jadezweni & Morris 2006).

Helen Oxenbury's illustrations in *Kakhulu* capture emotional detail in well-designed compositions (see Figure 2.7). The characters exude emotion through their captured pauses rendered succinctly by Oxenbury's detailed and careful observations. The reader considers each expression, from the impish child, to the placid father, to the thoughtful aunt or mother, and the stoic grandmother. Oxenbury has considered the smallest of elements from the soles of the father's shoes to the grandmother's handbag to the gesture of the curious woman at the window. Through this keen and sensitive observation, the reader cannot help but remain engaged. Oxenbury takes the same care with the typography (see Figure 2.7), emphasizing sound with capitalized letters surrounded by sufficient white space that allows the reader to pause and consider the words.

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[15] ELRU is a multi-skilled organization working in the field of Early Childhood Development across all provinces. The books in the series are: *Antjie, Azhar, Cindy, Mhlanguli,* and *Zimikhitha*, each profiling a child from various backgrounds in South Africa, their names alluding to

The language of access

Picture books in isiXhosa present the chance to study the socio-economic and educational factors that influence the process of reading. In this section I consider how aspects of colonialism and apartheid, as outlined in Chapter 1, have affected the current use and consideration of African languages in South African classrooms. I consider the classroom setting because it is very often the place where many isiXhosa-speaking children have their first contact with picture books. I examine how, since the aftermath of Bantu Education's "separate and unequal strategies", there persists a chasm between spoken and written, "official" and "unofficial" languages for black South Africans. During the Bantu Education era, policy attached stigma to "mother-tongue instruction", as black school children were indoctrinated with a curriculum of social inferiority. Neville Alexander (2000:6) writes how, at the same time, an internal stigma had already developed: "With very few exceptions, there were no systematic attempts during the

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their ethnicities and the cover photographs setting the narrative in rural or urban geographies.

colonial era to use any African language in high-state functions, not even in domains such as secondary and tertiary education."

For my discussion in this section, I concentrate on how the status of isiXhosa as an official language affects current trends in literacy in regards to isiXhosa picture books,[16] in terms of the role of language in the image/text dynamic, as well as its shaping perceptions of books. It is my argument here that the "cultural capital" of language, with its inherent power dynamics, necessitates a deeper discussion of picture books. As soon as a written text lands in an individual's hands (adult or child), questions about literacy, consumption and perception ensue.

That language embodies power is obvious – in its most essential role, it allows for communication. In the case of colonialism, language carries with it clear cultural and economic ramifications. Neville Alexander (2000:11), writing from within the South African context, states: "[I]t is an indisputable fact that in the post-colonial situation, the linguistic hierarchy built into the colonial system led to knowledge of the conquerors' language becoming a vital component of the 'cultural capital' of the neo-colonial elite". The status of isiXhosa in current language policy speaks to a history of colonialism and apartheid policies. Researchers, Mbatha and Plüddemann (2004:5), write: "Despite the officialisation of isiXhosa and other African languages following the ushering in of the democratic dispensation in 1994 and the explicit promotion of multilingualism in the language-in-education policy for public schools, African languages continue to have a Cinderella status in education."[17]

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16 This thesis does not attempt to be a quantitative study on literacy and linguistics in South Africa, as it regards to isiXhosa speakers. For further enquiry, I recommend PRAESA at the University of Cape Town; Thomas van der Walt and others at the University of South Africa. My involvement in this topic is that of an illustrator seeking the wider socio-cultural and linguistic impacts made by the picture book.

17 Factors affecting language also include pedagogy in the classroom; Mbatha and Plüddemann (2004: 15) write, "Large numbers of learners appear to have been alienated at primary school and junior secondary school levels by grammar-based teaching approaches to XAL [mother-tongue language] that tended to emphasize structure and system at the expense of communication and cultural awareness". I mention this in light of children's acquisition of books in isiXhosa that very often is restricted to the classroom.

Going deeper than the 1997 language policy, which promotes dual-medium instruction until African languages "can hold their own with English and Afrikaans in high-status functions throughout the economy and the society" (Alexander 2000:17), I posit here that the potential is great for incorporating the full dimension of each language into the creation of texts. It is not only an empowering act but also an exciting one for writers, illustrators, and readers. The aims of my research are in accordance with Mbatha and Plüddemann (2004:17) who insist on "the ever-present need for an explosion of quality African-languages books". As Alexander states, "[b]ecause stories are self-contextualizing, sustained symbolic representation of possible worlds," he continues, "they provide the child with the opportunity to learn some of the essential characteristics of written language. Reading and discussing stories help the child to cope with the more disembedded uses of spoken language that the school curriculum demands." (2000:8-9) I save for later discussion the form, as well as the modes of production, for potential future picture books that express the richness of a language's storytelling paradigm.

Children, literacy, and isiXhosa picture books

At the heart of reading is a search for "overlap" – for what Eve Bearne describes as "seeking a way of characterising the 'inner' and 'outer' experiences of reading" (1996:xi). In the school environment, where many isiXhosa-speaking children obtain access to picture books, language is the means for accessing the pleasure of reading. Neville Alexander (1999:20) posits "in a plurilingual country, it ought to be axiomatic that the languages of the citizens should be seen as assets or resources to be used in the most effective manner for the full development of all the people". The "full development" of people carries with it the notion of language as an intrinsic element in intellectual development. For children especially, reading not only imparts knowledge but also fosters such qualities as imagination and self-understanding, and contributes to a child's growth by stimulating the sense of touch, sight and hearing – three of the main channels through which people learn (Radebe 2005:122.) As opposed to a "whole language" approach to literacy, as used in the United States and Europe, Neville Alexander (1999:9) points out that "in the many print-scarce environments of the South, we are still gripped by the erroneous belief that we can teach reading and writing in social and cultural vacuums, as sets of skills which will constitute the 'tools' for reading and writing".

How does the suggested multiplicity of languages impact on the *learning to read* process for young children? It begs the question: what is the capacity of a child to learn to read in a language other than the mother tongue? "With having to learn to read in English as opposed to reading in their mother tongue," writes PRAESA researcher, Carol Bloch (2002:68), "children have to 'swap' concentration as they learn the relationship between familiar oral sounds and words in their printed form, with the new strange sounds and words in print form." Later in this chapter, I will pick up this discussion of writing and orality as it relates to the development of both literacy and visual literacy. For now, I maintain the focus on the pedagogy around literacy. Despite the revamping of the new Curriculum 2005 pedagogy, writing often still entails what Carol Bloch sums up as "doses of essentially mindless exercises" that have children forming letters, and copying words and sentences for two or three years. The result is that many learners have never written for any real purpose or desire (Bloch 2002:68).

Bloch's criticism of the standard school approach to literacy stems from the ultimate conclusion that, in Africa as a whole, as children make the transition from oral to written word formation, most young children develop a *decontextualized* and *meaningless* relationship with literacy. I posit that quality picture books (using the formal elements which I have attempted to describe in the first part of Chapter 2) foster the opposite; namely highly *contextualized* and *meaningful* relationships with literacy and with books themselves. *The book* then takes on a new identity whose materiality encompasses intellectual, creative development, and ultimately social empowerment. As a *text*, the book fits into a broader category which D.F. McKenzie (2002:29) defines as "verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data, in the forms of maps, prints, and music ... everything in fact from epigraphy to the latest form of discography". Most importantly, this definition refers to a broader conception, "not to any specific material as such, but to its woven state, the web or texture of the materials" (2002:29). The texture of the picture book comes from words and image combinations that form a narrative. Giving children access to these books necessitates giving them the best tools possible – literacy in their mother tongue and visual literacy as it relates to understanding pictures. Reading then moves out of the sphere of hegemonic power and into the realm of personal power, granting a reader access not only to information but to the imagination and the creative potential within. At its most meaningful level, as Paulo Freire wrote in *Cultural action for freedom,* "'the literacy process must relate speaking the word to transforming reality, and to man's role in this transformation'" (cited in Grigg 2003:132).

Visual literacy and multi-literacies in picture book reading

The picture book requires combined modes of visual and textual communication. Literacy[18] and visual literacy[19] are requirements in the reading of a picture book. What I ask in this section is how *meaningful writing* can foster literacy and visual literacy. I consider how sound/orality can be included as a multi-modal, multi-dimensional approach to reading. Going deeper than the *signs*[20] of a picture book, I consider how a reader conceptually and physically develops a meaningful relationship with reading.

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[18] "Literacy means that a group shares the assigned meanings of a common body of information. Visual literacy must operate somewhat within these same boundaries. It can be no more rigidly controlled than verbal communication, no more and no less." (Dondis 1973:x)

[19] Dondis' definition of visual literacy is the following: "Its purposes are the same as those that motivated the development of written language: to construct a basic system for learning, recognizing, making, and understanding visual messages that are not negotiable by all people, not just those specially trained, like the designer, the artist, the craftsman, and the aesthetician" (1973:x). The term is problematic, as one researcher and illustrator so aptly pointed out in her thesis on the topic of visual literacy in the field of educational illustration. Heather Moore writes, "[The] lack of clear cut borders and definitions means that terms and methodology to do with visual literacy are still not generally agreed upon, making it difficult to formulate research problems. Nevertheless, many researchers refer to visual literacy as if it is a complete construct, perhaps unaware that they are working within their own idiosyncratic, synthesized definition of visual literacy." (2001:7) She speaks to the fact that my own idiosyncratic vision and expression are inherent in this discussion, though I do argue that these particulars are grounded in a Western paradigm in my case, shaped by a childhood of reading and looking at images.

In South Africa, as with any nation dealing with the confluence of many languages, I suggest that multi-lingual picture book reading encourages multi-literacies.[21] Despite the fact that we are living in an increasingly visual world, as demonstrated by the omnipresence of television, cinema, and the World Wide Web, *textuality* is still very much integrated into our daily lives.[22] I suggest here that the isiXhosa picture book can capitalize upon and encourage visual literacy, useful for mediation with the visual environment of daily life. Visual literacy spawns the ability to interrogate the "truth" of things *seen,* questioning the authority of visual representations and allowing for the construction of new modes of interpretation. At the very least, visual literacy allows one the choice to believe or not to believe what one sees.

Expanding notions of literacy to include its social context is a topic I pick up in the last section of this chapter. For now, I end this section positing that for a child to obtain full command of visual and written literacy, they need to develop a meaningful relationship with reading and writing.

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[20] I apply David Crow's definitions to the signs of picture book images: *denotation* is what is pictured; and *connotation* is how it is pictured (2003:56). I also add here Barthes' (1977:43) commentary on style as forming meaning: "[D]oes the coding of the denoted message have consequences for the connoted message? It is certain that the coding of the literal prepares and facilitates connotation since it at once establishes a certain discontinuity in the image: the 'execution' of a drawing itself constitutes a connotation."

[21] Michèle Anstey (2002:446) writes that "being multiliterate requires not only the mastery of communication, but an ability to critically analyse, deconstruct, and reconstruct a range of texts and other representational forms. It also requires the ability to engage in the social responsibilities and interactions associated with these texts." She refers to the technological angle of literacy (internet, television) within the larger discussion of postmodernist children's books as a useful way to teach the concept of multi-literacies.

[22] Barthes (1977:38) wrote: "[T]oday, at the level of mass communications, it appears that the linguistic message is indeed present in every image: as title, caption, accompanying press article, film, dialogue, comic strip balloon. Which shows that it's not very accurate to talk of a civilization of the image – we are still, and more than ever, a civilization of writing, writing and speech continuing to be the full terms of the informational structure."

Orthographies of the unknown and emergent literacy

As a non-isiXhosa-speaking illustrator, I view the language literally as *letters* – as more of a pictorial (text as image) and aural experience than as a language in which I can communicate. Language and its role in the picture book forces the illustrator to distinguish between reading and viewing. As much as words are graphic symbols themselves, they string together in a system with specific communicative intentions. The linear sequence of a sentence (one word follows the next in preordained relationships) ultimately creates a visual pattern. It is this *visuality* of language that I pursue by considering visual/verbal cross-overs: from oral to written, from symbol to language, and ultimately from foreign to familiar. It is the ongoing pursuit of an illustrator seeking to effectively marry image with text to creating a visual/verbal discourse.[23] Dondis (1973:8) writes that, "[t]he evolution of language started with pictures, progressed to pictographs, self-explaining cartoons, to phonetic units, and then to the alphabet … Each step of the way was, no doubt, a progression toward more efficient communication." In my own attempts at communicating in a language that is not my own, I fall back on childlike notions of language, reenacting learning how to read and write. In a sense, I create my own *orthography,* based on sight and composition, and what I know of the *sound* of the language. The words of the isiXhosa language, of which I have only rudimentary understanding, appear to me primarily as collections of angles, straight lines, dots and patches of colour. There is a visual rhythm, but until I learn the syntax, the letters remain a visual composition (see Figure 2.8). This interpretation speaks both to my identity (foreign) and to hazy distinctions between image and text. In working with language, I meld image and text into a symbiotic relationship based on dynamic expression and composition (see Figure 2.9).

In a similar vein, children can relate to visual and oral juxtapositions. "In their writing," Eve Bearne (1996:xvii) explains, "children reflect multi-modality of their reading, depicting sound as part of the pictorial element of text construction, making their meanings clear through written word, image, sound in dialogue and as depicted in images". The term "emergent literacy", coined in the 1970s, describes the notion that through personal interactions with printing and drawing letters and shapes, children tap into their own strategic learning capacity. Researcher, Martin Prinsloo (2005:8-9), gives a detailed account below:

> Children’s early writing efforts, through their own explorations in informal, home-based drawing and play-writing activities, included invented spelling systems, or *invented writing*, that were strikingly similar in their differences from established orthography, and phonetically consistent. The consistency in the kinds of ‘mistakes’ the children in the study made (e.g., spelling the word *drag* as *jag*; using E for ‘short i’ as in SET for sit, A for ‘short e’ as in BAG for beg) were neither random nor the result of auditory/phonological immaturity or deficit. Instead, they were quite logical, given the knowledge base the children were operating from.

My argument here is that children develop an intrinsic relationship with literacy and expression when they write, draw, and letter of their own accord. I also argue that *lettering* and writing can be a possible mode for visually bridging oral to written form. It is a multi-modal attempt not only to incorporate influences of orality but also to initiate a child's own mediation with *image* and *text,* and encourage both literacy and visual literacy. In my own work, I relate to this form of representation: the vitality and directness of an expressive line to shape a story.

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23 Susanne Langer writes poetically, "[A]ll language has a form which requires us to string out our ideas even though their objects rest one within the other; as pieces of clothing that are actually worn one over the other have to be strung side by side on the clothesline. This

Visual language of orality

Children's picture books suitably reflect the influences of orally performed stories. Jenkins (1993:21) explains below:

> [Picture books] usually give the narrator a strong voice and personality and even, in some cases … an historical context. In their dramatic presentations, freed from inhibitions of academic solemnity, writers ... use questions, exclamations and direct address to the audience to convey something of the atmosphere of the original interplay between narrator and audience.

The main differences between a performed story and a written story are the verbal interplay and overtones, the stylistic structure and content, and the performative devices used to convey meaning to the audience (Finnegan 1970:13-14). Ruth Finnegan (1970:10) elaborates further that the critical differentiating element – the audience – is "directly involved in the actualization and creation of a piece of oral literature". Orally performed stories are not without their own *image-making* devices. Harold Scheub (1996:53) comments that:

> Image is composed of words that are given a unique framework by means of rhythm, intonation, and gesture, by body movement, which tends to dance, and by verbal drama, which inclines to song. Image is a visualized action or set of actions evoked in the minds of the audience by verbal and nonverbal elements arranged by the performer.

The body which Scheub describes as "those narratives in which movement is engaged in by the artist and her audience[,] ... revealing the forms and their interrelationships" (Scheub 1996: 28). The body as a *text* is a fascinating notion; I focus specifically on Scheub's lines – "visualized action" and "nonverbal elements" in the context of my discussion here. Though there may be no way to repeat *pictorially* and

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property of verbal symbolism is known as discursiveness." (Langer 1942:81) verbally the interaction between the performer and audience, I argue that *writing* can express oral *inflections.* The body as text, as mentioned above, frames the image through rhythm, sound and gesture. I suggest here that *writing* frames the performance through visual elements of line, angle, size and composition.

Writing as a technology[24] says Ong, is the "reduction of dynamic sound to quiescent space, the separation of word from the living present, where alone spoken words can exist" (Ong 2002 (b):107). "Linguistic transference" that Hannah Arendt says "enables us to give material form to the invisible…and thus to render it capable of being experienced" (Benjamin 1968:20), enables a reader to experience a formerly oral story, but in the process, of course, the narrative changes by virtue of the medium and subsequent interaction with the reader. *Intertextuality* then becomes a possibility: can orality be displayed visually? A performance cannot be mimicked on the page but there can be visual influences that refer to the expression. In isiXhosa culture, as Pallo Jordan (1973:xi) writes in the introduction to A.C. Jordan's collection of isiXhosa folktales:

> [T]he ethos of traditional society was enshrined in an oral legal, religious, and literary tradition through which the community transmitted from generation to generation its customs, values, and norms. The poet and the storyteller stood at the centre of this tradition, as the community's chroniclers, entertainers, and collective conscience.

The isiXhosa picture book offers a dynamic format for the confluence of the oral and written, the visual and the performed. Perry Nodelman (1988:279) writes of picture books in this regard: "[T]hey focus on action, they are sparse in physical detail, and they move from highly detailed moment to highly detailed moment by means of quickly described action"; he continues by saying "[c]onsequently, the addition of pictures is a logical move; it transforms a successful oral text into a successfully written one without actually changing the text itself" (1988:279).

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[24] Walter Ong's definition is that alphabetic writing especially calls for, "the use of tools and other equipment: styli or brushes or pens, carefully prepared surfaces such as paper, animal skins, strips of wood, as well as inks or paints, and much more" (2002(b):107).

In our collaboration, writer Mhlobo Jadezweni and I sought to portray aspects of orality in the production of the picture book *uTshepo mde/Tall enough* (Jadezweni & Morris 2006). Using both a narrative style that accentuates dialogue, and a visual style that highlights expressive typography (see Figure 2.10), we include *sound* into the story in such instances as using "E-e-m-b-o-o" and "Vuth-u-u! Vuth-u-u!" (see Figure 2.10). Jenkins (1993:21) comments on orality as reflected in narrative elements: "The writers can presume to attempt to convey, in their original form, other elements of the oral delivery, such as songs, chants, riddles, repeated phrases, onomatopeic sounds, and idiosyncrasies of speech that are often excluded or transmuted in more serious translations". Jadezweni incorporated this aspect of storytelling with inclusion of the bird's little song as shown in Figure 2.10. Inviting sound into the narrative space, as Eve Bearne (1996:xxiii) suggests, is "a way of seeing; listening to a story or a piece of music often calls up images in the mind. Still images can signal movement and moving images suggest stillness". That stillness perhaps then opens further the compositional space described earlier in this chapter and allows the reader to enter and develop her/his own relationship with the narrative.

The social language of reading

There is no one way to see, just as there is no one way to draw or write. Picture books entail both seeing and reading, as I have argued through this chapter. For the sake of my discussion here, I deepen the concepts of literacy and visual literacy to consider their *social shaping.* "Most people, most of the time think in language," writes Colin Grigg (2003:129), in his essay, "The painted word: literacy through art", "as if a voice was speaking in their head, with the earlier mode of consciousness suppressed, so that the way we see and experience the world is profoundly determined by the deep structures of languages we speak."[25] I argue here that this deeper structure of language shapes vision itself and the very notions of *reading* and *literacy*.

Hofmeyr explains how the notion of literacy can be expanded in regards to historic considerations of isiXhosa culture. She writes of the concept of literacy in 1800s in regards to the legendary isiXhosa prophet Ntsikana, "regarded as the forerunner of Christianity in the Eastern Cape", and how he evolved notions of literacy: "Like many early converts, he experienced the well-documented phenomenon of miraculous literacy, in which texts are revealed by divine agency. In Ntsikana's case, hymns appeared to him on the inside of his cloak and on the tail brush of his cow" (2005:3).

My point here is that there are as many ways to *read* as there are to *see*. Again I return to visual literacy – tracing back to the specific way that someone *sees*. Dondis (1973:20) writes of the initial stages of seeing:

> Meaning in visual message-making lies not only in the cumulative effects of the arrangement of the basic elements but also in the perceptual mechanism that is universally shared by the human organism … [W]e intend meaning … Seeing is another and separate step in visual communication. It is the process of absorbing information into the nervous system through the eyes, the sense of sight. This process and capacity is shared by all people on a more or less common basis, finding its significance in terms of shared meaning.

The how of seeing fits into a deeper realm of cultural workings as forwarded by Pierre Bourdieu. His ideas that there is a rift between the modes of *subjectivism and*

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[25] American linguist's, Noam Chomsky's, contribution to the fields of linguistics and psychology cannot be underestimated. I have space for merely alluding to the 'deep structures' and associations in language he brought to the shaping of linguistics; as Macey describes, "Chomsky ... maintains that language is an expression of human creativity, and therefore, human freedom" (2000:59).

objectivism[26] and that the vacillation between the two forces shapes our [humans'] perceptions requires an interdisciplinary approach to *vision* that includes the who, what, when and where of seeing and reading. Bourdieu combined the two terms, announcing "objectivity of the subjective" (1993:4) and this notion I draw into my study to broaden the critical interpretation of isiXhosa picture books. I look at not only the writing, illustrating, publishing, and consumption of these works, but what Bourdieu might call the "cultural semiology" or "the networks of relationships between texts". I posit that these *networks* are partly comprised of the reader's *own* relationships. The shape of their *own* perception and vision determines the *shape* of these texts.[27]

Since a picture book requires both visual and verbal intelligence, I question here what are the modes of perception an illustrator must recognize to reach a child through the narrative space. It is a space mediated by culture, language and society, and ultimately accessible through visual and verbal communication. It is a query that shapes my artistic motivations: a perpetual paradoxical search for the unmediated narratives of childhood. Eve Bearne (1996:xiv) speaks to the perceptual habits of children, a practice to which I can relate in my own art making:

> Any child reading now is likely to invest verbal texts with sounds, voices, gestures, and colour. Translation and transduction, as part of an integrated theory, help to bring together the inner meaning-making of the imagination which draws on metaphor and symbol with the social nature of sharing those meanings within and across communities and cultures.

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26 Johnson, in his introduction to Bourdieu's work, defines these terms: subjectivism "represents a form of knowledge about the social world based on the primary experience and perceptions of individuals"; objectivism "attempts to explain the social world by bracketing individual experience and subjectivity and focusing instead on the objective conditions which structure practice independent of human consciousness" (Bourdieu 1993:3-4).

27 David Macey highlights Bourdieu's considerations succinctly: the "'network of relationships between the texts', or 'intertextuality', and the – very abstractly defined – relationships between this network and the other systems functioning in the 'system-of-systems' which constitutes the society" (Macey 1993:33).

Social shaping of visual literacy

To develop a narrative picture book space for an isiXhosa child, I must consider the cultural shaping of visual perception as essential to my work in, at the very least, realizing that there is a vast range of visual and textual interpretations. Susanne Langer (1942:71-72) writes of this operative belief:

> A concept is all that symbol really conveys. But just as quickly as the concept is symbolized to us, our own imagination dresses it up in a private, personal conception, which we can distinguish from the communicable public concept only by a process of abstraction. Whenever we deal with a concept we must have some particular presentation of it, through which we grasp it.

Cultural framing, called *ideolects* and *lexicons* by Barthes,[28] and *schemata* by Perry Nodelman,[29] shapes each person's visual translations[30] of narrative. I use several examples for discussion, set within a local framework of isiXhosa speakers. One of the isiXhosa-speaking illustrators from the team that produced *Amabali ethu/Our stories*, a collaborative picture book of folktales from Kayamandi in Stellenbosch, describes his own experiences of *visuality* that have thus far shaped his visual literacy. Lucky Mahlaba described the comic books he read as a child (*Asterix & Obelix* and *Tin Tin*) at the public library in Strand, where he attended primary school. At that time he also started drawing, despite the lack of materials and instruction in his primary school. He created his own comics, commenting that they "helped with my reading", and describes that when one reads a comic book and follows a lead character, "you become more interested because you become *him* [the character]" (personal interview, 22 July 2006, Kayamandi).

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[28] "There is a plurality and a co-existence of lexicons in one and the same person, the number and identity of these lexicons forming in some sort of person's idiolect. The image, in its connotation, is thus constituted by an architecture of signs drawn from a variable depth of lexicons (of idiolects); each lexicon, no matter how 'deep', still being coded, if, as is thought today, the psyche itself is articulated like a language." (Barthes 1977:46-47)

[29] The pre-existing structures that direct our perceptual activity, "so that to 'see' objects is to match the actual meaningless images of them that our eyes provide with the categories we have already established" (Nodelman 1988:8).

[30] Colin Grigg explains this translation process: "[w]hat the viewer sees initially is pre-language, a physical, aesthetic response, but at the moment the brain attempts to process this response, language cuts in and asks for a translation" (2003:130). He speaks of the linguistic

Lucky's conceptions of meaning are as subjective and culturally based as his definitions of various terms in visual communication. He defined drawing as communicating without speaking, reading as "getting knowledge", seeing as "I'm looking now", and looking as an "action you take, something you plan" (personal interview, 22 July 2006, Kayamandi.) These sorts of differences in interpretation of visuals can lead to perceived "difficulties" in communication. Perry Nodelman (1988:16) describes more specifically here:

> [A]ll of the difficulties people of other cultures have with pictures that successfully represent reality for Europeans and Americans finally boil down to this key fact: while physiology tells us that our eyes all show us the same world in the same way, our culture and our history force us to interpret the eye's images in different ways and thus to see different worlds.

Researcher Kathy Arbuckle describes this dynamic pointedly in her article about Adult Basic Education Training materials for low-literate readers in South Africa. She (Arbuckle 2004:451) writes that "[p]eople who see very few pictures do not develop the kind of visual literacy skills that are often taken for granted ... In addition to being able to identify the subject of a picture, there is the matter of how the subject is interpreted in terms of the scale, perspective and the space within the edges ('frame') of the picture." She comments on specific images (see Figure 2.12), images made from materials used to illustrate instructional texts. She illuminates in the images' accompanying captions that, "as these examples show, the conventions associated with reading pictures are not always familiar to, or understood by, the people for whom they are intended" (2004:453).

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method that Barthes called 'fixing' chains of signified meanings, "as a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques" (1977:39).

I include her discussion in alluding to the multiplicity involved in both reading and in seeing; it is my attempt to contextualize the notion of perception. In summing up this section, I consider Randal Johnson's term "radical contextualization" in reference to Pierre Bourdieu's term (1993:9) that "takes into consideration not only works themselves, seen relationally within the space of available possibilities and within the historical development of such possibilities, but also producers of works in terms of their strategies and trajectories, based on their individual and class habitus, as well as their objective position within the field." I carry this discussion further by considering my own "positioning", and the shape of my own visual literacy.

Artistic and cultural motivations: the shape of my own visual literacy

Critical to any discussion centred on multiculturalism, multimodality and multi-literacy is the inclusion of my own artistic positioning. I agree full-heartedly with Randal Johnson (cited in Bourdieu 1993: 20), in his introduction to Pierre Bourdieu's *The field of cultural production,* on the "need to objectify and analyze the relationship between the analyzer and his or her object of analysis. Failure to do so frequently results in the analyzer assuming a privileged position (always self-attributed) and effacing relations of power that may be inherent in the relationship." As an illustrator involved in the production of an original isiXhosa picture book *uTshepo mde/Tall enough* (Jadezweni & Morris 2006), I am now contributing to a larger literary and artistic landscape. My artistic motivations and perceptions have everything to do with the framing of this research, the ensuing discussions, and ultimately the manner in which I illustrate. The formal elements of image and text relationships are the external display of an internal motivation. I seek a connection with childhood through the children around me, as well as through mediations with image and text relationships, attempting to access *unmediated* narrative spaces. I seek communication – both exterior and interior, both visual and written. I am equally a traveller, an illustrator, and a writer, seeking the overlap where, when jarred by my own paradigms, my subjectivity and objectivity collide (see Figure 2.13). In illustrating a picture book for children, I create a journey for a child's imagination. In illustrating *the process* of illustrating, I create a journey through my own imagination and concepts of "foreignness" into self-inquiry. In the following and final chapter, I take up for further discussion the artistic appeal of the *content* of a picture book, especially when it relates to the *subversive* and the *carnivalesque* elements which I describe as sparking my attraction to African folk tales.

CHAPTER 3: CONTENT AS SUBVERSIVE

> His gift is the ability to relate his life; his distinction, to be able to tell his entire life. The storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story. WALTER BENJAMIN (1968:107)

> Artists run into difficulty because they're dealing with our most upright, uptight business, which is the industry called childhood.
>
> MAURICE SENDAK (Watson 1996:45)

An illustrator's concept of "subversive"

As an illustrator, I am attracted to children's picture books because the best of them are ironic works, laced with metanarratives, 'double speak', sub-texts,[31] humour, and very often, 'inappropriate behaviour'. As I argue in the following chapter, what is at the heart of my attraction to these books, and to African folk tales, is *subversivity* in various forms. Using the Oxford Dictionary's definition of *subvert* – to "undermine the power and authority of an established system or institution." *(The Paperback Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002. Sv. subvert) – I attempt in this chapter to detail how and why South African folk tales appeal to me as 'subversive'. Inherently they undermine my Western perceptions and institutionalized notions of literature and childhood. In this chapter I use the work of children's literature researchers to comment on the subversive nature of folktales that appeal to the authentic nature of childhood itself.

Childhood as a cultural construct maintains an idyllic and innocent glow through Western adult eyes. I consider these notions of childhood in the light of African folk tales, using the work of Samantha Naidu, in an attempt to challenge not only the discourse surrounding African tales but also Westernized notions of narratives for children. I ask the question what *is* "South African" literature in regards to the body of my research. By considering how isiXhosa performance elements of the oral *iintsomi* or folk tales[32] can potentially influence a children's picture book, I offer suggestions in the wider discourse surrounding *African* literature. Finally, in this chapter, I look at how collaborative literary production can challenge notions of individual authorship and artistry. The underlying motivation of this chapter as a whole, in its uncovering of "subversivity", is my deeper artistic quest to perpetually subvert my own paradigms – to continuously question through image and text that which I hold to be true.

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[31] Terry Eagleton defines: "a text which runs within it [the text], visible at certain 'symptomatic' points of ambiguity, evasion or overemphasis, and which we as readers are able to 'write'" (1983:178).

Subverting Western notions of childhood

The Western world underestimates children's perception and capabilities. Having spent significant time now in South Africa and in other parts of Africa, and also in Latin America, and having been raised from childhood in the United States, I have witnessed that there are as many notions of what a child should or should not, can or cannot do as there are culturally distinct people. In the space of this thesis, I focus my inquiry along literary and visual lines considering how picture books have the potential to challenge Western assumptions. These cultural beliefs about childhood encourage us to cling to innocence as a sacrosanct space. We (speaking as a Westerner) guard this innocence through censorship (officially in the past and currently through informal means, within family and community) and through the marketplace. The large chain bookstores, which dominate the book-buying landscape in the United States, offer very few (if any)

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[32] For in-depth analysis of isiXhosa *iintsomi* and other performative aspects of the rich oral tradition, see Duncan Brown's *Voicing the text: South African oral poetry and performance* (1998; Cape Town: Oxford University Press); R.H. Kaschula's *The bones of the ancestors are shaking: Xhosa oral poetry in context* (2002; South Africa: Juta & Co.); Jeff Opland's *Xhosa oral poetry. Aspects of a black South African tradition* (1983; Johannesburg: Raven Press), and Harold Scheub's *The tongue is fire: South African storytellers and apartheid* (1996; Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press). For a broader understanding of orality in Africa, see Ruth Finnegan's seminal 1970 work, *Oral literature in Africa* (London: Oxford University Press).

'unconventional' picture books (let alone truly multicultural ones). The going style on average, is as bright, 'chatty' and saccharine as any television commercial. Perry Nodelman (1988:281) discusses pointedly this connection with 'dumbed down' literature and children: "While most adults would agree that watching a Shakespeare play allows most of us to think more, feel more, and imagine more of interest than watching a bare stage, we do tend to believe that children need barer stages, that the products of other and richer imaginations can indeed stifle the tender imaginings of youngsters". He continues (1988:281), describing the beliefs that perpetuate the Western paradigm:

> This conviction seems to be related to the Wordsworthian notion that children carry a wonderful wisdom with them ... Their 'innocent' imaginings offer them insight into a world different from and better than the reality that adults come to share, a world more ideal and more mysteriously incomprehensible, giving them too much information about our limited adult ways of viewing our reality or imagining our fantasies will corrupt and spoil that insight.

These notions of childhood interweave with an underlying Western meta-narrative of "truth, justice and courtesy" as something to be defended. James Stephens and Robyn McCallum (1998:6) write of the Western stories concerning truth and justice: "[T]he metanarrative which informs and shapes the outcomes or particular stories furnishes the assumption that they will – or morally should – prevail ... [T]ruth and justice are absolute values, whereas law is contingent and relative".

I raise these questions about *childhood,* and inherently, *adulthood* inquiring into the American context where the two terms ironically and often uncomfortably intertwine. As I see and experience, "childish" behaviour in politics and in the media demonstrates how the myths of childhood transcend into adulthood. In the following quote, Perry Nodelman offers telling reasons for exactly what we do mean by 'childhood':

> The supposedly mature adults who express those cynical attitudes may themselves be accused of indulging in childish behavior; distrust of imaginative fantasy and cynical pessimism are not necessarily

> signs of mature wisdom, and the childish attitudes of contemporary adults that contemporary children so frequently ape – egocentricity, thoughtlessness of others, disregard of the consequences of actions, and so on-may merely be the untampered-with attitudes of their own childhood, the attitudes of people with no actual knowledge of the complex and demanding world as it is. It may actually be maturity that is disappearing and not childhood at all. (Nodelman 1988:281-282)

There are, of course, subversive books within the Western canon of children's literature, many of which have been banned from various lists at various times during American history – well known works like *James and the Giant Peach, The Secret Garden*, and *Alice in Wonderland* to name a few. These are subversive because they challenge the assumptions mentioned earlier. Alison Lurie (1990:xi) writes that the authors of subversive children's literature "suggest that there are other views of human life besides those of the shopping mall and the corporation". She continues that, "they mock current assumptions and express the imaginative, unconventional, noncommercial view of the world in its simplest and purest form. They appeal to the imaginative, questioning, rebellious child within all of us, renew our instinctive energy, and act as a force for change." (Lurie 1990:xi) Ellen Handler-Spitz (1999:8) sums up aptly what she sees as the best of children's books: "[T]hey dare to tackle important and abiding psychological themes, and because they convey these themes with craftsmanship and subtlety. Musicality, rhyming, visual artistry, humour, surreal juxtapositions, elegance, simplicity, and suspense combine in them to construct layers of meaning that reward countless hours of cross-generational reading."

Rather than supply children with the tools for deeper comprehension, we offer them simplified reality as Bearne says: "[C]oncerns about harmful influences reflect views of children and agency" (1996:x). These views are manifestations of adult notions of childhood as something to "protect" more than they are actual protective measures. Children experience the realities of life one way or another, especially in our "flickering and non-flickering" image-oriented world, where one would be hard pressed not to find a television even in the remotest of places on earth. In the South African context, Thuli Radebe (2005:125-126) comments, there is a tendency towards caution and "hypersensitivity" around multiculturalism: "This hypersensitivity undermines values such as truthfulness, sincerity, and candidness about issues and thus defeats the purpose of children's literature, which is to delight and to teach children about life and reality in a truthful way".

I ask the question here, is the picture book then not a suitable space for guided mediation of these realities? Morag Styles, in commenting on *The tunnel* (1998) by Anthony Browne (renowned postmodern children's book illustrator), writes (1996:44) of children with regard to the reading of picture books:

> Perhaps there is a lesson here for those who subscribe to simple, hierarchical models of literacy development; to those who underestimate the capabilities of young children when engaged on 'work' they find intellectually stimulating, such as interpreting picture books. Then there are those who are more interested in whether children can jump through hoops of correctness in dull exercises from an early age, rather than grapple with young readers on fascinating questions about what the world is like, who they will become when they grow up, why human beings behave so badly, how this planet is going to survive and what is going to happen at the end of the story.

Picture books by nature of their form can undermine established Western views of childhood. "Because they welcome divergent readings, picture books are subversive," writes Victor Watson (1996:2), "both of narrative expectations and cultural orthodoxies. Consequently, they are inevitably political – they tend to be concerned with rule-breaking, mischief and challenge. They teach the rules, and at the same time they invoke laughter and subversive questioning." Postmodernist children's books (as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1) disrupt the easy relationship between writer and reader of modernism by uprooting the conventions and structures of a story (e.g., progression and resolved plot). Lewis (2001:91) notes: "We expect something like a decorum, a sense of fittingness, to prevail within the fictions that we read and we very soon notice when incongruities intrude". The use of intertextuality in postmodern picture books allows for multiple readings, and unfixed notions of meaning. To this format add the content of a tale, for which Walter Benjamin, speaking of European fairy tales, offers (1968:101) a deeper definition, and I quote:

> The fairy tale, which to this day is the first tutor of children because it was once the first tutor of mankind, secretly lives on in the story. The first true storyteller is, and will continue to be, the teller of fairy tales. Whenever good counsel was at a premium, the fairy tale had it, and where the need was the greatest, its aid was nearest. This need was the need created by the myth. The fairy tale tells us of the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare which the myth had placed upon its chest.

With Benjamin's analysis in mind, I move on to consider how the southern African folk tale in its best form challenges myths, especially those of a Westerner raised with specific notions of good and evil encapsulated in a specific narrative technique. It is perhaps the ultimate challenge to the "Hollywood paradigm".

African tales that "subvert" the narrative

As I alluded to in the first chapter's discussion, the history of African literature is richly nuanced requiring the proper exposure and experience for comprehension. I am a novice in approaching it in all respects. What I can speak of, however, is my own attraction to African tales as an illustrator seeking "a good story". The particular nature of African folk tales – those I have read, mainly isiXhosa in origin – appeals to me for the reason that they challenge conventional notions of childhood (as seen by an American).

As an illustrator, they pique my curiosity[33] and challenge my perception of narrative technique.

Lurie (1990:16) writes about the subversive nature of folk tales: "They are the most subversive texts in children's literature. Often, though usually in disguised form, they support the rights of disadvantaged members of the population – children, women, and the poor – against the establishment." She points out their particular challenge to "righteousness": "Law and order are not always respected: the master thief fools the count and the parson, and Jack kills the giant and steals his treasure. Rich people are often unlucky, afflicted or helpless: kings and queens cannot have children or suffer from strange illnesses, while the poor are healthy and enterprising and fortunate" (Lurie 1990:16). Lurie writes about Western (American and European) folk tales, but I apply her reasoning to the southern African tales for it describes the nature of my attraction to them. Zimbabwean children's writer, Charles Mungoshi (Schmidt 1998:38-39), articulates what I also encountered my first time, reading African tales:

> In these books I found a new fascination with [folktales]. They are not only for children but for all age groups. If one takes a closer look you will find that the stories talk about human cruelty, human failures in understanding, how people look down on disadvantaged or disabled who are sometimes viewed with disapproval. Therefore, the wisdom in the books is also for adults. The human failures in understanding are a universal issue.

A.C. Jordan (1973:xviii) wrote in the introduction to his collections of tales from southern Africa, "[i]n this manner the traditional society maintained a dialogue with the past, while retaining a correct pulse of the present and perspective of the future through speculative thought and imagery embodied in tales". These stories were visceral, humourous, terrifying, logically 'outlandish' but intrinsically bound to a humanity I recognized. As a whole, these stories are a feast large enough for both children and adults to share. These stories, however, do not float on their own. They swim in a sea of discourse, which, as Samantha Naidu argues in her well-wrought article on folk tales, nationalism, and the 'New South Africa', falls into two main discursive categories: neo-colonial (rearticulation of colonial essentialist typographies to describe the tales) and new nationalist (reinscription of African cultural identity in positive terms.) In her article, she seeks to employ postcolonial studies in tandem with the work of folklorists to situate these texts within wider discursive structures (Naidu 2001:17). At the heart of the nationalist discourse, writes Naidu (2001:17-18), "is the paradox of utilizing local cultures and histories together with the Western discourses of modernity and nationalism for purposes of liberation and self-determination". I include Naidu's work here for she directly takes on the problems arising from such discourse: the valorization of the "authentically African" and the stultifying reiteration of an "ethnographic" approach to the tales. She writes of "otherness" in the new South Africa, and holds that perhaps the way forward to the meet the challenge of being a culturally diverse yet unified nation, is to truly *hybridize* – to acknowledge that "the current folk tale texts are neither 'essentially' African nor purely European derived, but 'other'" (2001:19). I discuss the topic of hybridization further in this chapter but for now point out the aspect of "reinvention" that is critical in my discussion of subversive aspects of a folk tale. I suggest here that focusing on the "nationalist" or "ethnographic" aspects of a folk tale overlooks their artistic and narrative qualities that speak to universal emotions recognized by all people.

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[33] This being said: I am aware of the strain of historical Eurocentric notions on literary works, an idea advanced by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam: "The dominant literature on modernism often regards Europe as simply absorbing 'primitive art' and anonymous 'folklore' as raw materials to be refined and reshaped by European artists. This view prolongs the colonial trope which projected colonized people as body rather than mind, much as the colonized world was seen as a source of raw materials rather than of mental activity or manufacture." (1998:

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38) Clearly this is not my goal in this thesis but rather to put forward broader exposure of these narratives at a time when it seems the world needs to hear stories, as well as people needing to tell them; see my discussion on 'collaboration' further on in this chapter.

In the Sesotho tale entitled "Mamasianoke", B.L. Leshoai[34] opens the tale with the following line: "Among the Basotho there is a saying that it was Mamasianoke's kindheartedness that killed her." The story continues, presenting ruthlessness as the theme:

> Mamasionoke is a large bird with a huge stumpy tail. Normally, she lives in gorges and in the riverbeds where she makes herself a large and strong but ugly nest with clay and sticks. The bird really does nobody any harm, and it is her appearance alone which has made people associate her with witchcraft. Nobody likes her, as they assault the owl if he comes out of his hiding place during the day. The children also throw stones at her. As they chase her away they shout 'Mamasianoke, Mamasianoke!' and they accompany their shouts with insults and abuse as she struggles away with her large wings flapping hard. (Leshoai 1983:1)

The tale by the end is hardly "resolved," neither for my Westernized sense of *the good* (kindhearted) prevailing nor with any sort of mediation of fairness. It appears to be luck – or in this case bad luck – that leaves the reader by the end witnessing death. The little birds ("the selfish little refugees") Mamasianoke kindheartedly let into her nest when the rains came, "opened the door of the nest and flew out piping gay songs ... hardly noticing their hostess lying cold and dead and stiff next to a large boulder" (Leshoai 1983:7).

As a writer, illustrator and a reader, I am interested in tales such as these, mainly for one simple reason. Alison Lurie concurs (1990:21): "Folktales recorded in the field are full of everything the Victorian editors left out: sex, death, low humour, and especially female initiative". I chose to illustrate this story (see Figure 3.1) because the main character, Mamasianoke, dies in the end, despite her inherent kindness, in a highly

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[34] Naidu writes critically of Leshoai's style, which she describes as "conspicuously didactic" (speaking of Leshoai's rendering of the Sesotho tale *Madiepetsana and the milk bird*), with that particular tale, "being presented as a cultural as well as a moral lesson" (Naidu 2001: 23). I agree with her commentary, though I find Leshoai's rendering of the *Mamasianoke* much more ambiguous and open to interpretation, which I argue directly opposes the nature of a didactic story.

problematized context of good versus evil. To me it is a reflection of one of life's realities, disguised in an entertaining and thought-provoking way. Being *too kind* and *too giving* can kill you, much to the horror of someone such as myself raised on Westernized notions of *good* consistently prevailing over *evil*.

The themes of life are subsequently the themes of great literature. Equally important to the content is the *telling*. In the context of this research, this requires consideration of what is "African telling". I have discussed orality in terms of visuality peripherally in Chapter 2, as one mode of merging the two genres. In this section, I consider (albeit peripherally, for again it is a realm of discussion best left to the experts in this field) African influences on written narrative. Researcher, Bernth Lindfors (1995:28), comments that "[t]hese are non-Western national literatures written in a Western international language, and they all contribute distinctive regional dimensions to a world literature written in English". I consider these contributions in light of subversivity, as Lindfors suggests (1995:37), of "[s]uch intriguing phenomena as the impact of oral art on written forms, the influence of Western culture on African modes of self-expression (or vice versa), the syncretic permutation of genres, the emergence of new national literatures, and the testing of developed literary theories on rapidly developing African literary movements".

Literary techniques obviously involve the very substance of language itself – a subject hotly contested as I detailed in the discussion of literacy in Chapter 2. In discussing the content of picture books, I present the question, asked by many in the field of African literature, and voiced here by Meena Khorana (1998:4): "Does using a European language mean that it is not an African voice?".[35] It is more a question of how non-Western, African conventions interrogate and feed the Western literary canons. The techniques of orature – the songs, proverbs, idioms, dialogue and direct address to reader (Khorana 1998:6) – manifest the aesthetics of "anthropophagic, carnivalesque, magical realism, reflexive modernist, resistant postmodernist" in the narrative itself, as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam aptly describe:

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[35] In the same article, Khorana considers Chinua Achebe's response [on a 1978 questionnaire put to him by Phanuel Akubueze Egejuru]: "'It's really a question of looking around and deciding whether you can tell a story using English words and still keep the meaning of the story. To me it seems you can; you can play around and see whether you can do it.'" (Khorana 1998:4)

> These aesthetics are often rooted in non-realist, often non-Western or para-Western cultural traditions featuring other historical rhythms, other narrative structures, other views of the body, sexuality, spirituality, and the collective life. Many incorporate non-modern traditions into clearly modernizing or postmodernizing aesthetics, and thus problematize facile dichotomies such as traditional/modern, realist/modernist, and modernist/postmodernist. (1998:41)

Samantha Naidu further outlines the African aspects of folk tales, focusing on orality as revealed in A.C. Jordan's telling of the "Milk bird" story in his collection *Tales from southern Africa*. Naidu writes (2001:24) that "two main elements are derived from the *iintsomi* genre: the themes of community spirit and family life; and the structure which is shaped by the core-clichés in the form of utterances or songs". She continues, describing other *iintsomi* performance elements, such as isiXhosa epithets with English translations and *ideophones.* These she describes (2001:24), quoting Isidore Okpewho from his book *African oral literature: backgrounds, character, and continuity* (1992), as "'idea-in-sound, in the sense that from the sound of the word one can get an idea of the nature of the event or the object referred to'".

Through its structure and form and as a product of reinvention, the African folk tale subverts Westernized narrative traditions. In further consideration of this 'problematizing' of the narrative, I see the African folk tale indeed as presenting the 'carnivaleque', one of the elements mentioned originally by Shohat and Stam, where the banality of everyday life becomes a carnival of the imagination.

The subversive 'carnival'

In speaking of *subversion* in the folk tale genres, I consider the notion of *inversion* as detailed by Mikhail Bakhtin. Countless applications of *carnival* and *carnivalesque* have been used in literary analysis, not restricted to Western and European literature only, but also to African literature. Rather than engage in direct application of Bakhtinian theory[36] to deduce meaning from a given text (in this case, the southern African folk tale), I borrow Bakhtin's notions to apply African notions of narrative to the subversive space of the picture book. David Macey (2001:29) describes Bahktin's theory of the 'carnivalesque' as the following: "The tradition of the carnival, whose history is traced back to the Roman saturnalia, is described by Bakhtin as abolishing the boundaries between the public and private spheres and between performers and spectators, and as establishing an inverted order in which fools and outsiders become king for a day". As Rita Barnard comments about this inversion, "[t]he quintessential aspect of the carnivalesque vision ... is a peculiar and productive ambivalence" (2004:s.p.).

The *carnival* mocks those in authority by denying official ideas that society and institutions are fixed and unalterable. Jeanne Curran and Susan Takata (2004:s.p.) write that, "[w]ith its masks and monsters and feasts and games and dramas and processions, carnival was many things at once. It was festive pleasure, the world turned topsy-turvy, destruction and creation; it was a theory of time and history and destiny; it was utopia, cosmology, and philosophy." The pictorial rhetoric of illustrated texts creates the

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[36] South African scholar, Rita Barnard, presents one potential pitfall of such an application: "It remains a tricky matter to deploy Bakhtin in an African context, and I do so almost reluctantly, especially when I consider the fast and loose way in which literary critics have tended to use Bahktinian terms over the past decade or two. The 'carnivalesque' is no exception. In countless essays, including several on South African literature, the term serves as little more than a term of vague approbation with which one may gesture at any form of transgressive or rowdy behaviour." (2004: s.p.)

conditions for what Shohat and Stam (1998:45-46) describe as the "carnival aesthetic" where "everything is pregnant with its opposite, within an alternative logic of permanent contradiction and nonexclusive opposites that transgresses the monologic true-or-false thinking typical of a certain kind of positivist rationalism". They argue that, "[c]arnival also proposes a very different concept of the body. Instead of an abstract rage against figuration ... carnival proposes a gleefully distorted body of outlandish proportions" (1988:45-46).

Eve Bearne (1996:xxiv) pushes the notion of inversion further, discussing texts that have "interiors exposed" and, therefore, beckon to the reader: "Because of their rootedness in everyday experience and their ability to call on different dimensions of experience". She notes that "texts which show, display and depict movement demand interaction from the reader, introducing another aspect of an adequate theory of text – the possibilities of alternative readings and ambiguities" (1996:xxiv). These tales are often replete with humour as the ingredient that Radebe (2005:132) argues is especially important for South African children. "Laughter," she explains, "provides a release from tension, especially in a society fraught with tension and suffering, such as that of South Africa."

In my own illustration work (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3), I consciously offer multiple readings grounded in the "low culture" of my every day experiences. I am inclined to "twist" reality and meld real life with the imaginary, both conceptually and by using formal devices such as skewing proportions. What intrigues and inspires me about African folk tales is that they offer a narrative space that is *open* and what Rita Barnard writes as, "a vision of the profound and regenerative connection between life and death, of the world of the living and the earthy netherworld" (2004:s.p.). The fact that the little boy uTshepo in *uTshepo mde/Tall enough* (Jadezweni & Morris 2006) turns into a tree at the command of a bird pleases my artistic inclinations to create my own "magical realism" that blends the ordinary with the extraordinary, and the real with the imagined.

Collaboration and hybridization as subversive

Upon the publication and launch of the book *Amabali ethu/Our stories*, Lucky Mahlaba said (personal interview, Kayamandi, 21 July 2006), "[W]hen the book was out, people were coming up, telling me, 'tell me about the story!'" The book was a collaborative project produced by VisionK[37] and several teenagers from Kayamandi township on the outskirts of Stellenbosch (see Figure 3.4). I present *Amabali ethu/Our stories* within my discussion as a suggestion for how collaboration can be a subversive act in that it overturns individual authorship and artistry. Collaboration also subverts the paradigms that leave the majority of isi-Xhosa speaking children without a truly meaningful relationship to reading in their mother tongue. By virtue of *participation* through collaboration, participants become writers themselves and engage *personally* with writing and illustration – what Carol Bloch calls the "tuning in" to the uses of written language. As she explains (Bloch 2004:9), it is not sufficient to provide only good reading materials: "One also has to understand that people need to tune into the uses of written language and make these personally meaningful".

Through the collecting of the oral stories, the teenage illustrators involved in *Amabali ethu* took part in the collaborative process of the *retelling* of traditional tales. Given the historical parameters I have outlined in Chapter 1, a story is never a static piece of literature. Cultural, economic, and sociological factors influence the tellings and the retellings of stories over time. By shifting that *retelling* to new tellers, the action potentially subverts 'standard' points of view, as well as seats of narrative power. James Stephens and Robyn McCallum (1998:8-9) argue the following:

> [T]he retelling of traditional stories may seem intellectually and culturally oppressive [but] there are always possibilities for resistance, contestation, and change. This occurs on two fronts: by the introduction of new or rival metanarratives, which effectively dispute the grounding metaethic, and in actual textual processes, the bottom-up production of narrative discourses.

The "bottom up" approach in the form of *collected individualities* and illustrated oral transmissions, was the intention behind *Amabali ethu/Our stories*. Rouleaux Le Roux described that though it was an enormous amount of work,[38] the collaborative approach was essential for the aims of the project: to "reignite the flame of storytelling" and gather stories from parents and the elders in Kayamandi. "Let's go to the root of the stories," (personal interview, Stellenbosch, 12 July 2006) was his guiding mantra in the design process, with the aim to "reflect Kayamandi". The collection therefore, required the children's participation, and reflects the small, differing details that surface in collaborative work. Commenting on the notions of visuality and visual literacy in the work, Rouleaux pointed out that his own style and the way he read would not convey the same message as for someone from the Kayamandi community. The work produced became a collage of five people's work (including Rouleaux's illustrations), which he scanned in and manipulated to suit the overall design using the "colours of Kayamandi" as noted in the streets, on the buildings, and on signage around the community. The team drew every element named in the stories over a period of six weeks, incorporating discussion and critiques in the process (personal interview, Stellenbosch, 12 July 2006). The creation itself subverts the larger mechanism of story production in South Africa as produced by the publishing world in the area of picture books (as discussed in Chapter 1

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37 VisionK's (2004) mission reads: "Through life skills training and exposure to opportunities, we seek to inspire young people to dream of a better lifestyle and better future ... We seek to close the cultural, educational, and economic gap between the races of South Africa."

[38] He commented that the process produced hundreds of illustrations, much of which was "visual clutter" in the end, but perhaps necessary, as this was the first time doing this type of collaborative work. He said if he did it again, he would not illustrate every detail of the story of the tales, and would come up with a more concrete page layout (personal interview, Stellenbosch, 12 July, 2006).

of this study).

The fact that the stories come from Kayamandi township also challenges the notion of "traditional tales", for it begs the question as to how an urban retelling can affect the "traditional" nature of a tale. Of the township as a "location" in the literal sense of the world, as well as geo-literary setting, Rita Barnard (2004:s.p.) makes the following comment, speaking about Zekes Mda's novel, *Ways of dying*, but what she says is in fact applicable throughout the many cultural landscapes of South Africa:

> [I]t is worth bearing in mind that the chronotope that anchors Mda's narrative – that of impoverished "squatter camps" or "informal settlements" on the fringes of the African city – is a fairly new one in the history of human experience and in the history of narrative forms. African political theorists and urbanists have already speculated in fascinating ways about the new forms of subjectivity that these ever-waxing factories of poverty with their largely wageless, improvised economies are likely to produce: subjectivities shaped not in relation to the (former) colonizer, but by the sheer effort to survive in extremely unpredictable circumstances and temporalities ... In situations where the usual benefits of urban life such as employment, legality, and shelter cannot be relied on, a capacity for continual self-invention becomes an essential skill.

Barnard's commentary speaks to the "temporal" nature of township life, but I see it more deeply, in light of the notion of *retelling*. I suggest there is perhaps *no* traditional tale of any kind, for in the process of each person's writing and telling, hybridization is unavoidable. It occurs on all levels of everyday experiences, from the construction of a home in a township, to the construction of identity via exchanged cultures to the construction of a story. I suggest here that collaboration is perhaps one of the best ways to expose the subjectivity of a narrative and to challenge the belief that there are "authentic tales". Samantha Naidu comments on such considerations, and neatly sums up her observations of *synthesis*. She refers (2001:24) specifically to A.C. Jordan's stories in the well-known *Tales from southern Africa,* which she describes as a hybrid text since he borrows from the best of both oral and literary traditions. She explains

(2001:24) here: "Jordan's specific 'hybrid art form' is a conscious, creative convergence of the *iintsomi* and short story genres". She confirms (2001:24) my point later in her discussion describing the benefits of "synthesizing differences into something new and progressive", as Jordan did since he, "recognized and embraced heterogeneity rather than claiming authenticity". *Creativity* rather than authenticity then becomes the element that shapes the story, reflecting the constant flux and exchange of cultures that leads to the *only* truly "authentic" reflection of life.

In summation of this chapter, I wish to add to the definition of "subvert". As I see it, "undermine" does not mean to destroy but rather to "trim away" and pull back to encourage new growth. As an American with a background in cultural studies, a need to travel, and as a self-reflective writer and artist, I am aware of both the overabundance of "America" as a cultural exportation, and the underdevelopment of many Americans' true awareness of cultures other than our own – an ironic reality as a "nation of immigrants". I find the picture book an exciting form that contends with accepted Western notions of childhood and of narrative itself, set within the seeming banality of everyday life. I include the following response given by Bernth Lindfors (1995:29), an African literature specialist based in Texas, in response to a comment that American students should read "home grown literature" rather than "multicultural" works:

> Some will answer that English literature and American literature are the most relevant ones for Americans to study, for we must understand our own heritage before we begin to investigate someone else's. This may be true if we interpret contemporary relevance in a diachronic rather than synchronic terms ... What is the point of introducing rural Texans to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, or Pope when frontier sagas set in Canada, Australia, and South Africa are likely to be closer to their immediate realm of experience?

I conclude this chapter by saying that living, studying and researching in South Africa have reaffirmed my beliefs both that cultural exchange is constant, and that the very best of stories are inherently universal. I have sought to demonstrate in the preceding discussions that the content of southern Africa folk tales is an exciting realm, both for the illustrator/writer, as well as the reader, eager to ingest new stories and the authentic experience of reading.

CONCLUSION

> On this continent, replete with oral wisdom and stories, we continue to favour textbooks, full of decontextualized low-level skills and drills, often in a foreign language. At best, those who can afford them, use 'readers' with restricted, unnatural language. Storybooks and other meaningful texts are effectively discarded as supplementary 'extra' material, the luxury that we all know African children generally don't get. Our youngsters continue to be denied opportunities to experience the richness of stories in their own languages in print.
>
> NEVILLE ALEXANDER (2002:http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/ praesa/pru.html)

In the above paragraph, Alexander sums up succinctly the issues that I have studied in light of children's picture books in isiXhosa: the influence of oral storytelling, decontextualized reading, the "educational look", the accessibility or *inaccessibility* of language, the economics of purchase, and finally, the constraints on opportunities for individual and cultural creative expression. To elicit any sort of well-rounded understanding of these issues, I have employed an interdisciplinary approach that spans several fields and engages in a dialogue of multiple perspectives. I have attempted to answer some of the questions spawned from this dialogue: the three chapters detail the effects of history, sociology, economics, and culture on the context, the form and the content of picture books in isiXhosa that ultimately render the majority of these works *unassimilable* to the average isiXhosa-speaking child on a multitude of levels.

South Africa is not alone in facing the challenge of developing a wide-spread reading culture. However, the nation has its own peculiarities that influence its strategies for improvement. As it grapples with "First-" and "Third-World" and "developed" and "developing" issues, it faces the high cost of books, specific publishing trends, technology issues, widespread poverty and Aids afflictions, not to mention high illiteracy rates. South Africa confronts what Modiful Hoque (2004:s.p.) described as "the low level of economic development reflected in widespread poverty and poor purchasing capability of people", with which most developing countries must contend. It is a risky environment, in which publishing and printing industries attempt to thrive. As a result, the paradigm shaping the decisions of most printing and publishing industries in South Africa is underscored by a market tailored for educational publishing. This, in turn, has fostered a notion of *reading* that has manifested itself fully and contentiously in the realm of isiXhosa and other African language picture books. As I have described in Chapter 1, South Africa's colonial history and apartheid legacies created conditions conducive to this "bottom line" of *educational publishing*. The historical production of African language picture books to suit a colonial agenda included anthropological inquiry, religious motivations and the maintenance of economic and cultural power, and gave shape to a paradigm of *language* as the site of power. The first missionary printing presses became the physical manifestation of this struggle, where language, image, song, verse and tales intertwined as the new and complicated indigenous cultural productions: *books*. In his essay on the sociology of texts, D.F. McKenzie (2002:190) writes that when one *truly* considers the book, "each of which has its own human history and all of which unite to create the 'finished' book as a palpably articulated 'text' (to form it, not de-form it), then we enter an entirely new, more positive and, for me at least, more exciting phase of textual criticism". I argue that inherent in this critique is acknowledgement of historical factors that gave shape to the complicated position occupied today by African language picture books. Being aware of the historical roots of contention around language and power can only assist in the crafting of new modes of cultural production.

My discussion in Chapter 2 considers the form of isiXhosa picture books through the various *languages* involved. As I argue, the visual language of design, the language of access, and the social language of reading each contribute in specific ways to the creation, as well as consumption, of isiXhosa picture books. The details involved in juxtapositions of image and text are crucial elements in rendering a narrative accessible and meaningful to an isiXhosa-speaking child. Using contemporary examples, I have highlighted some of the successful books being produced, but point out that there is room, as well as the necessity for more. Moving into a deeper discussion of language and language policy in South Africa as it relates to literacy, I point out that *literacy* and *visual literacy* are highly critical issues on several levels: in contemporary South African society seeking to formulate a unified but diverse identity; in the realm of picture books as one mode of encouraging both adult and children's literacy; and in my own artistic practices, mediating through image and word, relationships between life and identity. Just as it is crucial to consider historical implications on books, language and reading, so is it essential to consider the variations in the way people *see,* as well as *how* they represent that vision. My work as an illustrator therefore necessitates a consideration of how my artistic practice and personal visual literacy shape the way I see. From considering my own illustration work and notions of how children interact with printed language, I have concluded that there is a rich intersection between the oral, the written, and the visual in the format of a picture book. Ultimately this is a *playground*, where both the artist and the child, the adult too, can engage meaningfully with text – through the "emergence" of writing, drawing, lettering, and ultimately the expression of the narrative these produce. Of primary importance is that a positive *relationship* to words and images develops. It is this meaningful contact that inspires not only the artist but also the reader to *keep being* a reader and to develop essentially as a member of a *reading culture*. My ultimate conclusion is that the only way a child truly learns to read is when she/he learns to revel in the pleasure of reading; only then can the child reap the benefits that reading affords, not only in intellectual and creative development and also in social empowerment.

Chapter 3 delves deeper into my motivations, as an artist and illustrator, for seeking out "subversivity" as a theme, as well as an approach to narrative. I consider my Western-orientated paradigms of childhood as "innocent" and "vulnerable" in light of the content of African folk tales. Considering my growing attraction to subversivity, I see the multiple meanings revealed in the content of African tales as well-suited for the postmodern picture books' bi-textual format. In challenging notions of *right* and *wrong*, and a Western "sense of decorum", I argue that these tales are inspiring to me as a writer and illustrator attracted to the *carnivalesque,* or what I argue is the inversion of "high" and "low" cultures. I consider my own artistic work as weaving together the real and the surreal – the banality and the fantasy – of everyday life. Broadening the notion of subversivity and relating it back to children, I argue that collaboration and hybridization in the creation of narratives is a dynamic approach to authentic cultural production. It builds upon reader, writer, and illustrator participation, which inherently deepens the engagement with texts and further develops a reading culture. In essence, collaboration further promotes literacy and multi-modal literacy that incorporates various modes of storytelling and narrative. The notion of *multi-literacy,* as South African teachers, Newfield and Stein (2000:295), write, "captures and validates the diversity of people's literacies in specific sites and has flexibility which seeks to include rather than marginalize".

Ultimately this research is about literacy on all of its linguistic, cultural, and artistic levels. Visual literacy with it multi-modal and multicultural facets is a tool of empowerment for a nation building upon *hybridization* and the *integration* of diversity as its cultural, political and economic operations. *Vision* therefore, becomes not a means to an end – the ability to see – but a proactive movement that not only engages in but celebrates the diversity of humanity. I argue that developing people's literacy and visual literacy skills to the fullest potential opens the door, not only to *narrative* expression but to social empowerment. I am not alone in this thinking. Eve Bearne sums it up concisely:

> Different ways of representing knowledge and experience bring different features of the world literally into view and so change ways of

> thinking about the world. Globalization is more than a matter of economics; it is the way we think now. Shifts from the possibilities for literacy practices offered by the two dimensions of the page (literal and visual) to the three, often four, dimensions of the visual multimedia world mean that the possible 'events' of reading are multiplied. (Bearne 1996:xiii)

South Africa stands at an exciting juncture. Here at work is rich cultural production, with new forms of representation starting to emerge after a past of cultural, political and economic restrictions. Literacy and visual literacy, among such other potential *literacies* as I have taken note of in this thesis, are required not only for the production but for the understanding of new modes of expression. Bearne (1996:xiii) adds, "[C]hildren are already ahead of the adults in this new conceptual world of text ... young readers are already there, reading four dimensions and investing texts with meaning drawn from a wide repertoire of their own."

Children then are the forerunners of this new wave of writers, illustrators and readers. As consumers of picture books, their mediations with image and text will help determine the shape of their own *literacies* and, in turn, their own cultural productions. I argue then for an expansion of access to these modes of production and consumption: providing high quality picture books accessible to children and adults and fostering a *reading culture* that relishes in the written and illustrated stories of the *whole* of the nation. Not only are these picture books essential to South Africans but to the global community at large. As an American raised on picture books, I recently found myself answering the question, "Which picture books about South Africa did you read as a child," I was speechless. *Africa* was and still remains a *theme* (Aesop's fables and the like, and all the various Disney productions that spawned accompanying picture books), incorporating the multitude of countries and the hundreds of languages and customs of the continent of Africa. To foster truly authentic, cross-cultural understanding, I argue that we have to listen to and read the stories of each other to understand what gives us the shape and meaning of our own daily lives. The only way to bring these printed stories to light is to truly foster a nation of writers, artists, illustrators, and readers.

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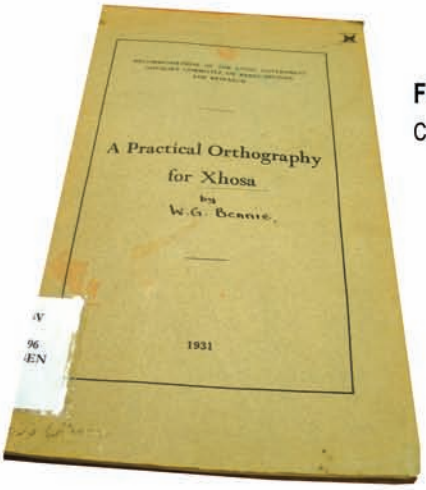
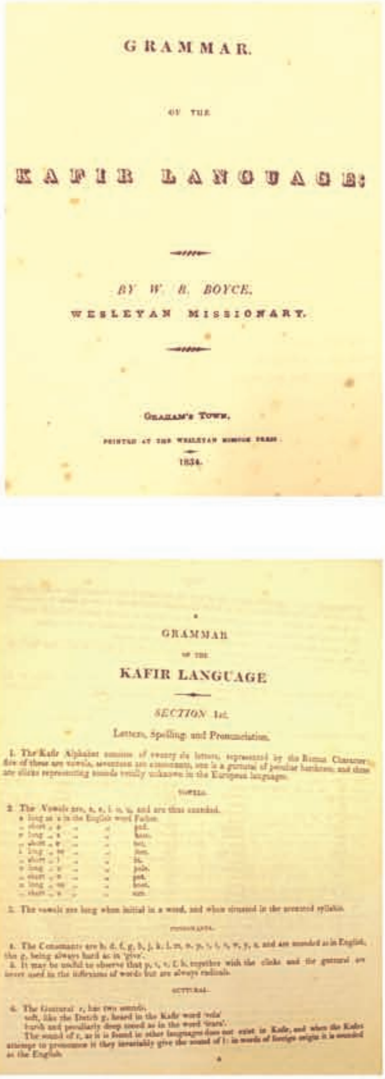


A Practical Orthography
for Xhosa
by
W.G. Bennie.

1931

Figure 1.1 (left) W.B. Bennie, *A practical orthography for Xhosa*. 1931. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris)



GRAMMAR.
OF THE
KAFIR LANGUAGE:

BY W. B. BOYCE,
WESLEYAN MISSIONARY.

GRAHAM'S TOWN,
PRINTED AT THE WESLEYAN MISSION PRESS:
1834.

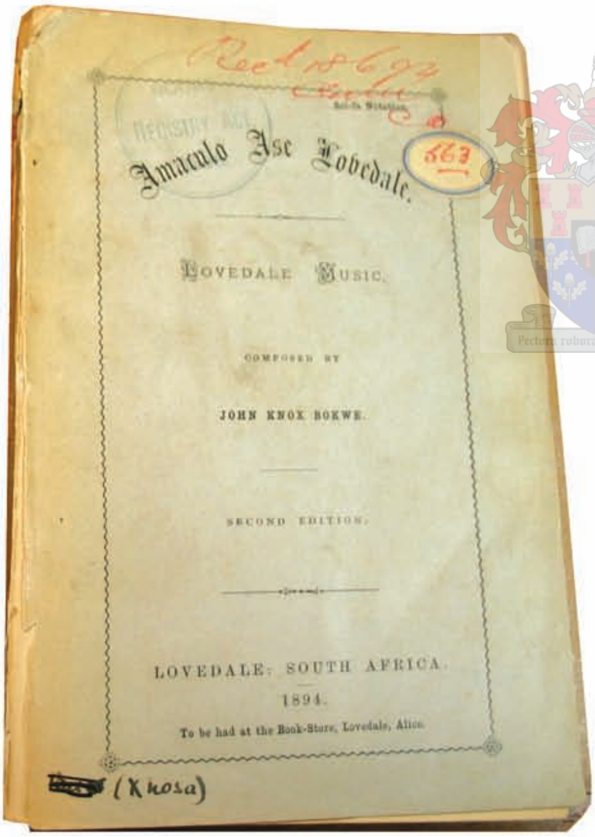
GRAMMAR
OF THE
KAFIR LANGUAGE

SECTION 1st.

Letters, Spelling and Pronunciation.

3. The vowels are long when initial in a word, and when situated in the accented syllable.

Figure 1.2 **(a)** (top) Title page from W.B. Boyce, *A grammar of the Kafir language*. 1834. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris) **(b)** (above) Page from *A grammar of Kafir language*, see details above.



Amaculo Ase Lovedale.

LOVEDALE MUSIC.

COMPOSED BY

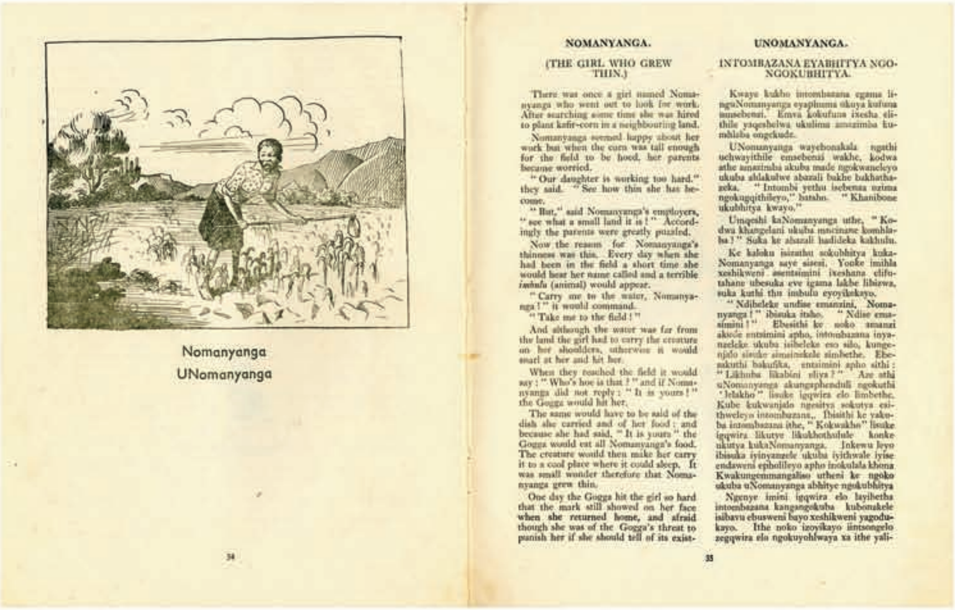
JOHN KNOX BOKWE.

SECOND EDITION.

LOVEDALE: SOUTH AFRICA.
1894.
To be had at the Book-Store, Lovedale, Alice.

(Xhosa)

Figure 1.3 (above) Title page from John Knox Bokwe, *Amaculo ase Lovedale*. 1894. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris)



Nomanyanga
UNomanyanga

34

NOMANYANGA.

(THE GIRL WHO GREW THIN.)

There was once a girl named Nomanyanga who went out to look for work. After searching some time she was hired to plant kafir-corn in a neighbouring land.

Nomanyanga seemed happy about her work but when the corn was tall enough for the field to be hoed, her parents became worried.

"Our daughter is working too hard," they said. "See how thin she has become."

"But," said Nomanyanga's employers, "see what a small land it is!" Accordingly the parents were greatly puzzled.

Now the reason for Nomanyanga's thinness was this. Every day when she had been in the field a short time she would hear her name called and a terrible *imbulu* (animal) would appear.

"Carry me to the water, Nomanyanga!" it would command.

"Take me to the field!"

And although the water was far from the land the girl had to carry the creature on her shoulders, otherwise it would snarl at her and hit her.

When they reached the field it would say: "Who's hoe is that?" and if Nomanyanga did not reply: "It is yours!" the Gogga would hit her.

The same would have to be said of the dish she carried and of her food; and because she had said, "It is yours" the Gogga would eat all Nomanyanga's food. The creature would then make her carry it to a cool place where it could sleep. It was small wonder therefore that Nomanyanga grew thin.

One day the Gogga hit the girl so hard that the mark still showed on her face when she returned home, and afraid though she was of the Gogga's threat to punish her if she should tell of its exist-

UNOMANYANGA.

INTOMBAZANA EYABHITYA NGONGOKUBHITYA.

Kwaye kukho intombazana egama linguNomanyanga eyaphuma ukuya kufuna umsebenzi. Emva kokufuna ixesha elithile yaqeshelwa ukulima amazimba kumhlaba ongekude.

UNomanyanga wayebonakala ngathi uchwayithile emsebenzi wakhe, kodwa athe amazimba akuba made ngokwaneleyo ukuba ahlakulwe abazali bakhe bakhathazeka. "Intombi yethu isebenza nzima ngokugqithileyo," batsho. "Khanibone ukubhitya kwayo."

Umqeshi kaNomanyanga uthe, "Kodwa khangelani ukuba mncinane komhlaba!" Suka ke abazali badideka kakhulu.

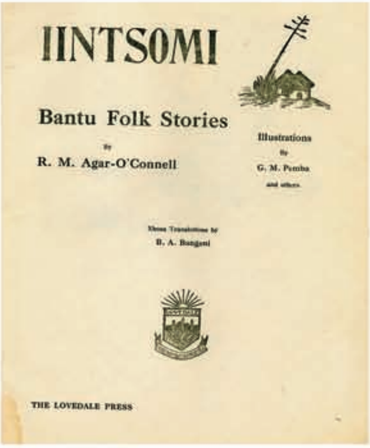
Ke kaloku isizathu sokubhitya kukaNomanyanga saye sisesi. Yonke imihla xeshikweni isentsimini ixeshana elifutshane ubesuka eve igama lakhe libizwa, suka kuthi thu imbulu eyoyikekayo.

"Ndibeleke undise emanzini, Nomanyanga!" ibisuka itsho. "Ndise emasimini!" Ebesithi ke noko amanzi akude entsimini apho, intombazana inyanzeleke ukuba isibeleke eso silo, kungenjalo sisuke simaimkele simbethe. Ebesakuthi bakufika, entsimini apho sithi: "Likhuba likabani eliya?" Aze athi uNomanyanga akungaphenduli ngokuthi "lelakho" lisuke igqwira elo limbethe. Kube kukwanjalo ngesitya sokutya esithweleyo intombazana. Ibisithi ke yakuba intombazana ithe, "Kokwakho" lisuke igqwira likutye likukhothulule konke ukutya kukaNomanyanga. Inkewu leyo ibisuka iyinyanzele ukuba iyithwale iyise endaweni epholileyo apho inokulala khona. Kwakungemmangaliso utheni ke ngoko ukuba uNomanyanga abhitye ngokubhitya.

Ngenye imini igqwira elo layibetha intombazana kangangokuba kubonakele isibavu ebusweni bayo xeshikweni yagodukayo. Ithe noko izoyikayo iintsongelo zegqwira elo ngokuyohlwaya xa ithe yali-

35

Figure 1.4 **(a)** (above) Double-page spread from R.M. Agar O'Connell, *Iintsomi: Bantu folk tales*. 1934. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. **(b)** (right) Title page from *Iintsomi: Bantu folk tales*, see above details.



IINTSOMI

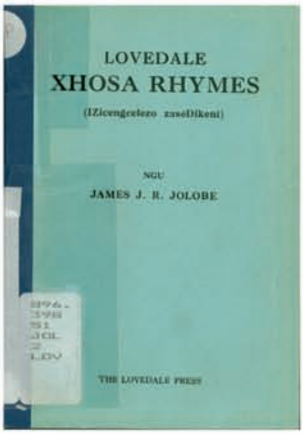
Bantu Folk Stories

By
R. M. Agar-O'Connell

Illustrations
By
G. M. Pemba
and others

Xhosa Translations by
B. A. Bangeni

THE LOVEDALE PRESS

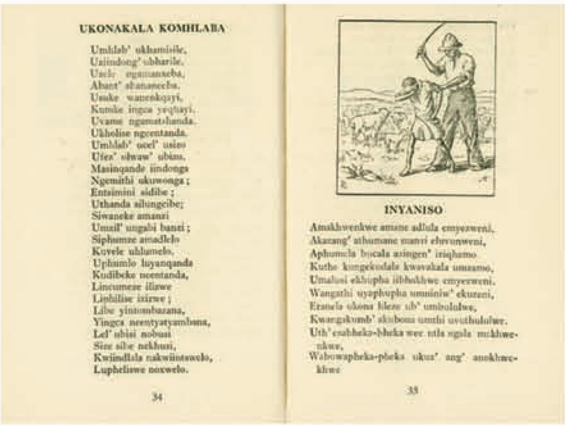


LOVEDALE
XHOSA RHYMES
(IZicengcelezo zaseDikeni)

NGU
JAMES J. R. JOLOBE

THE LOVEDALE PRESS

896.
398
51
JOL
2
LOV



UKONAKALA KOMHLABA

Umhlab' ukhanisile,
Uzindong' ubharile,
Uzele ngamanxeba,
Abant' abanancebа.
Umke wanenkqayi,
Kumile ingca yeqhayi,
Uvame ngamatshanda.
Ukholise ngeentanda.
Umhlab' ooel' usiso
Ufez' abaw' ubizo.
Masinqande iindonga
Ngemithi ukuwonga;
Entsimini sidibe;
Uthanda silungeibe;
Siwaneke amanzi
Umzil' ungabi banzi;
Siphumze amadlelo
Kuvele uhlumelo,
Uphumlo luyanqanda
Kudibeke neentanda,
Lincumeze ilizwe
Liphilise izizwe;
Libe yintombazana,
Yingca neentyatyambana,
Lel' ubisi nobusi
Sizz sibe nekhusi,
Kwiindlela nakwiintsasela,
Luphelisiwe noxwelo.

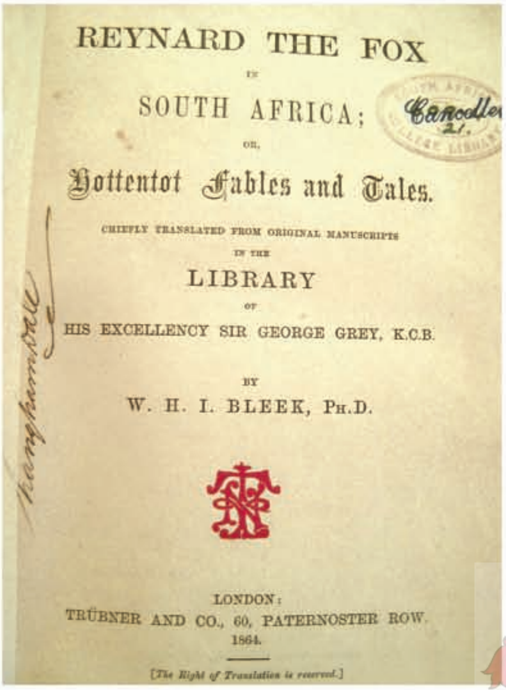
34

INYANISO

Amakhwenkwe amane adlala emyezweni,
Akazang' athumane matsi ebuvunweni,
Aphumela bucala azingen' iziqhamo
Kuthe kungekudala kwavakala umzamo,
Umalusi ekhupha iibhokhwe emyezweni.
Wangathi uyaphupha umninis' ekuzeni,
Ezanela ukona likeze ub' umbululwe,
Kwangakumb' akubona umthi uvuthululwe.
Uth' esabheka-bheka wee ntla ngala mckhwenkwe,
Wabowapheka-pheka ukuz' ang' anokhwekhwe

35

Figure 1.5 **(a)** (top left) Cover of J.J.R. Jolbe, *Lovedale Xhosa rhymes/Izicengcelozo zaseDikeni*. 1957. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. **(b)** (top right) Double page-spread, see above details.

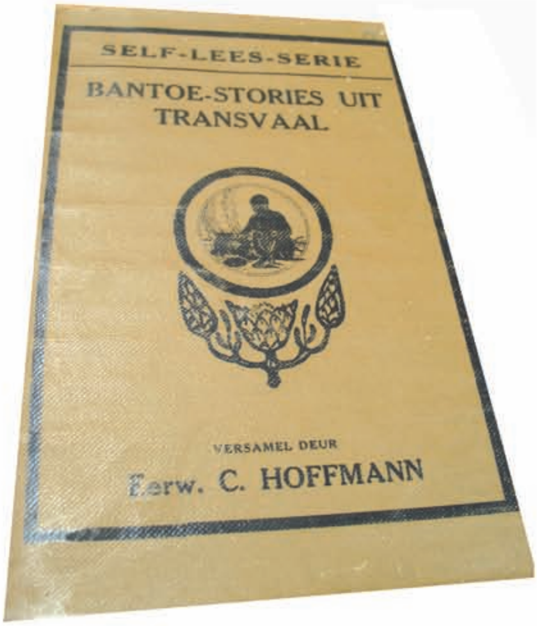


REYNARD THE FOX
IN
SOUTH AFRICA;
OR,
Hottentot Fables and Tales.
CHIEFLY TRANSLATED FROM ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS
IN THE
LIBRARY
OF
HIS EXCELLENCY SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.
BY
W. H. I. BLEEK, PH.D.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER AND CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1864.

[*The Right of Translation is reserved.*]

South African College Library Cancelled 21.

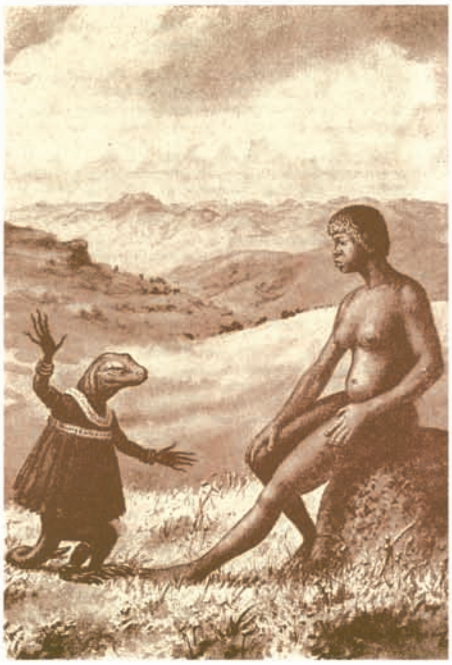


SELF-LEES-SERIE
BANTOE-STORIES UIT
TRANSVAAL

VERSAMEL DEUR
Eerw. C. HOFFMANN

Figure 1.6 **(a)** (left) Title page from *Reynard the fox in South Africa (or Hottentot fables and tales).* 1864. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris) **(b)** (above) C. Hoffman, *Bantoe stories uit Transvaal.* 1930. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. (Photograph: H. Morris)

Figure 1.7 (below) Illustration from *Xhosa fireside tales part 1*. 1963. Collection: Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University.



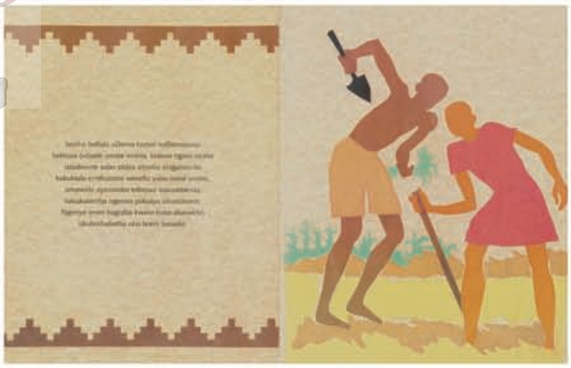
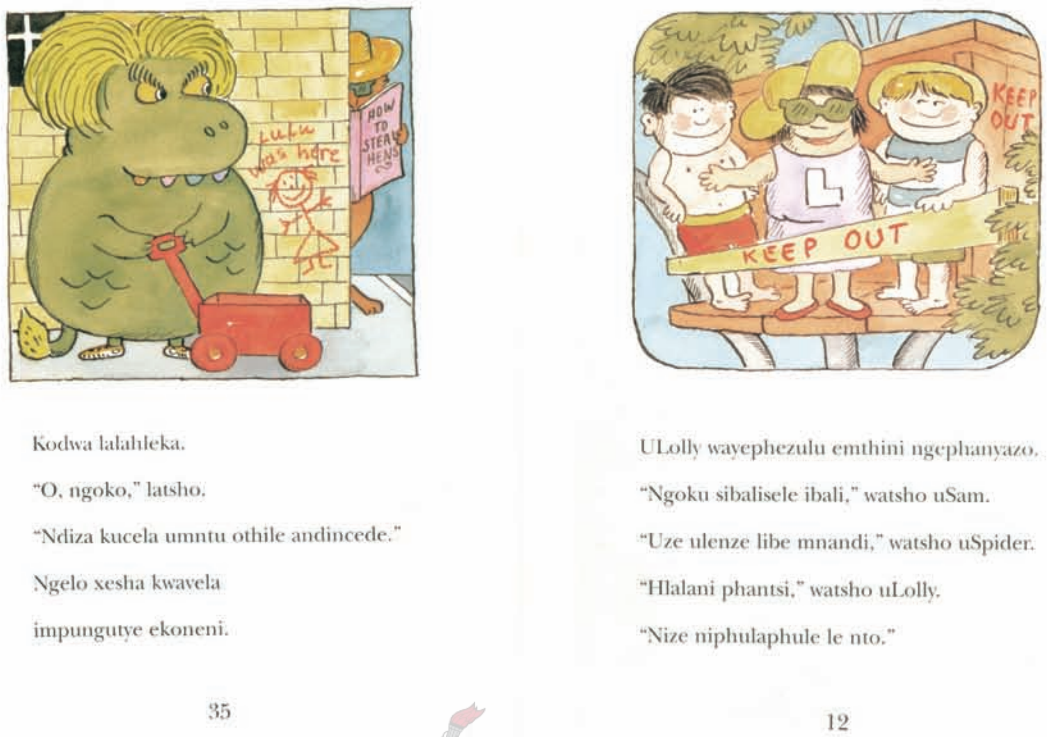


Figure 1.8 (above) Double-page spread from *Dema & Demzana.* 1994. Collection: Kayamandi Public Library.



Kodwa lalahleka.

"O, ngoko," latsho.

"Ndiza kucela umntu othile andincede."

Ngelo xesha kwavela

impungutye ekoneni.

35

ULolly wayephezulu emthini ngephanyazo.

"Ngoku sibalisele ibali," watsho uSam.

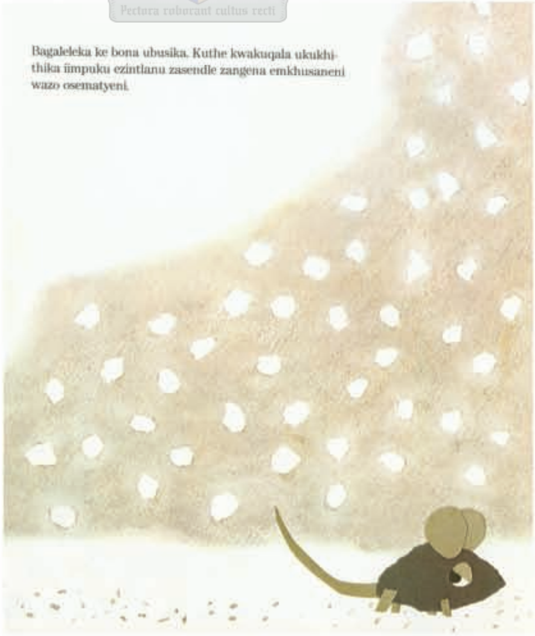
"Uze ulenze libe mnandi," watsho uSpider.

"Hlalani phantsi," watsho uLolly.

"Nize niphulaphule le nto."

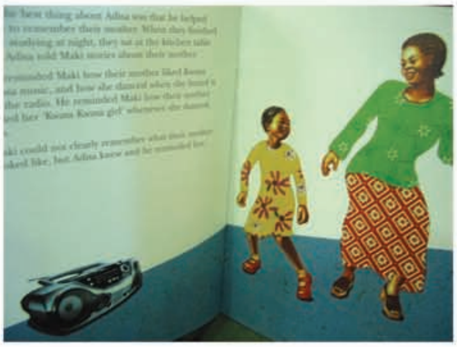
12

Figure 1.9 **(a)** (above left) Illustration from James Marshall, *Abathathu phezulu emthini*. 1986. Collection: Kayamandi Public Library. **(b)** (above right) Illustration from James Marshall, *Abathathu phezulu emthini*, see details above.



Bagaleleka ke bona ubusika. Kuthe kwakuqala ukukhithika iimpuku ezintlanu zasendle zangena emkhusaneni wazo osematyeni.

Figure 1.10 Illustration from Leo Lionni, *uFrederick*. 1993. Collection: Kayamandi Public Library.



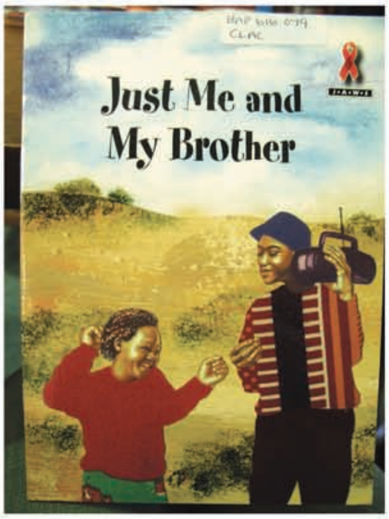
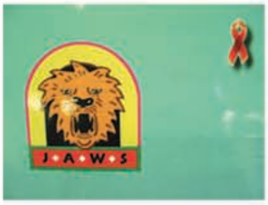
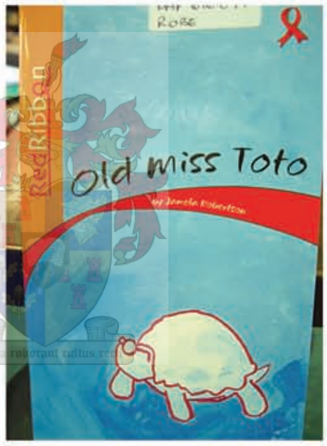
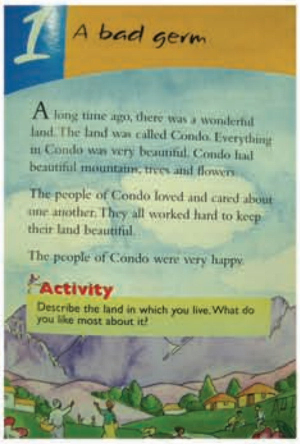

Just Me and My Brother
J·A·W·S

Figure 1.11 (a) (left)Title page from Glynis Clacherty, *Just me and my brother.* 2004. Collection: African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. (Photgraph: H.Morris) **(b)** (above) Double page spread, see above details.




Red Ribbon
Old miss Toto
by Jamela Robertson



1 A bad germ

A long time ago, there was a wonderful land. The land was called Condo. Everything in Condo was very beautiful. Condo had beautiful mountains, trees and flowers.

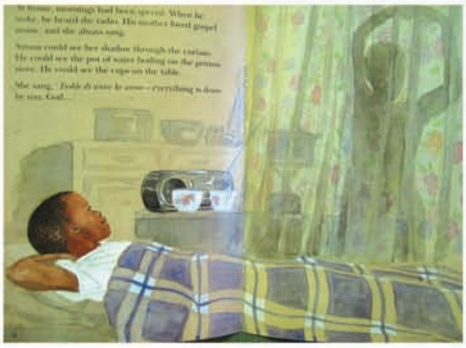
The people of Condo loved and cared about one another. They all worked hard to keep their land beautiful.

The people of Condo were very happy.

Activity

Describe the land in which you live. What do you like most about it?

Figure 1.12 **(a)** (above) Illustration from Jamela Robertson, *Old Miss Toto*. 2004. Collection: African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. (Photograph: H.Morris) **(b)** (right) Cover of Jamela Robertson, *Old Miss Toto*, see details above. **(c)** (far right) Illustration from Jamela Robertson, *Old Miss Toto*, see previous for details.



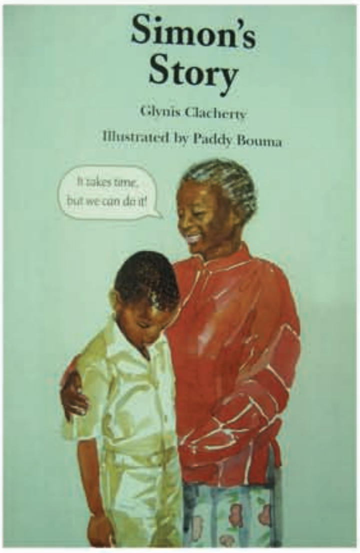

Simon's Story
Glynis Clacherty
Illustrated by Paddy Bouma
It takes time, but we can do it!

Figure 1.13 **(a)** (right) Title page from Glynis Clacherty, *Simon's Story*. 2004. Collection: African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. (Photograph: H.Morris) **(b)** (above) Double page spread, see previous for details.

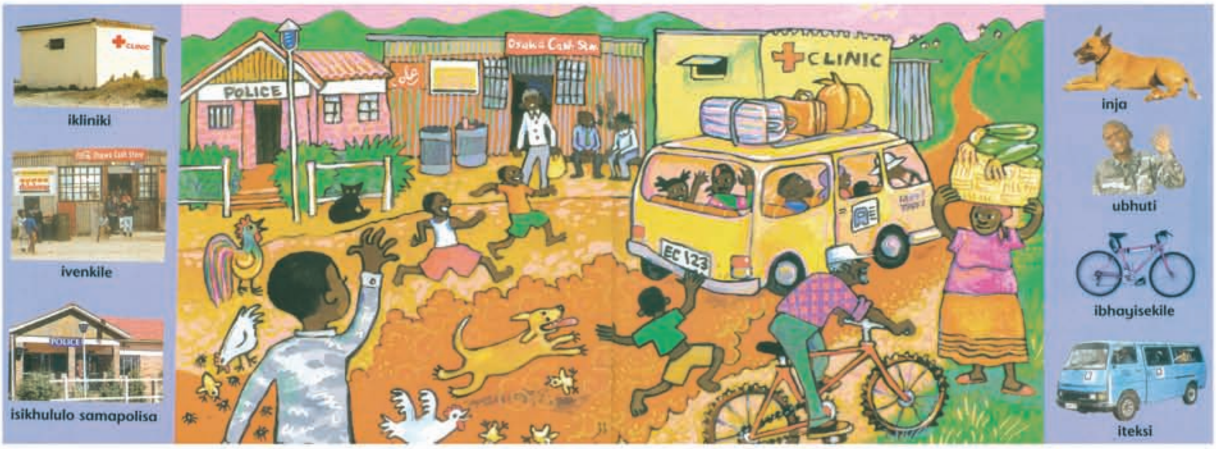

ikliniki
ivenkile
isikhululo samapolisa
POLICE
CLINIC
EC 123
inja
ubhuti
ibhayisekile
iteksi

Figure 2.1 (above) Double-page spread from Fatima Dada, Gcina Mhlope, Leoni Hofmeyr, & Pandora Alberts, *Isipho sikaThandeka*. 2002. Collection: Centre for the Book, Cape Town.

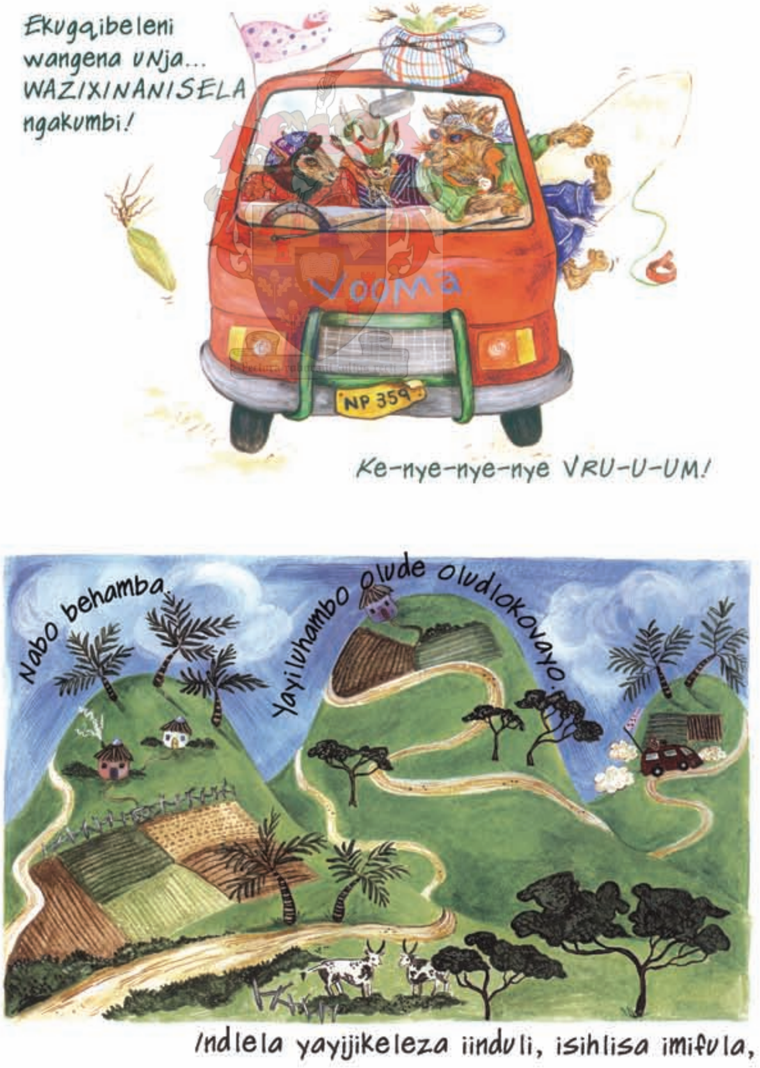
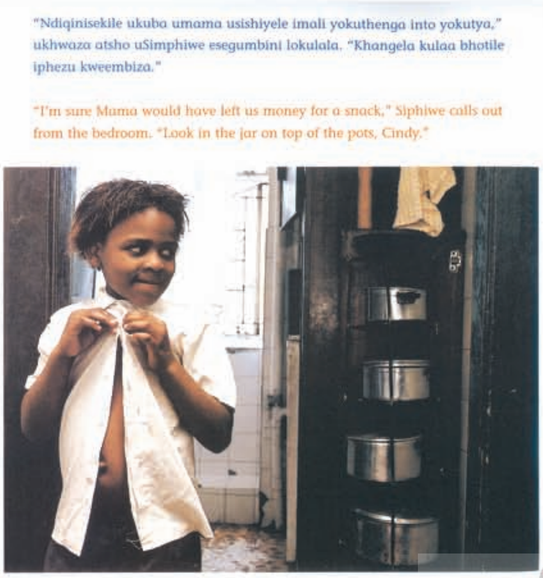

Ekugqibeleni wangena uNja... WAZIXINANISELA ngakumbi!
Vooma
NP 359
Ke-nye-nye-nye VRU-U-UM!
Nabo behamba.
Yayiluhambo olude oludlokovayo.
Indlela yayijikeleza iinduli, isihlisa imifula,

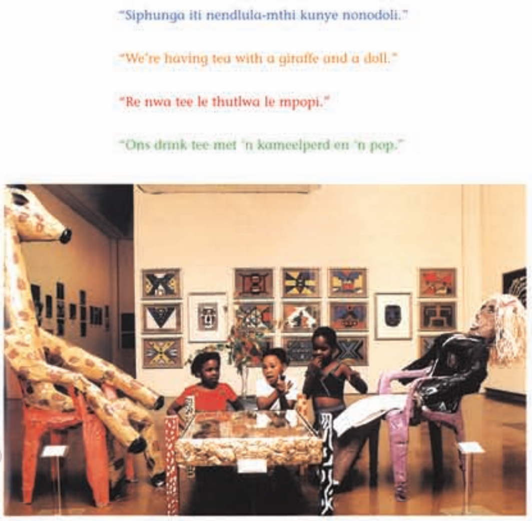
Figure 2.2 **(a)** (above top) Page illustration from Maryanne Clegg & Shayle Bester, *Abahlobo abathathu*. 2004. Collection: Centre for the Book, Cape Town. **(b)** (above) Illustration from *Abahlobo amathathu*, see above for details.



"Ndiqinisekile ukuba umama usishiyele imali yokuthenga into yokutya," ukhwaza atsho uSimphiwe esegumbini lokulala. "Khangela kulaa bhotile iphezu kweembiza."

"I'm sure Mama would have left us money for a snack," Siphiwe calls out from the bedroom. "Look in the jar on top of the pots, Cindy."

Figure 2.3 (below) Page illustration from Reviva Schermbrucker & Motlhalefi Mahlabe, *Cindy*. 2001. Collection: private.



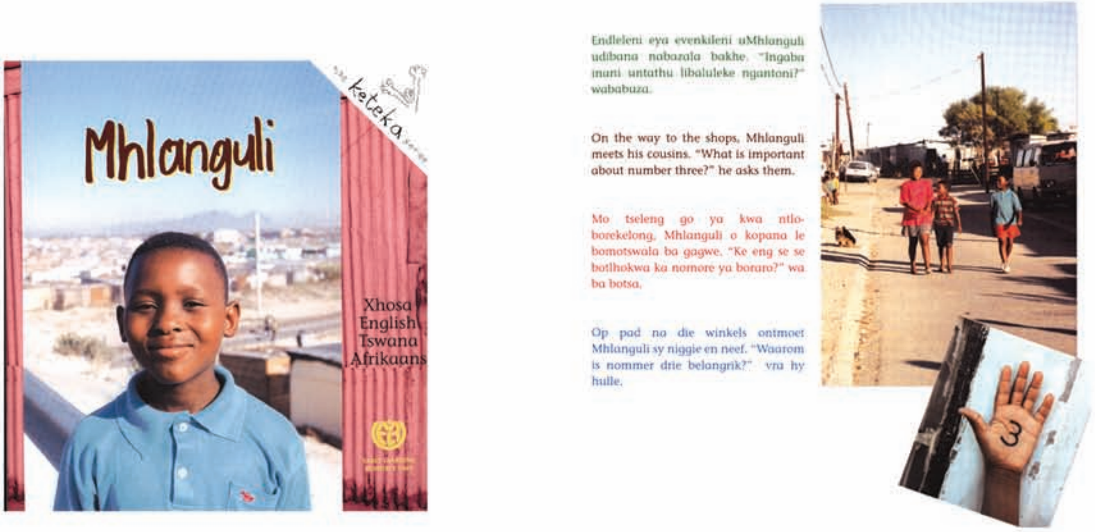
"Siphunga iti nendlula-mthi kunye nonodoli."

"We're having tea with a giraffe and a doll."

"Re nwa tee le thutlwa le mpopi."

"Ons drink tee met 'n kameelperd en 'n pop."

Figure 2.4 (above) Page illustration from Reviva Schermbrucker & Motlhalefi Mahlabe, *Cindy*. 2001. Collection: private.



Endleleni eya evenkileni uMhlanguli udibana nabazala bakhe. "Ingaba inani untathu libaluleke ngantoni?" wababuza.

On the way to the shops, Mhlanguli meets his cousins. "What is important about number three?" he asks them.

Mo tseleng go ya kwa ntlo-borekelong, Mhlanguli o kopana le bomotswala ba gagwe. "Ke eng se se botlhokwa ka nomore ya boraro?" wa ba botsa.

Op pad na die winkels ontmoet Mhlanguli sy niggie en neef. "Waarom is nommer drie belangrik?" vra hy hulle.

Figure 2.5 **(a)** (above left) Cover illustration from Sue Kramer & Reviva Schermbrucker, *Mhlanguli*. 1998. Collection: private. **(b)** (above right) Illustration from Sue Kramer & Reviva Schermbrucker, *Mhlanguli*, see above for details.

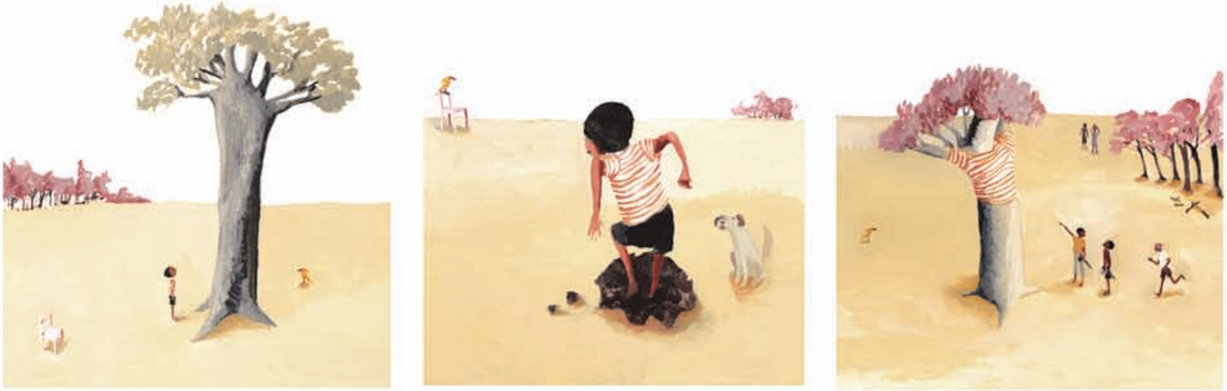
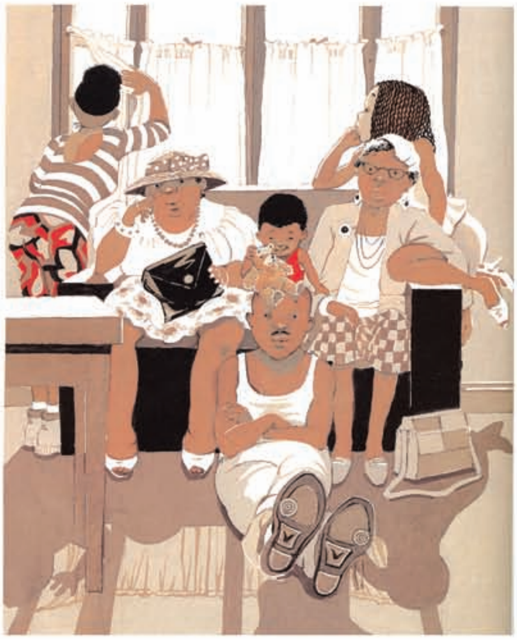


Figure 2.6 Three paintings from the series for Mhlobo Jadezweni and Hannah Morris' *uTshepo mde/Tall enough*. 2006. Gouache on paper, 15 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.

Figure 2.7 **(a)** (right) Page illustration from Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury, *Kakhulu*. 1994. Collection: private. **(b)** (below) Title page from Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury, *Kakhulu*, see above for details.



KAKHULU
IBHALWE NGU-
TRISH COOKE
IMIFANEKISO NGU-
HELEN OXENBURY
IGUQULWE NGU-
PAMELLA MASEKO

TAFELBERG

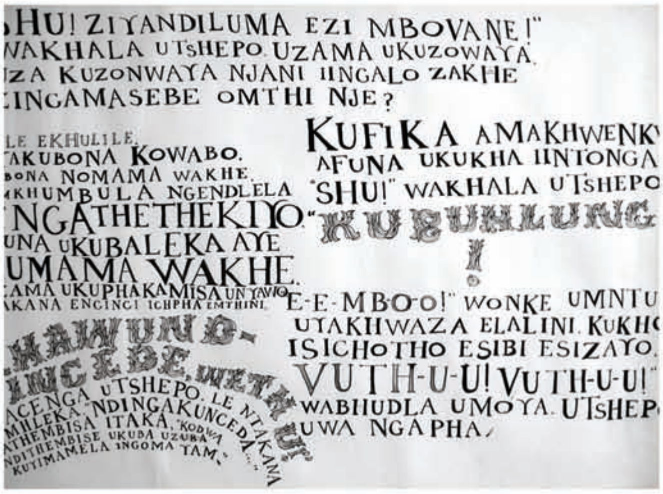

HU! ZIYANDILUMA EZI MBOVANE!"
WAKHALA UTSHEPO. UZAMA UKUZOWAYA.
ZA KUZONWAYA NJANI IINGALO ZAKHE
INGAMASEBE OMTHI NJE?
LE EKHULILE.
AKUBONA KOWABO.
BONA NOMAMA WAKHE.
KHUMBULA NGENDLELA
NGATHETHEKIYO.
UNA UKUBALEKA AYE
UMAMA WAKHE.
AMA UKUPHAKAMISA UNYAWO
KANA ENCINCI ICHPHA EMTHINI.
KUFIKA AMAKHWENK
AFUNA UKUKHA IINTONGA
"SHU!" WAKHALA UTSHEPO
"KUBUHLUNG
!
E-E-MBO-O!" WONKE UMNTU
UTAKHWAZA ELALINI. KUKH
ISICHOTHO ESIBI ESIZAYO.
VUTH-U-U! VUTH-U-U!"
WABHUDLA UMOYA. UTSHEP
UWA NGAPHA.
HAWUND-
INCEDE, WETHU!
ACENGA UTSHEPO. LE NTAKANA
MILEKA. "NDINGAKUNCEDA..."
THEMBISA ITAKA. "KODWA
THEMBISE UKUBA UZUBA
NDITHEMBA
KUTIMAMELA INGOMA TAM."

Figure 2.8 (right; bottom right) Hannah Morris, *isiXhosa poster*. 2006. Ink on paper, 84.1 x 59.4 cm. Artist's collection.

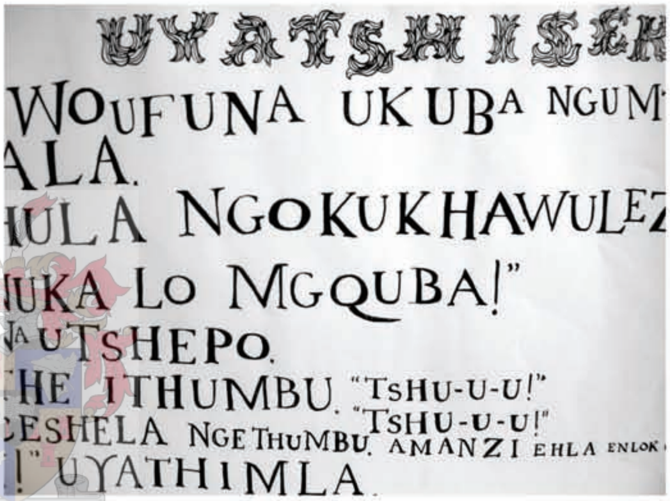
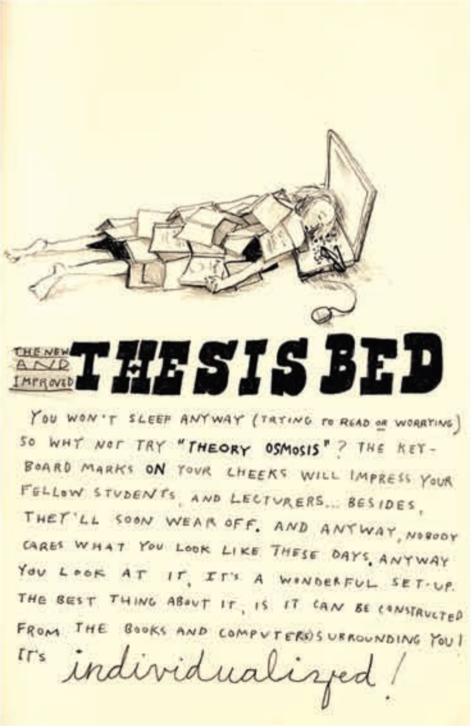
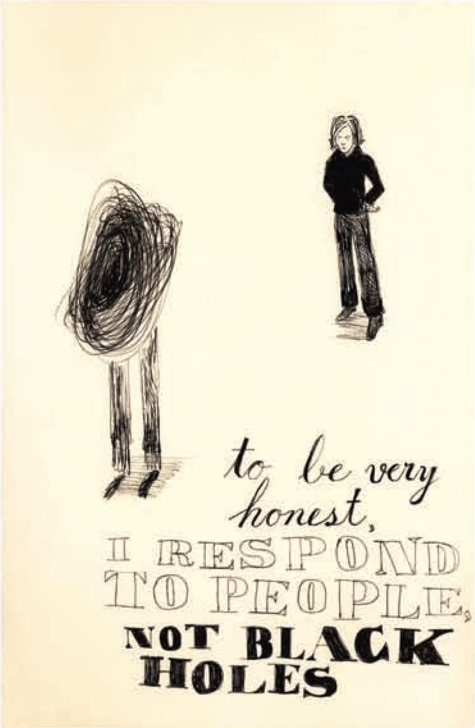

UYATSHISEK
WOUFUNA UKUBA NGUM
LA.
ULA NGOKUKHAWULEZ
UKA LO MGQUBA!"
A UTSHEPO.
HE ITHUMBU. "TSHU-U-U!"
"TSHU-U-U!"
ESHELA NGETHUMBU. AMANZI EHLA ENLOK
!" UYATHIMLA.

Figure 2.9 (bottom left; bottom right) Hannah Morris, *Observing my own life series*, 2006. Ink on paper, 12.75 x 21 cm. Artist's collection.


THE NEW AND IMPROVED THESIS BED
YOU WON'T SLEEP ANYWAY (TRYING TO READ OR WORRYING) SO WHY NOT TRY "THEORY OSMOSIS"? THE KEY-BOARD MARKS ON YOUR CHEEKS WILL IMPRESS YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS, AND LECTURERS... BESIDES, THEY'LL SOON WEAR OFF. AND ANYWAY, NOBODY CARES WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE THESE DAYS. ANYWAY YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S A WONDERFUL SET-UP. THE BEST THING ABOUT IT, IS IT CAN BE CONSTRUCTED FROM THE BOOKS AND COMPUTER(S) SURROUNDING YOU! IT'S individualized!


to be very honest,
I RESPOND TO PEOPLE,
NOT BLACK HOLES

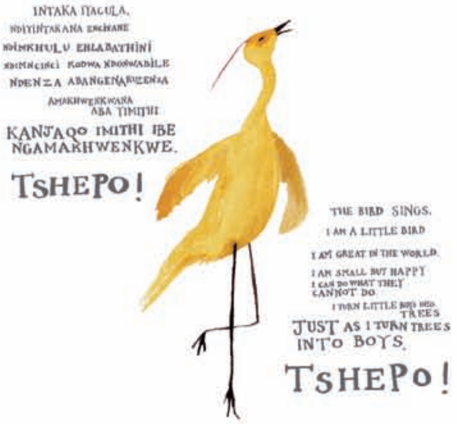

INTAKA ITAGULA.
KANJALO IMITHI IBE NGAMAKHWENKWE.
TSHEPO!
THE BIRD SINGS.
I AM A LITTLE BIRD
I AM GREAT IN THE WORLD.
I AM SMALL BUT HAPPY
I CAN DO WHAT THEY CANNOT DO
I TURN LITTLE BOYS INTO TREES
JUST AS I TURN TREES INTO BOYS.
TSHEPO!

Figure 2.10 (left) Hannah Morris, hand-lettered pages from series for the picture book *uTshepo mde/Tall enough.* 2006. Gouache on paper/digital, 15 x 15 cm; (below) 30 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.

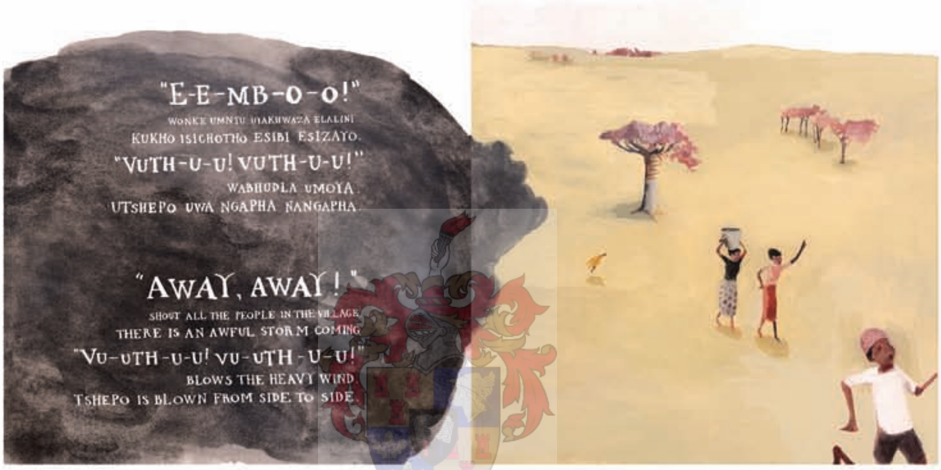
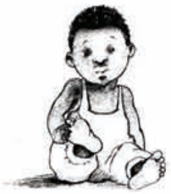

"E-E-MB-O-O!"
WONKE UMNTU UYAKHWAZA ELALINI
KUKHO ISICHOTHO ESIBI ESIZAYO.
"VUTH-U-U! VUTH-U-U!"
WABHUDLA UMOYA.
UTSHEPO UWA NGAPHA NANGAPHA.
"AWAY, AWAY!"
SHOUT ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE
THERE IS AN AWFUL STORM COMING
"VU-UTH-U-U! VU-UTH-U-U!"
BLOWS THE HEAVY WIND.
TSHEPO IS BLOWN FROM SIDE TO SIDE.

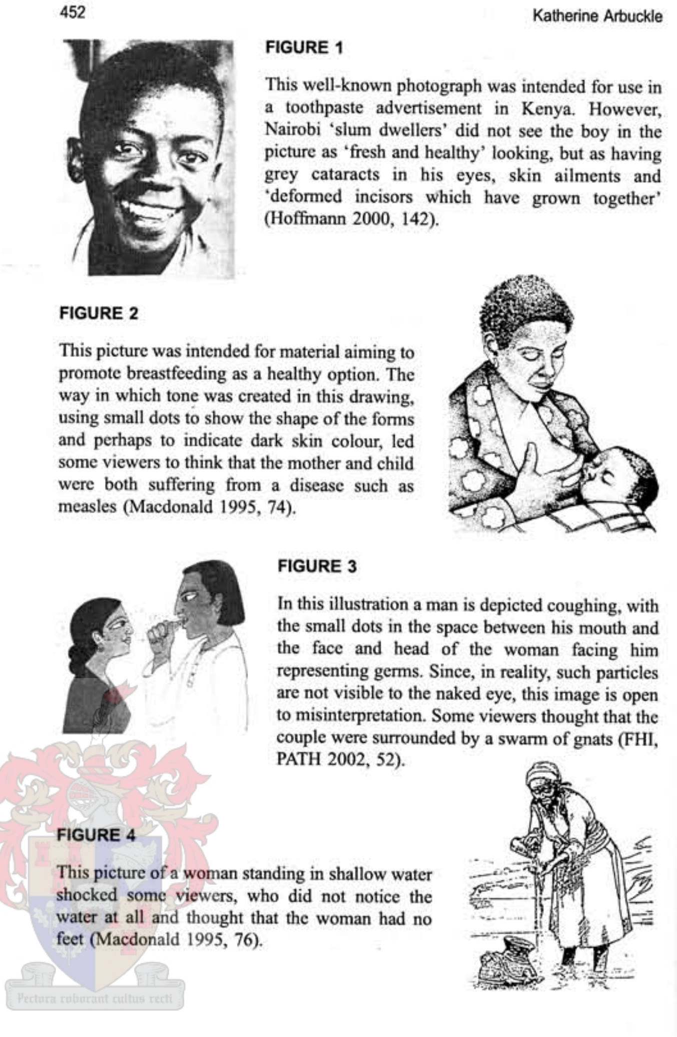
Figure 2.11 (right) Text from Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury, *Kakhulu*, 1994. Collection: private.

Bonke babengenzi nto,
umama, ubhabha no-Anti Bhabha,
uMalume uDidi noNhanha
noKhulu noMzala uKhaya,
babengenzi nto ngenene …

Suka,
NKQO NKQO NKQO!

“Sele ndifikile!”
Suka bonke bee xhungu.
Umama uphakamise umntwana
ngoku bonke balindile ngasemnyango …





452 Katherine Arbuckle

FIGURE 1

This well-known photograph was intended for use in a toothpaste advertisement in Kenya. However, Nairobi 'slum dwellers' did not see the boy in the picture as 'fresh and healthy' looking, but as having grey cataracts in his eyes, skin ailments and 'deformed incisors which have grown together' (Hoffmann 2000, 142).

FIGURE 2

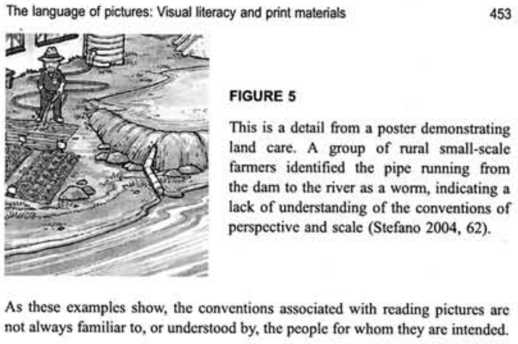
This picture was intended for material aiming to promote breastfeeding as a healthy option. The way in which tone was created in this drawing, using small dots to show the shape of the forms and perhaps to indicate dark skin colour, led some viewers to think that the mother and child were both suffering from a disease such as measles (Macdonald 1995, 74).

FIGURE 3

In this illustration a man is depicted coughing, with the small dots in the space between his mouth and the face and head of the woman facing him representing germs. Since, in reality, such particles are not visible to the naked eye, this image is open to misinterpretation. Some viewers thought that the couple were surrounded by a swarm of gnats (FHI, PATH 2002, 52).

FIGURE 4

This picture of a woman standing in shallow water shocked some viewers, who did not notice the water at all and thought that the woman had no feet (Macdonald 1995, 76).



The language of pictures: Visual literacy and print materials 453

FIGURE 5

This is a detail from a poster demonstrating land care. A group of rural small-scale farmers identified the pipe running from the dam to the river as a worm, indicating a lack of understanding of the conventions of perspective and scale (Stefano 2004, 62).

As these examples show, the conventions associated with reading pictures are not always familiar to, or understood by, the people for whom they are intended.

Figure 2.12 **(a)** (top right) Page illustrations from article, *The language of pictures: visual literacy and print materials.* 2004. Collection: private. **(b)** (bottom right) Page illustration from *The language of pictures: visual literacy and print materials*, see above for details.

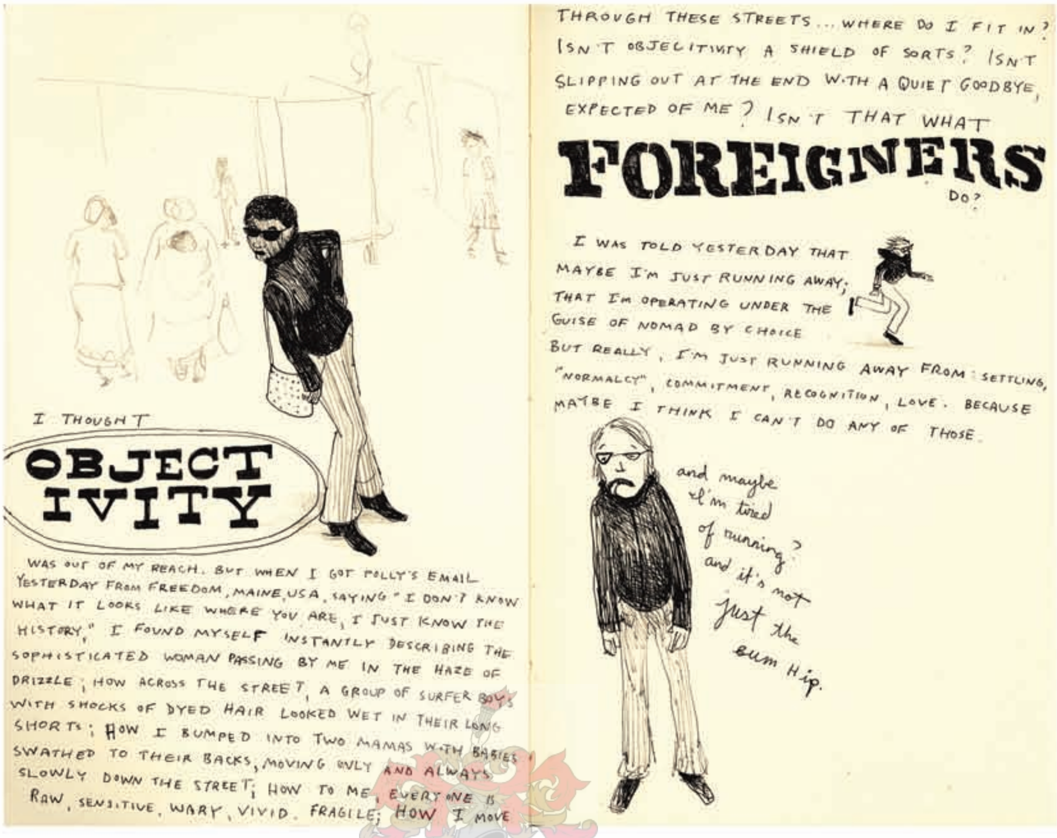
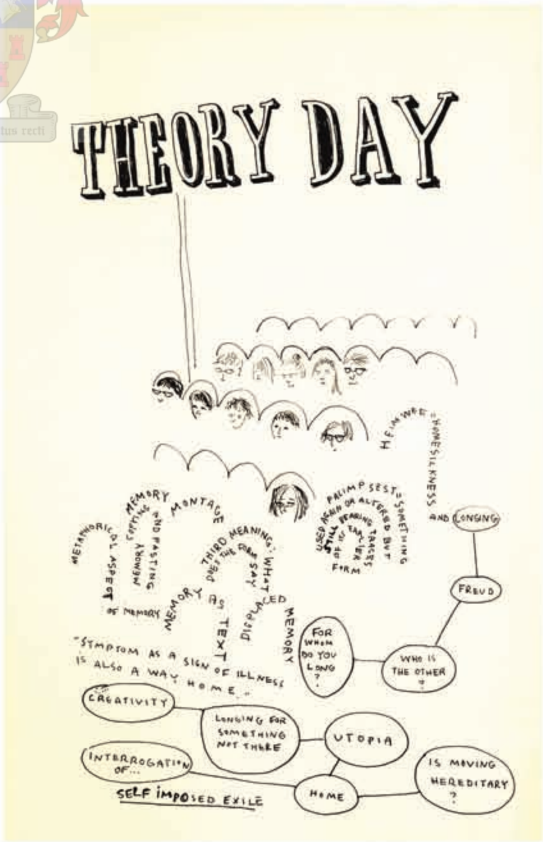
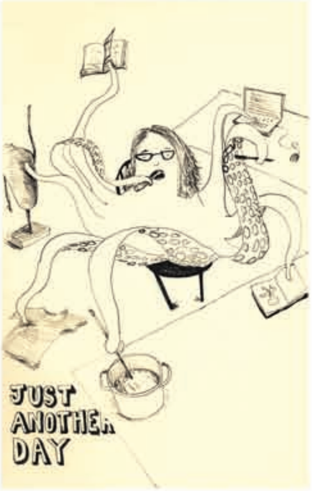

THROUGH THESE STREETS ... WHERE DO I FIT IN? ISN'T OBJECTIVITY A SHIELD OF SORTS? ISN'T SLIPPING OUT AT THE END WITH A QUIET GOODBYE, EXPECTED OF ME? ISN'T THAT WHAT
FOREIGNERS
DO?
I WAS TOLD YESTERDAY THAT MAYBE I'M JUST RUNNING AWAY; THAT I'M OPERATING UNDER THE GUISE OF NOMAD BY CHOICE BUT REALLY, I'M JUST RUNNING AWAY FROM SETTLING, "NORMALCY", COMMITMENT, RECOGNITION, LOVE. BECAUSE MAYBE I THINK I CAN'T DO ANY OF THOSE.
and maybe I'm tired of running? and it's not just the bum hip.
I THOUGHT
OBJECT IVITY
WAS OUT OF MY REACH. BUT WHEN I GOT POLLY'S EMAIL YESTERDAY FROM FREEDOM, MAINE, USA, SAYING "I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE WHERE YOU ARE, I JUST KNOW THE HISTORY," I FOUND MYSELF INSTANTLY DESCRIBING THE SOPHISTICATED WOMAN PASSING BY ME IN THE HAZE OF DRIZZLE; HOW ACROSS THE STREET, A GROUP OF SURFER BOYS WITH SHOCKS OF DYED HAIR LOOKED WET IN THEIR LONG SHORTS; HOW I BUMPED INTO TWO MAMAS WITH BABIES SWATHED TO THEIR BACKS, MOVING ONLY AND ALWAYS SLOWLY DOWN THE STREET; HOW TO ME, EVERYONE IS RAW, SENSITIVE, WARY, VIVID. FRAGILE; HOW I MOVE

Figure 2.13 **(a)** Hannah Morris, double page spread drawing from *Observing my own life series*. 2006. Ink on paper, 20.65 x 26 cm. Artist's collection. **(b)** Hannah Morris, drawing from *Observing my own life series*, see above details, 20.65 x 12.85 cm.


THEORY DAY
HEIMWEE = HOMESICKNESS AND LONGING
FREUD
WHO IS THE OTHER?
FOR WHOM DO YOU LONG?
MEMORY MONTAGE
METAPHORICAL ASPECT OF MEMORY
MEMORY CUTTING AND PASTING MEMORY
THIRD MEANING: WHAT DOES THE FORM SAY
MEMORY AS TEXT
DISPLACED MEMORY
PALIMPSEST = SOMETHING USED AGAIN OR ALTERED BUT STILL BEARING TRACES OF ITS EARLIER FORM
"SYMPTOM AS A SIGN OF ILLNESS IS ALSO A WAY HOME."
CREATIVITY
LONGING FOR SOMETHING NOT THERE
UTOPIA
INTERROGATION OF...
HOME
IS MOVING HEREDITARY?
SELF IMPOSED EXILE


JUST ANOTHER DAY

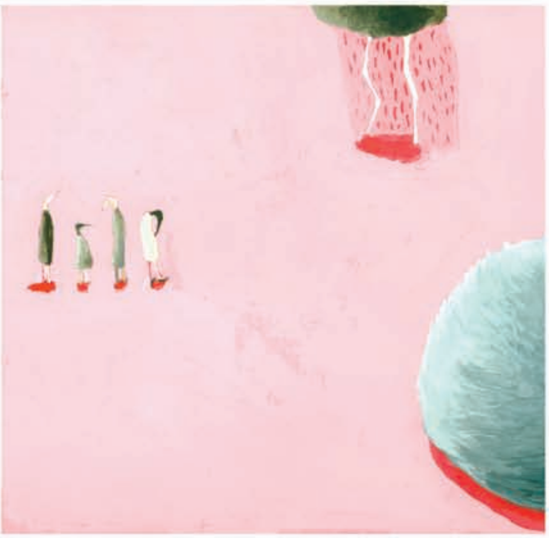
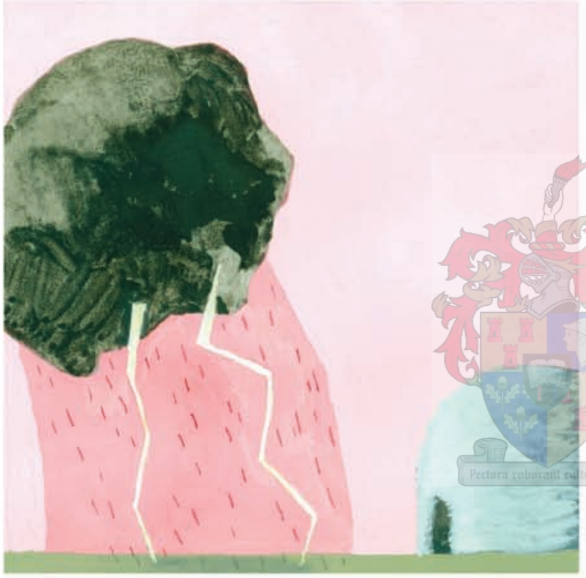
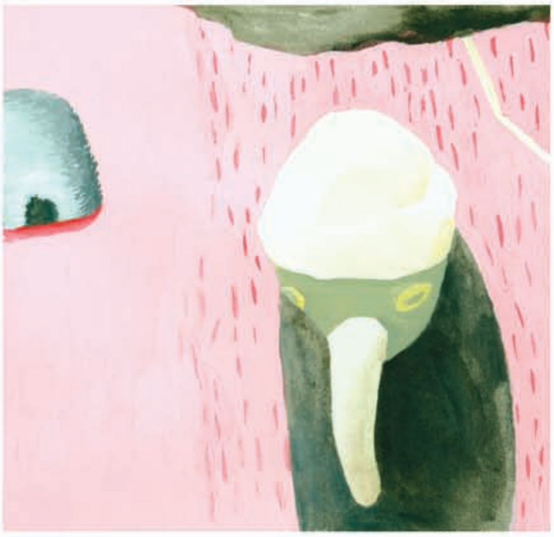


Figure 3.1 Hannah Morris, three paintings from series for the picture book *Mamasianoke, or the endless stream of selfish birds.* 2006. Gouache on paper, 15 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.





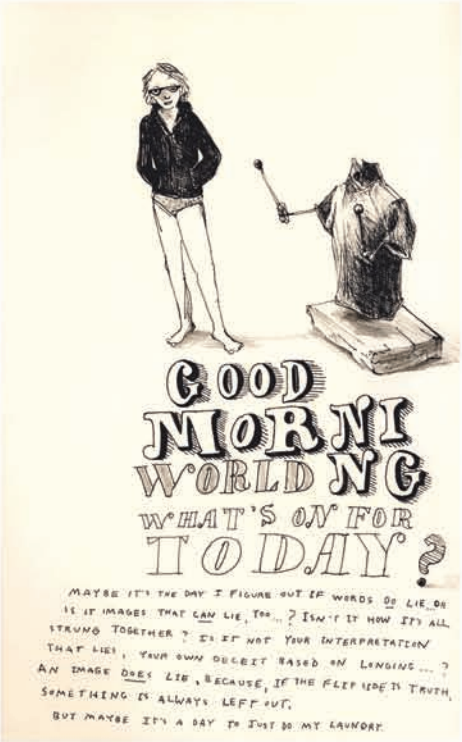
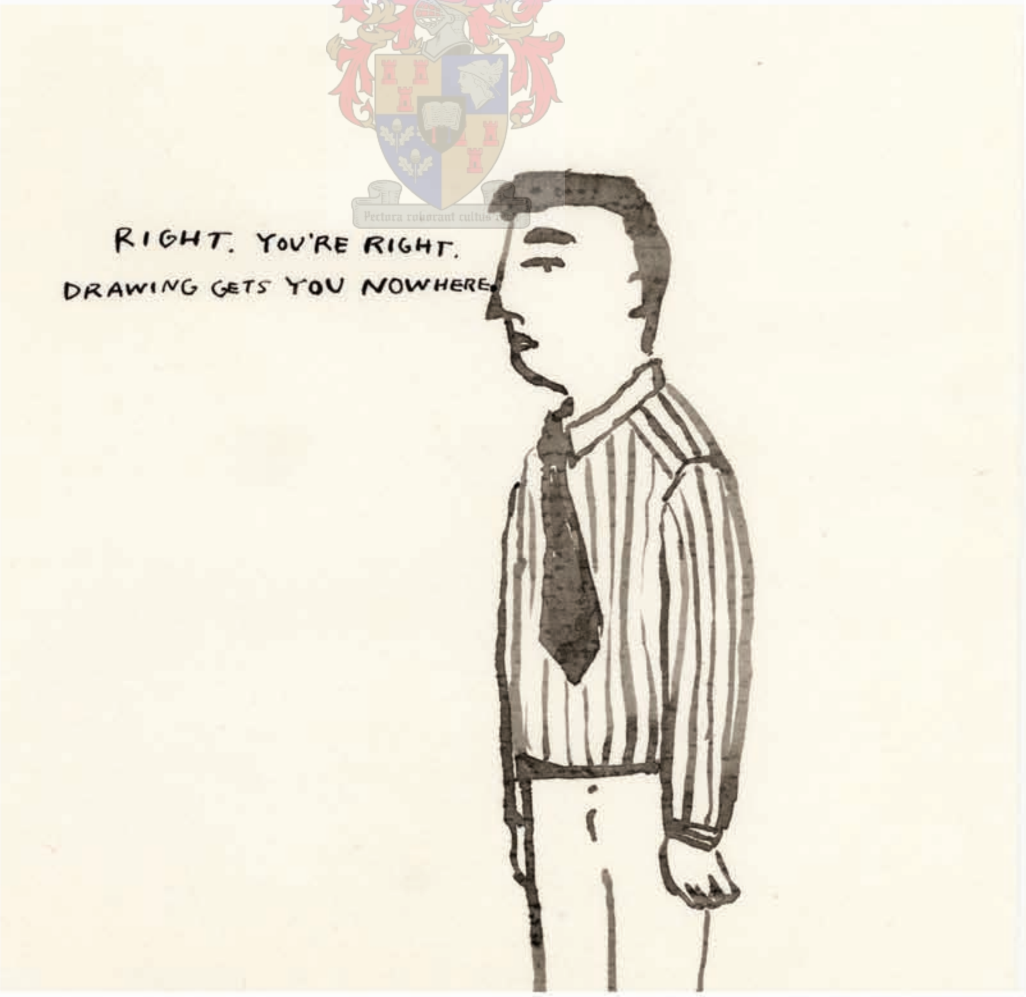

GOOD MORNI WORLD NG
WHAT'S ON FOR TODAY?
MAYBE IT'S THE DAY I FIGURE OUT IF WORDS DO LIE... OR IS IT IMAGES THAT CAN LIE, TOO...? ISN'T IT HOW IT'S ALL STRUNG TOGETHER? IS IT NOT YOUR INTERPRETATION THAT LIES, YOUR OWN DECEIT BASED ON LONGING...? AN IMAGE DOES LIE, BECAUSE, IF THE FLIP SIDE IS TRUTH, SOMETHING IS ALWAYS LEFT OUT.
BUT MAYBE IT'S A DAY TO JUST DO MY LAUNDRY.

Figure 3.2 (a) (left) Hannah Morris, drawing from *Observing my own life series*. 2006. Ink on paper, 20.65 x 12.85 cm. Artist's collection. **(b)** (below left) Hannah Morris, ink painting from *The art narrative* series. 2006. Ink on paper, 15 x 15 cm. Artist's collection.


RIGHT. YOU'RE RIGHT.
DRAWING GETS YOU NOWHERE.

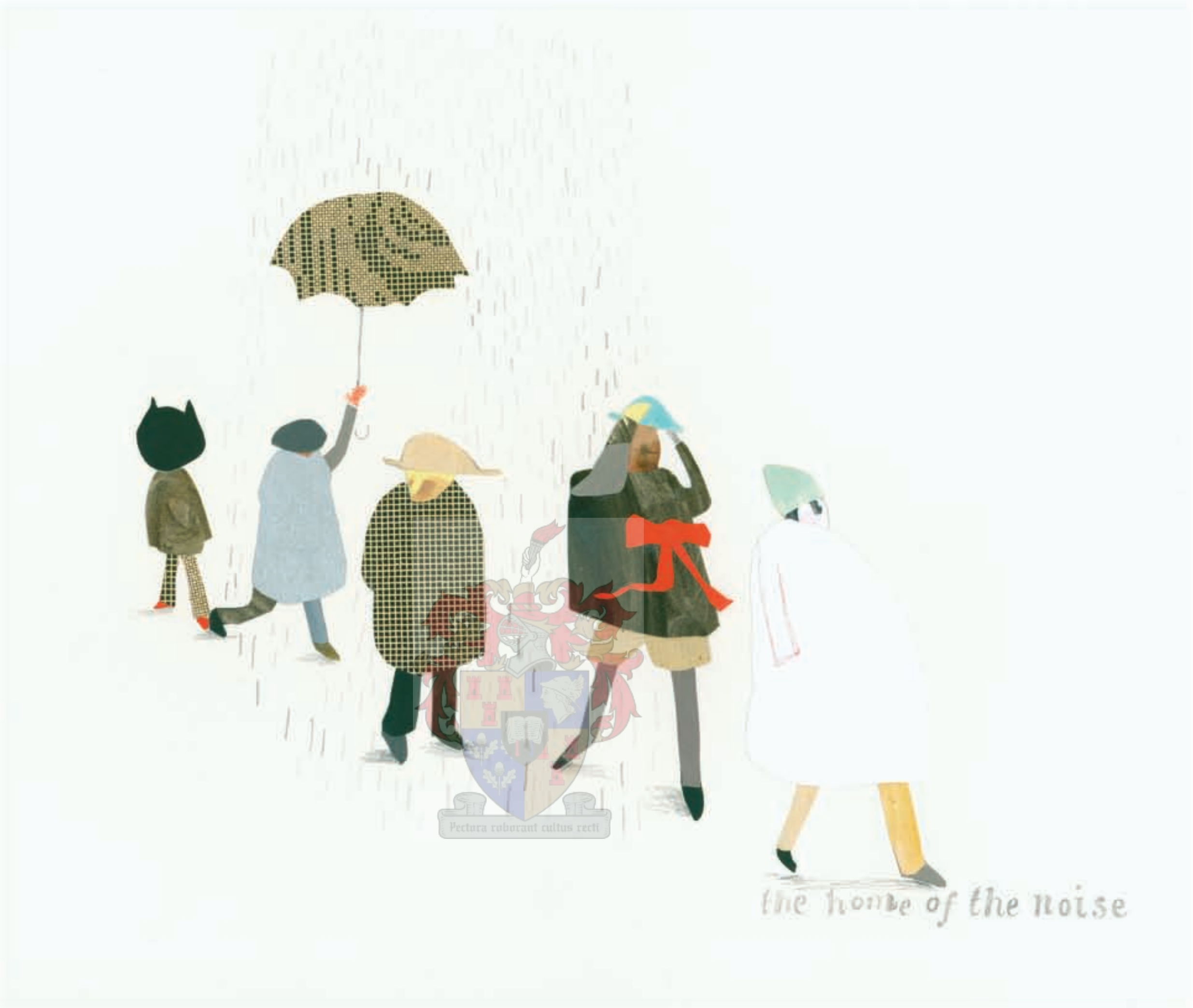
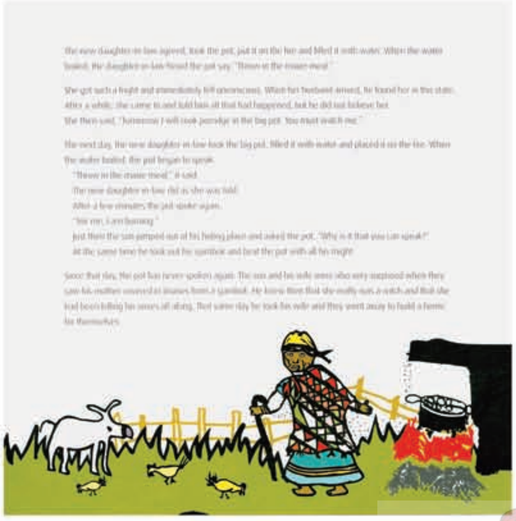
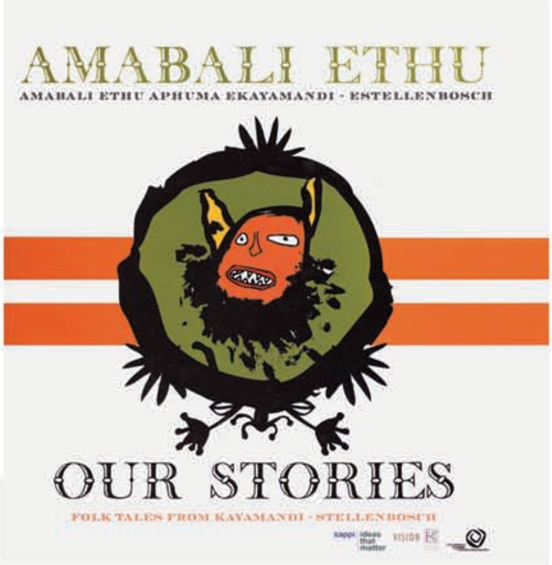

the home of the noise

Figure 3.3 Hannah Morris, *The home of the noise*. 2006. Collage, 33.4 x 37.8 cm. Artist's collection.





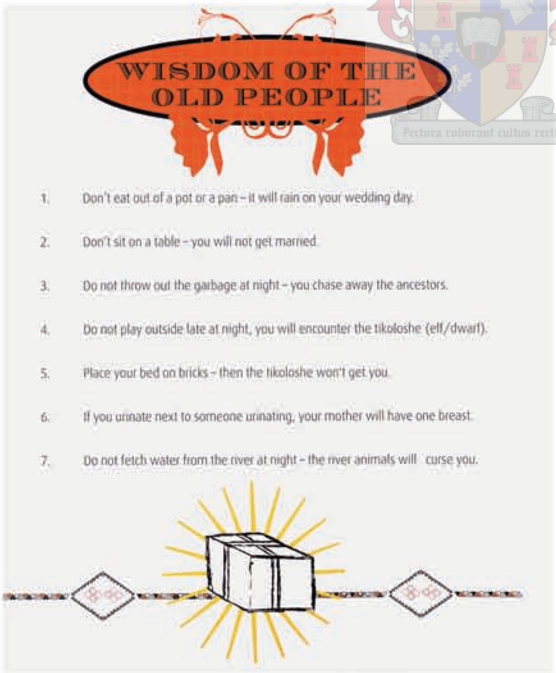
AMABALI ETHU

AMABALI ETHU APHUMA EKAYAMANDI - ESTELLENBOSCH

OUR STORIES

FOLK TALES FROM KAYAMANDI - STELLENBOSCH

Figure 3.4 (a) (above) Cover illustration for VisionK, *Amabali ethu/Our stories*. 2005. Collection: private. **(b)** (top left; left; below) Page illustrations from VisionK, *Amabali ethu/Our stories*, see above for details.



WISDOM OF THE OLD PEOPLE

1. Don't eat out of a pot or a pan – it will rain on your wedding day.
2. Don't sit on a table – you will not get married.
3. Do not throw out the garbage at night – you chase away the ancestors.
4. Do not play outside late at night, you will encounter the tikoloshe (elf/dwarf).
5. Place your bed on bricks – then the tikoloshe won't get you.
6. If you urinate next to someone urinating, your mother will have one breast.
7. Do not fetch water from the river at night – the river animals will curse you.