

THE APARTHEID CENSORS' RESPONSES TO THE WORKS OF FRANTZ FANON, AMILCAR CABRAL AND STEVE "BANTU" BIKO

TAMLYN SUE ROSS

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Supervisor: Dr Lucy Graham

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Declaration

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

T.S. Ross Date: 27 March 2013

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which the censors during the apartheid era responded to the works of three black liberation theorists; namely Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Steve Biko. Although other studies of apartheid-era censorship have been published, this is the first to examine the censors' reactions to the work of key African liberation writers. Apartheid in South Africa brought with it a stringent system of governance, which included a board of censors who would decide, according to their interpretation of the laws of the time, whether a publication was considered to be "desirable" or "not undesirable." One of the major themes examined in the thesis is the interface and tension between the specific and the transnational. As we shall see, all three liberation theorists put forward Pan-African ideas of liberation, but often explicated upon the specificities of their particular liberation struggles. In a strange act of mirroring, while upholding the idea of South Africa as "a special case" (exempt from the norms of international human rights law), the apartheid-era censors were concerned about the spread of Pan-African theories of liberation. Beginning with Fanon, I speculate on the reason why *Black Skin White Masks* was not banned in South Africa, though Fanon's later works to enter the country were banned. I also examine Gillo Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers*, which was influenced by Fanon's theories, and censorship, arguing that the "likely readers" or "likely viewers" of revolutionary material included not only possible revolutionaries, but also paranoid networks of counter-insurgency. I then move on to examine the apartheid censors' responses to the works of Amilcar Cabral, outlining the interface and tension between local and continental as described above. The final chapter, which deals with the censors' responses to Steve "Bantu" Biko's *I Write What I Like* as well as Donald Wood's *Biko*, the film *Cry Freedom* and other Biko related texts and memorabilia, has some surprises about the supposedly "liberal" censors' responses to what they deemed to be "undesirable" and "not undesirable" literature.

Abstrak

Hierdie tesis verken die manier waarop die sensuurraad tydens die apartheidera gereageer het op die werk van drie swart bevrydingsteoretici, by name Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral en Steve Biko. Hoewel daar wel ander studies oor apartheidera-sensuur die gepubliseer is, is hierdie die eerste studie wat die sensuurraad se reaksie op die werk van sleutel-Afrika-bevrydingskrywers verken. Apartheid het 'n streng beheerstelsel in Suid-Afrika tot gevolg gehad wat 'n sensuurraad ingesluit het wat volgens sy interpretasie van die toenmalige wette kon besluit of 'n publikasie "wenslik" of "nie-wenslik" was. Een van die hoofemas wat in hierdie tesis ondersoek word is die interaksie en spanning tussen die spesifieke en die transnasionale. Soos sal blyk, het al drie bevrydingsteoretici Pan-Afrikanistiese idees van bevryding ondersteun, maar dikwels die besondere van hul spesifieke bevrydingstryd uiteengesit. Die apartheidera-sensors se kommer oor die verspreiding van die Pan-Afrikanistiese bevrydingsteorië, terwyl hulle die idee van Suid-Afrika as "'n spesiale geval" (vrygestel van die norme van internasionale menseregte wetgewing) voorgehou het, was 'n ironiese spieëlbeeld hiervan. Ek begin by Fanon en bespiegel oor die redes waarom *Black Skin White Masks* nooit in Suid-Afrika verbied was nie hoewel Fanon se latere werk wat die land binnegekom het, wel verbied was. Ek ondersoek ook Gillo Pontecorvo se film *The Battle of Algiers* wat deur Fanon se teorieë beïnvloed is, en argumenteer dat die "waarskynlike lesers" en "waarskynlike kykers" van revolusionêre materiaal nie slegs moontlike revolusionêre ingesluit het nie, maar ook paranoïede netwerke van teeninsurgensie. Ek gaan voort deur die reaksie van die apartheidera-sensors op die werke van Amilcar Cabral te ondersoek en die interaksie en spanning tussen die plaaslike en die kontinentale, soos hierbo beskryf, uit te lig. Die slothoofstuk, wat handel oor die sensuurraad se reaksie op Steve "Bantu" Biko se *I Write What I Like*, asook Donald Woods se *Biko*, die film *Cry Freedom* en ander Biko-verwante tekste en memorabilia, bevat verrassings omtrent die sogenaamde "liberale" sensors se reaksies op wat hulle as "wenslike" en "nie-wenslike" literatuur beskou het.

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Introduction

While a number of studies have investigated apartheid-era censorship,¹ no one so far has focused consistently on the specific reasons given by the Censorship Board for the banning of the works of highly influential African liberation theorists. In this thesis, I access hitherto unsourced archival material from the South African National Archives in order to reveal what J.M. Coetzee calls “Apartheid Thinking” (163), in this case, the thinking and reasoning of the apartheid censors in relation to theories of African liberation. I will thus be investigating the apartheid censors’ responses and reasons for banning - or in few cases, for not banning or unbanning - the works of three incredibly significant theorists of the African liberation, namely Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Steve Biko. Comparing the censors’ responses to the writings of these theorists, I shall discuss the extent to which the apartheid censors believed in the possibility of transnationalism; specifically in terms of whether ideas of African liberation elsewhere could take root in South Africa. Each one of these liberation theorists wrote about their specific liberation struggles, that is, Fanon on Algeria, Cabral on Guinea-Bissau and Biko on South Africa, but what becomes evident through their various works is the fact that they shared views on liberation movements in general. In this thesis then, I intend to examine the views that the apartheid censors had about a transnational flow of ideas in the face of the conviction, held by many proponents of apartheid, that South Africa was a “special case”, an individual country whose issues should be approached as unique and that should not have to conform to the norms of international human rights law.

In the introduction to the English edition of Cabral’s collected speeches and writings, *Unity and Struggle*, the editors claim that “[apartheid] in South Africa was the political correlate of colonialism elsewhere in Africa, but with an added, particularly virulent, racial dimension” (Vambe and Zegeye 8). What cannot be denied is the fact that Fanon, Cabral and Biko were each fighting for the freedom of their people from a form of oppression, and that there was a transnational flow of ideas of African liberation. For Fanon, it was about the

¹See Christopher Merrett, “South African Censorship: A Legacy of the Past and a Threat to the Future” (1992) and *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (1994); J.M. Coetzee, *Giving Offence: Essays on Censorship* (1996); Margreet de Lange, *The Muzzled Muze: Literature and Censorship in South Africa* (1997); Peter McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences* (2009); and Mark Sanders, “Memories of Censorship” (2010).

liberation of the people of Algeria from French colonisation, for Cabral it was about the liberation of the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde from Portuguese colonisation, and for Biko it was about the liberation of the black and coloured people in South Africa from white oppression. Despite their differing situations, a common critique of racial oppression or colonialism exists in all of their works, illustrating that the works of these liberation theorists indicate the existence of a Pan African struggle, while at the same time focusing on the specificities of the context of each of their individual struggles.

In his article entitled “Afropolitanism”, Achille Mbembe highlights the fact that due to migration (including traders and missionaries), it is clear that the spreading and sharing of African ideas, cultures and customs occurred on a transnational level, and that it was “this very cultural mobility that colonisation once endeavoured to freeze through the modern institution of borders” (Mbembe 26, 27). Mbembe’s comment is important as it highlights colonial anxiety towards the distribution of knowledge and ideas. Mbembe points out that, because of this movement of ideas, cultures and customs, “a part of African history lies somewhere else, outside Africa,” and at the same time, the “history of the rest of the world, of which we are inevitable actors and guardians, is present on the continent” (28). The transnational sharing of ideas, not only between Africa and the world but also within Africa, as a counter-colonial movement is an important assumption in this thesis.

In addition to the above-mentioned focus on transnationalism, this thesis will investigate whether there appear to be any contradictions or paradoxes in the responses given by the censors to the work of the three African liberation theorists, and will highlight any instances where they may not appear to have been consistent in their decisions. The works examined in this study were published in the period from 1952 to 1987, and the censors responses cover this twenty-five year period and beyond. Far from being consistent or predictable, however, censorship in South Africa did not always operate in the ways one would imagine, and was not consistent at all times. As I shall demonstrate, it would appear that there were particular ideas in the works of the theorists that the censors did not seem to find objectionable, and this may seem rather counterintuitive. Moreover, censorship and its *modus operandi* mutated over time, thus the censors did not condemn all works equally at all times. With the passage of time, and as apartheid was nearing its demise, one finds the censors more inclined to give the liberation theorists credit for being substantial figures

in their field and historical context, though this was often based on the idea that their theories were outdated and of interest only for their historical merits and for shedding light on a context removed from South Africa.

Transnationalism vs. “A Special Case”

An important consideration in framing my inquiry is the extent to which Biko, a South African liberation theorist who was active during the height of apartheid, was in fact influenced by Fanon or Cabral, and if any of their ideas appear in his works. As Henry Bienen, Nick Shepherd and Steven Robins and Nigel Gibson have shown, there are indeed significant overlaps between the work of Fanon and Biko in particular, and between Fanon and Cabral.²

Despite the attempts of the censors to stop the dissemination of Biko’s ideas, his political activism and views were well known throughout this country during the apartheid era. The question is the extent to which Fanon and Cabral were influential in South Africa, and whether the censors were aware of any possible influence of these theorists in the struggle against apartheid. As Nigel Gibson argues in *Fanonian Practices in South Africa*, by examining the works of Biko, the influence of Fanon on his thinking becomes clear. In fact, it was “in Fanon’s philosophy” that Biko discovered “the ground for Black Consciousness” (Gibson xi). In one of his works, Fanon even explicitly speaks of Black Consciousness, stating:

The dialectic that brings necessity into the foundation of my freedom drives me out of myself. It shatters my unreflected position. Still in terms of consciousness, Black Consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something; I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal. No probability has any place inside me. My Black Consciousness does not hold itself as a lack. It *is*. It is its own follower.

(*Black Skins, White Masks*, 135, original emphasis)

It could be said that Biko further developed the idea of Black Consciousness in response to Fanon’s analysis of the black man’s “inferiority complex” as elaborated in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and in addition to this, Biko, like Fanon, criticised the role that the white liberal played in the struggle for liberation, arguing that while white liberals claimed to be helping

²Bienen, Henry. “State and Revolution: The Work of Amilcar Cabral”. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 15.4 (1977): 555-568; Shepherd, Nick and Robins, Steven. *New South African Keywords*. North America: Ohio University Press. 2008; Gibson, Nigel. *Fanonian Practices in South Africa*. South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 2011.

black people in their struggle, they “were not only apartheid’s indirect beneficiaries but also its accomplices in reinforcing the idea that Blacks were not capable of becoming self-determining human beings” (Gibson 50). Biko further echoes Fanon’s opinion that African cultures were not “precolonial relics”, but were “ways of life that have very nearly been battered out of shape by settler colonialism” (Gibson 51), a fact that they argue in their works *The Wretched of the Earth* and *I Write What I Like* respectively. It can be said that Biko was “following Fanon’s conception of a dialectic of national consciousness” when insisting that the Blacks “use what they learned in the apartheid schools and colleges against the regime itself” (52). Furthermore, according to Gibson, “Biko’s concept of authentic culture is based on Fanon’s concept of ‘national culture’” (54), and in his work, Biko refers to “one black writer” before echoing sentiments of Fanon’s work, “On National Culture” (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 43,) (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 210), showing Fanon’s influence on Biko, but also possibly indicating that Biko was aware of the contentious nature and reception that Fanon would receive in apartheid-era South Africa. According to Gibson, Biko also further “takes up Fanon’s position” by coming to the realisation that “society is a Manichaeian reality, a world split in two, where the ‘natives’, because they are bowed but not broken, are kept in check only by force”, and thus gives a warning, similar to that by Fanon, “that liberation cannot come about from a reactive action based on politics of revenge but only from channelling pent-up anger into meaningful action” (Gibson 58). Thus, it can be seen that Biko, like Fanon before him “underscored the centrality of mental liberation to the freedom struggle” and was also concerned “with the mind of the oppressed” in particular (67).

The influence of Fanon in the works and thinking of Biko can thus be clearly noted, and what is thus evident is a cross-pollination of ideas, even though the situations in French Algeria and apartheid South Africa were somewhat different. In an interview with scientist Gail M. Gerhart, Biko explicitly speaks of the “influences [...] from Africa, [from] guys who could speak for themselves” which he noted as “very important at the time” to his ideas on the liberation struggle (Gerhart 23). Biko goes on to explicitly name Fanon as one of these “very influential people” and then likens the situation of “whites versus blacks” in South Africa to “Fanon’s France versus Algeria” situation (23, 25).

In *Amilcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War*, Patrick Chabal speaks of "Cabral's new consciousness of his African heritage" after reading Senghor's anthology of African Poetry (1948), which Cabral felt to be an appeal on behalf of African tradition (Chabal 43). According to Chabal, Cabral's "new cultural consciousness" could be linked to "negritude", which was developed by French-speaking black intellectuals. Like Black Consciousness, negritude was "a cultural movement whose primary object was to present an intellectually coherent argument about the existence and resilience of an African culture in no way inferior to European culture" (43). The sentiments which are argued with regards to "negritude" are often very similar in nature to the sentiments behind the concept of Black Consciousness that formed the very basis of Biko's liberation struggle, which indicates once more the cross-pollination of ideas. It is thus not surprising that various academics have linked the theorists to one another, particularly Cabral to Fanon in the 1960s when the "nationalist movement [became] more visible to the world" (Lopes, *Unity and Struggle (foreword)*, x). According to Beinen, Fanon and Cabral both give specific attention to the ethnicity of their people and focused on the peasantry in the countries of their struggles, noting that "it [is] necessary to transform a peasant revolt into a revolutionary war through organisation, through the stating of clear objectives, and the hammering out of a definite methodology", further indicating that both saw the need for a methodological and grass-roots approach to their liberation struggles (566). Shepherd and Robins state that Fanon and Cabral both saw "cultural resistance" as "imperative in situations of domination" and thus paid attention to the fact that "anti-colonial nationalism was thus as much a political struggle as it was a cultural one", again reinforcing their attention to the culture of their people (43). Throughout their works, as will be made evident in later chapters of this study when examining each one of their works in detail, it is clear that there is an echoing of sentiments between the works of these three theorists: all three make it clear that for them, liberation struggles are not about race or about putting the black man in the position of the oppressor and creating a new elite, but rather about freeing the oppressed person and giving them equal rights and opportunities.

On the one hand, there is evidence that apartheid censors saw this transnational flow of ideas as particularly threatening to the South African situation at the time. On the other hand, however, not only did acknowledging the spread of transnational ideas of

African liberation suggest a wider base of resistance to white supremacy in various parts of the world as liberation theorists gave intellectual support to one another through the cross-pollination of ideas, but this movement and the even censors own concern with it also troubled the idea of South Africa as “a special case”.

The idea of South Africa being viewed as “a special case” was “[a]n important argument of the counter-critics [against those who criticized apartheid]”, who chose to “emphasise South Africa’s uniqueness, which apparently was not understandable for the outsiders” (Kreis 222). This stance was based on “the accusation, directed at the opponents of apartheid, that they did not know the actual circumstances” of the South African situation, and therefore this ““special case” argument was directed against the validity of universal values and norms (human rights, democracy, rule of law)” (222). For some then, the defence for apartheid was to “[analyse] South Africa from a strictly racial point of view”, meaning that certain “universal categories which were developed for understanding and interpreting Africa, and its specific problems as it grew into independence, did not apply to South Africa” which was to be “judged by different standards” (Worrall 1). As we shall see, the transnational cross-pollination of ideas of national liberation, which the censors themselves acknowledged at times, undermined this idea of a “special case.”

Apartheid Censorship and the Archive

Housing everything from birth certificates and marriage licenses to town building plans and photographic collections, the Western Cape Provincial Archives stores 33 000 meters of public and non-public records, the earliest of which date back to 1651. Situated in Roeland Street in the heart of the city bowl of Cape Town, this old prison building became the house of the Cape Town Archives Repository in 1990, and is now open to the general public wishing to access various collections including maps, pamphlets and actual publications. However, it is in a separate, run-down building merely a block away that the materials relevant to my research can be found. This building does form part of the Cape Town National Archives, but only on these numerous floors one will be able to find hundreds of thousands of censorship records, in which detailed responses were provided by the censors and their consultants to numerous publications, films and memorabilia, providing the reasons as to why these were or were not, allowed to be disseminated. It is in this building

that I was able to access most of the materials relevant to my study; namely those providing the details on the censor's responses to the works of Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Steve Biko, along with the censors' responses to any works related to these liberation theorists. The relevant files are separated into two periods; those from 1963-1968, which are known as BCS files and are held in the main building of the Cape Town National Archives, and those from 1975-1990, known as IDP files, are held in the separate building mentioned above. This reveals a missing period from 1969-1974 in which it seems that most reports somehow disappeared, although it has been reported that a few records from this period may be somewhere in the National Archives in Pretoria. This missing period has been a conundrum for many researchers and does, in fact, impact on my research as there are some missing records on the specific works of the three theorists I seek to investigate. However, since I was able to find most of the material (and certainly enough to make assumptions that fill in most of the gaps), I am still able to achieve my overall aim which is to access and write about the apartheid censors' responses to these liberation theorists.

In apartheid South Africa where, as J.M. Coetzee has pointed out, the ratio of censors to writers outnumbered even that of Stalinist Russia (Coetzee 34), the censorship process was often a long and gruelling one in which the initial decision to ban a work would be contested and reviewed until such a time when either the Publications Appeal Board changed their opinion (often due to recently revoked laws), or until the post-apartheid period, when censorship laws fell away. The first form of official censorship in South Africa came in the form of The Obscene Publications Act, No. 31 of 1892, the aim of which was "to prevent the Sale or Exhibition of Indecent or Obscene Books, Pictures, Prints and other Articles" (*From Censorship to Classification* 1). In terms of Section 7 of the Act, it would be an offence, punishable upon conviction by a fine or imprisonment "to send any indecent or obscene material by post" (1). There was no governing body or board enforcing the Act, but there was a Resident Magistrate who would receive complaints "upon oath" and who could initiate forced searches where police could "search for and seize" all indecent and obscene publications found "and carry all the articles so seized before the Resident Magistrate" (1). This Act was later replaced by The Entertainments (Censorship) Act, No. 29 of 1931, which aimed to "regulate and control the public exhibition and advertisement of cinematograph films and of pictures and the performance of public entertainments" (1). This was the first

time that a Board of Censors was created in order to govern and examine all forms of publications. The Board was not able to approve any publication which “in its opinion, depicts any matter that prejudicially affects the safety of the State, or is calculated to disturb peace and good order, or prejudice the general welfare or be offensive to decency” (1).

Publications were later governed by the Publications and Entertainment Act, No. 26 of 1963, which “provided for state control over films, images and public entertainment” (Graham). This Act established the Publications Control Board and “introduced a system of control over “undesirable” publications, objects, films and public entertainment” (*From Censorship* 2). The Board had the ability to “examine publications or objects with a view to prohibiting the production and dissemination of publications and objects found to be ‘undesirable’” and to “prohibit any public entertainment deemed to be ‘undesirable’” (2). In his book *Censorship in South Africa*, J.C.W. van Rooyen, the Chairman of the Publications Appeal Board from 1980 to 1990, gives a detailed account of the Publications Act and the functioning of the Board. In it he explains that the 1963 Act was later replaced with the Publications Act, No. 42 of 1974, which stated that any material would be deemed undesirable “if it is indecent or obscene or offensive or harmful to public morals or blasphemous or offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of a section of the population of the Republic” (Van Rooyen, *Censorship* 3). Publications would thus be prohibited from 1974 onwards along the following lines:

Section 47(2) of the Publications Act provides that when a publication...film or public entertainment, or any part thereof

- (a) is indecent or obscene or offensive or harmful to public morals;
- (b) is blasphemous or is offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the inhabitants of the Republic;
- (c) brings any section of the inhabitants of the Republic into ridicule or contempt;
- (d) is harmful to the relations between any sections of the inhabitants of the Republic;
- (e) is prejudice [sic] to the safety of the state, the general welfare of the peace and good order;
- (f) discloses with reference to any of the judicial proceedings –
 - (i) any matter which is indecent or obscene or is offensive or harmful to public morals;
 - (ii) any indecent or obscene medical, surgical or physiological details, the disclosure of which is likely to be offensive or harmful to public morals.

(Van Rooyen, *Censorship* 7)

Along with the 1974 Publications Act, came the restructuring and replacement of the Publications Control Board with three independent bodies making up the committee as a whole, namely the Directorate of Publications, dealing with the administration and giving decisions on the first level, the Publications Appeal Board, deciding on matters brought on appeal, and the Minister of Home Affairs who was responsible for the Publications Act itself and could not take part in the actual adjudication process (6). Once the committee had found any material undesirable, the interested parties had the opportunity to appeal to the Publications Appeal Board in the hope of a different finding. The act was amended in 1978, following the banning of Etienne le Roux's *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* with allowance then being made for the opinions of "expert readers" in making decisions as to whether a book would be "undesirable" in terms of "likely readers" (10).

In 1994, a new Act was instated entitled the Abolition of Restrictions on Free Political Activity, No. 208 of 1993 which, due to its contents, deleted subsections (c), (d) and (e) of Section 47. Following this, with the implementation of the new democratic Government in South Africa and the Constitution came The Films and Publications Act, No. 65 of 1996, which "represents a dramatic shift from censorship to classification" meaning that "adult South Africans would no longer be told what they may see or read, or what they may allow their children to see or read" and they were finally able to "exercise their fundamental rights to make informed choices" (*From Censorship* 4). The one proscription of the Act is contained in section 27, which "prohibits production, importation or possession of materials involving children under the age of 18 years engaged in sexual conduct or a lewd display of nudity" (4). This Act then, takes into account the fundamental human rights of the nation and the Board now places an age limit on publications and films, provided of course that they comply with Section 27. This new act now means that the public are no longer told what it is that they may see or read, but are rather given the "imposition of age restrictions and the provision of information on the basis of which choices about what to see or read may be made" (4). There is also the fact that the post-apartheid Constitution outlaws hate speech, seeing freedom of speech as a right, but not an absolute right.

Literature Review

Previously, there have been a number of investigations into the actual functioning of the system of apartheid censorship by scholars such as J.M. Coetzee and Peter McDonald, as well as by Margreet de Lange, the author of *The Muzzled Muze: Literature and Censorship in South Africa* (1997). The book by De Lange focuses predominantly on the relationship between Afrikaans literature and censorship, although there are a few chapters devoted to black and white English literature and censorship. In her book, De Lange outlines the complicated and particularly interesting relationship between the censor and the writer, noting that both actually relied on one another. She noted that censorship during the apartheid era impacted deeply on South African literature, and that not only did authors have to write for their readers, but for the censors too, constantly bearing in mind what may or may not be passed through. This means that, with the censors continuously in mind, authors were actually constantly censoring themselves, thus altering the actual product before any form of dissemination actually took place.

Coetzee is unusual in that he is a writer of novels published under apartheid, and he is also the author of a collection of essays on censorship. Coetzee believes that it was the introduction of the printing press and the subsequent rights of authorship and ownership that initiated censorship as, with the prompt developments of the printing press and the ability to hastily produce numerous copies of a publication, the author grew in fortune and in power and thus “became the object of suspicion and even envy on the part of the state” (42). He believes that the state recognised the power that lies with the written word and its ability to be disseminated visually and orally, meaning that the author’s word can now be seen as the “master’s word” (43). The state thus becomes “doomed” in that the writer has the ability to rival all that is said by the state, and “the relationship between writer and tyrant (or writer and censor) [is] that of power-rivalry that can only grow more and more naked” (46).

McDonald focuses on the idea of censorship being instituted to prevent “white degeneration or black detribalization” and claims that this was part of the state’s desire to “save Afrikaans literary culture” which they deemed to be strongly on the decline (McDonald 25). McDonald’s study focuses only on the works of South African authors, and

therefore he does not examine the censors' responses to Fanon and Cabral, but he also does not examine censors' responses to the work of Steve Biko and my specific study will thus be a contribution to knowledge in this specific field.

In a book entitled *Censorship in South Africa* (1987), J.C.W. van Rooyen, the chairman of the Publications Appeal Board during the era of high or late apartheid, gives extensive justification for the evolution of South Africa's censorship system, with specific focus on the Publications Act of 1974 and the Publications Amendment Act of 1986, the two Acts which governed most of the publications dealt with in this thesis. The Publications Act, No. 42 of 1974, stated that any material would be deemed undesirable "if it is indecent or obscene or offensive or harmful to public morals or blasphemous or offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of a section of the population of the Republic" (Van Rooyen, *Censorship* 3). Section 47(2)(e) of this act explicitly states that a "publication or object, film or public entertainment" will be deemed undesirable if it is "prejudicial to the safety of the state, the general welfare or the peace and good order" (7). In addition, the 1974 Publications Act focused on the restructuring and replacement of the Publications Control Board with three independent bodies making up the committee as a whole, namely the Directorate of Publications, dealing with the administration and giving decisions on the first level, the Publications Appeal Board, deciding on matters brought on appeal and the Minister of Home Affairs who was responsible for the Publications Act itself and could not take part in the actual adjudication process (6). The act was amended in 1978, thus changing some previously stated decisions, although it was only in 1980 that the amendments actually came into effect. It was now important that "the likely reader/viewer [be] established as an important factor in the decisions under the Act" (10).

More recently, Van Rooyen – who was an active member of the Censorship Board during the apartheid era, being the Deputy Chairman of the Publications Appeal Board in the late seventies before becoming its Chairman in 1979/1980 until 1990 – has published a new book on the South African censorship process, entitled *A South African Censor's Tale* (2011), under the name Kobus van Rooyen. According to the preface written by André Brink, this book argues that it was under Van Rooyen's "leadership [that] phenomenal steps were taken towards freeing South Africa from the clutches of apartheid censorships of books, films and public entertainment" (Brink 12). Brink states that under Van Rooyen's guidance,

“the paradigm was shifted completely in films and publications regulation in the eighties: from no to yes, from distrust to trust, from fundamentalism to realism, [and] from despotism to democracy” (9). In fact, it is even claimed that “he and his family personally suffered at the hand of rightwing elements for the passing of the Attenborough film, *Cry Freedom*” (13). Though it may be that Van Rooyen’s appointment as chairman of the Censorship Board ushered in, or coincided with, a more considered and intellectual approach to censorship under apartheid, this thesis will consider whether claims about Van Rooyen’s enlightened liberalism are true, as it is evident that Van Rooyen was extensively involved in the investigation of works by and on Biko.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter One, following a brief biography of his life, I examine the works of Frantz Fanon and the apartheid censors’ responses to these works. Fanon’s works dealt primarily with the liberation of the Algerian people while they were under French rule, and therefore I begin by considering the French censorship laws of the time, and how his works were received in France at that time. I then investigate each of Fanon’s works separately, and uncover the apartheid censors’ responses to each of these works by following their journey from publication to banning or not banning. Furthermore, I examine Gillo Pontecorvo’s famous film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) which was based on the work of Fanon, and how this film was received, paying particular attention to the ways in which the apartheid censors responded to the film.

In Chapter Two, I investigate the apartheid censors’ responses to the works of Amilcar Cabral. Following a biography of Cabral, and considering his theories of the liberation of the oppressed, I examine what was occurring at the time in Guinea-Bissau, Cabral’s native land, and the struggles that inspired his theories and his works. I then follow the trajectory of the works of Cabral under South African censorship, paying particular attention to their reception in South Africa while under apartheid rule. I examine each of his collected and published works, and uncover the apartheid censors’ responses to each one of them.

In Chapter Three, I explore the responses of the apartheid censors to the works of Steve Biko. As Biko was himself South African, and thus based his liberation theories on the

situation in South Africa at the time, his works posed the most imminent threat to the apartheid regime. I provide a biography on Biko, and examine his liberation theories, discussing the apartheid censors responses to *I Write What I Like*. Furthermore, I consider the censors' responses to Donald Woods' *Biko*, and to the Biko film *Cry Freedom* (1987), before turning to their responses to other publications about Biko as well as Biko memorabilia.

Chapter 1

Censorship Unveiled:

Frantz Fanon and the Apartheid Censors

The provocative works of Frantz Fanon have inspired many controversial and thought-provoking exchanges, as well as numerous other revolutionary works and anti-colonial liberation movements around the world. Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (*Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* [1952]), *A Dying Colonialism* (*L'An V de la Révolution Algérienne* [1959]), *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les Damnés de la Terre* [1961]) and *Toward the African Revolution* (*Pour la Révolution Africaine* [1964]) provided the framework and inspiration for what became postcolonial theory. In addition, a chapter from *A Dying Colonialism* entitled "Algeria Unveiled," provided the framework and inspiration for Gillo Pontecorvo's highly controversial film, *The Battle of Algiers* (1966). The censorship laws in France prevented some of Fanon's books from being distributed, while right-wing elements in France placed severe pressure on the government to ban the film by Pontecorvo from being shown at all until 1971. As we shall see in this chapter, Fanon's work was treated with suspicion but also with some surprising ambivalence by the apartheid censors in South Africa.

Frantz Fanon was a psychoanalyst, philosopher, psychiatrist, writer and, above all, a revolutionary who, according to Jean Paul Sartre, allows "the Third World [to find] *itself* and [speak] to *itself* through his voice" (Sartre iii *original emphasis*). Born to a middle-class family on 20 July 1925 in the French Caribbean colony of Martinique, Fanon was educated at the prestigious high school Lycée Schoelcher and taught by his mentor Aimé Césaire, whose publication, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1939), had a vast impact on Fanon, providing him with much inspiration (Macey 50, 54, 69). Although Fanon seldom spoke of his wartime experiences throughout his life, it is known that at the age of eighteen, Fanon moved to the British colony of Dominica and initially joined the French Free Forces in World War II, before later joining the French army, which placed him at the base on the coast of Algeria (98, 111). Fanon's work in the army sent him to numerous countries, including France, Germany and North Africa, which is said to have "enlarged Fanon's view of racial, economic, and cultural oppression" and further "revealed some of the more absurd

ambiguities of racial thinking” (Wyrick 11). By the time that he was twenty one years old, Fanon was already a war veteran and “had passed his *baccalaureat*,” and was ready to complete his studies in Paris to study medicine and psychiatry, eventually qualifying as a psychiatrist in 1951 (Macey 116, 119, 135). He thus experienced the world rather widely, but it was his exposure to the colonised people of Algeria that provoked him to begin his first manuscript, which would eventually manifest itself as what we know today as his innovative work, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon continued his work as a revolutionary throughout his life, taking as his special focus the place of the black man within the world, stating that: “I am a negro – but I naturally do not know that, because that is what I am” (Macey 63). In the latter years of his life, Fanon was diagnosed with leukaemia and about one year later, on 6 December 1961 one of the most influential thinkers of the anti-colonial revolution in Africa died.

Works by Fanon “promoted human dignity, honor, and liberation” and ask the readers to “re-examine our concepts of liberty, selfhood, humanism, equality and nationalism” (Wyrick 2). His works, however, were to face the censorship apparatus of the French and South African governments for many years. Historically, the French censorship process was actually far more liberal than most other censorship processes around the world (Phillips, “*Old Wine*” 127). By 1881 it was declared that the press would be free with only “offence against public decency” being the governing law of censorship (128-129). However, the World Wars and the Algerian War, together with the reinstatement of Charles de Gaulle into power in the French government saw the reactivation of a nineteenth century censorship law in 1958, which “allowed for the imposition of heavy fines and up to five years’ imprisonment for ‘any offence against religious and public morals, or against public decency,’ including mockery of the state religion” (128). It was then up until the end of the 1960s that France was under some of its most stringent censorship laws due to the Algerian War, which just so happened to be the same period in which Fanon began publishing his works. From the 1970s, there was a “drop in the number of book prosecutions following the defeat of de Gaulle,” however, books that were of a threatening nature to “moral decency” of the youth of the state were still seized, and warnings of fines given to the editors (130). On 1 March 1994, a new Penal Code was instated in France making it illegal “to

manufacture, transport of broadcast by whatever means ... any message of violent or pornographic character or the nature of which seriously injures human dignity” (130).

Research has indicated that of Fanon’s four books, only *A Dying Colonialism* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, were banned in France, which was perhaps to be expected due to the provocative content of each of these books (Taylor 1, 2). *A Dying Colonialism* focuses on the Algerian War, exposing the barbaric behaviour of the French police which occurred, while *The Wretched of the Earth* is most notorious for its controversial call to violence. Both of these books place the colonisers in a particularly negative light, exposing their methods of torture and oppression and encouraging the oppressed to revolt. It is thus not surprising that the French government at the time these books were published would want to prevent dissemination.

Black Skin, White Masks

Fanon’s first book, *Black Skin, White Masks* (originally published in French in 1952 as *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* and translated into English in 1967 by Charles Lam Markham), was written whilst he was studying medicine and psychoanalysis and was submitted to the University of Lyons as his doctoral thesis entitled *The Disalienation of the Black Man* where it was rejected (which might qualify as institutional censorship), and subsequently made into the book that it is today. It is viewed as an anti-racist and anti-colonial book, and Fanon’s own distressing experience of French racism in Algeria provided much of the inspiration for this book (Alessandrini 1). According to Anthony Alessandrini, the book is a “groundbreaking study of the multiple effects of racism in both colonized territories, such as the Antilles and North Africa, as well as metropolitan centres in Europe” (1), and David Macey states that in this work Fanon uses elements of modernist psychoanalysis and philosophy in order to “explore and analyse his own situation and experience,” even though Fanon never had any actual training as a philosopher and “no extensive knowledge of psychoanalysis” (Macey 163). Petri Liukkonen claims that *Black Skin, White Masks* further provides an analysis of the “impact of colonialism and its deforming effects” and highly influenced “civil rights, anti-colonial, and black consciousness movements around the world” (Liukkonen 1). Wyrick proposes that *Black Skin, White Masks* focuses on “the search for black identity” by providing an insightful diagnosis of racism (Wyrick 3), and that

according to Fanon, “[w]hite men consider themselves superior to black men” (Fanon, *Black Skin*, 10). Fanon has stated that this book “is a sociodiagnostic – that is, a clinical study of group racial identity,” and his overall argument is “that the fundamental juxtaposition of the black and white races has created a very real form of collective mental illness” (Wyrick 24).

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that the black man loses his native cultural identity as it is seen as inferior to the coloniser’s or the white man’s, tries to shed this inferiority complex by embracing the culture of the new colony that he inhabits, and thus begins to internalise and emulate the coloniser’s ways of life. He further argues that the black man does not behave or converse in the same manner with the white person as he does with other black people, a phenomenon which exists due to colonial oppression (17). The importance of language, for Fanon, is evident as he argues here that the use of the coloniser’s language only emphasises the adoption of their culture as “to speak means to assume a culture” (17), and thus, for those (especially African) countries colonised by France, “the black will be proportionally whiter in direct relation to his mastery of the French language” (18). In this book, Fanon draws on the famous question posed by Sigmund Freud: “What does woman want?” Fanon alternatively asks what it is that the black man wants, a question to which he provides a simple answer: the black man wants to be white. As we are told by Fanon, “the trauma of blackness lies in its absolute Otherness in relation to white men. That is, the white man makes the black man by recognising only his skin” (Wyrick 37). The black man thus becomes the Other, and in this case, the Other is associated with all that is wrong in the world:

[T]he Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly... the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother’s arms. Mama, the nigger’s going to eat me up.

(Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 113-114)

In this book we first come across Fanon’s use of the term “Negritude,” a term used by his mentor Aimé Césaire, who co-founded the Négritude movement. Fanon seemed to reject the idea of Négritude which underpinned the suggestion that “we Negroes [are] backward and simple,” (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 126) and rather stated that “the person’s status depends on their economic and social position” (Liukkonen 1). His wish was that “the native” man or the black man would liberate and reinvent himself.

I have no wish to be the victim of the *Fraud* of a black world.
My life should not be devoted to drawing up the balance sheet of Negro values.
There is no white world, there is no white ethic, any more than there is a white intelligence.
There are in every part of the world men who search.
I am not a prisoner of history. I should not seek there for the meaning of my destiny.
I should constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists in [the] introduction [of] invention into existence.
In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.

(Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 229)

It was in 1967 – the year that its first English translation (by Charles Lam Markham) made an appearance – that *Black Skin, White Masks* first came to the attention of the South African censors and was subsequently sent in for analysis by the Publications Control Board. Professor A. Murray compiled the report for the Board, stating that the censors found that the book by Fanon was “a moderately popular psychological and psycho-analytical discussion of the reflections of the opinions of race” (“*n Redelik populêre psiegologiese en psigo-analitiese bespreking van die verskynsel van rasse-gevoelens*”) (Murray 605/67). They acknowledged that “this book by a non-white qualified psychiatrist, has its place in the discussion of racial problems” (“*[d]ie boek deur ’n nie-blanke opgeleide psigiater geskryf het sy plek in die bespreking van rasse-probleme*”) (Murray 605/67). Yet it was stated that “the content of this book is called to awaken a violent emotion, a state of enmity, between white and non-white” (“*[d]ie inhoud van die boek is daarop bereken om ’n gevoel van vyandigheid tussen blank en nie-blank aan te wakker*”) (Murray 605/67). However, ultimately the censors found that “the discussion is objective and clean and probably no worse than a similar discussion by MacCrone on the same problems, which is readily available and circulated throughout the country” (“*die bespreking is objektief en skoon – en seker niks erger as b.v. MacCrone se werk oor dieselfde problem, wat hier in vrye omloop is*”) and it was decided that Fanon’s book would not be widely read (“*[d]ie boek sal nie populêre gelees word nie*”) (Murray 605/67). This is an ironic reaction from the Board as Fanon is anything but “objective and clean” in his discussion on inter-racial relationships, and in fact provides a rather sexually explicit and very literary-critical argument on these sexual interactions. The censors did argue that they found the second and third chapters potentially problematic as these chapters provide a discussion on the psychological phenomena which occur in and because of inter-racial relationships (“*[d]ie enigste twee hoofstukke was enigsins moeilikheid kan gee is no’s 2 en 3, wat die ontleding van die psiegologiese fenomene by blanke en nie-*

blanke geslagsverhoudings bevat") (Murray 605/67). Fanon did, however, paint these relations in a negative light, arguing that they came about as a result of an inferiority complex on behalf of black men and women and not as the result of "true" interracial love. This negative depiction was a likely factor in the Board's decision to find the publication "not undesirable" ("*die Raad vind die volgende publikasie nie aanstootlik nie*") in terms of Section 8(1)(a) of the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963 (Murray 605/67). The dissemination of the publication thus went ahead in South Africa, somewhat surprisingly, given Fanon's status as a subversive liberation theorist at that time.

A Dying Colonialism and The Battle of Algiers

A Dying Colonialism (originally published in French in 1959 as *L'An Cinq, de la Révolution Algérienn* and translated into English by Haakon Chevalier in 1965) and the film *The Battle of Algiers* both deal with the war for independence of the Algerian people from French-colonial rule. The two works are tied together as Pontecorvo's film is undoubtedly "thoroughly imbued with a Fanonian spirit" (Stam 22). Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* was first published in French in 1959 (before the liberation of Algeria in 1962) and "immediately banned by France's colonial-imperialist government of Charles de Gaulle" (Turner 2-3). This account by Fanon of the Algerian struggle for liberation from French colonial rule uncovers the revolution of the Algerians and the change of their society by placing focus on the introduction of modern medicine and technology (such as the radio), and the shifting dynamics within the family unit, especially focusing on the changing role of the Algerian woman. Fanon states that the colonial oppressors "attempt to justify the maintenance of [their] domination [and] almost always push the colonized to the position of making uncompromising, rigid, static counter-proposals" (Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 63). For Fanon, an active revolution was necessary where "the colonized man braces himself to reject oppression" and, as a result "a radical transformation takes place within him which makes any attempt to maintain the colonial system impossible and shocking" (179).

Pontecorvo was an avid reader of Fanon, and the film thus sees the events which it portrays through what Stam calls a "Fanonian anti-colonialist prism" (Stam 27), although Pontecorvo has the benefit of hindsight since his film was made after the liberation of Algeria. The anti-colonial struggle in Algeria raged from 1954-1962 and Fanon published his

book right at the heat of the battle, focusing on the Algerians and how they faced and took to the revolution. Fanon whole-heartedly believed that “colonialism was inherently racist” and that “myths of ‘integration’” were just that, myths, and it is this that Pontecorvo managed to capture in his film (23). Both Fanon and Pontecorvo seemed to expose a side of the oppressors that the oppressors had always denied existed, including various methods of torture such as electric-shock therapy and near drowning, which are powerfully depicted in *The Battle of Algiers*. Furthermore, the film references the first chapter of Fanon’s *A Dying Colonialism* “Algeria Unveiled,” in which Fanon elucidates the importance of the Algerian woman and the way in which she used her dress in the anti-colonial struggle: “it was the woman who was given the historic mission of shaking up the Algerian man” (Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 39). In this chapter, Fanon describes the shifting meaning of the veil in the war against colonialism. As described in this chapter Algerian women would not only hide weapons beneath their traditional dress, but later they removed their traditional dress in order to look European and thus move around with weapons or bombs in the French quarters of Algeria with ease. For Fanon, the Algerian woman, like the colonised man, must become part of the revolution in order to liberate herself from the colonialism which has penetrated the mind:

The Algerian woman [...] must overcome a multiplicity of inner resistances, of subjectively organized fears, of emotions. She must at the same time confront the essentially hostile world of the occupied and the mobilized, vigilant, and efficient police forces. Each time she ventures into the European city, the Algerian woman must achieve a victory over herself, over her childish fears. She must consider the image of the occupier lodged somewhere in her mind and in her body, remodel it, initiate the essential work of eroding it, making it inessential, remove something of the shame that is attached to it, devalidate it.

(Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* 52)

While certain feminists have questioned Fanon’s attitude to women, his views on the shifting meaning of the veil are interesting. He is also well known for his controversial call to revolutionary violence as a cleansing and exorcising force in *A Dying Colonialism*. It thus comes as no surprise that those in power in colonial and oppressive societies would not want either Fanon’s *A Dying Colonialism* or Pontecorvo’s *Battle of Algiers* to be disseminated. Doing so would expose the colonisers and their inhumane methods of torture and possibly incite the oppressed to fight for their freedom, thus placing those in power under significant amounts of pressure.

During the time in which Fanon was writing the essays that were to make up *A Dying Colonialism*, he was expelled from Algeria and was one of the most wanted men of his time by the French secret police (Alessandrini 1). It comes as no surprise then that *A Dying Colonialism* garnered a significant amount of public attention and was subsequently banned by the French government, who prohibited any printing of the book for a further six months after its initial publication. *A Dying Colonialism* was later removed from the list of banned works as censorship laws were withdrawn with the eventual execution of the Fifth Republic of France in 1958. (It was at this stage that the main focus of censorship laws shifted to cinema and news articles) (1).

The trajectory of the release of *The Battle of Algiers* in France is one which is not without numerous complications. The film by Gillo Pontecorvo, which is said to have adhered to historical events, is based on the rebellion of the Algerian people against colonial rule in Algeria, one of France's oldest and largest colonies, and is said to offer "a marked contrast with the timidity of 1960s French cinema in treating the war in Algeria" (Stam 24). The film focuses on one specific aspect of the anti-colonial struggle, namely events that took place in Algeria, focusing on the period between 1954 and 1957, and then finally cutting to and ending in 19 March 1962 after France eventually signed the Évian Accord, in which power was conceded to the FLN and the cease-fire was formally proclaimed.

The film was first screened in 1966 when it premiered at the Venice Film Festival, garnering the prestigious Golden Lion Award. However, the path that lay ahead for the movie was to be complicated. Although Pontecorvo's masterpiece was well received in Italy, Algeria and especially in the United States, where it was nominated for three Academy Awards (including Best Screenplay, Best Director and Best Foreign Language Film), it was immediately banned in France and Britain until around 1971, although it has been reported that certain scenes of torture and violence were cut for the original American and British releases (Cowie 1). The Israeli government also chose to ban the film until 1975 (Austerlitz 1). The film was not seen as being "officially released" until 1970, due to its "struggle against censorship even though it was granted a certificate for its release in France" (Caillé 1). This was due to the fact that there was some intense violent opposition towards the movie, which included extreme right-wing threats of bombs being planted in the cinemas which planned to screen the film in France. Further reasons for not releasing the movie in France

were that it was a “slur on the country” and that “passions were still running high and that those lobbies representing the memory of those who had supported the French in Algeria would not put up with a spectacle of this sort” (Stora and Stevens 479). The government of Charles de Gaulle decided that a four to five year ban was necessary due to the politically sensitive nature of the film. But as Pontecorvo himself has reported in an interview, the press were incorrect in stating that it was the government alone who placed the ban on the movie. According to the director, it was initially “the French authorities, who were very sensitive on the Algerian issue, [who] banned the film for three months” (Cowie 2), but Pontecorvo goes on to say that the right-wing in France were behind the banning as they “sabotaged [the movie], in effect, because although it was announced as playing in four big cinemas in Paris, the Fascist organisation, OSS, let the exhibitors know that they would be bombed if they went ahead with the screenings” (2). Four years later in 1974, Pontecorvo and a group of directors who admired the film made an agreement with numerous youth organisations who “maintained a round-the-clock watch on three cinemas where the film was screened” discreetly (2). After this, since there was no negative reaction, the film was then released throughout France. The film thus followed “a very unusual form of censorship, since it was not imposed by the state” but, “from French society” (Stora and Stevens 366). As we shall see later, it is interesting to compare these events to what happened to the Biko film, *Cry Freedom*, in South Africa.

According to the archival records from the South African National Archives in Cape Town, *A Dying Colonialism* went through a long process of at least 25 years to get its censorship ban fully lifted in South Africa. From examining the records, it was seemingly in 1970, five years after its first English publication, that it was first declared to be undesirable by the committee. The file on the banning of the book in 1970 falls into the missing file period and was not available from the Archives, and thus I was unable to investigate and evaluate the reasons given by the committee for the initial banning of *A Dying Colonialism* in South Africa, or to find out exactly who it was that initially brought the publication to the attention of the Board. Yet it is evident from the materials from the years to follow that the publication was deemed undesirable in terms of section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1963. This section of the act stated that a publication would be considered to be

undesirable if it was found to be endangering to the safety of the state and its people in any manner or form.

In 1976 the original decision for banning was sent in for review where it was decided that, according to the Publications Act of 1974, Fanon's text was still undesirable in terms of section 47(2)(e) of the Act. However, it was decided that, in terms of section 9(3) of the Act that possession of the publication was not banned, and thus if someone already possessed a copy they were allowed to keep it, but no selling of the book would be allowed. Professor A. Murray was the member of the Publications Appeal Board who provided the reasons for the committee's decision. In their opinion, the book by Fanon ultimately comes across at an emotional level with regards to the French colonial regime in Algeria and gives an emotional description of who and what the Algerians were and what they did. They stated that Fanon did not use a concrete argument or concrete situations, for example the economic situation, to describe the situation in Algeria. While Professor Murray found that the book was well written using an in-depth psychological analysis of the situation, he stated that it makes readers extremely sympathetic towards the Algerians in light of their revolution. He felt that "it was not objectively written but was merely a plea, defence and argument" ("*is geen objektiewe studie nie [...] eer 'n pleidooi*") (Murray P76/8/143). What he found to be most problematic was "the argument that openly justifies the call for revolution" ("*n argument wat openlik vir geweldadige rewolusie pleit,*") and that Fanon relied on the emotions of the population in order to gain support for his motion (Murray P76/8/143). Murray stated that the anti-colonial argument is one that is commonly known: it requires the active uprising from the oppressed people, prompting them towards an active revolution in order to undermine those who are in control ("*dit gaan oor die aanmoediging tot aktiewe optrede en die relaas van "verdrukking" wat baaz in Algerie onder Franse beleid plaas gevind het,*") (Murray P76/8/143). The book was thus banned due to its overall emotional and sympathetic attitude towards an active revolution. The Board also applied section 9(1) of the Act to this publication, which stated that "every subsequent issue (...) is likely to be undesirable, [and must] also be banned" (Van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa*, 19). It is interesting to note that this application is dated 2 June 1976, merely weeks before the Soweto Uprising on 16 June. It thus comes as no surprise that the Board would want a

publication such as *A Dying Colonialism* to be banned within this volatile environment, however, their attempts to avoid revolutionary acts proved to be somewhat futile.

There was once more an application for review, this time in the transitional moment of 1990, when it was decided that due to the fact that section 47(2) and 9(3) had been uplifted, the publication would be returned. The book was now declared “not undesirable” in terms of section 47(2) of the Act, as decided in section 15(2) of the Act on review, and was not any longer prohibited in terms of section 9(3) of the Act. *A Dying Colonialism* was now to be deleted from the list of banned works. A Mr A. A. van Niekerk provided the reasons on behalf of the Publications Appeal Board and according to the Archival material, he stated that it can clearly be seen that the Publications Act strongly shows how the interest of a country can be protected. He found that the book “deals with a situation and various circumstances that, in spite of some coincidental similarities with the South African situation here and there, can be done away with in the future” (“*handel oor ‘n situasie en omstandighede in tyd wat, t.s.v. toevallige ooreenkomste hier en daar, baie ver in tyd en in ruimte verwyder is van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie,*”) (Van Niekerk P90/06/39). So although they previously had anxiety about the volatility of Fanon’s ideas spreading throughout South Africa, here they dismiss “coincidental similarities with the South African situation”, suggesting the ongoing tension in the censors’ attitudes about the transnational spread of liberation ideas and the idea of South Africa as “a special case”. Moreover, they relied on the argument that by 1990 the political situation was changing dramatically such that any similarities between South Africa and Algeria under colonial rule would soon be of no consequence. They further stated that Fanon is without a doubt a voice in terms of revolution in a colonial situation but “that in itself no longer provides enough grounds for a decision of ‘not-undesirable’” (“*dit in sigself is nie meer ‘n genoegsame grond vir ‘n bevinding van ongewenstheid nie,*”) (Van Niekerk P90/06/39). They found that, due to the fact that the book seems to be written in a somewhat complicated manner, it is obviously “aimed at the intellectual reader” (“*gemik op die intellektuele leser*”), which would consequently mean, according to the Board, “that [Fanon’s] following in South Africa would be very small” (“*dat sy lesertal in SA baie klein sal wees*”) (Van Niekerk P90/06/39). They went on to say that the book is “a rather expensive one for students of the revolution to be able to afford” (“*kostelike materiaal vir ernstige student van rewolusie in SA*”) and that it

would be in intellectual circles only that the book would hold great academic merit (Van Niekerk P90/06/39). Accordingly, the Board found that there was “no reason to believe that the distribution of this book holds with it any potential for an active revolution in South Africa” (“*geen rede om te vermoed dat ‘n algemene verspreiding van hierdie boek die potensiaal vir geweld en rewolusie in SA noemenswaardig sal verhoog nie,*”) and hence “[the publication] can be let through” (“*[d]it kan met vrymoedigheid deurgelaat word,*”) (Van Niekerk P90/06/39).

There is something that apartheid-era censorship definitions of the likely viewer/reader missed however. In tracing the reception of revolutionary works such as Fanon’s *A Dying Colonialism* or Pontecorvo’s *Battle of Algiers*, it is possible to track a vast network of counter-revolutionary aggression: the likely readers/viewers of revolutionary works in fact include the censors and military apparatus of oppressive regimes. One of the most infamous examples of this, of course, occurred in August 2003, when *The Battle of Algiers* was screened to employees of the Pentagon’s Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict department. This was done due to the fact that “Iraqi resistance began to intensify its operations against the US military” and thus it was felt that there was a demand for “improved intelligence” (Phillips, *A Timeless Portrait online*). The film was thus viewed as some sort of “training camp” where the Pentagon employees could gain insight to the actions of “Arab terrorists.” In fact, there was a flyer which invited guests to this screening which read:

How to win a battle against terrorism and lose the war of ideas. Children shoot soldiers at point-blank range. Women plant bombs in cafes. Soon the entire Arab population builds to a mad fervor. Sound familiar? The French have a plan. It succeeds tactically, but fails strategically. To understand why, come to the rare showing of this film.

(Kaufman 2003)

Ironically, after the screening of the film at the Pentagon it was available on pirated VHS and DVDs and its worldwide distribution escalated. The film had been restored in 1999 and has now been re-released in this form in the United Kingdom, the United States and in France. Finally in 2004, “the press covered the screening of the film at the Cannes Film Festival, its re-release in September and its first broadcast on French public television in November” (Caillé 1). This release was in order to “commemorate the 50th anniversary of the outbreak

of the Algerian War” and the film was screened on prime time French television (Stora and Stevens 366). The ban on the film was thus finally completely lifted, and it remains one of the most highly influential films about anti-colonial revolution to date.

The Wretched of the Earth

The Wretched of the Earth (originally published in French in 1961 as *Les Damnés de la Terre* and translated into English by Constance Farrington in 1963) is arguably Fanon’s most famous and studied book and was written during the Algerian struggle for independence from colonial rule. Fanon wrote this book on his deathbed and completed it in just ten weeks. His call for an active revolution in this book is said to be “a direct statement of what an anti-colonial revolution in Africa needed to look like” (Alessandrini 2). The cover of the original translation actually states that it is “a negro psychoanalyst’s study of the problems of racism and colonialism in the world today” (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, i). The text is further famous for its preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, which he wrote after a request from a desperate Fanon who wanted to get his work published as soon as possible. Fanon sent a letter to his publisher which said: “Ask Sartre to write me a preface. Tell him that I think of him every time I sit down at my desk. The things he is writing are so important for our future but he still can’t find readers who know how to read at home, and he just doesn’t find readers here” (Macey 454). This resulted in Sartre’s famous preface, which informs readers that the book contains an obvious advocacy for violence, and Sartre warns readers that they should “[h]ave courage to read this book, for in the first place it will make you ashamed,” and that shame is “a revolutionary sentiment” (Sartre, Preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, 14). Sartre further urges us to “[r]ead Fanon” so that we can learn how “in the period of their helplessness, their mad impulse to murder is the expression of the natives’ collective unconsciousness” (17).

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon “explores class conflict and questions of cultural hegemony in the creation and maintenance of a new country’s national consciousness,” and in fact, it was seen as “one of the central documents of the black liberation movement” (Liukkonen 2). In it, Fanon

gathers theories and issues from his earlier writings – racial identity formation, analysis of colonialism, dialectical history, narratives of liberation, critiques of Manichean thinking,

political prophesy – and extends them to the phenomenon of decolonization, particularly as it affects African nations.

(Wyrick 99)

The focus is on the process of decolonisation, and the fact that “[d]ecolonization is always a violent phenomenon” and “evokes for us the searing bullets and bloodstained knives which emanate from it” (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 35 and 37). Fanon describes to his readers the initial relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, indicating that the violence between them is actually inherent: “Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler- was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons” (36). Fanon’s argument is that colonialism “is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence,” and he thus encourages those who have been oppressed due to colonisation to confront their oppressors with extreme forceful violence as “[t]he violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world (...) will be claimed and taken over by the native” when he decides to “embody history in his own person” and fight back (61, 40). In fact, he argues that

[t]he practice of violence binds [colonised people] together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in a great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upward in reaction to the settler’s violence in the beginning ... [it] introduces into each man’s consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny, and of a collective history.

(93)

In the penultimate chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, entitled “On National Culture,” Fanon draws from his experience during the Algerian struggle for liberation when the French were becoming increasingly fierce and he “found himself treating both Algerian freedom fighters and French police officers, the tortured and the torturers,” and used the case studies that he performed on his patients for the material in this section of the book (Alessandrini 2). There is no doubt from reading his book, that these experiences only deepened his belief that the call for a violent revolution was the only way to become free from the never ending state of oppression: “At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self respect” (94). He further offers a highly controversial opinion on the state officials of the African countries, informing the reader that “[t]hese heads of government

are the true traitors in Africa, for they sell their country to the most terrifying of all enemies: stupidity" (183). The infamous conclusion of the book offers Fanon's "most withering critique of the form of "humanism" that has underwritten European imperialism and racism" (Alessandrini 4). Calling for a new postcolonial form of humanism, he states that we should "[l]eave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 251). Fanon's final sentence is as urgent today as it was when the book was written: "For Europe, for ourselves, comrades, and for humanity, we must grow a new skin, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man" (316).

In France, *The Wretched of the Earth*, on its publication after Fanon's death, was dismissed as a "dated work" and a mere "book of witness" which fosters "illusions of a western youth that [has] been won over by a new Third-Worldist myth" (Macey 25), and was quickly banned, thus preventing the impending dissemination of the text (Taylor 1). The palpable call for extreme violence as a means to counter the oppression of the colonisers alerted the censors in South Africa soon after its initial English translation. In 1965, the publication was brought to the attention of the Board, where Professor A. Murray commented on their behalf. They stated that this book "deals with the nationalism that sits behind the liberation movements of Africa" ("*hierdie boek is 'n verhandeling van die "Nasionalisme" wat agter die "liberasie-bewegings" van Afrika sit*"), especially in Algeria (Murray 1461/65). They found that "the analysis is extremely perceptive and insightful" ("*[d]ie ontledings is in baie opsigte heel perseptief en insiggewend*"), but "unfortunately goes hand-in-hand with a violent form of extremism and even blatant propaganda and expressions which could lead to a violent uprising" ("*ongelukkig gaan dit gepaard met 'n mate van verwilderde ekstremisme en selfs blote propaganda en bevat die boek uitdrukkings wat tot opsweping kan lei*") (Murray 1461/65). Furthermore, they found that the last chapter on mental disorders was totally unrealistic ("*die slot-hoofstuk oor Mental Disorders is vergesog*") (Murray 1461/65), a claim that is somewhat absurd, since Fanon was a doctor who recorded actual case studies of mental illness. The Board found their reasons were sufficient to deem the publication to be undesirable and thus banned the import and distribution of the publication ("*die invoer en verspreiding daarvan verbied word*") under The Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963 (Murray 1461/65).

In 1977 the publication was sent in for review, but was still deemed to be undesirable; this time in terms of section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1974, and was further placed under the section 9(3) ban, meaning that possession of the publication itself was prohibited. This is not surprising, considering the fact that the censors reviewing the appeal would have the actions of the recent Soweto Uprisings of 1976 fresh in their minds. Professor J.P Jansen provided the reasons for the banning on behalf of the board. According to him, “Frantz Fanon was one of the most important black activists that has ever lived” (“*Frantz Fanon was een van die grootste swart aktiviste, wat ooit geleef het*”) and that this book was his “most revolutionary book” (“*mees revolusionêre boek*”) (Jansen P77/2/16). He further stated that “in the United States of America, (...) the works of Frantz Fanon played an important role in the black uprisings” (“*In die V.S.A (...) die werke van Frantz Fanon ‘n belangrike rol gespeel het in die swarte opstande*”), claiming that the two books used in the United States of America in these black uprisings were *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *The Wretched of the Earth* (Jansen P77/2/16). It was stated that “the most important objection to the book is that it openly preaches violence” (“*die belangrikste beswaar teen die boek is dat dit openlik geweld predik*”) (Jansen P77/2/16). The censors quoted an article in *Time Magazine* on 2 April 1973 which stated that Fanon’s “later preaching that the oppressed can heal their souls through the cathartic effect of revolutionary violence, posthumously turned Fanon into a hero for some white radical theorists and some American blacks” (*Time Magazine* 64). They found various statements made by Fanon in the book, such as that “[t]he colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence,” and that “violence is a cleansing force (...) free[ing] the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and his inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect” to be inappropriate (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 68, 74). Lastly, they found that in the publication “the uprising of rebellion against the Government was justified” (“*[d]ie opstande van rebelle teen die landsregering word geregverdig*”) (Jansen P77/2/16) as the *Time Magazine* article stated that “[h]is most significant work came out of his sudden realization, as a black psychiatrist in an Algerian mental hospital, that the fact of the French colonial domination caused unique and grave psychic disorders in the objects of oppression” (Jansen P77/2/16).

Once again, in 1981 *The Wretched of the Earth* was sent in for review where the Board found that the previous decision in 1977 would still stand, and the publication would be retained. It was still banned in terms of section 47(2)(e) and section 9(3) of the Publications Act of 1974, and was not open for appeal. The committee presided over by A. Coetzee, gave the following reason for their decision:

It is a well-known fact that the publication is being extensively used and consulted by the IRA, Black activists in the USA and other revolutionary movements. (...) Recently it was announced that a book will be published shortly dealing with Fanon's influence on the Soweto riots. It is therefore clear that Fanon is the mentor of revolutionaries not only in Africa but elsewhere in the world.

(Coetzee P81/5/101)

In September 1984 the book was once again reviewed and in 1985 it was decided that distribution and possession of the publication was previously found to be undesirable and that this decision was to remain in force. *The Wretched of the Earth* thus remained banned under sections 47(2)(e) and 9(3) of the 1974 Publications Act. The publication was however, at this stage, returned to the sender and not retained by the council. Professor J.P Jansen wrote on behalf of the committee and stated that although the book was written 24 years earlier, "the viewpoint of the author, one of the most important black activists, is still problematic" ("*die standpunte van die skrywer, een van die grootste swart aktiviste, nog steeds problematies*") (Jansen P85/2/62). He stated that it would be important "to read the previous reasons for banning the publication along with these, and that they will however repeat that the book openly preaches violence" ("*daar kan egter herhaal word dat die boek oentlik geweld predik*") (Jansen P85/2/62). Jansen stated that in the book "there is belief that the oppressed can be free and cleansed (in essence) if he himself pledges to commit violence" ("*[d]aar word geglo dat 'n onderdrukte eers vry kan word (in sy wese) as hy self geweld gepleeg het om hom innerlik te reinig*") and that "no non-violent reconciliation is possible because it shall never free the oppressed" ("*geen geweldlose versoening is moontlik nie omdat dit die onderdrukte nooit sal bevry nie*") (Jansen P85/2/62).

In the case of *The Wretched of the Earth*, as was seen with many other publications, there was no formal documentation stating the actual uplifting of the ban, however with the implementation of the new Acts governing films and publications in the new democratic South Africa, the publications would no longer have been banned.

Toward the African Revolution

Toward the African Revolution (originally published in French in 1964 as *Pour la Révolution Africain* and later translated into English in 1967 by Haakan Chevalier and finally published in 1969) is a book made up of a collection of journalistic and political essays which were written by Fanon. These were various essays which he had written during his time as an Ambassador to Ghana for the Provisional Algerian Government, when he attended conferences all over North Africa. The essays were compiled and published only after his death. *Toward the African Revolution* reveals Fanon's strategies on war and further engages in the struggle against colonialism that he was witness to during Algeria's war for independence; a topic which Fanon was clearly passionate about and which he also engaged in extensively in *A Dying Colonialism*. These essays by Fanon "lashed out at French colonial practices, explained FLN goals and tactics, shamed ineffective French intellectuals, and called for the liberation of the entire African continent" (Wyrick 19). In these essays Fanon exposed the violence inherent in colonialism by stating that "[c]olonization cannot be understood without the possibility of torturing, of violating, or of massacring," and goes on to appeal to the "[y]outh of Africa" who must "dig the grave in which colonialism will finally be entombed" (Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 66, 119). The content often echoes' his exposure of the French oppressors that we saw in *A Dying Colonialism*, saying that

[t]he truly monstrous practices that have appeared since 1 November 1954 are surprising, especially because of the extent to which they have become generalized [...] In reality, the attitude of the French troops in Algeria fits into the pattern of police domination, of systematic racism, of dehumanization rationally pursued. Torture is inherent in the whole colonialist configuration.

(74)

In his chapter entitled "Letter to the Youth of Africa," Fanon states that "the duty of every colonized being has been clear: it is, on the national soil, to undermine the colonialist edifice and support (...) the struggles of the colonized peoples" and he thus urges the youth of Africa to stand up against their oppressors, even if the need for violence exists (125, 129).

The publication was initially brought to the attention of the South African censors in 1963 and it was subsequently banned. However, these files are currently not available from the National Archives in Cape Town, and thus the reasons and process of the initial banning cannot, at this time, be examined and discussed. Even so, *Toward the African Revolution*

was then sent in for appeal and in 1976 was still found to be “undesirable.” It was banned in terms of section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1974 but did not receive the section 9(3) sanction and thus could remain in possession of those who already owned it. Professor A Murray who handled the case claimed that, as the title suggests, “this [book] motivates for the idea of an African revolution” (*“hierdie pleidooi die id e van ‘n Afrika-revolusie”*) (Murray P76/9/24). Murray undermined the book by referencing its literary style, stating that “Fanon was more of a poet and emotional writer than a scientific one, and thus basically the book has minimal scientific value” (*“Fanon was meer digter en gevoelsmens as wetenskaplike (...) en basies het die boek min wetenskaplike waarde”*) (Murray P76/9/24). Evident in the Board’s argument is an awareness of Africa as a transnational space, since they cite Fanon’s position as one in which “Africa must stand together” (*“n aanhitsende pleidooi vir die opstand van Afrika teen kolonialisme en dat Afrika moet saamstaan”*) (Murray P76/9/24). They decided that the chapter “This Africa to Come” “illustrates the underlying theory of the collection of chapters that there must be a revolution in Africa, and how it must occur” (*“illustreer die onderliggende tesis van die versameling stukke dat daar Rewolusie in Afrika moet kom en hoe dit moet kom”*) (Murray P76/9/24). Murray stated that “the piece is revolutionary and is intended to give momentum to the revolutionary spirit in Africa” (*“[d]ie stuk is rewolusioner en is bedoel om die rewolusionere gees in Afrika aan te blaas”*) (Murray P76/9/24), though he tried to discredit Fanon again by stating that the content “is not an objective or analytical” (*“is nie objektief of ontledend nie”*) (Murray P76/9/24).

It was only with a resubmission in 1990, after the uplifting of section 47(2) that the publication was returned and declared “not undesirable”. Mr J.P. Jansen gave his opinion in the censorship forms and stated that “the book is strongly dated and relevant only to the time in which it was written, which is what gives it only historical value today” (*“die boek is baie sterk gedateer wat dit vandag hoofsaaklik van historiese waarde maak”*) (Jansen P90/04/11). The censors evidently felt that Fanon’s book “has influenced the culture of the fight for independence for all of the black people in the world” (*“word geskenk aan die invloed van kultuur in die vrywording van die swartmense in die w reld”*) (Jansen P90/04/11). Jansen further stated that “the book is highly outspoken against colonialism” (*“die boek is baie sterk uitgesproke teen die kolonialisme”*) and that certain deductions and

presumptions have been made by Fanon (Jansen P90/04/11). They quoted Fanon as saying that “[t]he Algerian people are not unaware of the fact that the colonialist structure rests on the necessity or torturing, raping, and committing massacres” (*Toward the African Revolution* 72) and that thus “colonialism must, according to Fanon, be eradicated” (“[d]ie kolonialisme moet dan volgens Fanon uitgeroei word”) (Jansen P90/04/11). Fanon believed that “violence would free Algeria” (“geweld Algerië moet bevry,”) and that for Southern Africa, the struggle would need to continue (Jansen P90/04/11). The committee reasoned that since “most of the articles are concerned only with the conditions in Algeria,” (“die meeste artikels het betrekking op toestande in Algerië”) not with “the fight for independence on Africa as a continent” (“die planne vir die vrywording van Afrika as kontinent”), the book “is only about the North-African syndrome” (“dit gaan dus oor die Noord-Afrikaanse sindroom”) (Jansen P90/04/11).

The final decision stated that “the book was written 26 years ago and, today especially, has historical meaning” (“boek is reeds 26 jaar gelede geskryf en het vandag veral historiese betekenis”) (Jansen P90/04/11). Jansen states that Fanon propagates violence for the freeing of Africa but he says that this process of liberation has already been concluded (“Fanon propageer geweld vir die vrywording van Afrika maar die proses is reeds afgehandel”) (Jansen P90/04/11). The board found that the “‘psychological’ interpretation of violence that Fanon is known for, and which is dangerous, is not discussed in this book” (“‘sielkundige’ interpretasie van geweld waarvoor Fanon so bekend is, en wat gevaarlik is, kom nie in hierdie boek ter sprake nie”) and that, because of this, “the book is therefore not undesirable in terms of the Law, Article 47(2)” (“[d]ie boek is dus nie ongewens binne die bedoeling van die Wet, Art. 47(2) nie”) (Jansen P90/04/11).

Chapter 2:

“We Must Not Underestimate This Book”:

Amilcar Cabral and the Apartheid Censors

Amilcar Cabral, perhaps the least well known of the chosen theorists, is by no means the least important when it comes to revolutionary theory. Born on 12 September 1924 in Bafatá, then the Portuguese West African colony of Guinea, to Juvenal Cabral and Iva Pinhel Evora, Amilcar Lopes Cabral was to become one of the most influential figures in ideas about African liberation from colonial rule. Due to the fact that his parents separated in 1929, Cabral spent time living in both Guinea as well as Cape Verde, a background which informed his thoughts on the liberation struggle throughout his later years. Although he only began primary school at the late age of twelve, Cabral was an excellent scholar who “thrived on education,” and finished his schooling by the age of twenty, “thus completing the four years of primary school and the seven of secondary education in eight years,” achieving “exceptionally high score[s] [...] by any standard within the Portuguese education system of that time” (Chabal 31). Cabral was then awarded a bursary to attend the Agronomy Institute in Lisbon, and began his studies to become an agricultural engineer in 1945. When he graduated he was said to have had an outstanding academic record, and it was noted that his “knowledge of Portuguese literature and culture was far superior to that of most of his colleagues” (35). Cabral was even requested by the Rector of the university to tutor his own children (36). During his studies in Lisbon, Cabral founded various student movements dedicated to African liberation and was said to be the “driving force behind the ‘re-[A]fricanisation’ programme in Lisbon,” giving Cabral his first taste of leading any form of significant protest or movement group (36, 45). It was thus clear from his younger days that “Cabral’s foremost concern was the liberation of Africa,” and through his various works, it became evident that he “was exposed to and influenced by Marxist ideology and theory,” which he would use to further his theories on liberation (41). In fact, what is ironic to this research as a whole, is that before Cabral was the victim of censorship himself, he had already experienced its far reaching effects as “there was strict censorship over printed material” in Portugal which made access to Marx’s papers particularly difficult (41).

However, as a student and mainly through the Portuguese Communist Party, Cabral was able to access “Marxist books and reviews” in order to study Marxist theories and to broaden his own ideas (41).

Cabral first fell victim to the censorship process in 1949 on holiday in Cape Verde, when he took part in a radio show that raised public awareness about Portuguese colonialism: “All programmes were routinely sent to the censorship board” which governed Cape Verde and Guinea and “[o]n one occasion a programme was cut in which reference had been made to the problems of hunger and education in Cape Verde” (44). Due to the fact that Cabral decided not to amend the programme, it was withdrawn and never aired; however, “[t]he incident was minor in the sense that it in no way threatened Cabral personally” (44). In 1951, Cabral married Maria Helena Rodrigues, and a year later, was working as an agricultural engineer in Guinea. According to Cabral, the move back to Guinea in 1952 was not by chance, but was “calculated with the aim of contributing to the preparation of the people for the struggle against colonialism,” a task for which Cabral was extremely well equipped (47). While travelling around the country on various land surveys, Cabral would make a point of meeting and conversing with the various village people, building relationships with them from the outset which would prove to be invaluable in the years to come (49). In 1954, Cabral attempted to begin a “sports, cultural and recreational club in Bissau” for young people; the activities of which were closely monitored by the country’s secret police who already felt the threat of Cabral and accordingly “sent a report to the governor about the suspicious nature of the discussions” that took place (49). To this day, the exact events that followed remain unknown, but Cabral returned to Portugal in 1955, before moving to Angola where he assisted in the founding of the *Movimento Popular Para A Libertação de Angola* (hereafter, the MPLA) (54).

It was later reported by Cabral’s party that his “departure from Guinea stresses the fact that he was expelled and banned from the colony,” claiming thus that the move was not one of choice and that he had become a banned person (50). In 1956, during a sanctioned return visit to Guinea, Cabral realised the need for an active liberation movement in his home country, and founded the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (hereafter, the PAIGC), the party that had “been created as a party of nationalist agitation” and that would, under his leadership, eventually lead the country to its

liberation from the Portuguese colonialists (54). By 1959, Cabral realised that “independence [in Guinea and Cape Verde] would have to be achieved by force and that a guerrilla struggle would have to rely on the participation of the villagers,” and thus Cabral initiated a “strategy of national liberation by means of armed struggle” (53). By 1965, “the PAIGC guerrillas were in control of 30 percent of Guinea, the Portuguese army was on the defensive, and the first party congress had been held inside the liberated areas” (54). By 1972, the party had gained enough ground and international support to be able to call for elections “and to empower the elected ANP [*Assembléia Nacional Popular*] to proclaim independence” (128).

Due to Cabral’s success at the United Nations where he presented on 16 October 1972 before the twenty-seventh session of the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, he “felt that the party was in a position to declare the independence of Guinea and to set up its first government” (130). Sadly however, Cabral did not get to see the actual declaration of independence in Guinea on 24 September 1973. On 20 January of that year, Cabral was assassinated in front of the PAIGC office by Inocêncio Kani, an undercover Portuguese agent and PAIGC naval commander, revealing an “internal plot in the party to overthrow and neutralise the PAIGC leadership, to seize control of the party, [and] to eliminate all party functionaries who refused to follow the new leadership” (132). Efforts to stifle Cabral’s revolutionary ideas, however, ultimately proved to be futile, and one of Africa’s first liberation leaders would leave a legacy which proved to be invaluable. It was said that there were three main facets to Cabral’s character that resulted in his success: “his easy personal contacts and his ability to listen; his open mindedness and tolerance; and his dominating personality,” each of which were clearly evident in his forty-nine years (36).

Although Cabral never wrote a book himself, a number of books are comprised of his various essays, speeches and interviews and translated into English: *Revolution in Guinea: (An African People’s Struggle) Selected Texts* (1970), *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches* (1974) and *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* (1979). All of these were embargoed by the South African censors once published. The majority of Cabral’s original speeches and writings would have been given and written in Portuguese, his mother tongue, so each of these collections are English translations of Cabral’s original work and, as Portuguese was not a language which was widely spoken in South Africa, it was only these English

translations of Cabral's speeches and writings that alerted the South African censors, illustrating the fact that translation can be seen as a means of disseminating ideas both trans-linguistically and trans-nationally. What is interesting about the publications though, is that all three of the books are no longer in print, some even went out of print at the time of being examined by the Censorship Board, and are not readily available today. *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* was the last to go out of print and is thus more widely available, and contains much of what existed in *Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts* as well as in *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches*.

Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts by Amilcar Cabral

Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts by Amilcar Cabral was compiled, translated and edited by Richard Handyside and published by the Monthly Review Press in New York. In many speeches here, tension between the analysis of colonialism as a global phenomenon and the specificities of local issues become apparent. On the one hand, Cabral did not focus his work purely on the Guinea and Cape Verde situation, but "tries to understand the specifics of his own society within the broader framework" of colonialism even as he proposes local solutions (Bienen 559). In one text, Cabral states that "[i]n the colonial period it is the colonial state which commands history" and "not the class struggle," thus leading to a need to "see who is capable of taking control of the state apparatus when the colonial power is destroyed" and hence emphasising the importance of the transformation of the state not only during, but after revolution (Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, 69). In this need for post-revolution maintenance Cabral saw the necessity for a ruling party, laying out the essential factors for such a party, which include the nature of the state, the nature of the party as well as its size, and the character and development of the struggle leading to liberation (70). Cabral fully believed that his party, the PAIGC, embodied these necessary characteristics, and never doubted his people's ability to succeed in their struggle for liberation.

On the other hand, in contrast to more general statements about colonialism, it becomes clear that Cabral pays significant attention to the importance of local ethnicity and culture, stating that "the peasant who fought in Algeria or China is not our peasant," and thus the focus of the movement needs to be relevant to the people of Guinea and Cape Verde (158). The irony is that his ideas were, however, taken up transnationally, reinforcing

the fact that, although liberation theorists wrote and spoke about the specifics of their struggle, their thoughts on colonialism and the overthrow of colonial oppression were disseminated globally and were influential on a transnational level.

What is interesting is that Cabral treated class and ethnicity as intertwined phenomena, arguing that “one could build on ethnic feelings to mobilise people” (Bienen 561). What becomes evident in this argument then, are the relationships and the local knowledge that Cabral built when working as an agronomist in the tribal lands, as seen when Cabral stated in an interview at the Khartoum Conference in January 1969:

When the Portuguese came to our country the tribal economic system was already disintegrating. Portuguese colonialism contributed further to that disintegration, although they needed to maintain some part of the superstructure. As far as we were concerned it was not so much the economic base that led us to respect the tribal structure as a mobilising element in our struggle, but its cultural aspects, the language, the songs, the dances, etc.

(Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, 160)

Cabral, then, was eager to prove that his people had the ability to succeed in such a struggle, despite the fact that the colonisers viewed them as “economically backward” people who were “living sometimes almost naked in the bush, not knowing how to read or write, not having even the most elementary knowledge of modern technology” (64). He made it known that, even if any of that were true, his people “are capable, by means of their sacrifices and efforts, of beating an enemy who is not only more advanced from a technological point of view but also supported by the powerful forces of world imperialism” because of their collective connection to the land and the cause (64).

In this collection, Cabral emphasised that the armed struggle should always remain subordinate and secondary to the party, as “[t]here has appeared a certain attitude of ‘militarism’ which has caused some fighters and even some leaders to forget the fact that we are *armed militants* and not *militarists*” (87, *original emphasis*). For Cabral then, there could not be any form of liberation without a necessary force of violence for the cause, but it was important “to determine which forms of violence have to be used to answer the violence of imperialism and its permanent violence” (Bienen 564). Furthermore, Cabral stressed the need for a form of revolutionary consciousness within society, and “necessarily calls our attention to the capacity of the leader of the revolutionary struggle to remain

faithful to the principle and to the fundamental cause of this struggle” (Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, 110).

Also, despite emphasising the importance of local ethnic cultures, Cabral made it clear that this was in no way a purely racial struggle. Although there was an obvious white-black divide in that the Portuguese colonialists were generally paler in skin tone, and the Guinea and Cape Verde nationals were generally black, Cabral emphasised a common humanity

We are fighting against Portuguese colonialism. [...] We, the peoples of the Portuguese colonies, are African peoples, of this Africa ensnared by imperialism and colonialism for decades and even in some cases for centuries. We form the part of Africa which the imperialists call Black Africa. Yes, we are Black. But we are men like all other men.

(62)

In his opening address at the CONCP (*Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas*) in Dar Es-Salaam in 1965, he stated that

[w]e of the CONCP are fighting so that insults may no longer rule our countries, martyred and scorned for centuries, so that our peoples may never more be exploited by imperialists – not only by Europeans, not only by people with white skin, because we do not confuse exploitation or exploiters with the colour of men's skins; we do not want any exploitation in our countries, not even by black people.

(65)

The liberation struggle was thus not about Cabral's desire for black liberation, but for liberation from colonialism, as “[t]he enemy is not the Portuguese people, nor even Portugal itself: for us, fighting for the freedom of the Portuguese colonies, the enemy is Portuguese colonialism, represented by the colonial-fascist government of Portugal” (63). Identifying “the enemy” was an important part of rallying and motivating the masses, of mentally preparing them for the inevitable hardship that was to be a part of the armed struggle for liberation. Cabral was very clear in putting forward the actual purpose for the armed struggle for liberation.

Although he argued for the specificities of his people's situation, Cabral saw the importance of their struggle for liberation in relation to the rest of the African Continent, suggesting that the struggle of his people did not exist in isolation, and that their “national liberation struggle was of great significance both for Africa and for the world” (64). In fact,

Cabral saw the considerable impact that his liberation struggle could presumably have on the tempestuous South African situation of the time, stating in the same CONCP address that:

we are also most seriously and painfully with our brothers in South Africa who are facing the most barbarous racial discrimination. We are absolutely certain that the development of the struggle in the Portuguese colonies, and the victory we are winning each day over Portuguese colonialism is an effective contribution to the elimination of the vile, shameful regime of racial discrimination, of apartheid in South Africa. And we are also certain that peoples like that of Angola, that of Mozambique and ourselves in Guinea and Cabo Verde, far from South Africa, will soon, very soon we hope, be able to play a very important role in the final elimination of that last bastion of imperialism and racism in Africa, South Africa.

(67)

This quote opens up the liberation struggle transnationally, and this makes an interesting apparent contrast with Cabral's statement that the peasant in Guinea or Cape Verde is specific to his or her own struggle (158). Thus, while Cabral does emphasize the importance of focusing on the specifics of one's own struggle, the fact that the ideas and theories of liberation transcended nations was significant to him. The very emotional connection that Cabral made with the struggle in South Africa makes it unsurprising that his collection of works would be embargoed by the South African censors.

In 1975, *Revolution in Guinea* was brought to the attention of the South African censors by Customs and Excise. The chairman of the censorship committee, Mr E.G. Malan, stated that the book contains "a large number of clichéd Communist slogans" which are of a "defiant nature" ("*bevat 'n groot aantal geykte Kommunistiese slagspreuke van 'n uitdagende aard*") and that, among other things, it "describes the tactics of revolution which are used in Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands, and those that will still be used" ("*beskryf o.a. die taktiek van rewolusie wat in Guinea en Kaap Verde Eilande gebruik is en ook later gebruik sou word*") (Malan P75/4/32). Malan found the descriptions of these tactics of revolution interesting, along with "the almost chilling manner in which its predictions are true" ("*[w]at interessant is is sy beskrywing van die taktiek van rewolusie wat in sy land gebruike moet word en die byna kille wyse waarop al sy voorspellings bewaarheid is*") (Malan P75/4/32). Malan warned that "we must not underestimate this book" ("*[o]ns moet hierdie boek nie onderskat nie*") (Malan P75/4/32).

He then highlights that Cabral speaks of the “barbarous colonial repression” in South Africa as particularly problematic (Malan P75/4/32). Malan states that the book “is used by underground movements” (“*deur ondergrondse bewegings gebruik*”), and that Cabral even “recommends underground activities in the cities” (“*[i]n die stede beveel hy ondergrondse aktiwiteite aan*”) (Malan P75/4/32). He stated that the book can thus be seen as dangerous due to the “exposition of revolutionary tactics and theories” (“*kan gevaarlik wees (...) sy uiteensetting van rewolusionere taktiek en teorie*”) (Malan P75/4/32). He states that Cabral is a “known terrorist-leader in Africa”, and that the “post-humous version of his works and speeches will be glorified” (“*hier word ’n bekende terroristleier in Afrika, deur die na-doodse weergawe van sy werke en toesprake, verheerlik*”) (Malan P75/4/32). The Board found it notable and worrying that nearly “all of Cabral’s virtually impossible predictions came true – within twenty-one years after the beginning of his revolutionary regime” (“*hoedat daardie feitlik onmoontlike voorspellings van Cabral bewaarheid word – binne 21 jaar na die begin van sy rewolusionere bewind*”) (Malan P75/4/32). Malan thus found that the book is “dangerous and detrimental for the general welfare, peace and good order of the state” (“*die boek staatsgevaarlik en nadelig vir die algemene welsyn, die vrede en goeie orde is*”) and was seen as “undesirable” in terms of Section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1974 (Malan P75/4/32). The Board also found it necessary to place a Section 9(3) possession ban on the publication, as they deemed him to promote a “theory of terrorism” (“*teorie van terrorisme*”) (Malan P75/4/32). Malan found that “in the book, Cabral deals with the strategies and tactics of terrorism and guerrilla warfare and revolution” (“*[i]n hierdie boek behandel Cabral die strategie sowel as die taktiek van terrorisme en guerrilla-oorlogvoering en rewolusie*”) and therefore “the application and examination of [Cabral’s] works can be dangerous to the state regarding terrorism in the Republic and on its borders” (“*[d]ie toepassing en bestudering van sy werke kan staatsgevaarlike gevolge ivm terroriste in die Republiek en op ons grense hê*”), as the book “can be used as a study guide” (“*[h]ierdie boek kan as a studie-handleiding gebruik word*”) (Malan P75/4/32). For these reasons, the Board deemed it necessary to keep the book away from “potential revolutionaries” (“*potensiële rewolusionêres*”) (Malan P75/4/32). Thus, despite Cabral’s focus on revolution in Guinea, and despite the apartheid state’s belief in South Africa as a “special case,” the censors believed that Cabral’s revolutionary sentiments would inspire liberation fighters in South Africa to try and overthrow the apartheid regime.

In 1985, the publication was resubmitted to the Board by the South African Library in Cape Town. Although the Section 9(3) ban (possession of the publication) was lifted due to the amended laws, it was decided that the previous decision of a Section 47(2)(e) ban (ban on distributing the book) would remain in force. The Board's motivation was based on the fact that it was "clear that Cabral [had a] fanatical pursuit to free Africa from neo-colonialism" (*"Cabral se fanatiese strewe om Afrika te bevry van enige neokolonialisme blyk baie duidelik"*) and that, throughout the publication, "it is clear that he simply accepted an armed terrorist struggle as the only method to free the Africans" (*"blyk dit duidelik uit die publikasie dat hy dit eenvoudig aanvaar dat 'n gewapende terroristestryd die enigste metode is om die Afrikaan te bevry"*) (Smit P85/2/63). They further found that it is obvious throughout the publication that "Cabral is an advocate for an armed revolution in order to achieve a political change" (*"Cabral 'n voorstander is van 'n gewapende revolusie ten einde politieke veranderinge te weeg te bring"*) (Smit P85/2/63). So, in a contradictory gesture, while the Board agreed that Cabral's statements were not applicable to South Africa and that this particular publication "is not of the nature that it will directly persuade any likely reader in South Africa that they should join in an armed struggle in the current [South African] state" (*"nie van so 'n aard is dat dit enige waarskynlike leser in Suid-Afrika direk daartoe sal oorhaal om in 'n gewapende stryd teen die huidige staatsbestel toe te tree nie"*), they claimed that "the book will exert a highly adverse political influence on some South Africans" (*"die boek 'n hoogs nadelige politieke invloed op sommige Suid-Afrikaners uitoefen"*) (Smit P85/2/63). Smit further stated that in the publication one can find "the moral and political justification for a struggle against the so-called neo-colonialists (in other words, the white 'rulers')" (*"kan die morele en politieke regverdiging van 'n bevrydingstryd teen die sogenaamde neokolonialiste (d.w.s. die blanke "heersers") gevind word"*), and that the "free circulation of the works of Cabral, who is a proven revolutionary figure in Africa, will probably have a seriously adverse influence on the peace and good order in South Africa" (*"[d]ie vrye sirkulasie van werke van Cabral, wat 'n bewese revolusionere figuur in Afrika is, sal waarskynlik 'n erg nadelige invloed uitoefen op die goeie orde en vrede in Suid-Afrika"*), "especially under the current political climate" (*"veral so in die huidige politieke klimaat"*) of the country (Smit P85/2/63). For these reasons, the publication was thus still deemed to be "undesirable."

In 1990 the publication was sent in once more for reconsideration by the Acquisitions Department of the South African Library in Cape Town, and a Mr H. J. Kotze reported the Board's unanimous decision. It was found that the publication "provides a contribution in the sense that it gives an insight into the thinking of an African leader who fought for freedom from colonial power" (*"lewer dus 'n bydrae in soverre dit 'n insig in die denke van 'n Afrika-leier wat vir bevryding van die koloniale moondheid geveg het, gee"*), and, as such, "the likely reader of this book would be the student with an interest in African politics and revolutionary movements" (*"die waarskynlike leser van hierdie boek die student met 'n belangstelling in Afrika-politiek en revolusionere bewegings wees"*) (Kotze P90/07/03). They stated that the book contains "very few references to the South African police" (*"[d]aar is in die werk baie min verwysings na die polisie in Suid-Afrika"*), and when any references to South Africa are made, "there is a strong emotional language about the ruling party" (*"word daar in sterk emosionele taal na die heersersgroep verwys"*) which clearly shows that "Cabral views the white government in South Africa as a colonial one" (*"Cabral die blanke regering in Suid-Afrika ook as 'n koloniale mag gesien het"*) (Kotze P90/07/03). However, the Board believed that the "likely reader would not be negatively encouraged to [act] violen[tly] towards the state" (*"[d]ie waarskynlike leser sal egter nie deur hierdie negatiewe aangespoor word tot geweld teen die staat nie"*), but on the contrary, "the work will be taken in the context of the colonial struggle in Africa and, as such, already forms part of the history [of the continent] as such" (*"[i]nteendeel, die werk moet gesien word binne die konteks van die koloniale stryd in Afrika en vorm as sodanig reeds 'n deel van die geskiedenis"*) (Kotze P90/07/03). Despite Cabral's emphasis in his writing on the character and maintenance of a post-liberation state, Kotze stated that "very little of Cabral's message can be applied in the current situation in South Africa, especially in light of the current government's willingness to negotiate processes" (*"[b]aie min van die boodskap wat Cabral oorbring sou tans van toepassing op die situasie in Suid-Afrika gemaak kan word, veral in die lig van die huidige regering se bereidwilligheid tot 'n onderhandelde skikking"*) (Kotze P90/07/03). He concluded that "even political groups which still see whites as colonialists will not be able to see Cabral's speeches to foment violence against the state" (*"[s]elfs die politieke groepe wat blankes nog sien as 'kolonialiste' sou nie Cabral se uitsprake kon gebruik om geweld teen die staat aan te blaas nie"*) (Kotze P90/07/03). Because of these findings, together with amendment of the Act, the publication

was found to be “not undesirable,” and was returned to the Library and dissemination was thus able to commence – although it was now out of print.

Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral

The book *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral* was put together and edited by the African Information Service, “an organization of Africans, African-Caribbeans and African-Americans who share a commitment to Third World anti-imperialist struggles” (cover blurb), and was published again by the Monthly Review Press in New York. The intention of this collection of works by Cabral is clear from the outset, as the dedication states: “Dedicated to the struggle”. This collection of speeches by Cabral fell upon public ears at a vast array of events, ranging from various addresses to the United Nations to numerous international lectures.

The title, *Return to the Source* is derived from the speech entitled “Identity and Dignity in the Context of the National Liberation Struggle,” which was given by Cabral when he accepted his first Honorary Doctorate degree (in Law) from Lincoln University in the United States of America, in October 1972, (his second Honorary Doctorate was in Political and Social Sciences from the African Institute of the Academy of Science of the USSR in December 1972). The idea of “returning to the source,” which seeks to recover the history of his people, was seen as a “political process rather than a cultural event,” and is a remedy for “the pretended supremacy of the culture of the dominant power over that of the dominated people” (Cabral, *Return* 12). Cabral saw this corrective as the “only possible reply to the demand of concrete need [...] and enforced by the inescapable contradiction between the colonized society and the colonial power, the mass of the people exploited and the foreign exploitive class” (63). “Returning to the source” was thus never a “voluntary step” but a necessary one, which went “beyond the individual and is expressed through ‘groups’ or ‘movements,’ the contradiction is transformed into struggle (secret or overt), and is a prelude to the pre-independence movement or the struggle for liberation from the foreign yoke” (63). This idea of “returning to the source” was thus a response to foreign rule and the oppression of culture, requiring “real involvement in the struggle for independence” from a people who “contest not only the foreign culture but also the foreign domination as a whole” (63).

The above rationalisation, as well as many of Cabral's other speeches seen in this collection, expose the reader to the importance that Cabral places on the idea of culture, stating that "the liberation struggle is, above all, a struggle for both the preservation and survival of the cultural values of the people and for the harmonization and development of these values within a national framework" (48). Cabral even goes so far as to refer to culture as "a *weapon* in the struggle for independence" (59, *original emphasis*). Cabral gave attention to the fact that the culture of the people gives them a sense of identity and more importantly, of unity, and it is this element of society that the colonialist oppressors would thus attack. Cabral accordingly cautioned the people that "imperialist domination calls for cultural oppression and attempts either directly or indirectly to do away with the most important elements of the culture of the subject people" (60). Consequently, it would then become true that "the armed liberation struggle is not only a part of our culture but also a determinant of culture," in that the armed struggle would come to determine the various ways in which the people could and would unify, and whether the result would be that their culture would eventually be undermined or alternatively, strengthened (55). For Cabral, the constant "underestimation of the cultural values of African peoples, based upon racist feelings [...] has done much harm in Africa" (51), and to rectify this one needs to identify the opportunity "for developing the cultural level of both the leadership strata in the liberation movement and the various social groups who participate in the struggle" (53). This positive reinforcement of the culture of the people of Guinea and Cape Verde was undoubtedly important, as it was a culture with which the Portuguese colonists could not identify and, as Cabral noted, "[t]he greater the differences between the culture of the dominated people and the culture of their oppressor, the more possible [...] a victory becomes," as the oppressor does not have the necessary knowledge and devotion to their land and to their fellow people (48).

Throughout the struggle, Cabral's confidence in his peoples' ability to succeed was constantly evident, as he unequivocally stated that "[t]here is no force capable of preventing the complete liberation of my people and the attainment of national independence by my country" (Cabral, *Return to the Source*, 26). He refers to the "indestructible unity of our people [which is] the vital basis of the success of our struggle" (100). However, at the same time, Cabral was constantly realistic about the fact that his

people were under a great form of oppression and that “national liberation takes place when, and only when, national productive forces are completely free of all kinds of domination” (43). In an informal talk with various black Americans, Cabral explicitly expressed his and his parties’ desire for their country; this was “to have no more exploitation of our people, not by white or by black people,” which would only be achieved by “giv[ing] to our people all possibility to participate more actively each day in the direction of their own life” (88, 89). It was this realisation by the people, that it was for their own quality of life that they were fighting, that motivated them to continue with the armed struggle, even at a stage when the Portuguese were in a state of “heightened aggression against [the] liberated areas” and had decided to “intensify their bombing, multiply their assaults on [the] liberated areas, and make every effort to try and reoccupy a certain number of places inside these areas” (105).

Cabral was fully aware of the dangers that he, the PAIGC and the people of Guinea and Cape Verde faced. Once again reinforcing the transnational dimension of the liberation struggle by connecting the struggle of the people of Guinea and Cape Verde with that of black Americans, Cabral spoke with more than 120 representatives of various black organisations in the United States of America, giving a speech given on 20 October 1972 entitled “Connecting the Struggles: an informal talk with Black Americans”. Here he gave his honest opinion and justification about the need for an armed struggle:

Naturally, we are not defending the armed fight. Maybe I deceive people, but I am not a great defender of the armed fight. I am very conscious of the sacrifices demanded by the armed fight. It is a violence against even our own people. But it is not our invention – it is not our cool decision; it is the requirement of history. This is not the first fight in our country, and it is not Cabral who invented the struggle. We are following the example given by our grandfathers who fought against Portuguese domination 50 years ago. Today’s fight is a continuation of the fight to defend our dignity, our right to have an identity – our own identity.

(79)

In this informal talk, Cabral highlights the fact that black Americans are Africans too, and reinforces his and his parties’ aversion to “any kind of racism” (76). He states that, quite simply, “[we] are fighting for the freedom of our people and to allow them to be able to love any kind of human being” (77). This statement would have been particularly resonant in the still racially-divided America of 1972, where anti-miscegenation laws had only been ruled to

be unconstitutional five years previously (in 1967) and many people still frowned upon mixed marriages. It would also obviously be resonant in South Africa, which suffered under the Immorality Act at the time.

Once again in this publication, as in *Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts by Amilcar Cabral*, the situation of apartheid in South Africa is brought to the fore by Cabral. In a speech given in 1970 as part of the Eduardo Mondlane (the first president of the Mozambique Liberation Front) memorial lecture series at Syracuse University in New York, Cabral highlights the utter brutality of apartheid, and even goes so far as to liken it to Nazi Germany, stating that “[t]he practice of apartheid takes the form of unrestrained exploitation of the labour force of the African masses, incarcerated and repressed in the largest concentration camp mankind has ever known” (41). As before, this reference to South Africa alongside Cabral’s other anti-colonial statements, made the apartheid censors question the dissemination of this publication.

The publication first came to the attention of the censors in 1980 through the Security branch of the South African Police. The censorship board stated that, Cabral was responsible for the liberation of Guinea-Bissau, and they represented the claim that he was assassinated by a Portuguese agent as mere “speculation” (“[d]aar word beweer dat hy deur Portugese agente om die lewe gebring is maar dit is hoofsaaklik spekulasie”) (Jansen P80/9/127). The Board took note that all but two speeches which appear in the publication (“National Liberation and Culture” and “Identity and Dignity in the Context of the National Liberation Struggle”) had already appeared publically in the period between 1970 and 1973, and are all of “philosophical nature” (“’n sterk filosofiese inslag”) (Jansen P80/9/127). They additionally stated that a large portion of the book is centred around a “discussion of the role of culture, as well as the role of identity, in the freedom struggle” (“[d]aar is ’n bespreking van die rol van kultuur in die bevrydingstryd, die rol van identiteit ens”) (Jansen P80/9/127). The Board decided that, “because the book strongly places the freedom movement in the foreground and shows photos of the armed struggle, the book is undesirable under Section 47(2)(e) of the Act, meaning that it is detrimental to the safety, general welfare and good order of the State” (“[o]mdat die boek die bevrydingsbeweging so sterk op die voorgrond plaas en die foto’s die gewapende stryd uitbeeld, is die boek ongewens binne die bedoeling van die Wet, Art. 47(2)(e) d.w.s. dit is nadelig vir die veiligheid

van die Staat, die algemene welsyn en die goeie orde") (Jansen P80/9/127). It was also stated by the Board, however, that although "the PAIGC had strong commitments with former and existing so-called freedom movements, some of which present a substantial hazard for South Africa" ("*[d]ie PAIGC het sterk verbintnisse met eertydse en bestaande sogenaamde vryheidsbewegings waarvan sommige vir Suid-Afrika 'n wesentlike gevaar inhou*"), "the independence of Guinea-Bissau and the man Amilcar Cabral are already known" ("*[d]ie onafhanklikheid van Guinee-Bissau asook die man Amilcar Cabral het reeds geskiedenis geword*") (Jansen P80/9/127). Again the argument of locality was used as it was argued that the publication "deals with an area [which is] far from the boundaries of the Republic" ("*[d]it handel oor 'n gebied ver van die grense van die Republiek*") and that there are "no tactical details of the struggle" ("*[d]aar is geen taktiese besonderhede oor die vryheidstryd nie*") given in the publication (Jansen P80/9/127). The Board thus found that they "cannot justify a possession ban at this time" ("*[d]ie boek regverdig op hierdie tydstip nie 'n besitverbod nie*") (Jansen P80/9/127). The publication was thus only found "undesirable" in terms of Section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1974.

In response to a request by the Acquisitions Department of the South African Library in Cape Town, there was a reconsideration of the publication in 1990. A Mr Nel, on behalf of the Censorship Board, stated that it must be known that Cabral is "considered as one of the founders of revolutionary theory of national liberation in Africa" ("*beskou as een van die grondleggers van die revolusionere teorieë van nasionale bevryding in Afrika*") and that this publication can thus be "considered to be an exemplary version of the most important themes that he addressed" ("*beskou as 'n goeie weergawe van die belangrikste temas wat hy aangespreek het*") (Nel P90/05/25). They noted that, in this publication, "he develops the thought that national liberation is not only a political and economic freedom, but it is also, and most importantly, a cultural regeneration of the suppressed nation" ("*ontwikkel hy die gedagte dat nasionale bevryding nie net politieke en ekonomiese bevryding is nie, maar ook, en veral, kulturele regenerasie van die onderdrukte nasie*") and that "he rejects racist theory which claims that African culture has a backlog" ("*verwerp hy rassitiese teorieë wat beweer dat die Afrikakultuur 'n agterstand het*") (Nel P90/05/25). Claiming that Cabral was a true "African nationalist" ("*Afrikanasionalis*") (Nel P90/05/25), the Board stated that, "although this work contains a grounding of the theory of national liberation, and even justifies

violence as a part [of the liberation], the work is not a simple piece of propaganda” (“[o]fskoon hierdie werk ‘n begronding van die teorie van nasionale bevryding bevat, en selfs geweld as deel daarvan regverdig (...), is die werkie nie ‘n eenvoudige stuk propaganda nie”) (Nel P90/05/25). Furthermore, they found that “the argument [in the book] is particularly complex and will only speak to certain intellectual groups” (“[d]ie argumente daarvan is besonder kompleks en sal net ‘n bepaalde intellektuele groep aanspreek”), and due to this highly intellectual level, together with the fact that “it addresses a historical situation that is significantly removed from the living environment of South Africans” (“gerig is op ‘n historiese situasie wat aansienlik verwyder is van die leefwereld van Suid-Afrikaners”), the Board stated that “the book will exert little influence in South Africa” (“die boekie weinig invloed in SA sal uitoefen”) (Nel P90/05/25). The Board further pointed to the fact that “the book is already out of print and is not generally available, which means that it will not have a wide readership” (“die reeds uit druk is, en dus nie algemeen beskikbaar is nie, beteken dat dit nit ‘n wye leserskring sal geniet nie”), and thus they found that the publication was “not undesirable”, and said the ban should be lifted (Nel P90/05/25).

Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings

The final English collection of the works of Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* (1979), published by the Amilcar Cabral Foundation in New York, was ultimately a re-issuing of his key works as, by this stage, some of them had been removed from print. It thus contains works that existed in *Revolution in Guinea*, and contains the entire contents of *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*. In the introduction to the second edition of the collection, written by Maurice Taonezvi Vambe and Abebe Zegeye from the University of South Africa, it is stated that there are three key issues that can be identified as Cabral’s understanding of Africa’s new beginnings or renaissances (Vambe and Zegeye, 3). The first issue is that “there cannot be any meaningful African rebirth” without considering “the importance of political economy or the material interests” of the people. The second was that “Cabral was very aware that a people’s culture encompasses their struggles and that any struggle can be successful when the people involved have conviction and self-confidence,” as was seen in a speech in *Return to the Source* above (3). Thirdly, when identifying the fundamentals of the various liberations, “Cabral did not fall into the pit

of narrow economism in which Africa's renaissances are merely seen as opening new markets to exploit poor African countries" (3).

In a series of lectures given at a seminar for PAIGC cadres in November 1969 entitled "Party Principles and Political Practice," Cabral introduced the members of his party to his idea of "Unity and Struggle." He stated that the idea of "unity and struggle" was the "first principle of [their] Party and [their] struggle," and could even be taken to be the "motto" or "theme" of the PAIGC (Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, 66). Cabral explains to his comrades the concept and importance of unity, stating that "whatever might be the existing differences, we must be one, an entirety, to achieve a given aim," the aim being national liberation, and therefore the principle of unity must be "taken in a dynamic sense, in motion" (66). Cabral embraced the fact that each member is an individual, highlighting the importance of "the difference between the items" in order to have a successful collective union in the liberation struggle (67). He claimed that "union makes for strength," and that this strength is "necessary [in order] to be pitted against the strength of the colonialists" (68). Any form of division would be a weak point in the party, and one that the colonialists would immediately identify and attack, consequently making the idea of unity "a means towards the struggle" (69). The concept of struggle is undoubtedly an important one for the party fighting for liberation, and Cabral explained that "[s]truggle is a normal condition of all living creatures in the world" as we "all struggle" and are in a struggle of some sort, be it with the gravitational force on the earth or with a loved one (69). However, for the purpose of this lecture, Cabral explicitly explained the struggle that the PAIGC faces due to the fact that "the Portuguese colonialists have taken [their] land, as foreigners and as occupiers, and have exerted a force on [their] society, on [their] people" (70). For the people of Guinea and Cape Verde then, the struggle was about the fact that "this united force of [their] people [which] can overcome the colonialist force" (70). The principle of "unity and struggle" for the PAIGC thus means "that for struggle unity is necessary, but to have unity it is also necessary to struggle," and furthermore, for them specifically, "[u]nity for us [is] to struggle against the colonialists and struggle for us [is] to achieve our unity, for us to construct our land as it should be" (70-71).

Further on in this lecture series, Cabral focuses on the need for the people to be realists and the importance for all those involved in the struggle to focus on the reality of

the situation. He even outlined, to his cadres, what is required by him as a leader of the liberation struggle, stating that “those who lead the struggle must never confuse what they have in their head with reality,” but must “weigh up and make plans which respect reality and not what he [the leader] has in his head” (81). This means that the organisation, the tactics, the movements and so on, of the party as well as the struggle, need to “be in accordance with the specific reality of the land,” and not based on ideas from previous movements or struggles elsewhere in the world (82). Echoing his earlier sentiments, Cabral highlighted the fact that each situation, however similar from the outside, is unique in its struggle, and thus regardless of what may have happened in Algeria, in France, in Mozambique or in Asia, the struggle in Guinea and Cape Verde would need to be adapted in a specific manner in order to be successful.

Cabral even indicated that it would be impossible for outsiders to wage war against the colonialists in Guinea as it was a “personal” war for the people of Guinea and Cape Verde, insisting that “[w]e cannot for a moment think of liberating our land, of building peace and progress in our land, by bringing in foreigners from outside to come and struggle for us” (110). He pointed out to the people that the liberation struggle is also a scene of progress for the people, and that their “fundamental strength is our people, themselves” (111). Cabral thus pays tribute to the people of Guinea and Cape Verde, stating that:

Our population, or rather the population linked to the work of our party, mobilised and organised by our party, has from the beginning fed our struggle, borne sacrifices for our struggle, and so has been the principle strength of our struggle. It would have been impossible for us to wage the struggle, in the era of clandestinity, were it not that our people kept us alive among them like a fish in water.

(111)

At the same time, he evidently kept sight of the interconnectedness of various struggles against imperialism by saying that the struggle in Guinea was “against the Portuguese capitalist colonialist class,” and ultimately thus against imperialism generally, due to the fact that “the Portuguese class is a piece, albeit minute and rotting, of imperialism” (110).

Cabral goes on to explain to the people the need for there to be a party such as the PAIGC rather than simply only a liberation movement, as there needs to be an instrument in place which is the driving force behind the struggle, and the PAIGC thus functions as that

instrument, illustrating that it “is the root and trunk which produce other branches for the development of our struggle” (119). Cabral preferred the idea of a “more defined, much clearer organisation” that occurs in the form of a party as opposed to a movement, due to the fact that a “Party represents all those who share a given idea, a given aim, on a given path” whereas “[a] movement is something very vague” (119).

In laying out the objectives of the PAIGC and the liberation struggle, Cabral once again explicitly hints at his distaste for any form of racism or exploitation, and suggests that a complete overhaul of the state is necessary for liberation:

There is no racism, there is no tribalism; we are not struggling merely so that we may have a flag, and anthem and ministers – we may not even have ministers in our land. We are not going to install ourselves in the governor’s palace, that is not our objective, to take over the palace to place Cabral and others there. We are struggling to liberate our people not only from colonialism but also from any kind of exploitation.

(120)

In some senses this may be compared with Fanon’s warning, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, against a post-liberation government that simply models itself on the colonial state:

The former colonial power increases its demands, accumulates concessions and guarantees and takes fewer pains to mask the hold it has over the national government. The people stagnate deplorably due to the unutterable treason of their leaders.

(Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 165-166)

Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings first came to the attention of the censors in 1980 through Customs and Excise. Mr Jansen wrote on behalf of the Board and stated that it was important to note that “the preface [of the first edition] was written by Basil Davidson, a person who is a complete authority on the Portuguese areas (or rather former areas) in Africa” (“[d]ie voorwoord van hierdie publikasie is geskryf deur Basil Davidson, ‘n persoon wat ‘n absolute autoriteit is oor die Portugese gebiede (of eerder eertydse gebiede) in Afrika”), but that he shows “sympathy with the terrorist movement” (“het heelwat simpatie met die terroriste-bewegings”) (Jansen P80/6/44). They took umbrage to the fact that, in the preface, Davidson writes of “Cabral’s general position that armed warfare should be always an extension of political warfare” and that Davidson mentions the “mastery of revolutionary thought and action in the pages of this book” (Davidson, xvi, xvii).

They stated that this can be summed up by saying that “the political struggle is part of the armed freedom struggle” (“*[d]ie politieke stryd is deel van die gewapende vryheidstryd*”) and that “revolutionary thinking is important in the actual revolution” (“*[d]ie revolusionere denke is belangrik in die werklike revolusie*”) (Jansen P80/6/44). The Board concluded that although the book was about revolution against Portuguese colonialism, and “the central theme of the book [is the] revolution against the Portuguese Government” (“*[d]ie hele boek het as sentrale tema, die revolusie teen die Portugese bewind*”), the book had wider import than just Guinea and Cape Verde as the “thought of a revolution is promoted” (“*[d]ie gedagte van die revolusie word bevorder*”) (Jansen P80/6/44). They thus acknowledged the transnational impact of ideas about liberation. With this in mind, it was stated by the censors that “our two neighbours, Angola and Mozambique, were also once [under] Portuguese governments, and [thus] the correlation with South Africa is particularly strong” (“*ons twee bure, Angola en Mosambiek, wat ook eertydse Portugese gebiede was, is die oordraging in Suid-Afrika besonder sterk*”) (Jansen P80/6/44). What is interesting about this observation is the fact that 1980 was the same year that South Africa took control of sponsoring RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana), in a cross-border military operation that attempted to destabilise Mozambique, as well as the same year that South Africa was still secretly involved in cross-border warfare in Angola. Although the censors make no mention of this, they would probably have been aware of these situations, and of the relevance of Cabral’s statements on anti-colonial revolution to South Africa’s covert involvement against revolutionary parties with its neighbouring states.

Jansen further stated that “the book is a carefully reasoned philosophical presentation of revolutionary thought” (“*[d]ie boek is ‘n fyn beredeneerde filosofiese aanbieding van die revolusionere gedagte*”) but is also “a subtle propaganda for revolution” (“*n subtiële propaganda vir revolusie*”) (Jansen P80/6/44). The publication was thus found “undesirable” in terms of Section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1974. The Board also stated that “in the current South African situation, books that promote revolutionary thought are not desirable for general circulation” (“*[i]n die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is boeke wat die gedagte van revolusie bevorder, nie wenslik vir algemene sirkulasie nie*”) but that “because this book does not provide guerrilla tactics, a possession ban shall not be

enforced" ("*[o]mdat hierdie boek nit guerrilla-taktiek as sulks uiteensit nie regverdig dit nie 'n besitverbod nie*") (Jansen P80/6/44).

In January 1988, the Board received a request from a Miss Veronica Baxter, a university lecturer in Pietermaritzburg, asking for special authority to consult *Unity and Struggle* in order to undertake certain research on "African Theorist Culture". Although there was a Section 47(2)(e) ban in place on the publication, the Board stated that, due to the fact that there was no Section 9(3) ban in place, possession of the publication was not banned and it was thus not necessary to get explicit authority from the Director of Publication in order to consult the publication, and the applicant should be able to access it through the university's main library (Du Toit P88/05/47).

In 1990, the publication was once again considered for dissemination after a request from the Acquisitions Department of the South African Library. The censors focused again on locality and specificity, on the fact that "the central theme of the book is the revolution in Guinea-Bissau and is aimed at the Portuguese government" ("*[d]ie hele boek het as sentrale tema die revolusie in Guinee-Bissau, gemik teen die Portugese bewind*") (Jansen P90/06/41). The Board stated that, "although the book preaches revolution, it is about revolution in a country that is already independent and is far away from the Republic of South Africa" ("*[h]oewel die boek revolusie predik gaan dit oor revolusie in 'n land wat nou reeds onafhanklik is en ver verwyder is van die RSA*"), and that "today, Guinea-Bissau is completely forgotten and is certainly just as ideologically removed as Red [communist] China" ("*[v]andag is Guinee-Bissau heeltemal vergete en ideologies seker net so ver verwyderd as Rooi China*") (Jansen P90/06/41). They claimed that "today, this book of Cabral's speeches and essays is primarily of historical value" ("*[h]ierdie boek met Cabral se toesprake en geskrifte het vandag hoofsaaklik historiese betekenis*"), and, as emphasised in the 1980 banning, "many of the guerrilla assignments are commonplace," ("*baie van die opdragte aan die guerrillas is heel alledaags*") and thus not of any threat to the likely reader (Jansen P90/06/41). The Board went on to state that, "with the new policy of negotiation [in place] in the Republic of South Africa, the possibility of a guerrilla war is extremely slim" ("*[m]et die nuwe beleid van onderhandeling in die RSA, word die moontlikheid van 'n guerrilla-oorlog baie skraal*"), and that in fact, "the concept of negotiation is so in the foreground that [the idea of a] guerrilla war is actually no longer relevant" ("*die konsep van*

onderhandeling is so op die voorgrond dat guerrilla-oorlog eintlik nie meer ter sprake is nie") (Jansen P90/06/41). Thus, the Board felt that, "in the current situation in the Republic of South Africa, [the publication] is no longer a threat to the safety of the State" ("*die boek in die huidige opset in die RSA, nie meer die veiligheid van die staat sal bedreig nie*"), and it was decided that the publication was "not undesirable" in terms of Section 47(2)(e) of the amended Publications Act of 1974 (Jansen P90/06/41).

Chapter 3:

“A Monstrous System and Its Gestapo Tactics”:

Steve Biko and the Apartheid Censors

Stephen Biko, more affectionately known as Steve “Bantu” Biko, is undoubtedly one of the most famous liberation leaders to come out of South Africa to date. In fact, he is said to be one of “the three most important black leaders to emerge” from this country, alongside “Nelson Mandela [and] Robert Sobukwe” (Woods 17). For the black man in apartheid-era South Africa, he was the “authentic voice of the people, not afraid to say openly what all blacks [were] think[ing] but [were] too frightened to say” (Stubbs 120). His drive and passion for the type of country he believed in; a country where all were equal, regardless of race, religion and gender, is what motivated him throughout his life, and ultimately is what led to his devastating murder by agents of the apartheid regime. In this chapter, I aim to examine the censor’s response to *I Write What I Like*, a collection of Biko’s writings, as well as to the literature and film that tried to expose the circumstances of Biko’s death. I shall also examine briefly the censor’s responses to some Biko memorabilia.

Biko was born in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape on 18 December 1946 and was initially educated locally before going to the Lovedale Institution in Alice, a missionary school run by the Bantu Education Department. He only stayed at the Institution briefly before moving to Natal to attend the Roman Catholic Mariannhill, from which he matriculated in 1965 before attending medical school in the “Non-European” section of the University of Natal in 1966 (Stubbs 1). It was at this stage of his life that Biko became active in various political movements. He was initially a member of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), a student organisation which “had its own power base on the white campuses (Wits – the University of the Witwatersrand – Rhodes, University of Cape Town, Natal) [which] meant that it was virtually impossible for black students to attain leadership positions,” and further meant that the non-white campuses were often not considered in various decisions (Stubbs 3). Biko thus left NUSAS in 1968 in order to form the South African Students’ Organisation (SASO), a group who aimed, amongst other things, to

“crystallise the needs and aspirations of the non-white students and to seek to make known their grievances,” as well as “to boost up the morale of the non-white students, to heighten their own confidence in themselves and to contribute largely to the direction of thought taken by the various institutions on social, political and other current topics” (4, 5). SASO gradually advanced into the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), which aimed to “break away [...] from past black attitudes to the liberation struggle and set a new style of self-reliance and dignity for blacks as a psychosocial attitude leading to new initiatives” (Woods 30). Biko was appointed as the first president of SASO in July 1969, and a year later, in 1970, became the Publicity Secretary. In December of that same year, he married Nontsikelelo Mashalaba (1). In 1972, Biko was expelled from the University of Natal due to his political activities and went to work on various organisations or Black Community Programmes (BCP) to come out of the Black Consciousness Movement, especially the Black People’s Convention (BPC). At the various conventions, “Biko and his associates used almost brutal language to initiate these bodies, because they felt they first had to get blacks to break away from the whites in multiracial organisations such as the National Union of South African Students” (Woods 30). Although the apartheid government seems to have been tolerant of Black Consciousness to some extent before this, believing it to fit into their ideas of racial difference, it was mostly due to Biko’s involvement in these various organisations that in February 1973 Biko became a banned person in South Africa, technically meaning that he was “consigned to the legal status of isolation from the community, and indeed of virtual non-identity, which the regime [had] devised for a select group of citizens perceived especially formidable antagonists” (Smith 280). Biko was now restricted to his home town of King Williams Town, could only speak to one person at a time, could not speak or write publically, could not anyone quote or refer to anything that he said, be it formally or in informal conversations (Stubbs 1). Initially under this ban, Biko founded an Eastern Cape branch of the Black Community Programmes (BCP), working as an Executive until the end of 1975, when “an extra clause was inserted in his banning order [...] prohibiting him from working for BCP” (1). His restriction did not however deter Biko from secretly moving around the country in order to attend numerous conferences and make inspiring speeches, nor did it impede his involvement in his organisations, and in 1975 he founded the Zimele Trust Fund, a fund which helped to support former political prisoners and their families. In 1976 Biko, the BCP and the BCM were instrumental in the organisation of the protests

which led to the Soweto Uprising on 16 June, where police involvement caused the death of hundreds of protesting school children, and ultimately made Biko an even greater target. In August 1976, Biko was “detained for 101 days under section 6 of the Terrorism Act” in terms of which anyone suspected of terrorism could be detained without trial for a minimum of three months (1). He was released without being charged, and was subjected to this situation many more times, until 18 August 1977 when he was once again detained under section 6 of the Terrorism Act and was taken to prison in Port Elizabeth, where he was “kept naked and manacled, as was revealed in the inquest after his death,” (2). On 6 September 1977, Biko was taken in for questioning, “where he was handcuffed, put into leg irons, chained to a grille and subjected to twenty-two hours of interrogation in the course of which he was tortured and beaten, sustaining several blows to the head which damaged his brain fatally, causing him to lapse into a coma” (Woods 9). Biko was examined throughout his torture by various doctors who collaborated with the state, saying that his injuries were not serious and mostly due to his “hunger strike.” Finally, another doctor examined him, discovering his severe head injuries and recommended that he be transferred to the police hospital in Pretoria. Biko was transported to Pretoria in the back of a police van where he lay naked and chained for the entire 1200km journey and, six days after the initial beating, on 12 September 1977, Steve “Bantu” Biko died in police detention (Woods 9). A lengthy inquest followed his death in order to determine the actual cause; this will be dealt with in more detail below. In his death however, Biko was not forgotten, and the man who “had excellent qualities beyond charisma, personality and wisdom [...], rocklike integrity and a degree of courage that sent one’s regard for the potentialities of the human spirit soaring skyhigh” left a legacy which ultimately led to the change that he so desperately wanted to achieve (61).

I Write What I Like

Biko’s *I Write What I Like* (1978), published by the Bowerdean Press in the United Kingdom after his death, remains one of the most powerful political texts ever published. The volume was edited by Aelred Stubbs C.R., an Anglican priest who was the principal of St Peter’s Theological College in Rosettenville, Johannesburg in 1960 (Stubbs v). Due to government legislation, Stubbs was forced to close the College at Rosettenville, and subsequently in

1963, he moved to Alice where they formed the new ecumenical Federal Theological Seminary before finally being expelled himself from South Africa in July 1977 (Stubbs v).

I Write What I Like is a compilation of Biko's writings and speeches from his politically active period of 1969 to 1972, before he was officially banned in 1973; the transcripts of his evidence in the BPC/SASO Trial in 1976; his letter to US senator Dick Clark in 1976; an interview on liberation; a meditation on death shortly before his death and a memoir by Stubbs. The title, a boldly self-conscious and provocative response to the censorship regime of the time, comes from the title that Biko used for a column that he wrote in the monthly SASO Newsletter, under the pseudonym "Frank Talk", and these columns are also included in the book. Few people actually knew that it was Biko who was writing the column, and in the BCP/SASO Trial of May 1976, the Judge even asked: "Isn't (accused) number 9 [Strini Moodley] Frank Talk?" to which Steve responded "No, no, he was never Frank Talk, I was Frank Talk" (108).

The BCP/SASO Trial, in which Biko was a witness, followed the pro-Frelimo (the Liberation Front of Mozambique) rally which took place in September 1974 at Currie's Fountain in Durban. The rally had been planned by the BCP and SASO to "celebrate the recognition of Frelimo as the *de facto* government of Moçambique" but was banned by the Minister of Justice (99). Subsequent to the banning, various BCP leaders in Durban and around the country were arrested and "their detention without trial and incommunicado [lasted] for many months in Pretoria," although eventually only 13 of the detainees were charged and only nine were tried under the Terrorism Act, found guilty and were sent to Robben Island for a minimum five year sentence (99).

With regard to SASO and its evolution into the BCM, Biko states that "[t]he blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing [and] [t]hey want to do things for themselves and all by themselves" (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 15). In the chapter entitled "Black Souls in White Skins" (obviously a play on Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*), Biko gives the reader his opinion of what he calls the "homogenous" South African white community, "a community of people who sit to enjoy a privileged position that they do not deserve, are aware of this, and therefore spend their time trying to justify why they are doing so," which leads to an "arrogant assumption that a clique of

foreigners has the right to decide on the lives of a majority” (19, 27). He further points out that “the real evil in our society [is] white racism” and reminds readers that “no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin – his passport to privilege – will always put him miles ahead of the black man” (23).

In the chapter “We Blacks,” a column by “Frank Talk”, Biko deals extensively with Black Consciousness and the ideals behind its inception. Biko states that “black consciousness seeks to show the black people the value of their own standards and outlook” and urges them “to judge themselves according to these standards and not be fooled by white society who have white-washed themselves and made white standards the yardstick by which even black people judge each other” (30). As suggested above, what is interesting is that up until Biko’s banning, the apartheid government initially seemed to have a rather ambivalent view of Black Consciousness due to the fact that it seemed not to be associated with either the African National Congress or the Pan African Congress, and even more so because it seemed to advocate the kind of separatism that suited apartheid thinking, as was similarly seen in the apartheid censors’ response to Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*. In some ways the government initially regarded Black Consciousness as not necessarily opposed to their ideas of separate development.

It is clear that Biko adopted a similar line of thinking to that of Fanon, and wanted the black man to embrace his “blackness”, to overcome any inferiority complex he might have and do so without any comparison to any form of “whiteness.” According to Biko, “the type of black man we have today has lost his manhood” and ignores any voice that he may have, and is now merely “a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity,” and for this reason, Black Consciousness “seeks to talk to the black man in a language that is his own” in order for the “black world [...] to realise the urgent need for a re-awakening of the sleeping masses” (28, 29, 32). A later chapter, entitled “The Definition of Black Consciousness,” is an example of how Biko spoke to his own SASO organisation members, in a paper he gave at a SASO training course, attempting to speak “from the heart of his and their experience” (Stubbs 48). Biko points out the importance of the fact that simply because “we are all *not white* does not necessarily mean that we are all *black*” as seen in his definition of what it means to be black (Biko *I Write* 48, *original emphasis*). He states that

“being black is a reflection of a mental attitude” and does not simply reflect one’s pigmentation, but by describing oneself as black, “you have started out on a road to emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being” (48). It is from this realisation, the acceptance of oneself as black, that Biko bases his ideals in the BCM, stating unequivocally that “Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude” (49). Unfortunately for the black man, the real problem lies with ‘White Racism’ and the fact that “whites are deriving pleasure and security in entrenching white racism and further exploiting the minds and bodies of the unsuspecting black masses” (50). However, Biko wanted to make sure that these “unsuspecting black masses” did not become despondent, which is why he and those in his organisation realised the importance and the necessity of the BCM (50). Black Consciousness then “expresses group pride and the determination by the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self” and in so doing, “[i]t will not be long before the blacks relate their poverty to their blackness” and therefore “wish to rid themselves of a system that locks up the wealth of the country in the hands of a few” (68, 63).

Many believed that what Biko was promoting was not merely Black Consciousness but black racism too, though his own words endorsed the contrary, stating that “[Black Consciousness] works on the knowledge that ‘white hatred’ is negative, though understandable, and leads to precipitate and shot-gun methods which may be disastrous for black and white alike” (31). He claimed that Black Consciousness “seeks to channel the pent-up forces of the angry black masses to meaningful and directional opposition basing its entire struggle on the realities of the situation” (31). In fact, in the chapter “Our Strategy for Liberation,” which comes from an interview that Biko had with a European journalist in 1977, Biko tells of his (and SASO’s) ideal society, which consists of a “country [where] there shall be no minority, there shall be no majority, just the people,” and in the SASO/BCP Trial, Biko mentions that “[w]e (blacks) intend to see them (whites) staying here side by side with us, maintaining a society in which everybody shall contribute proportionally” (149, 121). However, echoing more Fanonian concepts, Biko did declare that “conflict is unavoidable

given the predictable response from the present system” but that the BCP wishes to focus on “the efficacy of non-violence as a method” to achieve the desired state of equality (151, 148).

Biko also wrote a paper for the book *Black Theology: the South African Voice* (Moore, B. Ed.) entitled “Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity.” In it, Biko reiterates his view that “[the black] situation is not a mistake on the part of the whites but a deliberate act” which they refuse to “correct” and that blacks need to “[express] group pride and the determination of the black to rise and attain the envisaged self” (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 91, 92). In order to get this line of thinking across to the black population, Biko made what is arguably his most famous statement which undoubtedly echoes the philosophy of Fanon; that “[a]t the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed” (92). As a witness in the SASO/BCP Trial, drawing heavily on Fanon’s viewpoints, Biko expressed that “the black man himself has developed a certain state of alienation, he rejects himself, precisely because he attaches the meaning of white to all that is good [...] and equates good with white,” which is the exact mindset that Biko and the BCM sought to rid the black man of (100).

On more than one occasion in his writing, Biko seems to pre-empt his death in a rather chilling manner, and in the final chapter of the book entitled “On Death,” there is an interview that Biko had with an American businessman mere months before his detention and subsequent death. In it, Biko tells of an interrogation he once had while detained and states:

So I said to them, “Listen, if you guys want to do this your way, you have got to handcuff me and bind my feet together, so that I can’t respond. If you allow me to respond, I’m certainly going to respond. And I’m afraid you may have to kill me in the process even if it’s not your intention.

(153)

According to the archival records from the South African National Archives in Cape Town, *I Write What I Like* went through a process of eleven years before any legal dissemination eventually took place in South Africa. It was first in January of 1979, mere

months after its initial publication, that the book came to the attention of the Censorship Board. According to the material, the book was deemed undesirable in terms of Section 47(2)(d) and (e) of the Publications Act of 1974. In addition, a Section 9(3) possession ban was placed on the book. The Board examined the content of the book, finding that it

contains a collection of speeches and articles (some under the pseudonym Frank Talk, writing "I Write What I Like" in SASO's monthly newsletter) by Steve Biko" which extend over a period from 1969 to 1976 and focuses on SASO, the BCP, the BCM, black theology, black consciousness, black/white confrontation and the role of churches (*"die boek bestaan uit 'n versameling van toesprake en artikels (sommige onder die skuilnaam Frank Talk in 'n rubriek "I Write What I Like" in SASO se maandelikse nuusbrieff) deur Steve Biko wat strek hier oor 'n tydperk van 1969 tot 1976 en gaan hoofsaaklik oor SASO, die BCP, die BCM, Swart Teologie, Swart Bewustheid, Swart/Wit konfrontasie en die rol van die Kerke"*).

(Du Toit P79/1/174).

A Mr Du Toit, on behalf of the Board, wrote that the book was undesirable in terms of Section 47(2)(e) of the Act due to the fact that "the main character is Steve Biko, one of the founders and later the Honorary President of the BPC" (*"[d]ie hooffiguur is Steve Biko, een van die stigters en later Ere-President van die BPC"*), "head of the Zimele Trust Fund and prominent in the Black Community Programme, both of which were declared illegal" (*"hoof van die Zimele Trust Fund en prominent in die Black Community Programme wat albei ook onwettig verklaar is"*), and that Biko himself was "twice detained under the Terrorism Act" (*"tweekeer onder die Terrorismewet aangehou"*) (Du Toit P79/1/174). Du Toit also stated that the book was edited by Fr. Aelred Stubbs, C.R. whose "activities were of a nature that he was taken out of the country in 1977 and is continuing his hostile attacks from Lesotho" (*"se aktiwiteite was van so 'n aard dat hy uit die land in 1977 gesit is [en] is besig om vanuit Lesotho sy vyandige aanvalle op SA voor te sit"*) (Du Toit P79/1/174). The Board found that "the content of the book is conducive to the activities and objectives of illegal organisations" and that it is "clear that Biko is also linked to the ANC and the PAC" (*"[d]ie inhoud van die boek is bevorderlik vir die aktiwiteite en doelstellings van onwettige organisasies [en] [d]it is duidelik dat Biko ook met die ANC en die PAC probeer skakel het"*) (Du Toit P79/1/174). Du Toit stated that "the idea that revolution and violence are necessary in South Africa, is never far from the surface" of the book (*"[d]ie gedagte dat rewolusie en geweld in SA nodig is, is nooit baie ver van die oppervlakte nie"*) (Du Toit P79/1/174). While he acknowledged that Biko "never publically pronounced himself or Black Consciousness as being in favour of 'violent change,'" he said that Biko claimed that "a

degree of black violence would be needed to counter white violence (pg 143)” (Du Toit P79/1/174). The Board said that Biko “declares himself a socialist who believes in a socialist society” (“*verklaar dat hy in ‘n sosialistiese gemeenskap glo*”) (Du Toit P79/1/174). Noting perceptions of Biko’s status as a martyr in the struggle against apartheid, they declared that “this book can make a contribution to a Biko-cult” (“*[h]ierdie boek kan ‘n bydrae lewer tot ‘n Biko-kultus*”) (Du Toit P79/1/174). This was because Stubbs refers to a letter from a detainee in which Biko is referred to as the “son of man,” which is “an oblique reference to the Son of Man (Jesus Christ), though without the capital letters” (“*n sydelingse verwysing na die Seun van die Mens, hoewel sonder hoofletters*”) (Du Toit P79/1/174). Furthermore, the censors were concerned about the manner in which the police were portrayed by Biko, stating that “the police, as protectors of law and order, are attacked in a subversive manner” (“*[d]ie polisie, as beskermers van die wet en orde, word op ‘n ondermynende wyse aangeval*”). The offending passages here were when Biko asserted that the police “treat [the detainees] like dogs,” (“*die polisie hom soos honde*”) and “when the police question someone, they mock [them] and attack [them] with their fists” (“*[as] die polisie wat iemand ondervra, uit te tart en selfs met die vuiste aan te val*”) (Du Toit P79/1/174). The Board was disturbed by Biko’s admission that he defended himself against the police, as he stated in an interview which was published in “The New Republic” on 7 January 1978 that “[w]e [the police and Biko] had a boxing match the first day I was arrested,” and “if they had meant to give me so much of a beating, and not more, my idea is to make them go beyond what they wanted to give me and to give back as much as I can give so that it becomes an uncontrollable thing” (Du Toit P79/1/174).

In terms of Section 47(2)(d), the book was deemed undesirable due to the fact that it is “detrimental to good relations between Blacks and Whites” (“*skadelik vir goeie verhoudings tussen Swart en Wit*”) as the book states that “a peaceful coexistence between White and Black can only occur if the thesis of White racial hatred is confronted with the antithesis of Black racial hatred” (“*[‘n] vreedse naasbestaan tussen Wit en Swart alleen kan plaasvind as die tesis van Wit rassehaat gekonfronteer word met die antitesis van Swart rassehaat*”) (Du Toit P79/1/174). The Board found it problematic that the book refers to the White man’s “arrogant assumption that a clique of foreigners has the right to decide on the lives of a majority” (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 27) (“*verwys na die Witman se*”), and further

states that “[c]learly black people cannot respect white people, at least not in this country” due to the “obvious aura of immorality and naked cruelty in all that is done in the name of the white people that no black man, no matter how intimidated, can ever be made to respect white society” (76). Finally, the claim that “[a]t best therefore blacks see whiteness as a concept that warrants being despised, hated, destroyed and replaced by an aspiration with more human content in it” (77) led the censors to believe that this book was highly inappropriate for dissemination within apartheid society. According to Section 9(3) of the Act, it was found that Biko’s collection “is of a dangerous nature” (“*is van ‘n staatsgevaarlike aard*”) and that “the possession [of the book] will make the illegal spreading of his underground ideas easier and will thus promote domestic unrest and confrontation” (“*[d]ie besit daarvan sal die onwettige verspreiding van sy gedagtes ondergronds makliker maak, en sodoende konfrontasie en binnelandse onrus bevorder*”) and that all of the above factors make the book “radically undesirable” (“*die boek radikaal ongewens*”) (Du Toit P79/1/174).

Six years later, in 1985, *I Write What I Like* was resubmitted to the censorship board with the hopes of having the ban lifted. A Mr P.C. Smit reported on behalf of the Censorship Board and stated that “due to the fact that this publication is about and by Steve Biko, a person who in South Africa has been given the status of a martyr by certain groups, this publication will receive a relatively large readership base” (“*[g]egewe die feite dat die persoon waarmee en waaroor hierdie publikasie handel, nl. Steve Biko, binne Suid-Afrika onder bepaalde groepe persone bykans die status van ‘n martelaar verkry het, sal hierdie publikasie ‘n relatiewe wye leserskring geniet*”) (Smit P85/9/65). The Board determined that, “based on the general theme from the publication, [namely] Black Consciousness,” (“*geoordeel aan die hand van die algemene tema van die publikasie, nl. Swart Bewustheid*”) it could be said that “the likely readership will consist mainly of young black people” (“*[d]ie waarskynlike leserskring [...] sal bestaan veral uit jong swart persone*”) who were responsible for “elevating [Biko] to the status of a martyr” (“*hierdie groep persone bykans tot die status van ‘n martelaar verhef is*”) (Smit P85/9/65). Smit stated that this type of young person is relatively easily influenced by a document such as this one (“*hierdie tipe jong persoon relatief maklik beïnvloedbaar deur veral ‘n geskrif soos die onderhawige*”), and that this, together with “the emotions surrounding his death” (“*die emosies rondom sy dood*”), will guarantee many readers (Smit P85/9/65). Furthermore, Smit stated that “in the

publication itself, Biko's aversion to anything white is clear" ("*[u]it die publikasie self skemer Biko se afkeer teenoor alles wat blank is duidelik uit*"), while it presents "anything black, such as African customs, traditions, culture, [and] language as that which should be used by all residents of this country" ("*alles wat swart is, bv swart gewoontes, tradisies, kultuur, taal, ens., voorgehou as dit wat deur alle inwoners in hierdie land aangekleef moet word*") (Smit P85/9/65). The Board claimed that it is "almost inevitable that any young black reader of this publication will identify with Biko's views" ("*bykans onafwendbaar dat enige jong swart leser van hierdie publikasie hom met Biko se sienswyses sal vereenselwig,*") and that "the content of this publication will inevitably cause the likely readers' attitudes towards the whites to change so that serious harm may be inflicted upon any good race relations" ("*[d]ie inhoud van hierdie publikasie sal onvermydelik tot gevolg hê dat die waarskynlike leser daarvan se gesindheid teenoor die blanke sodanig sal verander dat dit goeie rasseverhoudinge ernstige nadeel mag berokken*") (Smit P85/9/65). It was stated that the book had an "unyielding spirit towards any negotiations or discussions between blacks on the one side and the government of the time and the whites on the other side" ("*gees van onversetlikheid teenoor enige onderhandeling, samesprekings, ens. tussen swartes aan die een kant en die regering van die dag en blankes aan die ander kant uit*") which would make it "inevitable that the likely reader adopt the same approach" ("*onvermydelik dat [...] die waarskynlike lesers [...] ook hierdie benadering sal volg*") (Smit P85/9/65). The censors concluded that, not only is it undesirable, but it could encourage an "unyielding attitude which would be detrimental to the peace and good order of the country, as well as the safety of the State" ("*gesinheid van onversetlikheid nadelig wees vir die vrede en goeie orde te lande en selfs ook die veiligheid van die Staat*") (Smit P85/9/65). It was thus decided that the book was still undesirable in terms of Section 47(2)(d) and (e) of the Publications Act of 1974, however, due to the amended Act, the possession prohibition under Section 9(3) was lifted and thus previous possession of the publication was no longer banned.

Interestingly, a cutting from *The Cape Times* of 12 October 1985 was attached to the censorship material stating that "[a] collection of essays by Steve Biko, 'I Write What I Like', has been declared no longer undesirable by the Directorate of Publications," and it was suggested to the Directorate of Publications by Customs and Excise that *The Cape Times*

should publish a correction, as only the Section 9(3) banning was lifted, and the Board should not advocate such incorrect information being published.

In 1987, *I Write What I Like* was sent in for reconsideration once more, although the outcome was unchanged. Mr H. Botha reported, stating that the “publication is harmful to the relations between the white and black populations of the Republic of South Africa because the author consistently tried to show how unreasonable and oppressive white society acts towards the black population” (“*publikasie is skadelik vir die betrekkinge tussen die blanke bevolkingsdeel en die swart bevolkingsgroep van die RSA omdat die outeur deurgaans probeer aantoon hoe onredelik en onderdrukkend die wit gemeenskap optree teenoor die swart bevolking,*”) which is only aggravated by the fact that Biko himself is “absolutely opposed to any negotiations between the two groups” (“*absoluut gekant was teen enige onderhandeling tussen die twee groepe*”) (Botha P87/10/114). The Board felt that the book lacked “normal political critique and fair comment” (“*gewone politieke kritiek en billike kommentaar*”) which could ultimately lead to feelings of “hostility between whites and blacks in the Republic of South Africa” (“*vyandskap verwek kan word tussen die blankes en swartes in die RSA*”) (Botha P87/10/114). The Board did however feel that, although Biko showed obvious “disapproval towards white cooperation” (“*afkeur van blanke samewerking*”), he did not, in fact, advocate violence (“*is hy, of was hy, in werklikheid nie ’n voorstander van geweld nie*”) (Botha P87/10/114). They found that it was stated in his book that Biko’s movement was not interested in an armed struggle (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 136), nor did he advocate violent methods to overcome the apartheid regime (148-149), even though he stated that “I can’t predict what will happen in the future, inasmuch as I can’t predict what the enemy is going to do in the future” (149). It was for these reasons that the censors felt that the Section 47(2)(e) ban no longer applied to the publication, as there was “no direct advocating or prescription for violence” (“*nie direkte geweld voorskryf of propageer nie*”) (Botha P87/10/114). However, with regards to the Section 47(2)(d) banning, the Board found that the previous decision on appeal, which stated that there is definite “sensationalising and over-dramatising of Black/White confrontation to promote or engender animosity” still held true and this, together with the fact that the likely readers who, “in this case would be thousands of black readers, will be influenced by Biko’s ideas of unyielding and non-cooperation” (“*in hierdie geval duisende swart lesers sal wees, sal*

beïnvloed word om Biko se idee van onversetlikheid en nie-samewerking te volg) (Botha P87/10/114). For this reason, the Section 47(2)(d) ban was still in place, meaning that the Board deemed the publication to be harmful to “race relations.”

It is worth noting however, that a certain Mr W. Malan of the Censorship Board did not agree with the rest of the Board’s decision, stating that “I cannot fairly place a ban [on this publication] under [Section] 2(d) or 2(e)” (*“Ek kan nie ‘n verbode onder 2(d) of 2(e) regverdig nie”*) (Malan P87/10/114). Malan’s reasoning was due to the that he felt that there were “hundreds of other publications where the white man and the South African governmental authorities come under attack in terms of [Section] 2(d) and 2(e)” (*“honderde ander publikasies waarin die wit man en die SA owerhede nog klasse aangeval is deurgelaat is in terme van beide 2(d) en 2(e)”*) and that these publications were not given any form of banning, and because of this, neither should this one (Malan P87/10/114).

In the case of *I Write What I Like*, it can be assumed that, although there was no formal documentation stating the actual uplifting of the ban, the implementation of the new Acts and the end of apartheid-era censorship, would have led to the banning being uplifted, allowing legal dissemination of Biko’s work to begin in South Africa.

***Biko* by Donald Woods**

Soon after the tragic death of Biko, a book about Biko that exposed the state as directly as the works of Biko had done was published by Paddington Press in London. *Biko* by Donald Woods not only gives the history of South Africa and of Biko’s life and numerous political ventures, but additionally gives detailed accounts of the trial and inquest into the death of Biko, exposing what was, in fact, a murder by the apartheid regime’s Security Police. The book, published in 1978 by Henry Holt & Company, became the inspiration for the Biko film, *Cry Freedom*, about which I shall say more below. Donald Woods, the editor of the newspaper the *Daily Dispatch* in the Eastern Cape from 1965 until 1977, and his wife Wendy, were both great friends of Biko and his family, and when they heard the statement given by the Minister of Police at the time, James Thomas Kruger, that Biko had died in detention due to self starvation, they knew that this simply could not be true. Woods and Biko “had a pact that if he should be detained, if he should die in detention, and if it should be claimed that he had taken his own life, [Woods] would know this to be untrue” (Woods

10). Biko had specifically told Woods that if it was said that he died in detention by “self-inflicted hanging, suffocation, bleeding (through, for example, slashed wrists) or starvation” that “this would be a lie,” and for this reason, Woods knew that he had a duty to his friend and to himself to expose the truth of the morally-perverse apartheid government (166). While Woods clearly wrote this book with the intention to expose the devious and evil ways of the apartheid regime, he wrote it “above all else, [...] as a personal tribute by one who was privileged to be his friend,” and attempts to show readers what made Biko so remarkable, in both life and death (10).

Biko was written under very trying circumstances, as Woods began writing the manuscript a mere ten days after he himself “had been banned for helping to raise public outcry throughout South Africa over [Biko’s] death” and was consequently “placed under surveillance in [his] home and ordered to write nothing for five years under threat of imprisonment” (10, 11). He, like Biko, was not allowed to be in a room with more than one person at a time, except for family members, and was warned that the Security Police would raid his house frequently to make sure that he was not breaking the rules of his ban (11). In spite of this very real threat, Woods chose to continue to write and would secretly and illegally send finished pieces of his manuscript to a friend in London, who then gave them to his publishers at Paddington Press, and within two months “the manuscript was complete and safely received in London” (11). Initially Woods hoped that the manuscript could be published “under the guise of a collection of memoirs of [Biko]” which would ultimately “lessen the penalties imposed on [Woods] for its publication abroad” (11). However, this strategy did not work, and Woods and his family were harassed by the police, with his five-year-old daughter receiving “an acid impregnated T-shirt through the post by right-wing terrorists”. This became one of the reasons that Woods and his family “had to go into exile on New Year’s Eve of 1977” (12, 11). While the Woods’ family were reluctant to leave their home country, they realised that “by going into exile [they] could add [their] voices and witness in the international forum to those of others seeking a peaceful end to apartheid through external pressure,” even though they knew that once the book went in to publication, they could only return to South Africa “after the downfall of the existing regime” (12).

While the history of the country and Biko's political activities were widely known by this time, it was the fact that Woods exposed the actual events surrounding his death (including photographs of Biko's beaten body) and the entire inquest, together with the fact that Woods exposed the true Biko, not the one who was portrayed as a "terrorist", but the man who was "unusually gifted", had the "aura and stature of a leader" and "was the greatest man [Woods] ever had the privilege to know" that made the book so incredibly dangerous to the apartheid government (93, 56). The book contradicts the image that the apartheid government tried to make of Biko, stating that "[t]he striking thing about Steve and his followers was that ironically, for purveyors of Black Consciousness, their blackness was the easiest thing about them to forget" and that they had "a full sense of self-worth," exuded "poise and confidence" and "walked, talked and slouched in chairs like us [whites]" (58).

The book goes on to give a detailed account of the SASO/BPC trial before moving on to a chapter entitled "The Killing – Steve Biko Dies" (159). It tells how Biko came to be detained after being arrested in a road block for breaking his banning. Woods tells of the reaction by the Minister of Justice, James Kruger, who claimed that Biko died of hunger strike and stated that the death of Biko "leaves me cold" (he stated this in Afrikaans saying, "*dit laat my koud*"), before later falsely claiming that the expression actually translates to: "I am sorry, I am neutral about it" (166). When Woods challenged the statement about a hunger strike with photographic evidence, Kruger then claimed that he did not in fact say that Biko died of hunger strike, when Kruger's own words had been widely published, stating that "Biko had died following a hunger strike" and even gave a detailed account "claiming that a number of doctors had examined Biko and found nothing wrong and that Biko had refused all food and drink made available to him" (167). On Monday 14 November 1977, the inquest into the death of Biko commenced, and though Woods was banned from it, the book provides a detailed account of the thirteen day trial, along with the finding.

The decision of the trial was as follows:

1. That "the deceased was Bantu Stephen Biko, a black man aged 30, that he died on September 12 and that the cause of death was brain injury which led to renal failure and other complications."
2. That "the head injuries were probably sustained on September 7 in a scuffle in the Security Police offices in Port Elizabeth."

3. That “on the available evidence the death cannot be attributed to any act or omission amounting to a criminal offence on the part of any person.”

(261)

The inquest was thus over and no one was ever held responsible for Biko’s death, and for this reason, Woods concludes that “it becomes necessary to indict the State” who, in this case, was “the minority regime that has ruled South Africa for thirty years, with ever increasing contempt for democratic values and with ever growing arrogance toward all who hold such values to be paramount” (262).

In 1978, a Miss Gey van Pittius from the University of South Africa sent in a request to the Director of Publications, asking that she be allowed to import and possess the publication *Biko*, due to the fact that she was, at the time, busy conducting research for her doctorate in Politics on the “politics behind the meaning of Black consciousness in South Africa” (“*politieke betekenis van Swart bewustheid in Suid-Afrika*”) (Van Pittius 1). She felt that in the book, “Woods may have information on Steve Biko’s views on Black consciousness” (“*mnr Woods moontlik beskik oor inligting oor Steve Biko se opvattinge oor Swart bewustheid*”) which would help with her research (Van Pittius 1). However, the Board found the publication to be undesirable in terms of Section 47(2)(b), (d) and (e) and further installed the Section 9(3) ban.

Following the request of Van Pittius, the Board went on to examine the publication more carefully. Referencing the banning of Donald Woods himself, deputy Chairman of the Publications Appeal Board, Mr J.C. van Rooyen – ie. the same Kobus van Rooyen who has recently published *A South African Censor’s Tale* (2011), in which he presents himself as a well-intentioned liberal whose goal was to give “liberty to the disenfranchised majority to write, agitate for and read about a future unitary and democratic state” (Van Rooyen *A South African Censor’s Tale*, 62) – reported the findings of the Board, which included his own opinions in his capacity as deputy Chairman. The report begins by stating that “Donald Woods’ containment order prevented him from writing or publishing anything” (“*Donald Woods se inperkingsbevel hom verbied om enigiets te skryf of publiseer*”) and that this specific restriction still applied at the time, even though he was no longer in the country, and this meant that he was breaking the rules of his order (“*hy die wet verbreek het deur sy*

inperkingsbevel") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). At this time, Van Rooyen was not yet chairman of the Publications Appeal Board, a position to which he was appointed on 3 October 1979 (Van Rooyen *A South African Censor's Tale* 58). Stating the fact that Woods was a banned person was all that was needed in order to ban the book, but Van Rooyen and the Board went further in their critique of Wood's book. Pointing out that Biko's post-mortem investigation "was now complete" ("*dat dit voltooi is*"), they defended the apartheid regime by stating that "no prosecution had taken place" ("*[g]een vervolging het uit die verslag voortgevoel nie*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). In terms of Section 47(2)(e) of the Publications Act of 1974, Van Rooyen stated that "the book is detrimental to the peace and good order and safety of the State," ("*[d]ie boek is nadelig vir die vrede en goeieorde en die veiligheid van die Staat*") as it uses "exaggeration, untruths and one sided opinion" ("*oordrywing [...] onwaarhede [...] eensydigheid*") to create false ideas (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). He reported that he and the Board were concerned about the depiction of the Safety Police who were, "accused of the torture of the prisoners" ("*beskuldig van die marteling van gevangenes*") and of a "conspiracy to withhold evidence" ("*sameswering om getuienis te weerhou*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). Van Rooyen and the Board found many examples in the book where the police were "unfairly attacked" ("*onregverdig aangeval*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127), including a few in their report, such as when Woods accuses two members of the Safety police for sending a t-shirt saturated in corrosive acid as a gift to his daughter, and when he accused two other members for firing shots at his house, eventually stating that the "evidence was handed to the regular police but it was soon clear that they would take no action against their colleagues in the political sector of the force" (Woods 12). Woods spoke of "a large number of physical threats [that he] and [his] family had been receiving from Security Police or right-wing cranks" (170), yet the Board stated that "there was no proof of this charge" ("*is daar geen bewys vir hierdie aanklag nie*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). In fact, they went so far as to state that "the book contains numerous unsubstantiated allegations of torture by the police" ("*[d]ie boek bevat talle ongestaafde bewerings van marteling deur die polisie*"), the most problematic contained in the Chapter entitled "In Memoriam," where Woods states that "[t]he following South Africans are known to have died in detention in the hands of the Nationalist government's Security Police," and goes on to say that "[t]he causes of death alleged by the Security Police are given in brackets" (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). The Board states that Woods actually made up these "alleged" deaths (Van

Rooyen P78/4/127). This, together with Woods' declaration that "[t]he Fifth commandment, "You shall not kill," is contravened not only by the most obvious instances of political killing – such as in the case of Steve Biko and forty-four other detainees," (Woods 268) led to Van Rooyen stating that "the Board cannot fail to conclude that Mr Woods produces a number of deliberate lies" ("*[d]ie Komitee kan nie anders as tot die gevolgtrekking kom dat mnr. Woods hierbo 'n aantal opsetlike leuens verkondig het nie*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). The Board further called attention to the cover of the book, which used the words "torture and beating," "gruesome torture and killing of Biko" and "a monstrous system and its Gestapo tactics" (Woods cover), calling these statements "a sort of propaganda" ("*soort van propaganda*") that is purely used for advertising the product (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). A further concern of the Board was the number of citations used from people, other than Biko and Woods, who were banned or detained and were consequently not allowed to be quoted, such as Nelson Mandela ("*n aantal aanhalings van persone wat gelys is, aangehou is, of ingeperk in en gevolglik nie aangehaal mag word nie*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). In addition, the censorship report states that a large part of this book promotes "communism, the ANC, violence, revolution and terrorism" ("*kommunisme, die ANC, geweld, rewolusie en terrorisme*"), such as a speech by Mandela which "defends the communist support for the ANC" ("*verdediging van kommunistiese steun vir die ANC*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). The Board found that both Mandela's and Biko's speeches speak about the use of "violence and sabotage" ("*geweld en sabotasie*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). The report additionally stated that there were many other sections of the book which were "detrimental, to a larger or smaller degree, to the peace and good order of the safety of the State" ("*nadelig, tot groter of kleiner mate, vir die vrede en goeie orde of die veiligheid van die Staat is*"), such as the "distorted version of events that took place in the previous year's Transvaal Congress of the National Party where Minister Kruger [...] was accused of lies" ("*verdraaide weergewe van gebeure op verlede jaar se Traansvaalse Kongres van die Nasionale Party gegee, en word Min. Kruger [...] van leuens beskuldig*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). Woods goes on to make what the censors called "unsubstantiated allegations" ("*ongestaafde bewering*") (Van Rooyen P78/4/127) about Minister Vorster and Minister Kruger when he stated that they "have on several occasions by their words lent encouragement to excesses by white extremists, who mysteriously have access to teargas canisters and unlisted telephone numbers" (Woods 171). Van Rooyen refers to an "offensive comparison" ("*aanstootlike*

vergelyking”) that Woods makes when he states that “[h]aving to wear a yellow armband and having to die in a gas-chamber at Auschwitz were but two links in the same chain ... Having to carry a ‘pass’ and having to die of assault in detention are similarly two links of the same chain” (264). It is then stated that the last chapter titled “The Indictment” is “shrill, over-emotional, [and] twisted” (*“skril, oor-emosioneel, verdraaid”*) (Van Rooyen P78/4/127) and harms the depiction of South Africa, which “could explode into total racial war at any time”, by comparing the “tyranny of apartheid” (Woods 271, 273) with the tyranny of “Genghis Khan, Attila [and] Hitler” (Van Rooyen P78/4/127).

With regard to Section 47(2)(d) of the Act, the Board decided that the above-quoted examples were “harmful to the relationship between Black and White populations in the Republic” (*“skadelik vir die betrekkinge tussen die Swart en Wit bevolkingsgroepe van die Republiek”*), as the black man is portrayed as the “downtrodden, aggrieved and oppressed victim of torture, coercion and brutality” (*“vertrapte, die verontegte en die onderdrukte voorgestel, die slagoffer van marteling, dwang en brutaliteit”*) (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). The fact that groups such as the ANC, PAC and Black Peoples Convention are “justified or approved of” (*“goedgepraat of met goedkeuring aangehaal”*) was raised, along with the fact that “racial war is predicted and polarization between Black and White is awakened” (*“[r]asse-oorlog word voorspel en polarisasie tussen Swart en Wit aangewakker”*) (Van Rooyen P78/4/127).

The report also concluded that in terms of Section 47(2)(b) of the Act of 1974, the book published “material which is offensive to the feelings and beliefs of many Christians” (*“stof wat aanstootlik vir die gevoelens en oortuigings van menige Christene sal wees”*) as it promotes “adultery, theft and [giving] false evidence as part of their lifestyles” (*“owerspel, diefstal en valse getuienis deel van hulle leefwyse maak”*) and that Woods “misuses the Ten Commandments,” presenting them in a “highly distorted manner” (*“misbruik Woods die Tien Gebooie deur hulle op ‘n uiters verdraaide manier”*) (Van Rooyen P78/4/127).

With regards to Section 9(3), Van Rooyen’s report claimed that not only are “significant portions of the book undesirable, but radically undesirable” (*“[a]nsienlike gedeeltes van die boek is nie net ongewens nie, maar ook radikaal ongewens”*), such as the illegal statements by various listed and detained people (*“die boek bevat onwettige*

verklarings [...] deur gelyste en ingeperkte persone”), the “deliberately false statements about the various deaths in custody” (“*[o]psetlike onwaarhede oor sterftes tydens aanhouding*”), and the obvious fact that many parts of the book “promote the objectives of Communism and underground activity” (“*[d]ele van die boek bevorder beslis die oogmerke van Kommuniste en ondergrondse aktiwiteite*”) (Van Rooyen P78/4/127). According to the censors, the above-mentioned factors required that possession of the book be undesirable too, (“*[d]ie bogenoemde faktore maak ook die besit van die boek ongewens*”) due to the fact that mere possession of the publication will “make it easier for the illegal, false and revolutionary content to spread” (“*maak om makliker die onwettige, valse en rewolusionêre stof daarin in ‘n ander vorm to versprei*”) (Van Rooyen P78/4/127).

What is incredibly ironic here, is that Van Rooyen was exceptionally unsympathetic in his response towards the death of Biko and towards the attacks and threats that Woods and his family suffered, claiming that Woods had fabricated the truth of these – yet in his new book *A South African Censor’s Tale*, Van Rooyen tries to gain sympathy and is even painted in a heroic light (by himself and by writers such as André Brink) for the so-called “pains” that he and his family suffered at the hand of “rightwing elements” after the Appeal Board’s decision regarding the film *Cry Freedom*, which as stated above, was actually based on Woods’ book *Biko* (Van Rooyen, *A South African Censor’s Tale*, 131). In his book, it is claimed that Van Rooyen would “read the situation lucidly and with a level head” when making a decision regarding the banning of publications (12). Yet, as seen above, in fact he accused Woods of fabricating stories about the murder of the detainees in prison, and goes on to say that Woods was using propaganda when referring to the murder of Biko, responses which seem to be anything but level headed. In his book, Van Rooyen claims to be an enlightened censor who changed the face of apartheid-era censorship; however in his report on the book *Biko*, he continuously denies the obvious truths of the horrors of the apartheid regime.

Due to the fact that the Committee is not inclined to release a book under a Section 9(3) ban to individuals, it comes as no surprise that Gey van Pittius was denied access to Woods’ book, although in his response, Reginald Lighton, signing as/for the Director of Publications, stated that the UNISA library should apply to possess the publication, which should be kept “behind bars”, so that the library may be able to keep its access under

control (“[d]aar word aan die hand gedoen dat UNISA se biblioteek aansoek doen om hierdie publikasie te mag besit [...] moet dan onder die normale voorwaardes agter slot en grendel gehou word [...] die publikasie [...] onder kontrole in die biblioteek te mad raadpleeg”) (Lighton P78/8/03).

Later that same year, there was another request that the book by Woods be made available for academic purposes. A certain Mr O.D. Hart returned from a trip to Australia and went to declare the book at South African customs, where it was then embargoed. He later received a letter from the Controller of Customs and Excise informing him that the book had in fact been banned in South Africa, and that he should request the release thereof from the Director of Publications. Hart thus sent a letter to the Director of Publications, requesting that the book be released to him as he was “a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Law Societies of South Africa,” and that the Association was “in the process of compiling facts and figures so as to make representations [...] in respect of security legislation and the deaths of persons held in detention,” and that he believed that “the book will be useful in the research on this subject” (Hart P78/10/28). Mr Hart was informed, again by Reginald Lighton, that the publication had indeed been declared undesirable under Section 47(2)(b), (d) and (e), as well as Section 9(3) of the Publications Act of 1974, and that he should thus “make representations to the Natal Society (Legal Deposit) Library, Pietermaritzburg, for the Librarian to apply for a permit to possess the said book” where it will then be kept “under lock and key” and “be subject to the prescribed conditions” (Lighton P78/10/28). Hart responded to this reply, requesting a “special exemption to enable [him] to have possession of the book because it is important that the book should be circulated amongst those members of the committee [...] who are considering the matters referred to” (Hart P78/10/28). He further informed the Director of Publications that “it will be very difficult to consider the contents of this book unless [we] are able to remove the book and read it at [our] leisure” (Hart P78/10/28). Lighton responded that “special exemption to enable [Hart] to possess a possession-prohibited publication cannot be granted” and that he should therefore approach one of the respective “legal deposit libraries” in the country and “submit their credentials for due consideration” (Lighton P78/10/28). It was thus clear that Hart would not be granted possession of his book and he then replied to Lighton, stating that the “position which you outline to me is useless

for the purposes which I require the book and in the circumstances I do not wish to take this matter any further” (Hart P78/10/28).

Interestingly, Lighton was the same censor who wrote a report on J.M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* two years later, deeming it to be “not undesirable” with the justification that it was not set in South Africa and could thus not be taken to be a direct commentary on the South African situation (McDonald, 314). Though set in a small marginal settlement on the periphery of an unspecified Empire, Coetzee began writing *Waiting for the Barbarians* a few weeks after the death of Biko, and the novel clearly references torture and deaths in detention.

Finally, twelve years later in 1990, *Biko* was resubmitted for consideration. Mr J.P. Jansen stated, on behalf of the Board, that the book had been written 12 years ago, “shortly after the death of Steve Biko” (“*kort na die dood van Steve Biko*”) when the various events were still under consideration (Jansen P90/02/12). However, at this time they found that the book contained historical value (“*historiese waarde*”) and that under the current political climate, “the safety of the State will not be threatened” (“*die veiligheid van die Staat bedreig nie*”) (Jansen P90/02/12). Furthermore, it was noted that the film *Cry Freedom*, which was not banned (see discussion below), was based on the events in the book and that the “visual representation [of events] will have a much bigger impact than the written word” (“*n visuele voorstelling ‘n baie groter impak as die geskrewe word*”) (Jansen P90/02/12). Jansen wrote that “although the law, the police and especially the safety police were portrayed in a negative manner, it is no worse than the film,” (“*[h]oewel die gereg, die polisie en veral die veiligheidspolisie in ‘n slegte lig gestel word, is dit nie erger as wat dit in die film is nie*”) and that “certain decisions of the Appeal Board suggest that it is not obviously undesirable” (“*sekere beslissings van die Appellaad dui daarop dat dit nie as vanselfsprekend ongewens is nie*”) and it was found that, “under the current conditions, the book is not a threat to the safety, nor the general welfare and good order of the State” (“*nie ‘n bedreiging is vir die veiligheid van die Staat, die algemene welsyn en die goeie orde nie*”) (Jansen P90/02/12). The Committee therefore came to the conclusion that, due to Section 15(2) of the Act on review, the publication was not undesirable under of Section 47(2) of the Act and that the Section 9(3) ban was no longer applicable, thus allowing dissemination of Woods’ book to commence in South Africa.

Cry Freedom

In 1987 the film adaptation of Woods' book was released. *Cry Freedom*, directed by Richard Attenborough with the screenplay written by John Briley, and starring Hollywood heavyweights Denzel Washington as Steve Biko and Kevin Kline as Donald Woods, premiered as a limited release film in the United States and the United Kingdom in November of that year. The film received three Academy Award nominations (including 'Best Actor in a Supporting Role' for Denzel Washington) and four Golden Globe nominations (including 'Best Motion Picture – Drama' and 'Best Director' for Attenborough). Before it even reached South Africa, the film was highly acclaimed, with the *New York Times* saying that "it can be appreciated for what it tries to communicate about heroism, loyalty and leadership, about the horrors of apartheid, about the martyrdom of a rare man" (Maslin online). It went on to be released in various countries around the world, including Germany, Australia and France to more positive reviews. It was only in South Africa that its pending release created a stir since the plot of the film was based on the banned novel by Woods. In fact, the film had to be shot in the neighbouring countries of Zimbabwe and Kenya due to the political situation in South Africa at the time. The film's screenplay was later released as a book, also under the title *Cry Freedom* (1987), by John Briley.

The release of the film in South Africa followed a particularly interesting trajectory, reminiscent of that of Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers*. Because of its acclaim overseas, by the time the film came to the attention of the South African apartheid censors in late November 1987, the censors were under some pressure to deal with it in a way that reflected well on South Africa internationally. After investigation, the film received "unconditional approval" by the Board (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151), a contradictory decision, since the censors had banned Woods' book on which the film was based, though this banning had taken place almost a decade before. They stated that because "[t]he film is set in the 1970s" and that "Biko's ideas have since lost favour with blacks," together with the fact that the "facts of his trial are known to black and whites and was widely [publicised] in all the newspapers," *Cry Freedom* would not be a threat to the state (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). The Board felt that giving this film "unconditional approval [...] despite its one-sided view point" would show the public that "South Africa is politically mature, unbiased and fair by allowing all points of view for public screening," indicating that the Board were aware of the films'

reception internationally (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). The Board noted that the fact that “the forces of law and order are depicted as unfeeling, inhuman and brutal” was of no consequence as it is “a concept that is generally expressed in many films and the press generally from all over the world” (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). They further noted the scenes of violence, and stated that while they do have an “emotive force,” they are of “limited duration” and the “probable viewer would see the events in perspective” and thus “would not be offended by the scenes as portrayed” (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). The report noted that the film focused more on the character of Woods and not on Biko, a fact that they deemed would leave the black viewers unsatisfied as “[t]he black people live with intimidation and violence on a daily basis – the scenes of violence shown are everyday facts of life to them – in fact, they would criticise the fact that so much exposure is given to Woods despite his sympathy for their cause” (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). They ultimately felt that the film “is not detrimental to the safety of the state” nor to “the peace and good order,” but that it would actually “[improve] race relations” (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). The Board added that by screening the film, they would help create “a climate of hope, openness, tolerance and subjectivity in the minds of the world outside South Africa”; once again indicating their awareness to the way the South African government would be perceived internationally (Van der Westhuizen P87/10/151). The film’s status as “unconditionally approved” thus went through.

Thus, on 1 December 1987, the distributor of the film, United International Pictures (U.I.P.) was able to commence with advertising and marketing for the film which they planned to screen in April 1988. Subsequent to this decision, the Board received letters of protest, a few of which are particularly noteworthy. One such letter was from Mr Paul Rhodes from California in the United States of America, in which he warns the government against finding the film “not undesirable”, as he believes that the effects of showing such a film in the country would have disastrous effects (Rhodes 1). Rhodes stated that he would like to “commend the people of South Africa for their courage for not allowing themselves to be shoved around” by foreign views and for taking a stand (Rhodes 1). Another letter received from a South African named James Robert Delpont offered another opinion. Delpont stated that: “I am not alone in voicing [a] very strong objection to the showing of this film, and [the] continued evident support and sympathies of Producer Attenborough for the A.N.C. and enemies of our country and government” (1). Delpont went on to accuse

Attenborough of financial “self-interest,” and that it disregarded “the suffering caused by deaths and losses inflicted on innocent people of all nationalities in South Africa by traitors and terrorists” (Delpont 1). Delpont requested that the Board “refuse permission for the film [...] to be shown” and that they “refuse Attenborough re-entry into our country” (Delpont 2).

Due to such letters, the decision went to the Publications Appeal Board. Prof. J.C van Rooyen, on behalf of the PAB, stated that members of the Board “were in agreement” with the previous decision, and found the film “not undesirable” (Van Rooyen P93/88). It was stated that *Cry Freedom* was “not harmful in terms of section 47(2) of the Publications Act” and that “[i]f the passing of the film does indeed have the incidental benefit of improving race-relations, this would be most pleasing,” but is not the main aim (Van Rooyen P93/88). The Board stated that the fact that Woods was a “listed person under the Internal Security Act [of] 1982,” together with the fact that his book was banned in South Africa at this time meant that the Board would have to examine the dialogue of the film (Van Rooyen P93/88). Yet it was found that within the film’s context, “nothing said by the character, Donald Woods, is of such a nature that it might be regarded as an incitement to racial hatred, violence, civil disobedience, and the like” and it was decided that he was actually depicted “as the hero in the film, [and] he is portrayed as an advocate of non-violent political change” (Van Rooyen P93/88). They decided that, due to the film’s nature, audiences would view it as an “adventure-story” and that they would “find the film’s heavy accent on the actions of Woods, who becomes the hero of the film, questionable or even deplorable in the light of his real role in relation to that of Biko, who, in the eyes of many, is something of a martyr-figure,” which would thus probably “neutralize emotions which might otherwise have arisen” from the screening of this film (Van Rooyen P93/88). The Board were however, wary of the depiction of the South African Security Police and the “ordinary police” who were depicted as “rather stupid, brutal, and generally despicable,” but decided that these depictions were extremely “blatant caricatures” and will thus have an “effect of reducing the impact which these scenes might otherwise have had” (Van Rooyen P93/88). They thus were of the opinion that “contrary to the film’s introduction that the “characters are real and the events are true” these characters are in truth somewhat unreal”, and that “even a foreigner would realise, or at least suspect the extent of this bias and “over-kill”” (Van Rooyen P93/88). Transforming themselves into film critics, while the members of the PAB acknowledged that there were some scenes in the film that were slightly problematic and

that depicted police brutality, they found that the “camera-technique employed by the director is, for the most part, objective” meaning that “viewer-identification with what is portrayed on the screen is greatly reduced or neutralized” as this particular “filming technique would have the effect of distancing the viewer from the events, rather than directly involving” them (Van Rooyen P93/88). In fact, the Board stated that such scenes amount to “blatant sensationalism” and lead to “questions as to whether the producer has not abused the film medium,” thus rendering these scenes to be “counter-productive, if they were ever calculated to evoke revolutionary ideas in the minds of viewers” (Van Rooyen P93/88). They thus decided that these scenes would “lead to reflection, discussion and questioning and not to actions which might be prejudicial to the security of the state, or harmful to race relations” (Van Rooyen P93/88). Van Rooyen stated that while the film presented an “obviously slanted, one-sided and biased [view] against the existing South African political system,” it must be accepted that “[h]arsh criticism of the existing government is, in any case, a typical feature of the SA political scene” (Van Rooyen P93/88). The PAB further found that the “inter-racial friendship which develops between Biko and Woods” was a favourable aspect of the film (Van Rooyen P93/88). Furthermore, the fact that the film was “principally” filmed in Zimbabwe and Kenya “emphasises that the film is essentially a dramatisation, which always leaves room for inaccuracies and flaws,” together with the fact that it “lasts two and a half hours” and is “slow-moving” with “rather boring action,” the film will thus “tend to draw the more determined viewer” (Van Rooyen P93/88). The Board thus decided that the film was “not undesirable.” However, due to the fact that they felt that the “theme” in the film is “an adult one” and therefore requires a viewer who is “more experienced,” they decided to install an age restriction (Van Rooyen P93/88). They determined that “[a]s the attitude nowadays tends to be that 19 is the age of emancipation,” it would be a suitable age restriction for the film (Van Rooyen P93/88). *Cry Freedom* was thus allowed to be screened “in any theatre or cinema in the Republic of South Africa” under an age restriction of “2-19” (Van Rooyen P93/88).

However, letters of outrage continued to be sent to the Director of Publications, but these were not the only examples of protest against the screening of the film, as the state began to receive threats to bomb cinemas that planned on screening the film. Consequently, “the police, the true agents of government, seized the film, claiming that they only had the public’s safety in mind” (Van Zyl 9). Thus despite the apartheid censors’

decision that the film was “not undesirable”, *Cry Freedom* was removed from circuit. However, what was eventually revealed was that “state security was responsible for the terror marring the South African premiere of *Cry Freedom*” (Van Zyl 9), which recalls the ways in which right wing terrorists (though not acting as state agents) attempted to stop the screening of *Battle of Algiers* in France.

In *A South African Censor's Tale*, Van Rooyen seems to take credit for the passing of *Cry Freedom*, though it is not obvious from the above that he was solely responsible for this. Even before the film reached the Publications Appeal Board, it was deemed to be “not undesirable” and it was, in fact, the PAB, under Van Rooyen’s chairmanship, who decided to place an age restriction on the film. Also, as mentioned above, it was Van Rooyen who was responsible for the banning of Woods’ book *Biko*, upon which this film was based, thus forcing us to question how much information Van Rooyen himself is censoring in his book, *A South African Censor's Tale*.

***Cry Freedom* by John Briley**

In 1987, shortly after its initial release, the book *Cry Freedom* by John Briley was brought to the attention of the South African censors by the Controller of Customs and Excise. The book, based on the original screenplay by Briley himself, was found by the censors to be exactly the same as the film, but merely in novel form (“*indien die film met hierdie boek vergelyk word is duidelik dat die boek slegs ‘n verwerking van die draaiboek in novelleform is*”) (Smit P87/12/108). The censorship board stated that “in order to determine who the likely reader of this publication will be simply by looking at the content and nature of the publication itself will be extremely difficult” (“*[o]m te probeer bepaal wie die waarskynlike leserskring van hierdie publikasie sal uitmaak deur bloot te let op die inhoud en aard van die publikasie self, is uiters moeilik*”) (Smit P87/12/108). They found that “the “political” content of the book has little to do with the life of any South Africans,” and thus “it will not be the ‘political’ content that pulls in significant numbers of readers” (“*[d]ie “politieke” inhoud van die boek het weinig om die lyf vir enige Suid-Afrikaner en dit sal nie om sy “politieke” inhoud enige noemenswaardige getalle lesers trek nie*”) (Smit P87/12/108). Furthermore, they found it “doubtful that the publication will bring in a significant number of readers of followers of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement” as “there is little about Biko and

his view on life” in the book (“[d]it is te betwyfel of die publikasie enige noemenswaardige getalle lesers onder “aanhangers” van Biko en Swartbewustheidsbeweging sal geniet (...) omdat hier weinig van Biko en sy lewensuitkyk in die publikasie tereg kom”) (Smit P87/12/108). The board concluded that “the only actual reason that the publication will be read by South Africans is due to the publicity around the film “Cry Freedom”” (“[d]ie enigste werklike rede waarom die publikasie deur Suid-Afrikaners gelees sal word is vanwêe die publisiteit rondom die film “Cry Freedom””), and that,

in all probability the publication will be read by people, black and white, with an interest in the extra-parliamentary politics in the Republic of South Africa, but were not themselves active or engaged in and do not themselves have ‘first-hand’ knowledge of the different extra-parliamentary political trends in the Republic of South Africa (“[n]a alle waarskynlikheid sal die publikasie gelees word deur persone, swart sowel as wit, met ‘n belangstelling in die buite-parlementere politiek in die RSA, maar wat nie self aktief daarin betrokke is nie en nie self “eerstehandse” kennis van die verskillende buite-parlementere politieke strominge in die RSA het nie”) (Smit P87/12/108).

The censors stated that the book “contains no political message for the readers” (“dit geen politieke boodskap aan lesers bevat nie”), but is “merely a critique of the current political system in the Republic of South Africa and a portrayal of how the system influenced a person such as Woods” (“is bloot ‘n kritiek op die huidige politieke stelsel in die RSA en ‘n uitbedeeling hoe die stelsel ‘n person soos Woods beïnvloed het”) (Smit P87/12/108). They were satisfied that the “publication does not propagate the ideology of Black Consciousness as such” (“publikasie propageer nie die ideologie van Swartbewustheid as sodanig nie”), and also that “violence and revolution are not directly or indirectly propagated in the publication as a “solution” for the social and political “problems” in the Republic South Africa” (“geweld en rewolusie nie direk of indirek in die publikasie gepropageer as “oplossing” vir die RSA se sosiale en politiek “probleme” nie”) (Smit P87/12/108). Smit stated that the only message that can be found in the publication is the following: “that Blacks are suppressed under the current political and social system in the Republic of South Africa, and in order to escape this blacks must learn to rely on themselves, that whites must show more interest in the blacks views and ideals, and whites must become more actively involved in blacks social and political problems” (“Swartes word onderdruk deur die huidige politieke en sosiale stelsel in die RSA, om dit te ontkom, moet swartes leer om op hulleself staat te maak, moet wittes meer belangstelling toon in swartes se beskouinge en ideale, moet wittes meet aktief betrokke raak by swartes se sosiale en politieke probleme”) (Smit P87/12/108). The decision

was thus that the “political impact that this book will have on readers in the Republic of South Africa is so small” (“*sal die politieke impak van hierdie boek op lesers in die RSA so gering wees dat nie enige van die belange wat deur art. 47(2) beskerm wil word in gedrang sal kom nie*”) that no banning in terms of Section 47(2) of the Publications Act is necessary, and the book was thus declared “not undesirable” (Smit P87/12/108).

No. 46 – Steve Biko

No. 46 – Steve Biko (1978) by Hilda Bernstein was yet another book that aimed to expose the truth behind the life and death of Steve Biko. The title is based on the fact that Biko was the “forty-sixth political detainee known to have died under interrogation by the security police in South Africa since the first ‘no-trial’ detention laws were introduced in 1963” (Bernstein 5). The deaths of the other forty-five went by almost unnoticed, with the reasons varying between “suicide by hanging,” “natural causes,” “slipped in shower,” “fell seven floors during interrogation” and “fell down stairwell” (Woods 6-7). As is the case with *Biko* by Donald Woods, Bernstein gives a detailed account of the life of Biko, along with the details of the inquest, trial and the subsequent decision. However, in her book, Bernstein gives a far more detailed exposition of the numerous discrepancies which surrounded the case. In it, she reports the various statements given by Minister Kruger, stating that Biko began refusing his meals on 5 September, and that surgeons and doctors had been called in on various occasions to examine Biko but could find nothing wrong, eventually deciding to send him to Pretoria for examination before his death (Bernstein 19). Along with the alarm bells raised by Donald Woods was the fact that, according to Kruger, the so-called “hunger strike” lasted only six days, and with Biko being a man of “good health and normal weight (Biko was, in fact, overweight),” the result being death would be nothing short of phenomenal (20). Furthermore, if there was nothing physically wrong with Biko, one must wonder why so many doctors had to examine him and decided that he should be sent to Pretoria for further examination (20). Possibly the most interesting part of this book is the chapter entitled “Unanswered Questions,” wherein Bernstein points out that the various areas of the Biko Inquest that were unresolved. The first issue was that of the hunger strike cover-up story and the question as to where it came from. While Mr Kruger was not called as a witness in the trial, Colonel Goosen of the Security Police who was involved in Biko’s

interrogation stated that he had never told his superiors that Biko was threatening a hunger strike and “did not know on what the Minister based his statements” (119). However, when Kruger made his public statements, he was already in possession of the pathology reports from the post-mortem which stated that “it was clear Biko had suffered extensive brain damage” yet he failed to report any such detail, and as more information was revealed, Kruger took to denying ever stating that Biko had died from hunger strike (119). However, no explanation was ever offered as to where this lie ever came from and why it had occurred.

The next question dealt with the fact that Biko was left naked and chained. When questioned about this, Goosen stated that due to the pattern of suicide among the detainees, “everything with which detainees could hurt themselves, including clothes, were taken away” and, along with the other police officers questioned, failed to recognise the humiliation and dehumanising factor linked with this behaviour, reducing Biko “to the status of the dependant infant, incontinent, incoherent” (122). There was also the question of the journey to Pretoria rather than sending him to a nearby hospital in Port Elizabeth if medical assistance was necessary. However, doing this would mean that there would be a risk that the news of the state of Biko may be leaked, and why he was sent to Pretoria, without any medical records, naked and chained in the back of a van, to a prison “where the security police were experts at concealing the truth about detainees’ deaths” (124). All of these questions and more, even after a trial and a verdict, remained unanswered and were simply accepted for what they were. It did in fact seem that “[f]rom the time that Steve Biko entered room 619 in the Sanlam Buildings, his destiny was sealed” as the system that was in place favoured those in power, ensuring that regardless of the situation, it was they who would always ultimately be protected (135).

Unsurprisingly then, in 1978 this book was brought to the immediate attention of the apartheid censors. A Mr Hickman reported on behalf of the censors, stating that in the book, “the white man is portrayed as the oppressor and the black man as the oppressed” (“*[d]ie Blanke word uitgebeeld as die verdrukker [...] en die Swartman as die verdrukte*”) and that there is “not one part of the publication that depicts a positive relationship between the white and black man (“*[n]êrens is daar enige positiewe nooit in die publikasie wat betref die verhouding tussen blanke en Swartman nie*”) (Hickman P78/5/81). The Board found that

the book gives “a merciless attack on the police, accusing them, among other things” (“*n genadelose aanval op die polisie deur hulle te beskuldig inter alie van*”) of “cruelty and [the] torturing of people” (“*wreedheid en marteling van mense*”), of “dishonesty” (“*oneerlikheid*”), “malicious prosecution” (“*kwaadwillige vervolging*”) and “mass murder” (“*massamoord*”), for example in the Soweto and Sharpeville “massacres” (Hickman P78/5/81). Furthermore, according to the censors the book discredits the courts when stating that Mr Prins, the magistrate involved in the autopsy did not care about the case (“*gesê dat hy glad nie omgee het nie*”) and that the courts are involved in the so-called corruption (“*die howe deel is van die sogenaamde korrupsie*”) (Hickman P78/5/81). The censors further decided that the publication was “detrimental to the safety of the State” (“*nadelig vir die veiligheid van die staat*”), as well as for the “conservation of peace and discipline” (“*behoud van vrede en orde*”) due to the depiction of the Safety Police and the Courts (Hickman P78/5/81). For these reasons, the publication was found ‘undesirable’ in terms of Section 47(2)(d) and (e) of the Publications Act of 1974, and was additionally given a Section 9(3) ban.

In 1990 the publication was resubmitted for dissemination approval, and a Mr J Fourie provided the reasoning for the Board’s decision. He stated that this is “a disturbing book about an event that caused waves internationally in 1977” (“*n ontstellende boek oor ’n gebeurtenis wat in 1977 internasionale opslae veroorsaak het*”), but that it will undoubtedly have a “wider readership in South Africa because Steve Biko was one of the most famous Black activists of that time (“*die boek in S.A. ’n wye lesertal sal geniet aangesien Steve Biko een van die bekendste Swart aktiviste van daardie tye was*”) (Fourie P90/04/61). The Board stated that the book was factually based, and that Bernstein makes “no secret of her aversion to the apartheid system” (“*geen geheim van haar afkeer van die apartheidstelsel*”) or her feelings about the Safety Police, the medical system and the legal system at that time, stating that “[t]he courts remain, but there is no rule of law. The security police are totally above the law. There are no laws nor rules of conduct to which they adhere; there is no court to which, ultimately, they must be answerable” (Fourie P90/04/61; Bernstein 134). It was stated that “in a time where traditional views are being questioned and the South African citizen is confronted with change and development on a daily basis, the committee believes that a publication of this nature will not endanger the

authority or good order” (*“[i]n ‘n tydperk waarin tradisionele opvattinge bevestigings word en veranderende ontwikkelings byna daaglik die S.A. burger konfronteer, is die komitee van oordeel die ‘n publikasie van hierdie aard nie die gesag of goeie orde in gevaar sal stel nie”*), and that “to ban this publication would mean that the Committee is denying their own history” (*“[o]m hierdie publikasie te verbied sal beteken dat die komitee ons eie geskiedenis misken”*) (Fourie P90/04/61). The Board added that the content of the book can be seen in the film *Cry Freedom*, and that the “visual effect of the film is much more powerful on the likely viewer than the effect of this publication on the likely reader” (*“die visuele effek van die film heelwat kragtiger op ‘n waarskynlike kyker sal inwerk as wat die effek van hierdie publikasie op ‘n waarskynlike leser sal wees”*) (Fourie P90/04/61). Ultimately, they found that the book is merely a fierce critique of a system that, thirteen years earlier, treated a large part of our population unjustly (*“heftige kritiek teen ‘n stelsel van 13 jaar gelede wat deur groot gedeeltes van ons bevolking vandag as onregverdig beskou word”*) and that by this stage, it should be something that we should take notice of (*“‘n standpunt waarvan kennis geneem moet word”*) (Fourie P90/04/61). For these reasons, together with the uplifting of various laws, the Board decided that the publication was “not undesirable” and that dissemination could take place.

“A Miserable and Lonely Death”

While the details of the Biko Inquest are given above, it can be noted that there was a vast amount of interest surrounding the facts of the case, not only locally but internationally too. On 5 February 1978, the Royal Shakespeare Company put on a play at Warehouse Theatre in England under the title, “A Miserable and Lonely Death,” and over a year later, on 25 March 1979, the Company performed “The Biko Inquest” at the Newcastle Playhouse in the United Kingdom. Both plays had exactly the same script and were based on the events that took place in the court room during the Biko Inquest; the first simply had a less obvious title in order to avoid attracting political attention. The play was written by Norman Fenton and the award winning director and producer Jon Blair (who was himself a “refugee from South Africa”), by using “secretly obtained transcripts” of the actual hearing itself, and was initially written to be a television documentary before adapting it for the stage (Simon 84). The transcripts were published by Rex Collings Ltd., a London based company, and it was actually these transcripts rather than the play itself that caught the attention of the South

African censors. The play was successful worldwide, receiving much critical acclaim and was said to have been “directed tautly, unhistrionically, compellingly by its authors in appropriately drab trappings, and it is acted shingly by a cast of eleven,” thoroughly depicting how “[b]rutality, cruelty, and, above all, stupidity unite in the cause of political necessity, which is, in turn, made up of fear, self-interest, near-sightedness, and abysmal stupidity” (Simon 84). In 1984 a television adaptation of the theatre production was made and directed by Albert Finney, who also played the role of Sidney Kentridge, the lawyer representing the Biko family. The film originally aired on 1 November 1984 in the United Kingdom and in 1985 it aired in the United States of America. On 12 January 1986 it was re-released in the United Kingdom after being removed from the air for over a year and in 1987, Albert Finney was nominated for an ACE award for his role in the film under the “Actor in a Theatrical or Dramatic Special” category (IMDb).

In 1978, the text based on the British play “A Miserable and Lonely Death” came to the attention of the South African censors and was immediately red flagged and found undesirable in terms of Sections 47(2)(c) and (e) of the Publications Act of 1974. With regards to Section 47(2)(e), the Board’s attention was drawn to the foreword by Donald and Wendy Woods, which stated that:

Steve Biko was feared by the white regime. He stood for the realisation of the full humanity of his people. So they called him a subversive – a dangerous man. And so they detained him, they tortured him, and they killed him. And even in death they tried to smear him.

(Du Toit P78/5/214)

It was noted that the quoted words by Donald Woods had not actually been cited but that they “contain allegations against the authorities” (“*aantygings teen die autoriteit*”) which ultimately “undermine the peace, the rights and the law and order” of the State which is protected by Section 47(2)(e) (“*vrede, die gereg en die wet en orde te ondermyn, wat nadelig is onder Art 47-2e vir die veiligheid van die Staat*”) (Du Toit P78/5/214). The foreword further stated that “[t]hey (the white regime) could not afford to simply ignore the death of this detainee as they had done with so many before [and] [s]o they held an inquest,” which, according to the censors, was a false statement (“*[d]ie verklaring is onwaar*”) (Du Toit P78/5/214). Mr Du Toit, on behalf of the Board, stated that “the death of every prisoner was investigated, and if the autopsy indicate[d] that the death was not due

to natural causes, a judicial inquiry would take place” (“*[d]ie dood van elke gevange word ondersoek, en as die lykskouing aandui dat dit nie as gevolg van natuurlike oorsake was nie, word ‘n geregtelike ondersoek gehou*”), and thus Mr Woods is undesirably portraying the legal procedure in a vile manner (“*[d]ie veragtelikmaking van die regsprosedure is ongewens*”) (Du Toit P78/5/214). The Board reiterated the fact that it was found that “the evidence showed that Biko’s death was caused by a head injury which occurred as a result of a struggle with the Safety police, but that no intentional unlawful act had been committed” (“*[d]ie getuienis toon dat Biko wel oorlede is as gevolg van ‘n hoofbesering toe hy in ‘n worsteling met die Veiligheidspolisie betrokke is, maak dat daar geen opsetlike onwettige daad gepleeg is nie*”), and that Woods’ claim that “the Safety Police tortured and murdered Biko” (“*die Veiligheidspolisie vir Biko gemartel en doodgemaak het*”) was incorrect and undesirable (Du Toit P78/5/214). Du Toit additionally referred to the fact that the thirteen days of detention that are depicted both in the play and in this publication are taken out of context in order for it to seem that the police did in fact murder Biko (“*verdraai en uit verband geruk, om te lyk of dit ooreenstem met die bevinding dat die polisie vir Biko vermoor het*”) and that the summary given of the way in which the other detainees who died in custody actually died, is false (“*opsomming van ander gevalle van persone wat in aanhouding gesterf het, is vals*”) (Du Toit P78/5/214).

In terms of Section 47(2)(c), the Board found that the reference to “Afrikaner Nationalist mentality” in the foreword is used in order to make the Afrikaans people of the society despised” (“*is bereken om die Afrikaner volksgroep veragtelik te maak*”) (Du Toit P78/5/214), and that it was undesirable that they were referred to as “a frightened people, desperately clinging to their ethnic purity and their power” who Biko had no idea “would kill him” (Woods *preface*). For the above mentioned reasons, along with the fact that the Board has just previously banned Woods’ book, it is not surprising that the censors would too prevent dissemination of this publication, finding it ‘undesirable’.

Upon resubmission in 1990, it was stated by the censors that upon review, and due to Section 15(2) of the Act, the publication is “not undesirable within the meaning of Section 47(2) of the Act” and that dissemination would thus go ahead (Jansen P90/12/31).

The film dramatisation of the British theatre production was sent in to the Publications Board in 1989, seeking approval for dissemination. A Mr W. Malan stated that it was “undoubtedly a one-sided recapitulation” and places “strong emphasis on the role played [...] by Advocate Kentridge” who “dominates this version of the inquest in question” (Malan P89/7/17). He states that it “vividly focus[es] attention [...] on the abuses of Biko’s interrogators, including the alleged use of undue force and coercion and the holding of a naked Biko in chains” and strives to depict the “seeming incompetence or indifference of the doctors who attended Biko” (Malan P89/7/17). Malan did however, note some positive features in the film, including the fact that the actual court proceedings “reflect positively on the S.A. system of justice with Kentridge for example being given absolutely free rein to penetratingly question the Security policemen [and] doctors” and that the “magistrate is shown to be acting scrupulously correctly at all times” (Malan P89/7/17). He noted that the “Security Police and Biko’s doctors are shown in a very poor light” but that one must note that “the Appeal Board has ruled on more than one occasion that this is not sufficient per se to render a publication or film undesirable” (Malan P89/7/17). He further observed the fact that because the film is “unnecessarily long and [...] tedious,” it means that it will not “significantly hold the attention of most viewers, particularly that of the less sophisticated,” and for this reason, it is “unlikely that it will unduly sweep up the emotions of those viewers” (Malan P89/7/17).

A Mr G. Giaavelos of the Board also gave his opinion, stating that events and facts of the case are “well known to all South Africans and the court procedures were reported in all the South African newspapers” (Giaavelos P89/7/17). This reason, together with the fact that the film focuses on Biko’s detention and death, and not on Biko “as a great political leader,” nor his role in the Black Consciousness Movement or “of the black liberation struggle in general” acts as another “redeeming feature” which “outweigh[s] the negative elements and render the film as a whole not undesirable within the meaning of Section 47(2)(e)” (Giaavelos P89/7/17). The majority of the Board decided that, while they would not ban the film, it would be necessary to instate an age restriction of 2 to 18 years on the film due to the fact that “the subject and treatment [in the film] is an adult one” (Giaavelos P89/7/17). They stated that “maturity is required to view the events portrayed in the right perspective” and that in this light, “only adults possess the necessary objectivity to

distinguish and fully comprehend the controversial subject and its ‘dramatic’ presentation” (Giauvelos P89/7/17). Mr Malan’s opinion however, differed from other members of the Board, as he did not think that any age restriction would be necessary as there “is no visual material whatsoever which is likely to disturb younger viewers” (Malan P89/7/17). Dissemination of the film could thus take place, but with the instated age restriction.

Biko Memorabilia

During the tempestuous period directly after the death of Steve Biko, it was not only publications and film about the life and death of Biko that were brought to the attention of the censors, but so too were the countless posters and Biko memorabilia that created awareness of the current situation. For example, a poster with a picture of Biko and two small black children, stating that “Generations of Rage Shall Rise From his Death” was found “undesirable” in terms of Section 47(2)(e) and 9(3) of the Act of 1974. Again Lighton was the censor who reported, saying that it did not “commemorate the death of Biko as a human being, but [has] political motives to exploit his death in a manner calculated to promote White/Black confrontation and thereby to undermine the safety of the State” (Lighton P78/10/32). Another poster with a picture of Biko and the words “Died In Detention” was also deemed undesirable by Lighton under the same Act, due to the fact that the inquest was yet to be completed, and that this poster gave the impression that “Biko’s death was caused by those who held him in detention”, which ultimately means that these people are “[crying] murder before the facts are known, indicat[ing] how South Africa’s image was deliberately being undermined” (Lighton P78/3/91). There was even a poster for the “memorial service for Bantu Steve Biko” which was found to be “undesirable,” due to the fact that the word Azania (the African name for South Africa, much like Rhodesia was called Zimbabwe at that time), appeared on the poster (“*die word Azania kom op die plakkaat voor*”), with the censors stating that “this is the name for South Africa used by forbidden organisations and terrorist groups” (“*dit is die naam wat vir Suid-Afrika gebruik word deur verbode organisasies en terroriste-bewegings*”) (Van der Westhuizen P79/9/108). In 1982 a T-shirt with Biko on it, along with the phrase “Black Consciousness the Road to Freedom” was banned, as it was said to “propagate the ‘Black Consciousness Movement’ as well as Biko” (“*propageer die ‘Black Consciousness Movement’ asook Biko*”) who was a “militant and radical South African leader of those organisations” (“*militante en radikale S.A. leier van*

hierdie organisasies") and was thus "undesirable" under the same sections as above (Du Toit P82/10/23). Even ten years after his death, in 1987, there was still the desire of the state to ban Biko memorabilia. A pamphlet under the title "We Remember Comrade Biko" that discusses Biko's role in the Black Consciousness Movement was found to be "undesirable" in terms of Section 47(2)(e), as the censorship report argued that the likely readers of that pamphlet would be the black youth who will be "receptive to the call for "socialism or Barbarism", as well as the principles of "Anti-Capitalism, Anti-Ethnicity, Non-Collaboration" etc. that is made" ("*ontvanklik sal wees vir die oproep "socialism or Barbarism", asook die beginsels van "Anti-Capitalism, Anti-Ethnicity, Non-Collaboration" ens. wat ten slotte gestel word*") (Du Toit P87/10/28).

Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine apartheid thinking by tracking down and commenting on the apartheid censor's responses to the works of three major theorists of African liberation: Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Steve Biko. Some of the major discoveries that emerged out of the study were the tension and interface between local and the continental, between the idea of a Pan-African spread of ideas, and of the specificities of local or national situations. The three theorists themselves at times insist on the specificities of their local liberation struggles, but at the same time reach out to the rest of Africa in their references, and there is no doubt of cross-pollination in ideas across their work. Similarly, while apartheid relied on the argument of being "a special case", the censors were strangely concerned with the spread of ideas of African liberation from other parts of the world.

Most of Fanon's works were banned in France and South Africa at a time of increasing independence among former colonies from colonial rule. An exception to this is *Black Skin, White Masks*, which was not banned by the apartheid censors, most likely because it stated negative aspects of interracial sexual desire. Although *The Battle of Algiers* was banned immediately in France, it was only in the 1980s that it seems to have been an issue and was banned in South Africa. While the initial decisions to ban certain of Fanon's work were made at the height of apartheid in South Africa, the final decisions to allow for the dissemination were made as apartheid was drawing to a close, as negotiations were taking place between the ANC and the South African government. What has become evident from examining the censorship process and the works themselves is that in France and in South Africa, Fanon's works were all of an anti-colonial nature, encouraging an active revolution of the oppressed people and were thus brought to the attention of the censors to examine whether they could be deemed to be dangerous to the minds who may be exposed to the material. Ironically, in tracing the reception history of each one of these works, one notes not only the ways in which they influenced revolution, but also how they reached a global network of counter-revolutionary force at its most paranoid.

Through the examination of the apartheid censors' responses to the works of Cabral, one sees a contradiction in the views of the censors: while they clung to the idea of South Africa as "a special case," they also seemed to believe that Cabral's ideas for revolution in

Guinea would be influential in South Africa. Cabral's own views share something of this tension between theorising a local anti-colonial struggle and a Pan-African anti-colonial struggle. With *Revolution in Guinea*, the censors were troubled by Cabral's explicit description of revolutionary tactics and theories, together with the fact that he quite obviously calls for an armed struggle in order to liberate his people. Clearly they feared that the oppressed people in South Africa at the time would read his "terrorist" theories and gain ideas on how to overthrow the apartheid regime. The Board did, however, explicitly state that the comments that Cabral made in the book were not applicable to the South African situation and would not persuade South African readers to embark on an armed struggle, but they still chose to ban the book in order to protect the peace and good order in the country, thus clearly contradicting themselves. However, when this decision came to be reviewed towards the end of apartheid, the Board shifted their focus to the fact that the book would give its readers some historical insights into the mind of an African leader. Furthermore, because the situation in South Africa was currently changing, the censors felt that the book no longer applied to the South African situation and thus could not be seen as threatening to the peace and good order of the state, reinforcing their earlier contradiction. With *Return to the Source*, the censors were opposed to the fact that the book contained actual photographs of the armed struggle, and were of the opinion that some of the freedom movements of the PAIGC could be dangerous for South Africa if read by freedom fighters, even though they explicitly pointed out that the struggle in the book takes place in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde and thus nowhere near South Africa. Yet even so, the book was deemed to be "undesirable". Again, on review of this decision, with apartheid reaching an end, the Board later reasoned that Cabral rejects racist theory and deals, on a relatively high intellectual level, with a historical situation that has little to do with South Africans. They also stated that as the book was also out of print, it would not receive many readers, thus highlighting the fact that even when approving dissemination, the censors preferred that the book remain out of distribution. With *Unity and Struggle*, the Board were once again wary of the fact that Cabral emphasises the need for an armed struggle, and highlighted that the book thus comes across as propaganda for revolution. As the book centrally deals with revolution in a Portuguese colony, the censors felt that there would be a wider readership in all those countries that were under Portuguese rule would thus relate to it. The fact that Mozambique and Angola are bordering countries to South Africa meant, to

the censors, that the situation could thus be related to South Africa too, and thus deemed it to be “undesirable”. Reviewing their decision towards the end of apartheid, the censors noted that the revolution dealt with in the book was based on the revolution in Guinea-Bissau, a country far away from South Africa and all but forgotten, and thus it could be viewed as a historical book. The Board noted that any guerrilla tactics Cabral may have mentioned were by now common knowledge to South Africans and, as negotiation was underway, these tactics were no longer a threat to the peace and good order of the state. There thus seems to be a constant element of contradiction present in the minds of the censors as, although they were obviously aware of the transnational ideas which existed in Cabral’s works, they tried as much as they could to separate Cabral and the situation in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde from the situation in South Africa during apartheid – an unsuccessful attempt as South Africans involved in the liberation movement were well aware of, and influenced by, Cabral and his theories despite censorship.

The trajectory of the banning of the works by and on Biko in South Africa once again exposes the underlying thinking and the many contradictions of the apartheid-era government, through the censors as their agents. With *I Write What I Like*, the Board’s initial banning in 1979 was based on the fact that the “main character” of the book was Biko, a banned person in the country at the time. The censors felt that whites and the laws of apartheid were portrayed in an unfavourable manner in Biko’s writings and that this would be detrimental to relations between the races. They also believed that the book would promote a form of domestic unrest as it would encourage the spreading of Biko’s “underground” theories, and that it was thus “radically undesirable.” The book was therefore considered “undesirable” due to the fact that it would be damaging to the peace and good order of the state. Upon later reconsideration in 1985, the Board again concluded that the book would be harmful to the relationships between white and black South Africans. This constant focus on the negative impact that the book would have between so-called “relationships” between the races is interesting when one considers the fact that apartheid was based on a lack of “relationships” between the two groups. However, Biko’s book focused on empowering black South Africans, a notion that was the complete antithesis of the objectives of apartheid. In 1987 the Board slightly amended their earlier view, stating that Biko was actually not an advocator of violence and, because of this, they

felt that a possession ban on the book was no longer necessary. However, it was only with the amendment of the Publications Act and the end of apartheid that Biko's book was no longer banned. With *Biko* by Donald Woods, the Board noted in 1978 that Woods was a "listed person" and thus was not allowed to write or publish anything to do with South Africa. J.C. Van Rooyen, who compiled and signed the report for the Publications Appeal Board, claimed that Woods' book was filled with untruths and "deliberate lies," lacking evidence for its statements, and that it depicted the police in an unfair light. The Board, including Van Rooyen, viewed the book purely as propaganda, and felt that, as it refers to the ANC and their call for violence, and even goes so far as to equate the apartheid situation to that of Nazi Germany, it was detrimental to the peace and good order of the state, thus making it "undesirable." Again the Board said that the book may be detrimental to the relations between the Black and White populations, and was against the favourable manner in which the ANC, PAC and BPC were portrayed, thus highlighting their own racist views. However, when the book was reviewed towards the end of apartheid in 1990, the Board were now of the opinion that the book contained historical value and, due to the current situation in South Africa at the time, they felt that the book posed no threat to the safety of the state, thus admitting that they previously had viewed it as a threat, therefore encouraging them to view the book as "not undesirable." The path of the banning of *Cry Freedom* was particularly interesting and contradictory, as the Board initially decided to allow the dissemination of this film about Biko, despite the fact that it had banned the book *Biko* on which *Cry Freedom* was based. This decision that *Cry Freedom* was "not undesirable" was primarily to convince foreign onlookers that the South African government was progressive and was not trying to cover up what had happened. The Board further attempted to justify their decision by stating that South Africans would find the film boring and over-exaggerated, but also that the violence depicted was nothing new, inadvertently perhaps admitting that the violence portrayed in the film did actually occur, and as such was not necessarily an exaggeration of the truth. Public outcries and bomb threats forced the police to seize the film, indicating that while the Board wished to come across as moderate and reasonable to world, it was the local right-wing public who took offense to the film. Yet again, it was only with the end of apartheid in sight that these threats died down and the film could be viewed as simply "historical," and dissemination could begin. This examination reveals a constant tension within the minds of the censors as they knew that South Africa

was in the spotlight and thus wanted foreign perception to be that there was nothing to hide, while at the same time preventing the South African public, particularly the Black students of the revolution, from being exposed to this material and Biko's theories.

Despite the apartheid government's emphasis on South Africa as "a special case" whose situation could not be compared with anywhere else and that did not have to conform to international human rights norms, evidence from the archives reveals that the apartheid censors were aware of the fact that there was a transnational flow of ideas about African liberation, and thus indirectly acknowledged the fact that the South African situation was comparable to other places. In "Emerging From Censorship", one of his essays in *Giving Offence*, J.M. Coetzee points to the state's envy of "a certain disseminative power of which the power to publish and have read is only the most marked manifestation". Here Coetzee suggests that "the word of the master author" – whether written or oral – "has a disseminative power that goes beyond purely mechanical means of dissemination" (43). The word of great writers, Coetzee says, and, I would like to add, of great theorists of liberation, "particularly in cultures where an oral base survives, can spread by word of mouth, or from hand to hand in carbon copies... [and] even when the word itself is not spread, it can be replaced by rumors of itself, rumors that spread like copies" (43). As history has shown, despite their efforts the apartheid censors were powerless to prevent the dissemination of ideas about liberation, and ultimately to prevent the liberation of South Africa from apartheid.

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