Africa's Appendix: The Discursive Construction of Colonial South Africa[1]

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But where are we, in what uncharted world?
Camoens, *The Lusiads* (5:25)

In 1572 the Portugese poet Lucien de Camoens published an epic, *Os Lusiados,* describing Vasco da Gama's journey round the Cape on his way to the East. In the poem Camoens invented the figure of Adamastor, the anthropomorphic spirit ruling the Cape of Storms. Adamastor personifies the 'African Spirit' threatening European travellers. The subsequent myth of Adamastor provided many writers with a convenient model of African (Dionysian) vs. European (Apollonian) confrontation.

The Rise of the Cartographical Momentum

Geographers have never mapped this land
Camoens, *The Lusiads* (5: 50)

Camoens was very nearly correct in the above observation, with regard to South Africa's interior if not to the representation of the continent's shape. In 1489, almost a century before *Os Lusiados*, the world map of Henricus Martellus Germanus presents the southern tip of Africa extending beyond the frame of the map, literally introducing, from the very start, a discourse of marginality only partly justified by geographical distance (Fig. 1). The frame of the map is broken to accomodate the much distorted Cape, which suggests that South Africa was added as a cartographical 'last minute afterthought' and/or that it was already construed as an obstacle, an overflowing monstrosity, the frame-breaking irregularity of form. Usually, for the map-maker, what is close to the margin is a periphery and what is outside the frame is cognitively further miniaturised as a prefigured periphery to the periphery. In cartographical framing (perhaps even more than in other discourses) everything that is beyond the frame is seen as ir-

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relevant to the inside. Yet, the South African case is a momentuous exception. According to a study by Arthur Davies, the shape of South Africa on this map resulted not from ignorance but from forgery by Christopher Columbus and his brother, who needed to prove that Africa extended much further south than it did in order to facilitate the financing of Columbus's voyage westward.[2] Thus, Malvern van Wyk Smith's grounding principle that South Africa was invented before being discovered (*Grounds* 1) might be supplemented by the observation that it was invented defectively, in the process of a forgery.

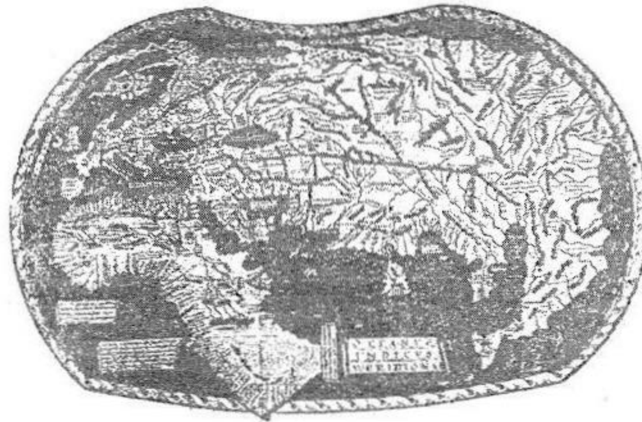

Fig. 1. The world map of Henricus Martellus Germanus (repr. after D. Oakes, ed., *Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story*, p. 35).

In 1544 there appeared another influential map, prepared by the German cartographer Sebastian Münster (Fig. 2). In his *Cosmographia Universalis*, South Africa rests within the frame (the reason for the original forgery having vanished in the meantime) but unlike the South Africa in Martellus' map, instead of being enlarged it is minimalised at the expense of the northern part. In addition, it is inscribed as marginal *–Africae extremitas*.

The first account of the Cape by a Dutch writer, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten's *Voyages* (1595) also contains a defective map of Africa, based on second hand information. Distortion and forgery (marginalisation, maximalisation, minimalisation, etc.) constitute key representational strategies employed in the use of the figure of the map in the context of South Africa.

Henricus Martellus Germanus drafted his map according to the data provided in the wake of the 1488 voyage of Bartolomeu Dias (Oakes 35). Dias can also be held responsible for inventing the technique of depopulating the contact zone, the in-between space of the initial colonial encounters. Upon Dias' landing in Mossel Bay, during an incident following a failure of communication near a stream, one of the party of the coastal Khoikhoi is killed with a crossbow. The

Fig. 2. The map of Africa in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia Universalis* (repr. after T. Cameron, ed., *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, p. 58).

rest flee in panic (Oakes 32). Dias' successor, Vasco da Gama, managed to conquer the remaining distance (the crossbow range) between himself and the natives. Like Dias, he depopulated the beach upon landing, but contrary to the account in Camoens' poetic version (*The Lusiads*) da Gama encountered and 'handled' a physical indigene, not a metaphysical spirit of Adamastor. Wilhelm Lichtenstein relates in his early history (1811) how, in November 1497, Portuguese travellers for the first time confronted the aboriginal inhabitants of Southern Africa. The date coincides closely with Columbus' initial contacts with Americans and the treatment of the natives is emblematic. The coincidence is a telling one, because it reveals that what Todorov in *The Conquest of America* and Greenblatt in *Marvelous Possessions* demonstrate with reference to American colonisation applies to South Africa as well.[3] The same strategies are employed, including, as if in a standard recipe, landing, measuring, deception, kidnapping, lack of linguistic understanding, the giving of gifts, etc., with the same result: promoting the politics of the Empire:

> Vasco was making astronomical observations on the beach when he learned from some of his people, that two natives near the landing place were busy collecting honey and apparently had not noticed the presence of foreigners. He ordered his men to approach them secretly and to catch them without any violence. They caught one of them... [N]one of them understood the captive's language.... They treated him in a friendly way, gave him presents and... gained his confidence. (Lichtenstein 23)

Vasco da Gama in a proprietorial gesture starts zealously conducting his geographical business of observation the moment he sets his foot on the ground, but like Dias before him, he is not interested in the reality of the land. Significantly, if one considers da Gama's mission, he looks *out* from the peninsula, not *into* it. Preoccupied with "finding his bearings on the cosmic chart" (Camoens, canto 5: 26) he uses his measuring (navigational) instruments with a view to the further voyage. Presumably, he is armed with an astrolabe (cf. Camoens 5: 26) – used by travellers for ascertaining longitude– but metaphorically serving as "theoretical eyes" (Boelhower 52), the icon of magic and scientific power. The whole scene suggests, like in a Renaissance painting, a desire for correct order and a feeling for symmetry, seen as especially appropriate at a place where two worlds meet. Thus, in the harmonious and balanced assemblage of images, the sailors *observe* the natives, whereas the natives are *ignorant* of them. The Portuguese arrive *from the sea*; the natives *from the land.* The meeting is enacted, typically –on the beach– supposedly "'twixt land and sea", neither here nor there. This is the first error in the symmetrical structure because the coast is not, as maps misleadingly show, an abstract line where land meets water, it is not a no-man's-terrain between the land from which the indigenes come as foreigners and the sea from which the travellers arrive in the same capacity. The cartographic representation of the beach invokes, repeats and mimics the Book of Genesis, where the creator in a symbolical gesture of "negative entropy" (Arnheim 31) separates the waters from the dry land. But the coastline exists as an orderly line only in the reality of cartographic representations, not in any other reality. The beach *belongs* to the land, so being on the beach is already an incongruous, radically asymmetrical encroachment, a minimal yet unmistakable invasion, an attempt at establishing a minimal yet unmistakable possession. Vasco has an *astrolabe* because he represents 'culture'; the natives, who stand for 'nature', have "wild sweet *honey*" (Camoens 5: 27, emphasis mine).

Until now the scene is presented as symmetrical and static. When it becomes dynamic, with spectacularly different roles assigned to co-present subjects, it still ostensibly remains oppositionally balanced. Instead of yielding to the temptation of enjoying the complexities of "contact zone interaction" (Pratt *passim*), Vasco –thinking in terms of a less complex but more effective binary logic– issues an order, though the natives form no threat, to *arrest* them, but aesthetically, *without violence. One* native is caught, *the other* escapes. The implied symmetrical 'social harmony' is equivalent to beauty for the Renaissance mind striving for organic unity.[4] How someone can be caught secretly by an armed stranger without recourse to violence is a thoroughly mystifying issue, and I do not possess a cognitive structure to explain it, other than to concede that violence had to be used but had to be presented as non-violence. How the Portuguese could determine whether they had gained the confidence of the prisoner without speaking a word of his language is one of the numerous mysteries of colonial translation. What is evident, however, is that the Portuguese did what they wanted and interpreted it the way they wished. They separated and deterritorial-

ised both natives (one is taken on board and the other one forced to flee) and emptied the contact zone.[5]

The significance of this act of emptying cannot be overstressed, as it explains and justifies the substitution of traces and the subsequent, though belated, desire for mapping. For Derrida it is the "avowed desire for presence" which propels the act of imitation, but Paul de Man notes perceptively that "there never would be a need for imitation if the presence had not been *a priori* pre-emptied."[6] This explains the logic of the practical enterprise of obliteration: the Portuguese sailors first created the need and then, accordingly, substituted the rival presence with the evidence of their own traces, planting stone crosses *–padrae–* along the shore (Lichtenstein 18). They employed at the same time a founding gesture of repetition and an archaeological gesture of precession, but they still did not develop a properly strong penetratory impulse and did not master the adequate idiom necessary for producing a map of the hinterland. Adamastor's fictional challenge to Vasco: "Geographers have never mapped this land," did not produce a sufficient zeal, and the challenge was not met even in Camoens' times.[7] The Portuguese volume of charts published around 1576 by Manuel de Mesquita Perestelo was still limited to a description of the coast (Cullinan 139). The impulse towards mapping and claiming the African interior developed in Europe much later, in the mid-eighteenth century (Pratt 9) as a logical aftermath to previous maritime exploration. In South Africa, the cartographical momentum is, additionally, delayed by almost half a century.

A Heap of Stones

Official map making comes to travel literature in the South African context at a relatively late stage (as a direct result of the British invasion of the Cape in 1795) with the figure of Sir John Barrow, who in his *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, published in 1801 and thus marking the beginning of the nineteenth century, presents himself proudly as a pioneer of South African cartography. This claim could remain uncontested because Col. Robert Jacob Gordon, who did precede Barrow in that respect, committed suicide when the British captured the Cape and did not publish his own exhaustive Great Atlas. Thus, Barrow could maintain that nobody seriously cared about publishing the results of mapping the hinterland of the Cape between 3 July 1620, when Humphrey Fitzherbert and Andrew Shillinge, two members of the English East India Company, enthusiastically yet unsuccessfully took possession of the the land adjacent to Table Bay, and the years 1797-98, when John Barrow, "armed with 'an artificial horizon; a good pocket chronometer; a pocket compass; and a measuring chain,' [laid] a possessive grid of latitude and longitude over the colony" (van Wyk Smith, *Grounds,* 3).

The year 1620 is conveniently symbolical because it enables –yet again– comparisons between South African colonisation and the founding of Plymouth Plantation in America. In an impressive manner, both architecturally and meta-

physically, Fitzherbert and Shillinge introduced an act of, literally, building a city on a hill, by piling up stones. It appeared to be a futile act because of the lack of subsequent support from the British Government, discouraged by the costs of establishing such a refreshment station (Lichtenstein 32-3, Were 19). Although this lack of the official royal support necessarily signified a lack of the need to draft maps, the cartographic fervour directed towards the interior, the germinating look *into* the land, absent from Portuguese accounts, can already be detected. In the document written by Fitzherbert and Shillinge in 1620, the symbol of taking possession is not yet a horizontal move forward, nor a survey or relocation of frontiers; it is a crude imitation of the activity of building:

> And in token of possession, taken as aforesaid, and for a memorial hereafter, we have placed a heap of stones on a hill lying West-south-west from the road in the said bay, and call it by the name of King James his Mount. (Barrow, vol 1, 4)

The geographical vocabulary is there (west-south-west), the activity of naming on behalf of the Empire is highlighted (the mountain is given the name of King James), the possibility of expansion is retained (the road), the possibility of surveying the countryside is hinted at (the hill), and the wish for the stability of the White presence is suggested too (a memorial, a heap of stones). About one hundred fifty years later, driven by similar impulses, Colonel Gordon solidifies the Dutch presence by erecting a stone (Cullinan 61) in commemoration of Governor Van Plettenberg´s expedition.

For the colonial subject, erecting a cairn of stones can be fraught with both political and mystical symbolism. For the colonialist it stands for a building, a vision of the city, and it was already Heidegger who derived the Western *Ich bin* from the root word *bauen* (cf. Boelhower 43). Moreover, a heap of stones suggests the idea of an organic unity of structure. If one takes into account that it all happened in the year 1620, it is possible to see in this act the yearning for a fresh Renaissance ideal, where a perfect city would have to display just such organic unity. The priorities did not change with time. At the end of the eighteenth century Carl B. Wadstrom in his *Essay on Colonization* gives the prospective settlers the following piece of *constructive* advice: "On arriving in Africa, the first, as being the most important thing settlers ought to think of, is the erection of houses..." (Wadstrom, Part I, 48).

The problem for the colonialist begins, however, when it appears that the erected heap, i.e. the symbolism of possession, coincides with the indigene symbolism of succession. A cairn was used by Hottentots and Bushmen as a grave marker.[8] Colonel Gordon comments: "Saw no skeletons and only one grave which was a circular heap of stones" (Cullinan 36). Twenty years later John Barrow records: "A heap of stones, piled upon the bank of the rivulet, was pointed out to me as the grave of a Hottentot" (vol. 1, 108). The question the colonialist faces is of a truly philosophical nature: if one is confronted with the same structure, does the symbolism of possession overpower the symbolism of succession?

Only the affirmative answer justifies colonial expansion. If the answer is negative (which it is), colonial expansion has to entail a simultaneous erasure of the unwanted heaps of stones, and after a ritual period of celebrating the emptied space, a global palimpsest of writing anew. Thus, Barrow –reverting uneasily to the muffled concepts of similarity, difference, and antiquity– has to apply a rather obscure logical somersault to explain why succession in Africa does not mean the same thing as succession in Europe:

> The intention, it seemed, of the pile was very different from that of the monuments of a similar kind that anciently were erected in various parts of Europe, though they very probably might have proceeded, in a more remote antiquity, from the same origin. (vol. 1, 108-9).

Assuming traces of people is a delicate issue. As long as traces remain organic proofs of habitation, they do not have to be included in a map, so for the cartographer, biological existence alone did not sufficiently legitimise the presence of the natives, in view of the presumed absence of more solid evidence –the anti-nomadic strategy known from Herodotus. For Joshua Penny –an American deserter from an English warship– Bushmen, or, as he calls them Bosjemen or Boschmen are "savages" (20) because "roving in hordes" (21) they leave only non-geometrical "tracks of wild beasts" (20). All that is material but cartographically invisible does not count as a proper trace. Only durable objects *could* legitimise possession, if one chose to apply the colonial cause-and-effect logic of facts.

The phenomenon of nomadism, the dynamics of which entails not only ceaseless mobility but the lack of fixed assets, is both an archaeological and a cartographical problem.[9] But while cartographers, like archaeologists, have grave difficulties in pinning the nomads down, there is a difference in the implication. It may or it may not be a problem for an archaeologist that nomads are not easily recoverable, whereas for the colonial cartographer the fact that nomads were often cartographically invisible, due to the 'low' profile and scarcity of the cartographically translatable traces by which their presence could be logocentrically recognised, did not have to be perceived as a problem, as non-restorability, in effect, facilitated emptying the colonial map and ensured its clarity. In the presumed absence of evidence and a failure to recognise traces, the Bushmen's inherently unstable mode of *subsistence* could be translated into an inherently unstable (and redundant) mode of *existence*.

In a naturalistic passage reconstructing the encounter with the land, J.M. Coetzee lists some of the less durable proofs deposited over Southern Africa by White explorers, but disappearing into atomic constituents:

> From scalp and beard, dead hair and scales. From the ears, crumbs of wax. From the nose, mucus and blood... From the eyes, tears and a rheumy paste. From the mouth, blood, rotten teeth, calculus, phlegm, vomit. From the skin, pus, blood, scabs, weeping plasma...

> sweat, sebum, scales, hair. Nail fragments, interdigital decay. Urine and the minuter kidneystones... Smegma... Faecal matter... Semen. (*Dusklands* 119)

But J.M. Coetzee has a contemporary awareness of traces, unlike for instance the early French traveller François Le Vaillant, who writes his name in the cave of the Heerenlogement. He believes, like many others, that the best trace on the face of the land is a written trace (Cullinan 69). It is a reflection of a legacy of ancient times that the presence of men is legitimised rather by traces of writing or geometrical lines, especially in the situation of the contact-zone encounters. This legacy is best exemplified by the anecdote concerning the Socratic philosopher, Aristippus, who when shipwrecked and cast up on the shore of Rhodes (another momentuous beach encounter) saw geometrical figures on the sand, and therefore cried out to his companions, "Let us be of good hope, for indeed I see the traces of men."[10] It seems there is nothing more satisfying than triumphantly replacing indeterminacy with regular shapes derived from reassuring Euclidean geometry. Paradoxically, such geometrical texts, written in sand and then read and interpreted from sand, are treated as human traces, whereas *human* traces written in sand tend to be interpreted as threatening and potentially monstrous signs, as the memorable footprint-passage from *Robinson Crusoe* testifies. It again requires a revisionist awareness to be able to equate the symbol of architectural traces of antiquity (pyramids) with organic traces in the context of destructive exploration. That J.M. Coetzee's "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee" is not a narrative of 1760 but a fictive narrative of 1974 is made obvious by references to this very awareness:

> I leave behind me a *mountain* of skin, bones, inedible gristle, and excrement. All this is my dispersed *pyramid* to life (*Dusklands* 79; emphasis mine)

Concentration on traces may constitute a technique of de-populating or repopulating, since the very concept of the trace, even a recent one, does not entail a co-presence –be it in spatial or temporal understanding– but, unavoidably, a *preceding* presence, made visibly distinct from the *present* presence or the implied *future* presence. The present presence always belongs to the reader of traces, it does not need to belong to their maker. To be absent is, in effect, to be negatively present and this negative presence requires either a dismissive rejection (eg. cartographical elimination) or dismissive incorporation (eg. colonial history/ ethnology/archaeology). As Boehmer notices in her analysis of Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, for Waldo, Bushman paintings are only traces or hieroglyphs of "a *lost* black history *once* lived in this desert land" (Boehmer 89, emphasis mine).

The aforementioned delicacy of the issue of traces in a depopulated landscape in confrontation with a heap of stones entails also a very specific nonbiological form of traces, namely, ruins and graves. It is infinitely less problematic if ruins are not traces of the inhabited land. John Barrow, who had such diffi-

culties with explaining the meaning of graves, has no difficulty whatsoever (and does not require the post-modern subtlety of J.M. Coetzee) when he considers chrystallised *pyramidal* columns of sand as *ruins* of vast *mountains* (vol. 1, 417, emphasis mine). Otherwise, ruins are extremely problematic because they seem to architecturally legitimise a preceding possession of the land by someone else. If included in the map, they hopelessly spoil the purity of the imperial mission, unless –like Waldo's Bushman paintings– they are museumised as monuments of people who no longer exist. This leads to the creation of a convenient myth which was still embraced at the end of the nineteenth century. "A country like Africa," asserts the protagonist of Rider Haggard's *She*, "is sure to be full of the relics of long dead and forgotten civilisations" (67). In other words, for the colonial project to be successful, architectural ruins require, ideally, the annihilation of the descendants of the builders of ruins. Mary Louise Pratt summarises this technique succinctly: "To revive indigenous history and culture as archaeology is to revive them as dead" (134). Or better still, to use Rider Haggard's diction, *long dead and forgotten.*

No wonder Rider Haggard's contemporary, W.C. Scully, in *The Bushman's Cave*, published in 1886, applies this very technique of filling the colonial space with the dead:

> Through fancy's glass I see, around,
> The shades of long-dead forms arisen...
> 'Tis gone! 'Twas but a glimpse, a flash,
> That for an instant lit the past...
> And on the rocks in deathless hue,
> The records of a perished race,
> That from this land of ours withdrew
> To silence, leaving scarce a trace.
> (in: van Wyk 81-82)

This is a prime example of nostalgic "archaeological fetishism" (Baudrillard 74). Scully combines White optical and mental perception, "fancy´s glass" with the idea of convenient immortality in the form of *long-deadness* and scarcity of traces left by the eliminated race which did not pile heaps of stones.

Erecting heaps of stones (Fitzherbert and Shillinge), stone crosses (the Portuguese), beacons with the arms of the Netherlands or the Dutch East India Company (van Plettenberg) or memorial stones (Colonel Gordon) –all of them at strategic points– is already conducive, whether consciously or not, to making an initial cartographical gesture of demarcating boundaries. John Barrow, referring to Gordon's cross, expertly sees both of these functions as follows:

> [Governor Van Plettenberg] caused a stone or baaken to be there [the Sea-Cow river] erected, which he also intended should serve as a point in the line of demarcation between the colony and the country of the Bosjesmans. (Barrow, vol. 1, 255)

It would be natural, as happened for example in America, that from this symbolical moment of cleansing the ground by building a heap of stones, mapping should start as an effort to record welcome traces or a lamentable (but remediable) lack of them. After all, in America, the Biblical "City on a hill" meant in effect an introduction of an allegorical map which sanctified the progress of civilisation (Boelhower 57). In South Africa, according to Barrow, for two hundred and fifty years nothing momentuous happened in the field of cartography.[11] Apparently, neither the Dutch East India Company which came to colonise the Cape nor the Dutch settlers were interested in mapping the interior. One of the numerous reasons for this is that although South Africa rightfully belonged to the Southern Hemisphere, the label of *terra nova*, the New World (America), or Antipodes (Australia), did not apply to it.

Africa's Appendix

Echoing the early discursive practice established by Münster's map, where South Africa is *Africae extremitas*, and repeated by an early eighteenth century German explorer, Peter Kolb, for whom the Cape is "diese äußerste Ecke des Landes" (Kolb 28), John Barrow commented on the ambivalence of the Cape's position, presenting both the Arcadian vision and the views of the Cape as a "useless and barren peninsular promontory, connected by a sandy isthmus to a still more useless and barren continent" (in: van Wyk Smith, *Grounds,* 5). The evocation of an image of a useless continent dramatises the Cape´s marginality and intensifies its positional handicap. Seen on the one hand as a suitable stopover on the route to India, the Cape was construed, on the other, as a negative extremity at a place which had long before been cast in the role of a "refused continent of negative extremities" (Mudimbe 9). Thus, one of the earliest cartographic inscriptions acquired the status of a double formative truth. Lady Ann Barnard, John Barrow's acquaintance and contemporary, imagined the colonialists' situation as that of "little mortals at the extreme point of Africa" (Barnard 101) or at "the far end of the globe" (182). For Carl B. Wadstrom the Cape is likewise the "extremity of Africa" (Part 1, 180) –a direct translation from Münster's map– and John Barrow also continually refers to the Cape as "the extremity" or "the southern extremity of Africa" (vol. 2, 269, 273, 329).

Significantly, the extreme point of the known world or even its far end eliminates the possibility of thinking in terms of the New Land. And thus, The Cape started to symbolise not just the extremity of Africa but the farthest extremity of the Old World (Coetzee, *White...*, 2), "the lands-end of the world" (William H. Lipsett, in van Wyk Smith, *Shades,* 106), and "a corner of the world" (Anthony Delius, in van Wyk Smith, *Shades,* 123). Even with respect to Africa itself the Cape was seen as "the edge of the continent" (F.D. Sinclair, in van Wyk Smith, *Shades,* 116) or "Africa's appendix" (Anthony Delius, in van Wyk Smith, *Shades,* 121). This is a repetition of Martellus' frame-breaking discourse of marginality. To determine such a placement –the appendix– which fortifies the

Cape's redundance by reference to biological, anthropomorphised discourse, one has to be first acquainted with the cartographical representation.

Mapping the appendicital peripheries of the known world was doubtless seen as less urgent than mapping new lands. Accordingly, the shift from the nautical, coastline exploration to the exploration of the interior was being delayed. "A city on a hill" despite the encouraging heap of stones remained devoid of meaning.

John Barrow's Instruments

Here placed by history on these sands,
My fathers dreamed of hinterlands,
Burned maps of Europe with their boats,
Went nation-building with their goats
Roy Macnab, *The Man of Grass*

Roy Macnab's contemporary poeticised version of South African history as a semi-divine agent of placement (*"placed by history on these sands"*) is grossly sentimentalised and oversimplified but what it legitimately stresses is the initial lack of respect for the European form of representing the interior (*"My fathers... /Burned maps of Europe"*). Hinterlands may have been colonised as a result of a dream (*"My fathers dreamed of hinterlands"*) but without a proper plan. John Barrow –a successful messenger of British rule– realising the significance of mapping for prospective colonisation, is rather indignant and surprised with the belatedness of the cartographical impulse: "no permanent limits to the colony were ever fixed under the Dutch government" (vol. 1, 8). Justifying the British take-over of the Cape, Barrow articulates the logic of Vasco da Gama, who conceived of contact zone kidnapping being possible without violence. For Barrow, similarly, the British military invasion of the same contact zone, already peopled by the Dutch, is translated into an act of taking possession in a non-aggressive manner: "An expedition was accordingly sent out to take possession of the Cape, not however in a hostile manner, but to hold it in defence and security" (vol. 2, 144-5).

Barrow, who was exploring a country of which he was totally ignorant (Lacour-Gayet 46) deeply believed that lack of knowledge could be overcome through the application of the deterministic and logocentric equation: map = knowledge. Like his Swedish contemporary, Carl B. Wadstrom –in whose view "the bare inspection of a map of Africa shows [the Cape's] superiority to all other parts of that continent" (Part 1, 182), its appendicity notwithstanding– Barrow does not indulge in post-Camoensian metaphysical speculations on the topography of the Cape and Adamastor's legacy. He is convinced that a successful colonial arrival requires both inspection and a plan as well as inspection of a plan and a plan of inspection. In the second volume of his *Travels* he implements this conviction practically, including several detailed maps. These maps show a certain

regularity of focus: they are restricted to Bays and indicate landing points, places with fresh water and corn magazines: Mossel Bay (vol. 2, 70), Algoa Bay (vol. 2, 86), a Military Plan of the Cape Peninsula (vol. 2, 205), Table Bay (vol. 2, 258) and Saldanha Bay (vol. 2, 260). This time the 'arrival' means a military invasion of the coast, 'knowledge' is espionage and maps of the interior become restricted to maps of places which enable penetration. This translation explains Barrow's anger with the Boers because they scandalously betrayed and wasted the White Man's cartographic mission: "Having no kind of chart nor survey [the Dutch] possessed a very limited and imperfect knowledge of the geography of the remoter parts" (vol. 1, 8). In the second volume he repeats the same complaints: "land measuring is very little understood or attended to" (vol. 2, 343). The reasons for this neglect Barrow sees in low mercantilism and laziness of the Dutch in general. He accuses them of carrying on a lucrative trade with the natives instead of supplying "useful information respecting the colony".[12] Barrow is, in effect, disgusted by the situation: "not one of them [the Dutch] has furnished a single sketch even towards assisting the knowledge of the geography of the country" (vol. 1, 8). Because of this inexplicable sloth of the unsettled settlers, both the farmers and the citizens of Cape Town, (cf. Coetzee, *White...* 4, 29) the actual boundaries of the colony were, in Barrow's view, simply "fixed on the spot" (vol. 1, 9) by Governor Van Plettenberg and Colonel Gordon, presented as the only two individuals in the years that elapsed between 1620 and 1779 who *really* seemed to care about lines of demarcation.

This is in fact a spectacular error because both Colonel Gordon and others before him made efforts at cartographical recordings.[13] Gordon, just like Barrow, travels with the assorted cargo of measuring instruments: the astrolabe, the barometer and smoked glass. He even has a boat and the flag of the Prince of Orange. He also finds "very good, extensive, sandy landing places" (Cullinan 57) in view of the possibility of military invasions, he also frequently conducts trigonometric triangulations, takes compass bearings and makes altitude records, uses an "astronomical quadrant" and utterly amazes the natives with his smoked glass, "spyglass", the compass, quicksilver and the watch (Cullinan 67, 80). He shows adequate pride in his instruments: wrapping them in his nightshirt, and sentimentally referring to the English quadrant as "a perfect instrument", regretting not having "a horizon" only a less reliable marine octant (Cullinan 52, 144).

But Barrow's intentional error is necessary for his task to be justified as a project of utmost importance to prospective, proper colonisation: "to complete the lines of demarcation", a task that he undertakes and executes by the order of the Earl of Macartney with a view to determine officially "the extent and dimensions of the territory" (vol.1, 9). The utensils he brings –a sextant, an artificial horizon, a good pocket chronometer, a pocket compass and a measuring chain (vol. 2, 22-23)– stress not only celebratory intentions, the belief that space is conquerable, recordable and erasable by means of obtaining longitudes and latitudes, supplying sketches of tolerable exactness, eliminating deviations, supplying corrections, taking the bearings, making intersections and providing

verifications (vol. 2, 23). They reflect a legalistic and ritualistic zeal for precise detail, a belief in direct and mimetic translatability of land into signs and an unshaken belief in the usefulness of colonial mapping.

It is not a coincidence perhaps that geographical measuring instruments used at the end of the eighteenth century by cartographers like Gordon and Barrow have ambiguous names: 'artificial horizon' introduces the idea of bogus findings, 'spy-glass' and 'burning glass' (Cullinan 112) suggest covert military activity, 'smoked glass' lack of clarity of vision, 'pocket chronometer' and a 'pocket compass' stress 'pocketing', i.e. appropriating, and a 'measuring chain' echoes bondage more than geometry. David Livingstone travels with "the magic lantern show", while De Brazza is said to arrange pyrotechnic displays to distract natives (Boehmer 58). Similarily, Gordon's compass serves at times as a weapon for disarming the indigene, because the instrument, whose role is to ensure tolerable exactness, does not *tolerate* assegais:

> I wanted to plot our course from a high hill, they [Caffers] walked about me and gazed at the compass as it moved, astonished and frightened. I asked them to put their assegais away because the thing could not *tolerate* these and I would not be able to carry out my duties. (Cullinan 51, emphasis mine)

But the instrument called "the artificial horizon" stresses additionally an important aspect of the cartographer's limitations within the horizontality of the field work, introducing at the same time a direct and a dramatic connection between the instrument and an activity of observation. The horizon is by its nature a line of boundary, without independent vantage points. If the beach was construed as the boundary between the ethos of arrival and the ethos of encroachment, the horizon signified a boundary between the observable and the unobservable. Such a definition of the horizon (Munitz 151) reveals already a limitation inherent in the notion, because it has to be relativised, depending in a complex way on a number of observational constraints; at a minimum, the position of the observer, properties of the observed, limitations in the technology of observation itself and the availability of instruments used for the observation (not to mention here the complex Jaussian concept of the model used by the observer, the 'horizon of expectations', observing as against inferring). Two meanings will be interrelated: the horizon of observability which functions as an information barrier is not only (1) a limitation of view, but more importantly perhaps, (2) a conceptual limitation of thought. This awareness of the horizon symbolising the limitations of perspectivism is already evident in some colonial travelogues and even Barrow in his own time may have perceived the conflicting implications of the concept, if he contemptuously referred to people whose "wants might be as bounded as their horizon" (vol. 1, 75). Yet, in general, the reassuring "fusion of horizons" of Gadamerian hermeneutics does not seem to apply to colonial cartology.

Although Charles Eglington maintains in his poem *Homage to Pessoa* that "The early mariners perhaps/Were first to understand/the pure aesthetic of hori-

zons" (van Wyk Smith, *Grounds*, 85), Perceval Gibbon earlier on, in his poems of 1903, more perceptively sees South Africa as a land "belted about with the horizon line" (van Wyk Smith, *Grounds*, 44). South African post-modern literature exploring the spirit of colonial endeavours reveals an awareness of the interdependency of 'horizon' as a term for freedom, destruction, and conceptual limitation, introducing what Malvern van Wyk Smith calls a "psychopathic space" (37): the arena of contemporary white fiction.

The artificial horizon –as a concept more than as a tool– is crucial for colonial cartography. Already in 1584 Giordano Bruno proclaimed in his treatise *De l'infinito universo e mondi* that centre and periphery are relative notions, but he was burnt at the stake for this heresy. In this situation, it was rather the fifteenth century invention of the European linear perspective, validating and symbolising an individual viewpoint, that can be seen as a Visual Metaphorical Preface to the age of geographical discoveries (cf. Todorov 192).[14] But understanding space in the context of colonial cartology and its radically asymmetrical arbitrary codes and standards of perspective would require a more detailed analysis of the visual metaphor in the colonial cartographical discourse, and that is already beyond the scope of this essay.

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Notes

1. This essay is a fragment of a larger project. The author wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Bonn, Germany which is sponsoring the entire undertaking.
2. For a perceptive study and historical background see Arthur Davies, "Behaim, Martellus and Columbus", The Geographical Journal 143 (3), Nov. 1977: 451-459.
3. One should not, however, overestimate the extent of this correspondence. I do not wish to advocate the 'historical method' of Stuart Cloete, who claims in his *Rags of Glory:* "There are many parallels between the United States [of America] and South Africa. Both began as distant overseas colonies in the seventeenth century. Both Cape Town and New Amsterdam were founded by Hollanders within a few years of each other. Both fought savages for the possession of the land. Both threw off the British yoke. Both trekked into the wilderness to found new states. Both had a civil war. Both had the same initials, the U.S.A. and the Union of South Africa, till South Africa became a republic" (Cloete v). For the critique of such discursive attempts at establishing a direct relationship of metaphorical resemblance between the histories of the two respective nations, see: Erhard Reckwitz, "History as Romance, Tragedy and Farce: Narrative Versions of the Anglo-Boer War" in: *1985-1995. Ten Years of South African Literary Studies at Essen University,* 120 - 121.
4. Even at the end of the nineteenth century (1893) the symmetrical representation of the contact zone encounter is cherished in poetry. Cf. the poem by J. Forsyth Ingram, *The Discovery of Natal:* "Then the captain, brave di Gama/Stood upon the deck and shouted/To the natives in the mangroves/- Shouted, making friendly gestures,/Begging

them to come and see him./Fear was banished..." (in van Wyk Smith, *Shades* 89). Da Gama is brave and he stands upon the deck (not upon the beach!), the natives are cowards and they hide in the trees; Da Gama's shouts are accompanied by friendly gestures; he begs the natives to approach. Fear is miraculously banished, the natives duly obey; surely [?] they must have understood the shouting and beckoning as friendly.

5. Lichtenstein relates further how the Portuguese for amusement used to drag natives by force onto their ships. (27).
6. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967, Part II, pp. 290ff and Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983, p. 126.
7. Cf. Ken Smith, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing*, where he comments on the comparative belatedness of documentation and lack of interest in Southern African exploration: "Southern Africa [...] is poorly off as far as written material is concerned.... Numerous Portuguese ships were wrecked along the treacherous south-eastern coast, and records resulted from this. There are even fewer documents for the interior. There is very little documentary evidence for most of the inland areas south of the Limpopo before the nineteenth century" (12). His opinion is shared by Carl B. Wadstrom who writes in 1794: "The coast of [Africa] after having served as a clue to conduct navigators to the East Indies, was itself comparatively neglected" (Part I, 3).
8. To avoid confusion in an already complicated matter of South African history which is, to repeat Clifton Crais' formula "a terminological nightmare" (5), I use the names of native peoples in the way they were used in early travel literature, however inadequate they are, ie. Hottentots and Bushmen for Khoisan, etc. In this respect I am following J.M. Coetzee's strategy used in *White Writing*. The term 'native', as in Boehmer's study (8), is used as "a collective term referring to the indigenous inhabitants of colonised lands."
9. A full assessment of the theoretical approaches to the issue of 'nomadism' is beyond the scope of this essay. Also, the distinction between nomads and hunter-gatherers is not at stake here, the difference consisting chiefly in migration patterns (cf. Cribb 21). For the colonial cartographer the strategy of the scheduling of nomadic/hunter-gatherer's movements was of no consequence.
10. After Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. Frontispiece.
11. This formulation must, however, be qualified. After 1652 (first settelment of the Cape) there appeared Dutch travellers' pamphlets with pictures, footnotes, crude maps and engravings. J.M. Coetzee mentions Hondius and Fryke among others. But these are often treated not as serious attempts at mapping or accounts targeted at a wider audiences but rather as collections of curiosities, wonders and oddities (cf. Coetzee, *White...*, 12-15). Also, in the eighteenth century, two astronomers, Peter Kolb (1719) and Abbé Nicolas Louis de Lacaille (1763) devoted themselves to the task of observations and measurements, though not to mapping the interior.
12. For a study shedding more light on the nature of this trade cf. Clifton C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992: 36-39.
13. In fact Colonel Gordon was almost unrivalled in the eighteenth century. He travelled farther inland from the Cape than any European before him, penetrated the unmapped interior and left an extensive map complete with decorative motifs, sketches and embellishments. Cf. V.S. Forbes, *Pioneer Travellers...* (116) and Patrick Cullinan, *Robert Jacob Gordon...* (137). Colonel Gordon was a very diligent cartographer but he did not

publish the results of his work; had he done so, he would have to be considered Barrow's worthy contestant.

14. Giordano Bruno maintains: "From various points of view these [bodies] may all be regarded either as centres, or as points on the circumference, as poles, or zeniths, and so forth. Thus the earth is not the center of the Universe; she is central only to our own surrounding space.... For all who posit a body of infinite size ascribe to it neither centre nor boundary" (in Todorov 192). Todorov notices also that Columbus's inspirer, Toscanelli, was the friend of Brunelleschi and Alberti, who were pioneers of perspective and that the founder of perspective, Pierro della Francesca, died on October 12, 1492 (Todorov 121).

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Africa's Appendix: The Discursive Construction of Colonial South Africa

Το άρθρο αποτελεί μια ανάλυση επιλεκτικών πτυχών της αποικιακής (προ-απαρτχάιντ) αντίληψης της Νότιας Αφρικής με επικέντρωση σε συμβολικές ενέργειες. Μεταξύ των αντιπροσωπευτικών ιστορικών γεγονότων που συζητούνται εδώ, το πρώτο αποκαλύπτει την ιδεολογική οργάνωση του 15ου αιώνα που επηρέασε την απόβαση των Dias και da Gama στις ακτές της Νότιας Αφρικής. Ο αναγεννησιακός ζήλος της προ-εμπορευματοποίησης εκείνη την εποχή προσανατολίζονταν ακόμα προς τις θαλάσσιες εξερευνήσεις και, κατά συνέπεια, οι Πορτογάλοι ναύτες δεν σκόπευαν να διεισδύσουν στο εσωτερικό. Διέθεταν, ωστόσο, αρκετή θέληση, ώστε να αδειάσουν προπαρασκευαστικά και συμβολικά τη γη ξεριζώνοντας τους ιθαγενείς. Το δεύτερο περιστατικό, από το 17ο αιώνα, αντανακλά την ανεπιτυχή προσπάθεια των Fitzherbert και Shillinge να καταλάβουν το Ακρωτήριο και μια παλιμψεστική προσπάθεια να χτίσουν στην άδεια έκταση, προσφέροντας –μέσω ανέγερσης συμβολικών σημάτων– ίχνη καλωσορίσματος για τις μελλοντικές χαρτογραφικές και αποικιακές προσπάθειες. Το τελευταίο γεγονός παρουσιάζει τον επίσημο πρωτοπόρο της Νότιας Αφρικής στην εμπορική γεωγραφία, John Barrow –που ξεκίνησε τη χαρτογραφική περιπέτεια στο εσωτερικό της χώρας– να είναι απασχολημένος με το μέτρημα της περιοχής η οποία είχε συμβολικά εκκενωθεί από τον Bartolomeo Dias και τον Vasco da Gama και στην οποία είχαν γίνει αργότερα πολλαπλές αναφορές από τον Fitzherbert και τον Shillinge. Αυτά συνέβαιναν στα τέλη του 18ου αιώνα, την εποχή, στην περιοχή της Νότιας Αφρικής, που η χαρτογραφική τάση μετρήσεων, προσδιορισμών και ιεραρχήσεων της γης συνδέθηκε άμεσα με το έργο της αποικιακής επέκτασης.